


AGENDA ITEM #3E
December 2, 2014
Introduction

MEMORANDUM

November 26, 2014

TO: County Council

FROM: Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Introduction – Resolution to Support the Use of Plant-Derived Materials for Infill in Artificial Turf Playing Fields**

Today the County Council will consider introduction of a resolution to support the use of plant-derived materials for infill in artificial turf playing fields in the County. This resolution (attached at circles 3-4) is sponsored by Councilmembers Berliner, Riemer, and Katz, Council Vice President Leventhal, and Councilmember Navarro.

On November 5, Councilmember Berliner sent a memorandum to the Council regarding his intent to introduce this resolution. This memorandum is attached at circles 1-2. The Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee and the Education Committee are tentatively scheduled to hold a joint worksession on January 29, 2015, to discuss this issue.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

November 5, 2014

TO: Councilmembers

FROM: Roger Berliner, Chair
Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee

SUBJECT: Artificial Turf

As you know, the City of Gaithersburg recently opened an artificial turf playing field in Lakelands Park that is constructed of an organic infill material. I, along with Council Vice President Leventhal, Councilmember Andrews, and staff from several Councilmember offices, visited the field last week with Council staff, Park and Planning staff, officials and staff from the City of Gaithersburg, and representatives of the company that produces the infill material. I was very impressed with the material, the condition of the field, and the increased playability that the organic infill provides.

The Council has worked diligently for several years to understand the pros and cons of artificial turf fields and to follow the most current scientific thinking available on the health and environmental safety aspects of crumb rubber infill. Following the 2012 staff report, the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee (T & E) recommended adopting several best procurement and operational practices to ensure that the County's approach to artificial turf matched the best thinking of other jurisdictions, such as San Francisco. Even so, many in our community have remained concerned about the potential risks that could come from contact with crumb rubber infill.

At this juncture, I am convinced that there are now sufficient viable alternative infill materials available that we no longer need to rely on crumb rubber infill in our effort to maximize recreational opportunities in our County. While our national environmental and health experts will continue to study synthetic materials, I believe that we can now shift our focus to installing organic infill materials that alleviate many of the community's concerns and provide excellent playing conditions for our young athletes.

I plan to introduce a resolution on December 2 that states the intent of the Council to endorse organic synthetic materials for use in artificial turf playing fields going forward. I will then hold a T & E Committee discussion of this resolution in January, followed by Council action. In the interim, I have asked Council staff to work with Park and Planning and MCPS to more fully understand the state of the industry of alternate infill materials, including what options are available as well as cost and durability

information. I look forward to moving the Council's conversation about artificial turf into the next generation of science in this area.

I ask for your support of this resolution and welcome your participation in January's committee discussion.

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Resolution No.: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: Councilmembers Berliner, Riemer, and Katz, Council Vice President Leventhal, and
Councilmember Navarro

SUBJECT: Use of Plant-Derived Materials for Infill in Artificial Turf Playing Fields

Background

1. There is a very high demand for use of County playing fields for youth and adult sports and other recreational activities.
2. County agencies began installing artificial turf in some County playing fields to increase the hours of available use for the community and to achieve a more sustainably consistent playing surface on the field.
3. Since County agencies began installing artificial turf fields, the technology of infill materials has expanded and improved. There are now more types of both synthetic and plant-derived materials available in the industry. In particular, use of infill materials made from plant-derived substances resolves some environmental and heat issues related to synthetic infill materials, and may allay some community concerns about the potential unknown risks that could come from contact with synthetic infill materials.
4. Plant-derived infill materials for artificial turf playing fields show great promise to also afford high quality playing surfaces that can sustain significantly higher hours of use than a natural grass playing field, achieving the County's goal of increasing playing field availability for sports and recreation.
5. County residents, businesses, and government all need to be good stewards of the environment. County Government should lead by example with environmental initiatives to affirm the County's commitment to reduce its environmental footprint and to show that viable environmentally-friendly options are available and should be pursued whenever possible.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Council plans to approve only the use of plant-derived infill materials for new artificial turf playing fields in projects where the County funds or contracts for the installation of a new artificial turf playing field.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council