

**To:** Palo Alto Parks and Recreation Commission  
**From:** Adam Howard, Senior Recreation Manager  
**Date:** 10/23/2018  
**Subject:** Seasonal Lighting Program on Cubberley Turf Field

**Recommendation:**

Staff requests that the Parks and Recreation Commission provide feedback on a seasonal lighting proposal on Cubberley Turf Field, and make a recommendation to staff.

**Background:**

During the winter months, when daylight saving time ends, there is a high demand for lighted athletic fields in Palo Alto. The City of Palo Alto currently has three fields that are lighted and available for rent; Mayfield Sports Complex (2) and El Camino Soccer Field (1). The three lighted fields are booked 7 days a week, with peak times being 4pm-10pm Monday-Friday. During the peak times there is no available free space. Youth and adult leagues are continually looking for additional space during winter months. Last winter the Palo Alto Soccer Club worked with the City of Palo Alto to initiate temporary winter lighting on a trial basis at the Cubberley Turf Field. This trial was deemed successful by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Discussion:**

In late 2017, the City of Palo Alto was approached by Palo Alto Soccer Club (PASC) with a proposal for a one month trial that would place temporary lights on the Cubberley synthetic turf field for the month of February 2018. The proposal was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) on Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 and with feedback from the PRC, the trial was approved.

Palo Alto Soccer Club provided a proposal that included the following highlights:

- 4-6 temporary light stations brought onto Cubberley turf field
- Lights are solar powered with generator as backup
- Lights only used Monday-Thursday, Sunset to 8:30pm (lights off at 8:30pm)
- All additional activity will go through Cubberley Community Center, no pick up/drop off on Nelson Ave
- Additional time on field will be used for practice only
- Lights are secured and have 24/7 tech support
- Lights will be placed to have least disruption to field and track, with safety precautions taken to keep participants and the public safe from running into the lights

The trial period began on Monday February 12<sup>th</sup> 2018 and ended on Sunday March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018. Prior to the trial beginning, staff conducted outreach to the neighborhood surrounding Cubberley fields. The greatest concerns were limiting traffic on Nelson Drive, limiting how late the fields were used and limiting light pollution.

### Post-trial Information:

The following provides the key points of the trial period:

- Roughly 60-80 participants a day (4-6 teams)
- 6 light stations were used as it was determined after the first night that 4 stations would not be sufficient.
- Solar power provided all the lighting needs. **Generators were never used**
- Schedule of Monday – Thursday, sunset to 8:30pm was followed with no reported incidents.
- Minor congestion on Nelson but issues seemed to be well monitored.
- Lighting stations had minimal impact on track but could impact full field use.

### Post-Trial Public Outreach

- Staff contact information was provided to neighbors before the trial, during the trial and after the trial.
- Staff was contacted one time regarding Nelson drop off, which was immediately remedied.
- Staff delivered a post-trial survey to the 18 residents that border Cubberley Field.



Residents were provided a self-addressed, pre-paid envelope and had the option to take the survey online as well. City staff received a total of 8 responses. Survey questions and results are below.

Questions	Yes	No	Comments												
Were you aware of the temporary lighting trial on Cubberley Turf Field?	8	0	1) Impossible to miss them												
Did the lights from the trial have any negative impact for you or your family?	1	7	1) We hated them. Noisy, bright, and in the way of usage of the field. Soccer is the only one use of the field and lights degraded all other uses 2) Parking and street congestion was well managed 3) Great to have this activity in the evenings 4) No problem whatsoever 5) probably has some cars sometimes on Nelson, but overall not a problem and we want kids to be able to play soccer												
Would you approve of a similar lighting plan taking place next winter (January - March) with the same restrictions as this year?	6	2	1) Please have someone continue to monitor- that coaches are telling players/parents to park at Cubberley. Thanks 2) While well intentioned, they were the dominant thing we could see out of the kitchen window or from street. 3) Too few participants! Possibly precedent setting. And this is not essential												

**Next Steps:**

With the end of daylight savings approaching the Palo Alto Soccer Club has approached the City and is interested in continuing the Seasonal Lighting Plan at Cubberley for winter 2018/2019. This proposal runs for two periods during the time that daylight savings is not in effect, November 5<sup>th</sup> – December 14<sup>th</sup> and then again January 7<sup>th</sup> – March 8<sup>th</sup> (lights will be removed December 15<sup>th</sup>-January 7<sup>th</sup>). Since this program is longer than the trial, there is an increased focus on safety which includes orange safety fencing and high density foam padding on the more exposed sections of the lights. It should be noted that there were no observed or reported safety incidents during the trial last year.

During the November – December dates the field is still used for games and lights will be located in such a way that the full field can be used with as little interruption to the field or the track as possible. The side lights will be placed in new areas that will not impact the field or the track but should still provide adequate lighting for the middle of the field.



Overhead image of goal locations  
Picture of proposed location for lights that will not impact field or track use.

**Community Outreach:**

City Staff has emailed Greenmeadow and Greendell neighborhood associations and hand delivered fliers to the houses surrounding Cubberley turf field informing them of the seasonal lighting request and requesting feedback at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting or via email.

**Attachment A: PASC Seasonal Lighting Plan**

**Attachment B: Survey results from lighting trial**

Prepared by

Adam Howard

Community Services Manager

City of Palo Alto