



TOWN OF GILBERT

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SPORTS FIELDS NEEDS ASSESSMENT



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PREFACE

This document is organized into the following chapters:

Executive Summary

This section provides a summation of the key findings of the report for a quick reference.

Chapter One: Introduction

This section provides an overview of the purpose of the Sports Fields Needs Assessment, the process utilized, and an analysis of the Town demographics.

Chapter Two: Sports Fields Needs Assessment

Understanding the existing conditions in the community is an essential step in the Sports Fields Needs Assessment process. The Needs Assessment provides an inventory of the existing sports fields, and includes review and evaluation of potential public school facilities, private recreation facilities, and a listing of other publicly-owned or available lands (opportunity sites) within the limits of Gilbert.

The Needs Assessment further provides a detailed assessment of the recreation facility needs of the Gilbert community. Data from the community was obtained to develop an understanding of the demand for a variety of facilities. The assessment utilized the following needs identification tools:

Community Outreach: Information gathered from the community through a series of interviews, meetings, sports organization questionnaires, and a public open house meeting.

Recreation Demand and Needs Analysis: An evaluation of current and future sports fields needs was developed using results from the sports organization questionnaires, staff input, facility inventory, and relevant demographic projections.

Service Area Analysis: An evaluation of how sports fields are utilized throughout Gilbert.

Acreage Analysis: An evaluation of park land acreage needs in Gilbert based on established standards and on identified need for specific recreation, practice and competition sports fields.

Chapter Three: Recommendations

Chapter Three provides recommendations with respect to existing and future sport fields and joint-use collaborative or partnering opportunities. Recommendations are intended to address the facility needs identified in Chapter Two and are the result of existing inventory, analysis of demand, community input, and consideration of the proposed service goal of the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan to provide a range of facilities that meet recreation needs of Town residents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gilbert places a high value on the availability of sports activities and facilities, as evidenced in the inventory of sports league participation found on Exhibit 2.1 of this report and as evidenced in the high level of maintenance care found in the review of existing sports facilities. This report found that based upon the high participation rate of the community, the existing field quantities fall somewhat short of meeting the demand. Game fields are also usable for practices, and because a shortage of game fields exists, there is a shortage of space for practices. As Gilbert continues to be developed for residential expansion, more game fields would be needed to meet the increased demands for additional players and teams.

The current needs are for 1 additional youth baseball, 3 additional adult softball fields, 1 additional soccer fields and 1 football field. The land required to construct these fields and associated parking areas totals 19 acres. The future needs, looking forward to the eventual build-out of Gilbert, will create an additional demand (beyond current needs) for 6 more youth baseball fields, 3 more youth softball fields, 2 adult softball fields, 12 more soccer fields, 7 more football fields and 1 cricket field. The land acreage needed for the future sports fields is 88.5 acres.

The total cumulative need for future sports fields in Gilbert is 107.5 acres (existing needs plus future needs). Utilizing industry standards for park development, a multiplier of 1.6 times this figure is used to allow for other utilitarian park functions that should be planned in a typical sports complex such as drainage features, park and recreation features such as ramadas and picnic areas, open spaces, trails/pathways, spectator areas, informal warm-up/practice areas and buffer zones. Therefore, the total land that would be needed to accommodate all the current and future sports fields needs is 172 acres. The recommendation of this plan is for the town to consider a level of service in long range planning for a sports complex in relationship to the 172 acres to meet the current and projected needs of the community.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The methodology for assessing Gilbert’s sports fields needs is based on the guiding principle that the quality of life in Gilbert depends in part upon the availability and quality of sports fields, parks, recreation facilities, and places in which to operate athletic programs. Across the nation, organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association describe the many important ways recreation facilities and programming can help in creating healthy lifestyles and livable communities, including:

- Strengthen community image and sense of place
- Support economic development
- Strengthen safety and security
- Promote health and wellness
- Foster human development
- Increase cultural unity
- Facilitate community problem solving
- Provide competition and recreational experiences

“Local parks and recreation are the gateways to healthy, prosperous and connected communities”

-National Recreation and Park Association

1.1 Purpose of the Needs Assessment

The purpose of this Needs Assessment is to provide a realistic and visionary guide for the creative, orderly development and management of sports fields now and into the future. This Needs Assessment is a planning and implementation tool for the Town Council, the Gilbert Parks, Recreation and Library Services Advisory Board, and staff. It provides defensible information for addressing Gilbert’s vision based on current analysis and community and professional staff input.

Key questions discussed in this Sports Fields Needs Assessment included: What forecasted changes in growth, demographic and utilization patterns will affect the Town’s sports fields needs? What usage conditions, additions, trends or modifications of sports fields have occurred over time? What changes should be made to existing sports fields now and into the future?

In February of 2014, Gilbert adopted a Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan that built upon many previous planning efforts and obtained new community and staff guidelines for park amenities in general. This Needs Assessment builds upon the Master Plan by providing detailed and specific analysis for the active sports fields components of the recreation system in Gilbert, and provides an up-to-date understanding of current and future sports fields utilization, needs and opportunities specific to Gilbert.

1.2 Context

Historical Population Growth

Exhibit 1.1, Population Growth Over Time in Gilbert presents a twenty-five year history of population growth within Gilbert, and a projection for twenty years into the future. As Exhibit 1.1 illustrates, population growth in Gilbert almost tripled from 1990 to 2000, and almost doubled from the 2000 Census to the 2010 Census. In the past five years of recession economy, it has slowed to a still impressive 10.3% increase. The pace of future development is estimated by the Economic Development Department of the Gilbert to maintain a pace of 2.05% per year.

EXHIBIT 1.1: Population Growth Over Time in Gilbert

YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE/DECADE	ANNUAL % CHANGE
1990	29,000		
2000	110,000	276%	27.67%/year
2010	208,500	90%	9.0%/year
CURRENT (2015)	230,000	20.6%	2.06%/year
2035 (PROJECTED EST.)	325,000	20.5%	2.05%/year

EXHIBIT 1.2: MEDIAN AGE OVER TIME

YEAR	POPULATION	MEDIAN AGE	NATIONAL MEDIAN AGE
1990	29,000		
2000	110,000	30.1 years	35.3 years
2010	208,500	31.9 years	37.2 years
CURRENT (2015)	230,000	32.4 years	37.6 years
2035 (PROJECTED EST.)	325,000	36.0 years	39.0 years

Exhibit 1.2 shows a demographic trend in Gilbert that will have an impact on sports field usage. The trend indicates a lower median age than the national average. This is likely due to Gilbert's high growth rate of new housing starts in the past, resulting in attracting many families that have young children. The net effect of this demographic characteristic is that Gilbert has a growing participation rate in sports activities, especially for youth. The next exhibit shows an even clearer picture of the youthful characteristics of Gilbert versus national and Arizona age demographics.

EXHIBIT 1.3: AGE CHARACTERISTICS OF GILBERT COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGES

AGE IN 2010 CENSUS	GILBERT % OF POPULATION	US % OF POPULATION	ARIZONA % OF POPULATION
UNDER 5	8.5%	6.5%	7.4%
AGE 5 TO 17	22.7%	17.5%	17.2%
AGE 18 TO 24	8.8	9.9	11.1%
AGE 25 TO 44	31.9%	26.6%	27%
AGE 45 TO 64	22.1	26.5	24.1%
AGE 65 AND OVER	6%	13%	13.3%

The presence of higher averages than national and Arizona age categories in the under 5 and 5 to 17 groups shows a clear reason why youth sports should be a priority for Gilbert. Future growth in Gilbert is anticipated to be steady as shown on Exhibit 1.1, and while the demographic profile indicates a slight percentage increase in the median age, the number of persons in the 5-18 age group is anticipated to continue to grow steadily. This age group has the highest participation rates in youth sports activities in Gilbert. The inventories in the following chapter reinforce this data, indicating that Gilbert has a higher utilization of sports fields as compared to other communities in Arizona, which is taken into account in the planning of future facilities.

2.0 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This portion of the report provides an overview of existing sports fields, an analysis of the existing usage patterns, community input on the analysis, and calculations that form the basis for establishing a baseline for current and projections of future sports fields needs in Gilbert.

2.1 Existing Participation in Sports Leagues

To assess the demand for sports fields, an outreach effort was utilized to gather data on the accurate size, game and practice usage patterns, and growth estimates for the users of Gilbert's sports fields. Gilbert has a very high rate of participants in sports, due in large part to the relatively young demographic makeup, as shown in Chapter One, as well as a very favorable year-round climate for outdoor activity in all but the hottest months of summer. This high usage pattern almost year-round limits the ability of maintenance staff to provide rotation for resting and rehabilitation of the Bermuda turf grass.

Every sports league in Gilbert was provided the opportunity to complete a Sports League Questionnaire that asked questions about the league's characteristics, such as; primary season of competition, size of league and teams, fields utilized for practice and competitions, growth expectations, and other relative data. A series of meetings, follow-up discussions, and teleconferences were provided with all of the league's representatives to discuss the questionnaire, verify data and gather other pertinent information for the Needs Assessment. Most league representatives expressed Gilbert and school fields were available for use, but universally their desire was to first utilize Gilbert sports fields and school fields only if necessary, due to the higher costs and somewhat unpredictable schedule for school fields. Exhibit 2-1 on the following page provides an inventory of the data collected from the Sports League Questionnaires, and provides the current level of participation of the organized sports leagues in Gilbert.

EXHIBIT 2.1: INVENTORY OF SPORTS LEAGUES, PARTICIPANTS, AND TEAMS

FACILITY	PEAK SEASON START	PEAK SEASON END	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF TEAMS
BASEBALL	February	May		
GALL	Feb	May	540	41
GNLL	Feb	May	481	37
SEDLL	Feb	May	385	26
Town	March	May	336	24
NYS	March	May	303	23
TOTAL			2045	151
SOFTBALL	Feb	June		
YOUTH:				
GSSL	Feb	June	550	50
NYS	Feb	June	60	5
Town Girls League	March	May	182	13
ADULT:				
Town League	Feb	June	1667	113
TOTAL			2459	181
SOCCER	Sept	Dec		
GYSA	Sept	Dec	3125	291
AYSO	Sept	Nov	1080	102
ASC	Sept	Dec	1200	130
NYS			412	37
TOTAL			5817	560
FOOTBALL	Aug	Nov		
GYFL	Aug	Nov	750	60
CTC	March	May	1200	110
OTZ	Sept	Nov	290	29
GCPW	Sept	Dec	649	26
TOTAL			2889	225
LACROSSE	Dec	May		
EVSL	Dec	May	95	5
GTL	Dec	May	105	6
TOTAL			200	11
RUGBY	Nov	Apr	105	7
CRICKET	Oct	May	40	2
GRAND TOTAL			13555	1137

LEGEND:

GALL- Gilbert American Little League, GNLL – Gilbert National Little League, SEDLL – Southeast Diamondbacks Little League, NYS – National Youth Sports, GSSL- Gilbert Softball Little League (Girls), GYSA- Gilbert Youth Soccer Association, AYSO-Arizona Youth Soccer Organization, ASC-Arizona Soccer Club, GYFL- Gilbert Youth Football League, CTC-Coast to Coast, OTZ-Own the Zone, GCPW- Gilbert Chandler Pop Warner, EVSL-East Valley Scorpions Lacrosse, GTL- Gilbert Tigers Lacrosse

2.2 Existing Sports Fields

Well-maintained sports fields are available throughout Gilbert facilities. Each park was visited by the consultant team to assess the level of service, condition, and quantity of fields. A description on each park site and school site is included at the end of this chapter. Upon detailed review of the existing facilities, a diverse combination of good quality Town fields were observed. With the community's high participation in sports, the current quantity of fields is challenged to meet the game and practice needs and usage patterns of the community. The projected growth of the community and corresponding

growth in teams and new sports organizations will increase the requests for fields, creating a need to find time slots outside of the premium times or fit into existing schedules on Gilbert fields or on fields in neighboring communities. This has a limiting effect on growth of league play and practice opportunities. The high participation use rate results in a shortage of fields for baseball, softball, soccer and football, as will be shown in detail in the exhibits and paragraphs that follow.

Field distribution around Gilbert has generally occurred in a well-planned pattern, resulting in an adequate accessibility for most of the residential areas. The only identified area of Gilbert which could be considered a long distance from sports fields occurs south of Queen Creek Road. As illustrated on Exhibit 2-2 on the following page, the area map shows the location of each existing park that currently has competition quality sports fields available for public use. Significant school sites that are utilized by groups listed are also shown.

Exhibit 2-3 provides a matrix that describes the existing inventory of sports field available to residents of Gilbert either at Gilbert-owned parks or at school properties that are available for community use. The total available fields are calculated in this exhibit. School District owned fields are given partial credit in the final inventory calculation on Exhibit 2-5 due to the fact that they not available in most cases until 6pm weekdays. School fields are prioritized for school team practice and competition usage first and community groups are a secondary priority, and many are not lighted, thereby restricting use to daylight hours. This results in a 60% average availability for sports activities, as compared to full availability for a Gilbert-owned field. It is also known that sometimes last minute cancellations occur if a school sponsored event or game goes long or is unexpectedly overbooked over a non-school rental.

Private homeowner association park sites were considered in this calculation, but due to the very small number of competition quality fields in these park sites, and the limited availability for scheduling, the private park sites do not meet the demands for league needs.

EXHIBIT 2-2: MAP OF EXISTING SPORTS FIELDS AT PARKS AND SCHOOLS IN GILBERT

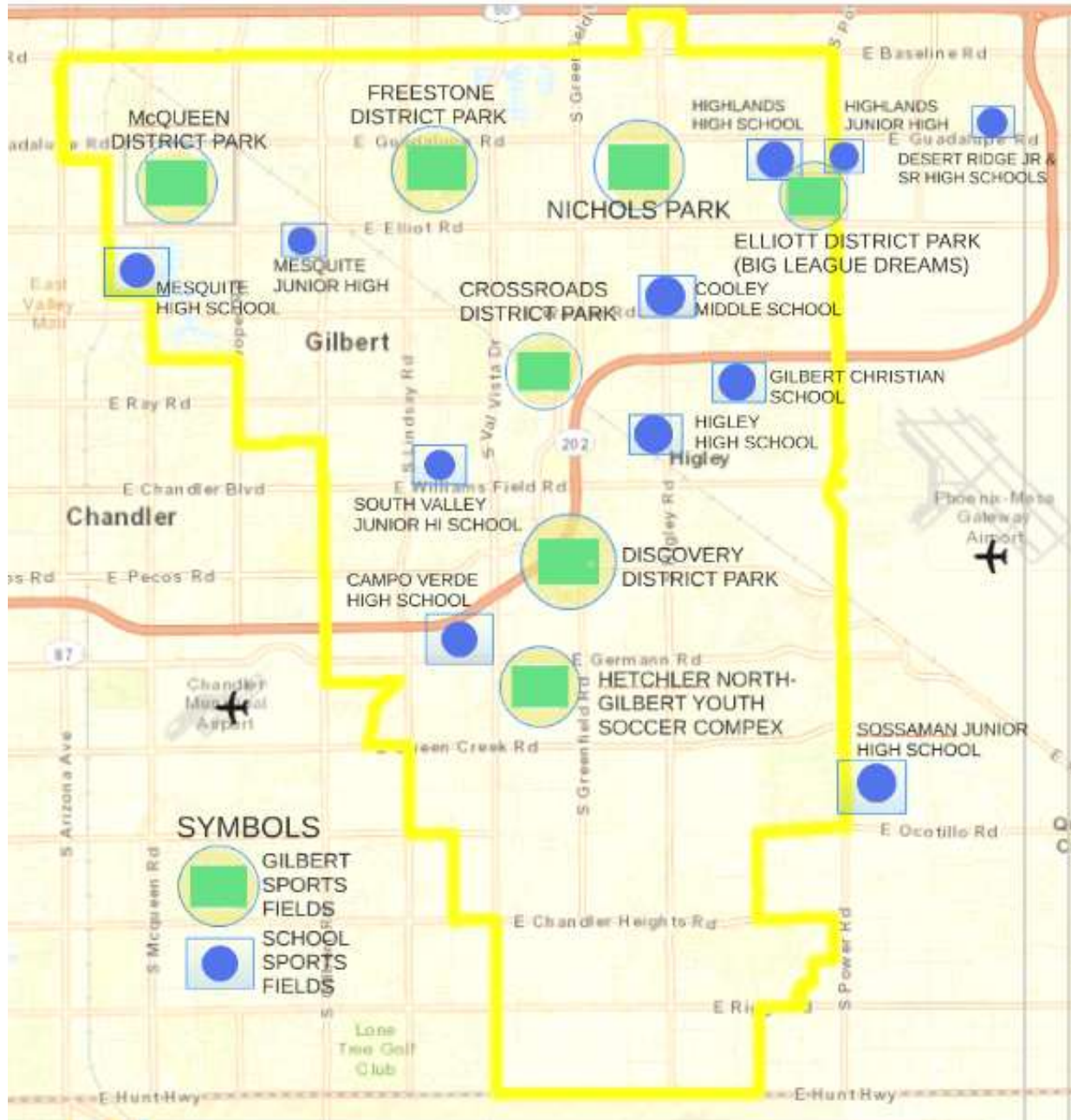


EXHIBIT 2-3: SPORTS FIELDS INVENTORY

FACILITY	BASEBALL	SOFTBALL	SOCCER	MULTI-USE (FOOTBALL, SOCCER, LACROSSE, RUGBY, CRICKET)
TOWN-OWNED FIELDS				
CROSSROADS DISTRICT PARK	3-L	1-L	3-L	2-L 1-NL
DISCOVERY DISTRICT PARK				3-L 2-NL
FREESTONE DISTRICT PARK		4-L		2-NL
GYSA (HETCHLER NORTH PARK)			10-L, 4-NL	
MCQUEEN DISTRICT PARK	5-L	3-L		2-NL
NICHOLS BASIN PARK				1-NL
SUBTOTAL LIGHTED	8-L	8-L	13-L	5-L
SUBTOTAL NON-LIGHTED			4-NL	8-NL
SUBTOTAL-TOWN SPORTS FIELDS	8	8	17	13
SCHOOL DISTRICT FIELDS				
CAMPO VERDE HS	1-L*	1-L	1-L* 2-NL	1-LS
COOLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL	1-L	1-L	1-L	1-NL
DESERT RIDGE HS	1-L*	1-L	1-L*, 1-L	1-L*, 1-NL
DESERT RIDGE JUNIOR HIGH	1-NL	1-NL	1-NL	1-NL
GILBERT CHRISTIAN HIGH			1-L	
GILBERT CHRISTIAN JR HIGH			1-L	
GILBERT HIGH SCHOOL	1-L*	1-L		1-L*
HIGHLAND HS	1-NL	1-NL	1-L*, 2-L	1-L*
HIGHLAND JUNIOR HIGH	1-L	1-L	1-L	1-L, 1-NL
HIGLEY HIGH SCHOOL	1-L*	1-L	1-NL	1-L, 1-NL
MESQUITE HS	1-L		1-L*, 2-L, 1-NL	1-L*, 1-NL
MESQUITE JUNIOR HIGH	2-NL	1-L	2-L, 1-NL	
SOSSAMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL	2-L		1-L	
SOUTH VALLEY JR HIGH	2-L	1-L	2-L	
SUBTOTAL LIGHTED	7-L	8-L	14-L	3-L
SUBTOTAL NON-LIGHTED	4-NL	2-NL	6-NL	6-NL
CREDIT RATIO	.60	.60	.60	.60
FIELD EQUIVALENTS (AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY USE)	7	6 youth	12	5
ELLIOT DISTRICT PARK (BIG LEAGUE DREAMS FACILITY)		8-L	1-L indoor	

ABBREVIATION LEGEND: L=LIGHTED NL=NON-LIGHTED

NOTES: FIELDS AT THE BIG LEAGUE DREAMS FACILITY ARE NOT COUNTED BECAUSE THE PLAYERS AND TEAMS THAT UTILIZE THESE FIELDS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE INVENTORY OF SPORTS LEAGUES, PARTICIPANTS AND TEAMS. ADDITIONALLY, SOME TOWN LEAGUES ARE UNABLE TO PLAY AT THIS FACILITY BECAUSE OF LEAGUE REGULATION CONFLICTS WITH BLD POLICIES (ALCOHOL POLICY).

*FIELDS WITH AN ASTERISK ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR USE BY COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF HIGH RATES OF USE BY SCHOOL TEAMS/GROUPS.

CREDIT RATIOS ARE CALCULATED BASED ON LACK OF FIELD LIGHTING AND THE TIMES THE FIELDS ARE RESERVED FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY.

2.3 Recreation Facility Needs Assessment

The purpose of the Sports Fields Needs Assessment is to identify the current and future field needs within Gilbert, and to suggest the relative priority of each identified need. Community outreach was an important factor in gathering data and feedback during the analysis process. Below the tools utilized are described in further detail.

2.3.1 Community Outreach

Sports User Groups Interviews

Meetings were scheduled individually with every league that utilizes fields in Gilbert on Saturday, January 24th and Monday, January 26th. Almost all leagues either met in person or participated in conference calls so that Gilbert staff and consultants could discuss the specific characteristics, use patterns, tournament play, and projections with each user group. The meetings were very important in developing an understanding of the unique character of sports within Gilbert, local seasonality considerations, and field conditions.

Open House Public Meeting

A 2.5 hour Open House Public Meeting was advertised broadly and held on March 25th from 6:00 to 8:30pm at the Southeast Regional Library assembly room. Approximately twenty-five community members attended the event. The preliminary findings of the Sports Fields Needs Assessment were presented, and exhibits were printed in poster format and displayed for public viewing. Overall, reactions to the presentation were affirmative and positive. Public input was gathered and recorded, with the following list on Exhibit 2.4 showing the comments from the attendees at the meeting:



EXHIBIT 2.4: OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

Comment #	Comment
1	Good analysis, looks thorough
2	Poor soil conditions exist at Hetchler Park (GYSA soccer facilities)
3	Be wary of neighbors and existing trail on the east side of Hetchler Park
4	Light field at Nichols Park and make it more useful (expand field, add restrooms & storage)
5	Access road at Nichols needs renovation
6	Concerned about funding the improvements and long-term maintenance costs
7	How long will the process take before improvements start to happen?
8	Worried about heavy reliance on school fields to meet Town needs
9	Town has maintained good level of service with limited funding

2.3.2 Recreation Demand and Needs Analysis

This section summarizes the evaluation of demand values for the sports field user groups based upon actual participation rates. These rates were determined utilizing the statistics of team and league sizes as provided by the sports organizations and verified through Gilbert reservations, bookings, and agreements and professional consultant analysis and research.

The following Exhibit 2.5 provides the calculations for determining the peak demand quantities of fields needed to meet the usage patterns in Gilbert. The table utilizes existing participants (column 4), divides that by the number of participants in each competition on the field (column 5), then divides by the turnover rate in column 7 (number of time slots at peak days the sport is played). That value is multiplied by the number of games the sport is played per week (column 9). The resulting value in column 10 provides the number of fields needed for each sport to accommodate the number of players for games. The facility need ratio is the resulting number of fields needed per 1,000 population, a ratio used to project field needs into the future for increased population numbers used in Exhibit 2.7.

EXHIBIT 2.5: TOWN OF GILBERT SPORTS FIELDS DEMAND CALCULATION – CURRENT 2015 FIELD

Activity	Participation Peak Season	League Participants	Design Standard for Facility	Peak Day Facility Turnover Rate	Games Played per Week	Number of Fields CURRENT DEMAND	Facility Need Ratio -Town of Gilbert			
Column1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11
Baseball:	Mar	May								
GALL			540							
GNLL			481							
SEDLL			385							
Town			336			Weeknights + Saturdays				
NYS			303							
			2,045	22 players/field		12 x		2	15.5	1/14,839 pop.
Softball	Feb	Jun								
Town Girls			182							
GSSL			550			Weeknights + Saturdays				
NYS	Mar	May	60							
			792	22 players/field		8 x		2	9.0	1/25,556 pop.
Adult			1,667			Weeknights + Sundays				
			1,667	22 players/field		24 x		2	6.3	1/36,508 pop.
Soccer										
GYSA	Sept	Dec	3,125							
AYSO	Sept	Dec	1,080			Saturdays				
NYS			412							
			4,617	22 players/field		7 x		1.0	30.0	1/7,667 pop.
ASC	Jan	Mar	1,200	22 players/field		7 x		1.0	7.8	
Football										
GYFL	Sept	Nov	750							
OTZ	Sept	Nov	290							
G/CPW	Sept	Nov	703			Saturdays				
NYS	Sept	Nov	708							
			2451	16 players/field		8 x		1.0	19.0	1/12,105 pop.
CTC	Mar	May	1200	16 players/field		8 x		1.0	9.4	
						Saturdays				
Lacrosse	Dec	May	200	22 players/field		6 x		1.0	1.5	1/153,333 pop.
						Saturdays				
Rugby	Nov	Apr	105	22 players/field		6 x		1.0	0.8	1/287,500 pop.
						Sundays				
Cricket	Oct	May	40	40 players/field		1 x		1	1	1/230,000 pop.

* Notes: Source: RJM Design Group, Inc.; use statistics from Sports Organization Questionnaires provided by leagues and Town recreation staff January and February 2015

USAGE

Exhibit 2.6 provides the current field needs compared to the existing inventory of fields. Town fields and school fields are included, with adjustments to the school fields because of times of the day they are not available. Exhibit 2.7 utilizes the facility need ratio to project needs into the future, based upon population growth. This table projects the number of fields that will be needed in the future.

EXHIBIT 2.6: TOWN OF GILBERT SPORTS FIELDS NEEDS – CURRENT

Facility	Peak Season Player Quantities	Current 2015 Number of Fields Needed	Existing Town Facilities	School Facilities*	Total Fields Available	Total Surplus / (Deficit)
Baseball Fields, Youth	2045	16	8	7	15	(1)
Softball Fields, Youth	792	9	4	6	10	1
Softball Fields, Adult	1667	7	4	0	4	(3)
Soccer Fields	5817	30	17	12	29	(1)
Football	2889	19	13	5	18	(1)
Lacrosse	200	2	0	2	2	0
Rugby	105	1	0	1	1	0
Cricket	40	1	1	0	1	0

Notes: *School facilities are counted at 60% percent for baseball/softball to allow for time not available to the public. Unlighted fields are given partial credit due to two unavailable time slots after dark per each field.

Note: Demand based upon current Gilbert population estimate of 230,000

Source: RJM Design Group, Inc.

EXHIBIT 2.7: TOWN OF GILBERT SPORTS FIELDS NEEDS – CUMULATIVE FUTURE

Facility	Facility Need Ratio for Gilbert	2035 Fields Needed	Existing Town Facilities	School Facilities*	Total Fields Available	Total Cumulative Surplus / (Deficit)
Baseball Fields, Youth	1/14,839 pop.	22	8	7	15	(7)
Softball Fields, Youth	1/25,556 pop.	13	4	6	10	(3)
Softball Fields, Adult	1/36,508 pop.	9	4	0	4	(5)
Soccer Fields	1/7,667 pop.	42	17	12	29	(13)
Football	1/16,547 pop.	26	13	5	18	(8)
Lacrosse	1/153,333 pop.	2	0	2	2	0
Rugby	1/287,500 pop.	1	0	1	1	0
Cricket	1/230,000 pop.	1.4	1	0	1	(.4)

Notes:

The above Total Surplus / (Deficit) column indicates cumulative quantities (current plus future needs)

Notes: *School facilities are counted at 60% percent to allow for time not available to the public.

Unlighted school fields are given partial credit due to two unavailable time slots after dark per each field.

Note: Demand based upon 2035 projected Gilbert population estimate of 325,000

Source: RJM Design Group, Inc., Town of Gilbert Economic Development Department

2.3.4 Acreage Analysis

Parkland Acreage Needed to Accommodate Identified Current Facility Needs

Based upon the analysis it is projected that Gilbert will have future needs for baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields, football fields and a cricket field. The future acreage requirement just for these recreational activities is summarized in Exhibit 2.8 and includes parking and service requirements.

EXHIBIT 2.8: TOWN OF GILBERT FIELD ACREAGE DEMAND – CURRENT AND FUTURE

Sport	Current Needs	Future Needs	Land Space Required Standard	Current Acreage Needed	Future Acreage Needed (in addition to Current Needs)	TOTALS
Baseball Fields (Youth)	1	6	3.5	3.5 ac	21 ac	24.5 ac
Softball Fields (Youth)	-1	4	3.0	0 ac	9 ac	9 ac
Softball Fields (Adult)	3	2	3.5	10.5 ac	7 ac	17.5 ac
Soccer Fields	1	12	2.5	2.5 ac	30 ac	32.5
Football Fields	1	7	2.5	2.5 ac	17.5 ac	20 ac
Lacrosse Fields	0	0	3.0	0 ac	0 ac	0 ac
Rugby Fields	0	0	2.5	0 ac	0 ac	0 ac
Cricket Fields	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	4.0	<u>0 ac</u>	<u>4 ac</u>	<u>4 ac</u>
TOTAL	6	31		19 ac	88.5 ac	107.5 ac

The sum of 37 fields totaling 107.5 acres is an approximate figure representing a need to add fields and acreage in order to satisfy known sports field needs. The standard acreage figures above include the regulation footprint for a full-sized sport field plus the required safety zone around each field, parking area for each field, and related required facilities such as restrooms and storage areas. The parking needed to satisfy peak parking demand is based upon the period of time when competition games are being played on a peak day of the season, and at a time when one game is concluding and the teams scheduled for the next game are present and warming up. An objective would be to plan enough parking stalls to accommodate the teams arriving for the next game before the end of the previous game (real-life conditions).

It is important to note that the above acreage figures do not include other items that may be desired in a District or Special Use Park, such as playgrounds, plazas, meeting rooms, open space, trails, landscape features, general park features, and similar types of amenities that would likely be desired. This figure also does not include allowances for sloping land (i.e., if the fields were in a basin). Industry standards show a general rule of thumb for making allowances for additional land to budget for these additional items is 1.6 times the total field acreage figure. The overall park land needed to accommodate the future field needs in Gilbert is approximately 172 acres.

Practice Fields Needs

Sports activities require training and practice for players to develop skills and abilities, and for teams to develop teamwork and sportsmanship. Practice patterns vary depending on the sport, and change as the season moves from preseason training into midseason and post season play. Practices are typically scheduled on the same fields as games, plus additional acreage to accommodate the frequency and pattern of practice for each sport. The presence of lights on the fields increases the potential for longer and more frequent practices. Research the consultants have prepared for other communities indicates a practice field demand ratio of 1.3 times the quantity of game fields. The additional practice fields beyond game field space can be in open lawn areas of District parks, in neighborhood parks and on school fields. Younger age group teams could utilize greenbelts and drainage basins grass areas for practice. The standard ratio of 1.3 times the competition demand applied to Gilbert indicates a current need for 6 acres beyond the sports field acreage, and future needs for practice increase to a further demand of 27 acres. It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze the open grass areas of Gilbert parks and schools to determine whether there is sufficient space to meet the practice needs, but the input gathered through the sports organization questionnaires shows the leagues practice needs are not sufficiently being met, and that a combination of building more fields and/or adding lights to some existing fields would enable more time for the practice needs as well as enabling field rotation to rehabilitate the turf.

2.3.5 Existing Parks with Sports Fields

The following site assessment sheets provide an inventory and analysis of the park and school sites in Town that currently provide sports fields for use by the sports leagues and residents of Gilbert.

Crossroads Park 2155 E. Knox Road

**Park Type: District Park
Acreage: 93 Acres**

Sports Field Elements

- (5) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields--Lighted
- (3) Baseball Fields--Lighted
- Softball Field--Lighted



Current Sports Field Users

- Arizona Youth Soccer Organization
- Mexcal Soccer
- Arizona Soccer Club
- Gilbert Youth Football League
- Coast to Coast Football
- Gilbert Pop Warner
- Gilbert American Little League
- Gilbert Softball Little League

**Support Elements**

- (3) Medium Ramada
- (2) Picnic Areas
- ½ Basketball Court
- Volleyball Court
- Amphitheater
- Play Area
- Off-Lead Dog Park
- Indoor Ice Skating Rink
- Restroom

Overall Park Condition

- Good to Excellent – heavy use has impacted turf quality in some areas

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking and concrete walkways to sports fields.
- Approximately 820 parking stalls



Discovery Park**2214 East Pecos Road****Park Type: District Park****Acreage: 48 Acres****Sports Field Elements**

- (3) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Lighted
- (2) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Non-Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- Arizona Youth Soccer Organization
- Arizona Soccer Club
- Gilbert Youth Football League
- Coast to Coast
- Gilbert Pop Warner
- Gilbert Youth Baseball—T-Ball

**Support Elements**

- (5) Small Ramada
- (3) Large Ramada
- (2) Basketball Courts
- Playground with Climbing Rock
- (2) Volleyball Courts
- Fishing Lake
- Restroom

Overall Park Condition

- Excellent

**Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation**

- Parking and concrete walkways to sports fields. Nearly 400 parking spaces serving the park.

Elliot District Park
4536 East Elliot Road

Park Type: Special Use Park
Acreage: 65 Acres

Sports Field Elements

- (8) Replica Baseball Fields
- Indoor Soccer Facility—20,000 Square Feet

Current Sports Field Users

- Operated under contract by Big League Dreams which schedules organized play for Men's and Co-ed slow pitch.
- Youth club baseball and softball practice and games.
- By agreement, paid admission is required for entry to facility except for before 4:00pm weekdays for practice or "pick up" games when park is supposed to be available to the public. Reports indicate the facility is frequently "under maintenance" at these times, thereby reducing the availability.



Support Elements

- (2) Restaurants/Concessions
- Restroom
- Playground

Overall Park Condition

- Fair—significant infrastructure renovations and upgrades needed.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking and concrete walkways to soccer complex. Approximately 510 parking spaces serving the complex plus overflow area for approximately 200 additional spaces

Freestone Park**1045 E. Juniper Road****Park Type: District Park****Acreage: 88 Acres (developed acreage only)****Sports Field Elements**

- (4) Softball Fields—lighted
- (2) Soccer Fields—non-lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- Arizona Youth Soccer Organization
- Arizona Soccer Club
- Mexcal Soccer
- Mesa Soccer
- Gilbert Youth Football League
- Gilbert Adult Softball (women, men, co-ed)
- Gilbert Youth Softball

**Support Elements**

- (3) Medium Ramada
- (13) Picnic Areas
- (2) Volleyball Courts
- (4) Basketball Courts
- (4) Tennis Courts
- (3) Restrooms
- Skate Park
- Amphitheater
- (3) Playgrounds
- Freestone Recreation Center
- Batting Cages
- Disc Golf

**Overall Park Condition**

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking and concrete walkways to softball complex.
- Parking and sloping grass hillside to soccer fields located within drainage basis.
- Approximately 368 parking stalls at softball fields, 75 stalls at soccer fields, 50 stalls at tennis courts, 215 parking stalls at Freestone Community Center



Hetchler North Youth Soccer Complex

Park Type: Special Use Park

Acreage: 122 Acres

Sports Field Elements

- (10) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Lighted
- (4) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Non-Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- Gilbert Youth Soccer Association—Agreement with Town for the use of fields.



Support Elements

- Restroom

Overall Park Condition

- Good—Turf needs improvement in areas.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking and concrete walkways to soccer complex. Nearly 500 parking spaces serving the complex
- Adjacent overflow parking on dirt field



McQueen Park 510 N Horne Road

Park Type: District Park Acreage: 41 Acres

Sports Field Elements

- (5) Baseball Fields—Lighted
- (3) Softball Fields—Lighted
- (2) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Non-Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- Gilbert Pop Warner
- Gilbert National Little League
- Gilbert Youth Baseball
- Gilbert Girls Softball Little League

Support Elements

- (12) Small Ramadas
- (2) Volleyball Courts
- (2) Tennis Courts
- (2) Basketball Courts
- (2) Playgrounds
- (2) Restrooms
- 2 Acre Fishing Lake
- Horseshoe Pit
- Multi-Use Trail

Overall Park Condition

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking and concrete walkways to sports fields. Approximately 627 parking stalls.



Nichols Park
700 North Higley Road

Park Type: Special Use Park
Acreage: 34 Acres

Sports Field Elements

- Multi-Use Cricket/
Football Field—Non-
Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- Arizona Cricket Club
- Own the Zone
Football

Support Elements

- Small Ramada
- Portable Toilet

Overall Park Condition

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Dirt parking lot and asphalt walkway
down to fields. Walkway access
slope has erosion and is in need of
repair.
- Space for approximately 300 parking
stalls



2.3.6 Existing Schools with Sports Fields

The following pages inventory existing of selected schools available for rental by user groups

Campo Verde High School Gilbert School District

Sports Field Elements

- Soccer/Multi-Purpose Field—Lighted
- (2) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Non-Lighted
- Football/Multi-Purpose Field/Stadium—Lighted and Synthetic Turf (can be rented)

Current Sports Field Users

- East Valley Scorpions Lacrosse Club
- GYFL Football
- Gilbert Coyotes Football
- NYS & Gary Zauner Pro Football Combines
- Random bookings for all sports

Support Elements

- None

Overall Condition

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking is available adjacent to sports fields.
- Student parking 304 stalls, visitor parking 398, administration 65 stalls



Desert Ridge High Gilbert School District

Sports Field Elements

- Softball Field—Lighted
- Baseball Field- lighted
- (2) Soccer/Football - Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- National Youth Sports
- Pop Warner Football
- Random bookings for all sports

Immediately adjacent to Desert Ridge Junior High School. This site is not in the Town limits of Gilbert, but is within the Gilbert School District

Support Elements

- Restrooms (required to be available for field rentals)

Overall Condition

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking is available adjacent to sports fields.
- Student parking 887 stalls, visitor parking 51 stalls, administration 285 stalls



Desert Ridge Junior High Gilbert School District

Sports Field Elements

- Soccer/Multi-Purpose Field - unlighted
- Softball Field - unlighted
- Baseball Field - unlighted
- Stadium - unlighted

Current Sports Field Users

- NYS Football
- Random bookings for all sports

Immediately adjacent to Desert Ridge High School. Campus location is in the City of Mesa, but it is a Gilbert School District property

Support Elements

- None

Overall Condition

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking is available adjacent to sports fields, approximately 360 stalls



Highland High School Gilbert School District

Sports Field Elements

- (3) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Lighted
- Softball Field—Non-Lighted
- Baseball Field—Non-Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- GFA Dawgs Football
- Arizona Soccer Club
- Random bookings for all sports

Support Elements

- None

Overall Park Condition

- Good

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking is available adjacent to the sports fields.
- Student parking 678 stalls, visitor parking 22 stalls



Highland Junior High Gilbert School District (school location is in the City of Mesa)

Sports Field Elements

- Baseball Field—Lighted
- Baseball Field
- (2) Softball Fields—Lighted
- Practice Field
- Stadium—Lighted

Overall Condition

- Good

Support Elements

- Restrooms

Current Sports Field Users

- GFL Dawgs Football
- AZ Future Stars Baseball
- Desert Ridge Little League
- Random bookings for all sports



Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking is available, approximately 250 stalls

Mesquite High Gilbert School District

The Town funded the field lights on the varsity softball field by separate IGA.

Sports Field Elements

- Baseball Field
- (2) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—
Lighted
- (1) Soccer/Multi-Use Field

Current Sports Field Users

- Pop Warner Football
- Alliance Football
- East Valley Scorpions Lacrosse
Club
- Random bookings for all sports

Overall Condition

- Good

Support Elements

- Restrooms

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking available, 780 student stalls and 20 visitor stalls



Mesquite Junior High Gilbert School District

Sports Field Elements

- (2) Baseball Fields
- Softball Field--Lighted
- (2) Softball Fields
- Soccer Field—Lighted
- Soccer Field
- Stadium

Current Sports Field Users

- Gilbert National Little League
- East Valley Scorpions Lacrosse Club
- NYS Football
- Random bookings for all sports

Overall Condition

- Good

Support Elements

- Restrooms

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- Parking available, 267 parking stalls



South Valley Junior High Gilbert School District

Sports Field Elements

- (2) Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields—Lighted
- (2) Softball Fields—Lighted
- Baseball Field—Lighted

Current Sports Field Users

- AYSO Soccer Camps
- East Valley Scorpions Lacrosse Club
- Gilbert Youth Football League
- Arsenal Soccer
- Pop Warner Football
- Gilbert Coyotes Football
- Random bookings for all sports

Support Elements

- Portable Restroom
- Lighted fields installed by Town of Gilbert.

Overall Park Condition

- Fair

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

- School parking lot adjacent to fields.
- Approximately 281 parking stalls



3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This portion of the report provides analysis of opportunity sites around Town, and recommended actions for consideration to be reviewed and discussed at subsequent planning milestones.

3.1 Opportunity Sites

The previous chapter provided analysis for the needs of Gilbert for development of approximately 19 acres of sports fields to meet current game needs and an additional 88.5 acres to meet future sports field game demands over the next twenty to thirty years. The primary recommendation of this study is to take steps to set aside a minimum of 172 acres to construct 37 fields for this purpose. As stated earlier, this value represents the land needed for the sports fields, plus additional acreage for other support facilities, aesthetic buffers and open space, a trail network, and allowances for drainage features, and slopes for basin structures.

A single site of 172 acres would be ideal for the concentrated location of a major sports complex in a single location, and for maximum maintenance and operational efficiency. This would address the local community needs for competitions and practice, and would also provide some potential positive economic impact to Gilbert because of the possibility for rentals, local tournament hosting and regional tournament opportunities for leagues. Policies and procedures would need to be developed to prevent regional tournament opportunities from significantly displacing local team scheduling and utilization. The following exhibit provides a matrix for comparing the positive or negative characteristics for the known open properties of Gilbert that are currently candidates for development as a sports facility.

EXHIBIT 3.1: OPPORTUNITY SITE EVALUATION MATRIX

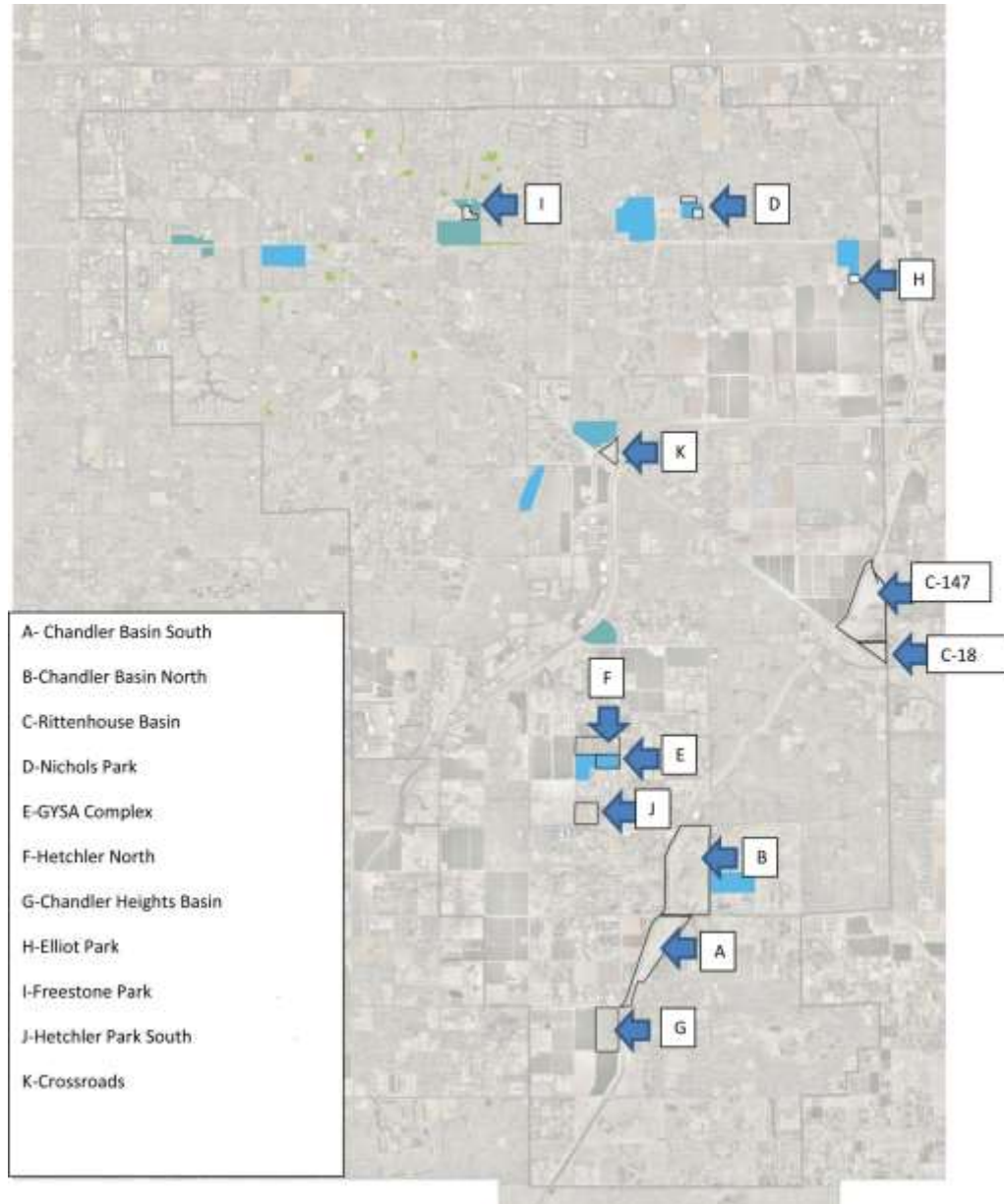
SELECTION CRITERIA		CHANDLER HEIGHTS BASIN	VACANT PROPERTY, GREENFIELD @ CHANDLER HEIGHTS	RITTENHOUSE BASIN	NICHOLS PARK	HETCHLER NORTH GYSA COMPLEX	HETCHLER NORTH	HETCHLER SOUTH GYSA COMPLEX	ELLIOT DISTRICT PARK	FREESTONE PARK	CROSSROADS PARK
	Size in Acres	258	80	165	28	20	60	80	8	32	30
1	Good Access	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1
2	Adequate Size	+1	-1	+1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
3	Developable as Sports Facility	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1
4	Potential Neighbor Issues (Noise or Sound)	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
5	Location	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1
	TOTALS	5	3	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	1

Each site in its current condition and location has positive and potential negative attributes in terms of evaluating the appropriateness, location, access and challenges. As shown above, Chandler Heights Basin provides the highest ranking score in the matrix.

3.2 Opportunity Sites Inventory Sheets

The map and evaluation pages that follow provide more detailed information for review of each of the above opportunity sites.

EXHIBIT 3.2: OPPORTUNITY SITE MAP



Chandler Heights Basin

Acreage: 47 Acres Town of Gilbert Owned/211 Acres Flood Control District Owned

Property Attributes and Concerns

- Large continuous parcel located in the ideal southern section of Gilbert.
- Town is working towards transfer of property from Flood control.
- Major portions of property are within flood basins.
- Property may be divided by the extension of Ocotillo Road, although a bridge is proposed



Vacant Area
Town Owned:
47 acres

**Vacant Property,
Greenfield and Chandler Heights****Acreage: 80 Acres Town Owned****Property Attributes and Concerns**

- Just south of the acreage at Chandler Basin.
- Currently in agricultural use.
- Highly developable parcel for commercial purposes.
- Several new subdivisions in the area.

Rittenhouse Basin

Acreage: 165 Acres Town Owned



Total Vacant area:
165 acres

Property Attributes and Concerns

- Town owned parcel.
- Majority of property is located within the flood basin.
- Located on the eastern border of Gilbert, closer to Mesa population area
- May have difficult access issues.

Rittenhouse-Town Owned



Vacant Area Town Owned out of flood plain:
18 acres



Nichols Park

Acreage: 28 Acres Town Owned/16 Undeveloped



Property Attributes and Concerns

- Park currently utilized for cricket and football.
- Support facilities would enhance user experience.

GYSA Complex

Acreage: 20 Acres Currently Undeveloped



Property Attributes and Concerns

- Adjacent to current soccer complex.
- Reported potential soil issues, would require testing and may have potential soil amendment costs

**Hetchler North
GYSA Complex**

Acreage: 60 Acres Town Owned



Property Attributes and Concerns

- Located just north of the GYSA soccer complex.
- Currently in agricultural uses.
- Very developable property.
- Some new subdivisions in the area.

Greenfield

J
C
V
S

Hetchler South GYSA Complex

Acreage: 80 Acres Undeveloped/Town Owns Portion



Property Attributes and Concerns

- Adjacent to the GYSA Soccer Complex and the waste water treatment plant.
- Eastern portion of property open space with trails and small drainage basin.
- Remaining portions of property have difficult access.

**Elliot District Park
(Big League Dreams Sports Park)**

Acreage: 8 Acres Town Owned and Undeveloped



Property Attributes and Concerns

- Smaller sized parcel with irregular shape.

E. Elliot Road

Freestone Park

Acreage: 19 Undeveloped Acres on East and South Side of Facility/Town Owned
13 Undeveloped Acres West of Facility/Town Owned
1.5 Undeveloped Acres Site (just west of Facility/Town owned)



Property Attributes and Concerns

- Heavily used park with limited parking.
- Eastern undeveloped area often utilized for special event overflow parking.
- Land adjacent to Freestone Recreation Center is currently being developed for a Disc Golf Course.



for a pool.



- Small 1.5 acres site is currently master planned

Crossroads Park

**Acreage: 4 Acres Undeveloped at the Northeastern Corner/Town Owned
 14 Acres Undeveloped at the Southeastern Corner/Town Owned
 6 Acres Undeveloped at the Southern End of Crossroads Park**



Property Attributes and Concerns

- 4 acre parcel currently utilized for overflow parking and special event support.
- 14 acre parcel is physically separated by Santan Village Parkway.
- 6 Acres parcel is physically separated by active train tracks with very difficult access from either Santan Village Parkway or East Ray Road.

• A
 adjacent existing residential properties to the



east
 ,
 potential
 constraint
 for
 field
 lighting



3.3 Specific Recommendations

The recommendations of the Sports Fields Needs Assessment are summarized in the following list:

1. The Town should consider continuing negotiations with the Flood Control District to procure the remainder of the property at Chandler Heights Basin, enabling development of a large sports complex of approximately 172 acres of the basin. This would be a long-term project that would require special financing and commitments to concentrate the development effort in a single site that would have significant positive economic development impacts on Gilbert. This solution would take a number of years to go through a planning, funding, and engineering process before the first phase could be ready for use. A combination of natural grass and synthetic turf fields could be considered in the planning of this complex, as there are long-term advantages to having some of the fields in synthetic turf. Synthetic fields have lower long-term maintenance costs than natural turf when mowing, turf management and water use costs are included, as well as providing multiple sport overlay opportunities for constant scheduling and field rotation/resting opportunities for the natural turf fields.
2. Depending on timing and return on investment, Gilbert could consider a number of short term measures that would make more sports fields available while the development process continues for Chandler Heights Basin. The following list would provide availability upon completion:
 - a. Consider converting a currently unlighted field at Freestone Park (the west field adjacent to N. Lindsay Road) to a synthetic, lighted field and adding more parking to the west of the existing parking lot at the soccer fields. This would enhance the football and soccer leagues' ability to schedule games and practices. This field is a sufficient distance from residential neighbors and has a natural buffer that would make it ideal for lighting. Neighborhood outreach would still be recommended. The renovated field could be utilized for soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby games and practices. The increased

- field availability resulting in constructing this potential project would equate to the equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ of an additional field added into the game field supply. It would also greatly improve the ability to rotate and rehabilitate other natural turf fields, because a synthetic field should not need rehabilitation until about 8 to 10 years after installation.
- b. Consider converting two grass fields at Discovery Park to synthetic, lighted fields. Additional parking demands could be mitigated through schedule management by Parks and Recreation staff, and the additional field usage time would mostly occur when day-users have left the park. The renovated fields could be utilized for soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby games and practices. If implemented, these two potential synthetic fields would result in the increased availability of one additional field in the game field supply.
 - c. Consider construction of a three-field lighted multi-use baseball/softball/soccer complex with associated parking in the vacant land on the east side of Freestone Park. There is sufficient space to create multiple field overlays, thereby providing additional practice and game space for multiple sports. This land is currently utilized by Gilbert for special event parking, so alternative arrangements would need to be coordinated. The increase to the field supply would result in three baseball/softball and three soccer/football fields.
 - d. Consider adding lights to Nichols Park to extend the hours of use for football and cricket. Soccer matches could also be played at Nichols if lights were installed. This addition would add the equivalent of .5 fields to the football field supply, due to the size of the field (double sized field) and the added time in the evening the park is currently closed.
3. Bermuda grass is the primary turf grass choice for use on athletic fields in the Southern Arizona region. Its superior heat and drought tolerance, as well as its excellent recuperative capacity, allow it to withstand many of the stresses often associated with recreational turf. However, if Bermuda grass athletic fields are subjected to excessive amounts of traffic, over time they can eventually produce unacceptable and even unsafe playing conditions.

These excessive levels of play can cause a field to become over compacted, resulting in a worn and dusty condition, especially in high-wear areas such as the mouths of soccer goals and between the hash marks on football fields. In situations such as these, the crown of the Bermuda turf plant, which is where growth originates, will become damaged. This can result in overall death of the plant and resulting "dirt" areas within the playing field.

When this occurs, partial or complete renovation is often necessary to revitalize the turf, resulting in field closures for up to six months at a time. The intent of preventative maintenance is to protect the rhizomes. Rhizomes are lateral stems that grow beneath the soil surface, allowing the plant to spread. Even though the aboveground parts of the plant may appear dead or damaged there could be enough rhizomes present to fill in any bare areas.

The Town could consider a number of permanent policy measures and maintenance practices that would ensure sports fields, primarily soccer, football, and lacrosse would be available for play and not subject to complete renovation every two to three years.

These recommendations are:

- Each soccer, football, or lacrosse field could be closed to all use for a minimum of two weeks during both the spring and fall seasons. The spring season is most important, because of the natural resting the fields get during the hot summer months when game and practice use diminish significantly.
- The two week closure will rotate, so that each field is allowed to refresh during both the spring and fall seasons.
- Major maintenance on the fields should be programmed and scheduled during the two week closure period.

The net result of this recommendation is an approximate increase of 15% in the number of fields needed. The Town currently has 30 soccer fields in the inventory. To close each field for two weeks during each season will result in 60 weeks of field closure. For an approximately 12 week season this results in an additional 5 fields to accommodate current level of play.

4. An optional consideration to number 3 above, could include the following:
 - Consider overseeding the Bermuda with a perennial Ryegrass in October at a rate of 450 to 800 lbs pure live seed per acre, after a slowdown of the Bermuda has been achieved by stopping the nitrogen fertilization and increasing potash application for about 30 days prior to seeding. Watering should be decreased to half usual amount for 7 days prior to seeding. This recommendation is not inexpensive, but would result in significant improvements in the level of service and playability on the fields. It would also help to protect and preserve the rhizomes of the Bermuda turf plants, by providing a temporary Ryegrass upper wearing area that would protect the Bermuda crown below. The heavy use patterns of sports groups in Gilbert in the winter, fall and spring indicate that this approach would be beneficial for games and practices for all sports.
5. Gilbert could consider adopting a higher level of service standard to accommodate practice field demands and field rotation/resting solutions. The figure of 1.3 times the game field demand calculation is provided in Section 2.3.4. Adopting this standard would increase the total acreage figure by 33 acres, from 172 acres to 205 acres of total need by build-out.
6. Funding and financing improvement projects on a large scale is a challenge for any municipality. There have been a few successful funding efforts in neighboring communities over the past few years. The Town could review efforts of other Phoenix area cities to secure new funding for the development and maintenance of park and recreation facilities. Examples include the City of Scottsdale successful voter approved sales tax increase and the City of Mesa voter approved bond measure.
7. The Town could evaluate opportunities to secure funding for development and operation and maintenance of new sports facilities. Potential funding measures could include selling unneeded vacant park parcels, voter approved bonds, sales tax increase, certificates of participation, user fees, naming rights, grants, public/private partnerships, and co-development of commercial businesses.