Safer, Healthier, Sustainable & Cost-Effective Natural Grass MCPS Athletic Fields

Hannah Donart, MPH

MCCPTA Board Meeting

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Health Equity

- **This is an ADA compliance and equity issue.**
- **Plastic turf further limits access to safer, healthier environments for more susceptible populations, including all youth and those with chronic health conditions.**

Full Life-Cycle Cost Analysis

Table 12: Sample Life Cycle Cost Estimate (65,625 square foot field)

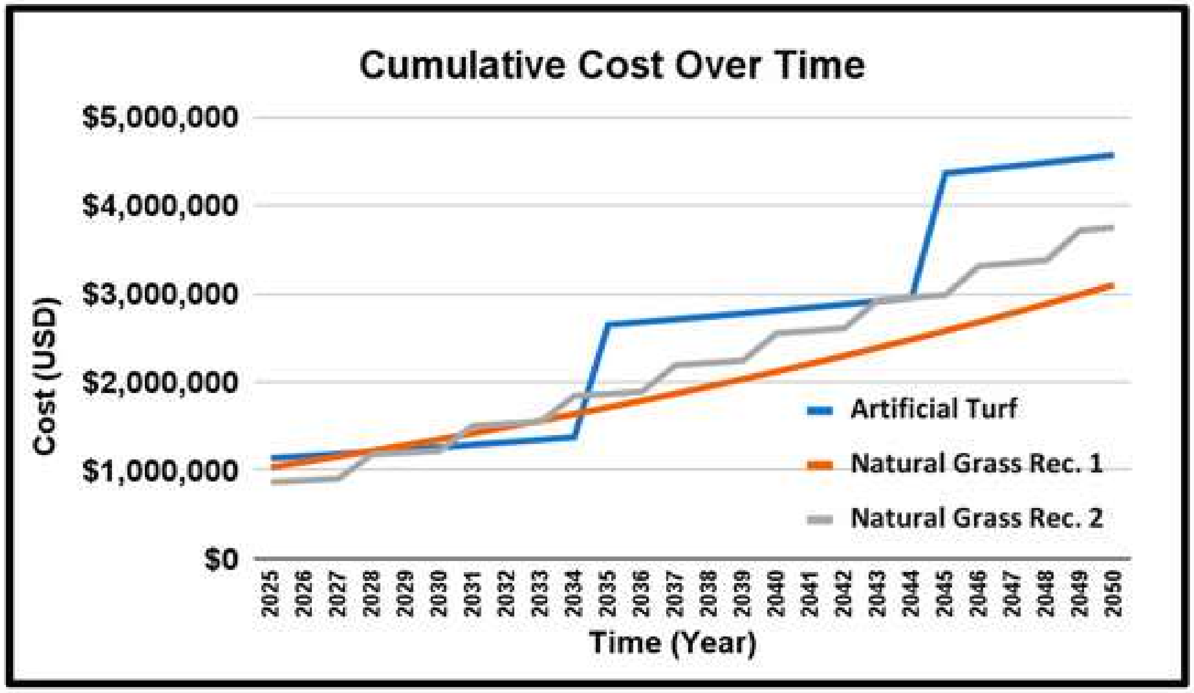
	Natural		*Synthetic (replacements in years 8 & 16)*	
	Low	High	Low	High
Installation*	$39,000	$328,000	$295,000	$673,000
Annual Maintenance*	$4,000	$14,000	$4,000	$4,000
Annual Labor (hrs)*	250	750	300	300
Annual labor cost	$5,000	$15,000	$6,000	$6,000
Resodding (yrs 6, 11, 16)	$25,000	$45,000	$0	$0
Disposal & resurfacing & transport & landfill*	$0	$0	$557,000	$642,000
Net Present Value	**$197,000**	**$753,000**	**$1,189,000**	**$1,676,000**

*Source: SportsTurf Managers Association. [no date.] A Guide to Synthetic and Natural Turfgrass for Sports Fields. 3rd edition. Lawrence, KS: STMA. Assumptions: Hourly rate $20; interest rate 3%, disposal/resurfacing occurs in years 8 & 16; natural grass resodding in years 6, 11 and 16; conversion factor used to calculate annualized cost from NPV 0.0796. In the scenarios used here, at year 16 the field is in equally good condition as in year 1.

[Sports Turf Alternative Assessment: Cost-analysis, University of Massachusetts, Lowell Center for Sustainable Production and Toxics Use Reduction Institute](#).

These costs don't include the costs to our kids' and communities' health or the environment from more toxic micro and nanoplastics, heat islands, and runoff plastic turf creates!

Artificial Turf Versus Natural Grass: A Case Study of Environmental Effects, Health Risks, Safety, and Cost



Cumberbatch et al. 2025. Artificial Turf Versus Natural Grass: A Case Study of Environmental Effects, Health Risks, Safety, and Cost.
Sustainability **2025**, *17*(14), 6292; https://doi.org/10.3390/su17146292

State and Local Policies & Local Partners

Maryland State Laws:
HB0457 and HB1147

Growing list of laws from around the country:

- Artificial Turf and Playgrounds: State Initiatives
- Artificial Turf and Playgrounds: Municipal and Regional Initiatives

Local partners & natural grass turf experts that are right in our backyard!

MD Soccerplex: “Sports Turf Maintenance utilizes the most cutting-edge technology available to maintain **high quality on some of the most high-use natural grass surfaces in the world**.”

Petition for Natural Grass Athletic Fields for Montgomery County Public Schools

- **Initiate an RFP for installation and sustainable maintenance of state-of-the-art natural grass fields for:**
  - **Old grass fields that need updating in all schools and;**
  - **Existing artificial/plastic turf fields when they reach the end of their life.**
- **Publicly post the RFP for natural grass fields and update the 2026-2027 Fiscal Year CIP budget to include these costs.**
- **Include sustainable natural grass maintenance costs in the 2026-2027 Operating Budget.**
- **Install state-of-the-art natural grass fields at Watkins Mill, Spring Brook, Magruder, and Poolesville High Schools for implementing**
  - **Consult with MD SoccerPlex and include maintenance in contract to support cost-effective, high-use, well-maintained grass fields.**
- **Place a ban on any future installation of artificial/plastic turf in all school athletic fields.**