ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

MOTION

The Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) needs funding to execute Council File 24-0602 (adopted in September 2024). The Council directed RAP, and multiple agencies to scientifically evaluate the municipal use of artificial turf, comparing dollars spent, usage of fields, injuries of users and liability, maintenance, plastic and other toxic chemical seepage into storm drains and soils, among other requests. This report was to be accomplished through a multi-agency approach involving the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN), and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The study's findings, combined with expert analysis from RAP, LADWP, and LASAN, will be essential for Council to make future policy decisions about use of alternatives to natural grass.

During the summer of 2026, the City of Los Angeles hosted over 100 World Cup viewing parties as part of the "Kick it in the Park" initiative, drawing thousands of Angelenos across 19 park locations over 34 match days. However, at facilities equipped with artificial grass, the practical failures of synthetic turf were on full display. Plastic surfaces such as artificial turf trap and then radiate thermal energy—and during the World Cup it drove attendees off the fields. Particularly on soccer fields in full sun, such as Lanark Park in CD3, residents chose to avoid extreme heat and clustered in small shade pockets near trees or skipped daytime games entirely.

Plastic synthetic turf actively amplifies the urban heat island effect during increasingly severe summer heatwaves. Unlike living grass, which cools surrounding neighborhood air through natural evaporation, plastic carpet absorbs and stores solar radiation. On days when ambient temperatures reach 85, 95, or 100°F or higher, surface temperatures on unshaded fields regularly soar to 140°F to 160°F or beyond. Under these extreme heat conditions, plastic synthetic fields become hazardous heat sinks capable of blistering exposed skin, softening shoe soles, and melting the plastic cleats of young athletes attempting to play on them—directly undermining the purpose of the fields themselves.

In addition to thermal hazards, synthetic turf poses other serious environmental and public health threats. Chief among these is microplastic shed and the presence of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)—durable "forever chemicals" embedded in plastic blades, backings, and infill that leach into soil, groundwater, and marine habitats through municipal stormwater systems. Recognizing these risks, Council recently gave new instructions under CF: 24-0456, adopted on September 29, 2026, with an amending motion directing the Bureau of Sanitation and Environment and the Department of Recreation and Parks to test park sites where plastic field runoff threatens local water supplies, coastal waters, and sensitive ecosystems.

Additional instructions are needed to clarify intent, and to execute this contract and deliver the technical analysis Council needs. Recognizing the urgency of this issue in the West San Fernando Valley where synthetic turf has caused significant issues, Council District 3 is allocating up to $330,000 in the district's AB 1290 funds to launch the study immediately.

BB

OCT 23 2026

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of Recreation and Parks, with the collaboration and assistance of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation, Chief Legislative Analyst, and the Office of the City Administrative Officer, be instructed to report back to Council in 180 days with an analysis of the findings and recommendations in the study, taking into account recreational needs, climate realities, future funding, and plastics pollution proliferation from artificial turf, such as in ground water aquifers, soils, and storm drains.

I FURTHER MOVE that up to $330,000 from the AB 1290 Fund No. 53P, Account No. 281203 (CD 3) Redevelopment Projects – Services) be transferred/appropriated to the Department of Recreation and Parks Fund No. 302, Department No. 89, Account No. 89270K (General Capital), Subaccount Synthetic Field Study to fund the artificial/synthetic turf study.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of Recreation and Parks be authorized to confirm the total funding amount of the study prior to the transfer of funds, and make any new corrections, clarifications or revisions to the above funding transfer instructions in order to implement Mayor and Council intentions.

Presented By: _____
Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember, 3rd District

Seconded By: _____