

**FRIENDS OF ATHLETIC FIELDS**  
**Sportsfields Questionnaire, 2009**

1. What are your favorite recreational activities that you engage in at Seattle Parks?

Bicycling, hiking/walking, swimming.

2. Do you support the recreation mission that is currently part of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation? Or should the Seattle Parks Department be devoted more strictly to providing for green space?

Both parts of the mission are important, and the Parks Department must have the resources and the commitment to provide both green space and active recreation.

3. With the ProParks Levy running out in 2008, did you support the new Parks and Green Spaces Levy that provided continued funding for many improvements to the Seattle parks system, including converting four existing sportsfields from a sand to synthetic surface? Are tax levies a good method for citizens to inform government of their funding preferences for city services?

I was one of the key Councilmembers who initiated the 2008 Parks for All Levy, worked hard to develop it and get it to the ballot, and then campaigned for it all over the City. While it would be great to be able to fully fund City government without the use of levies, because of the restrictions on our funding as a result of the Eyman initiatives, we must rely on them, especially for capital projects. I do not think they are a very good way for citizens to inform government, as a levy vote is simply a passive response to a proposal put forward by government. Active community engagement is a much better way of finding out citizen priorities.

4. Given the increasing demand for use of athletic fields in the Seattle area due to increasing population and "new" sports like ultimate Frisbee and lacrosse, parks and schools districts are looking for ways to increase capacity using their existing infrastructure. Many districts are converting their athletic fields to synthetic (Field Turf-type) surfaces that eliminate rainouts and provide for year-round play, especially at facilities that already have field lighting. Do you support funding for these types of playfield improvement projects or do you have other ideas on how to manage our public assets more efficiently?

I support funding for synthetic fields and field lighting, and have consistently voted for this funding. It is important for the City to balance this work with full public involvement and attention to making sure that all communities have access to both active recreation and green space. These two aspects of the Parks Department do not have to be in conflict if the City works hard to plan and secure adequate land and funding to meet all of the needs of Seattle residents.

5. Given the intense competition for scheduled playing time on sportsfields in Seattle, many athletes have to drive long distances to find available fields. Do you support local playfield improvements that offer more activities in the community, reduce transportation air pollution impacts, and save personal time?

Yes.

6. How would you balance the needs of sports field users against the concerns (such as noise, lighting, and/or traffic) of homeowners that chose to live near parks with playfields?

I support full public engagement in decision making, and careful attention to mitigation where that will be helpful and reasonable to meet the concerns of homeowners. However, ultimately Parks belong to all of the people of Seattle, and we must make decisions on them that reflect that. We should employ, as much as is practical and affordable, new technologies that minimize the impact of lights on neighbors when the fields are not in use. Also, fields can more efficiently scheduled so that the greatest number of people have access to the fields closest to their communities.

7. Seattle is constructing hard lids over many of the drinking water reservoirs that will create acres of new public space. Do you support using some of this flat ground for new athletic fields?

Yes, this is an excellent use of some of this flat ground.

8. Have you had personal experience in developing or improving parks in general and athletic fields in particular?

I have both participated as a volunteer in improving parks and renovating playgrounds, as well as taking votes on the Council that reflect the values and priorities I have articulated in this questionnaire, even when there was considerable opposition to moving forward with field development.

9. Are you supportive of public/private partnerships for parks development and/or operations, such as independent commercial endeavors, or more simply for sports leagues investing their own funds in local parks improvements?

Public/private partnerships can play an important role in parks development, and I enthusiastically support them where this makes sense. The continued development of Magnuson exemplifies this – the work of the sports leagues on the athletic fields, the partnership with Arena Sports to redevelop Building 27, and the continued engagement of Sail Sand Point as a Parks facility are excellent examples of how these partnerships can work.

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Thank you for taking the time to respond. Please see our website (link below) if you'd like to learn more about our organization and see what issues are of interest to us. Good luck on the election.

Bill Farmer/Friends of Athletic Fields (FAF)

[www.friendsofathleticfields.com](http://www.friendsofathleticfields.com)