



### FAQs about Athletic Turf Complex at IHS

We are sharing some Frequently Asked Questions about the proposed Multi-Purpose Complex on our main campus, which falls under Proposition 2 on the Dec. 10th ballot of the Promise Project 2027 Vote. This includes details about the synthetic turf fields for baseball and softball behind Irondequoit High School, including new dugouts, sidewalks, walkways and lighting. For a graphic and more details on the entire project, go to [westirondequoit.org](http://westirondequoit.org) and click on the Promise Project 2027 Vote tab.

#### **1. Why is the District proposing athletic field renovations?**

Rain and snowmelt limit the ability of our students and community to safely use our grass athletic fields in wet and muddy conditions. This is often an issue each spring. Thirteen of the 20 schools in our league (Monroe County) either already have upgraded to synthetic turf baseball and softball fields or are building them. A multi-purpose complex with turf fields would also support our commitment to equity across our physical education programs, our girls/boys athletic teams and also increase availability for community use.

#### **2. What would be included in the multi-purpose complex at IHS?**

Both fields would be marked for multiple sports, with the ability to support a variety of additional physical education and outdoor athletic activities. They may be used regularly by students for physical education programs.

#### **3. Is field lighting included in the project and will there be protective netting?**

Yes, both fields would have lights and protective netting. They'd be designed to minimize glare and impact into the surrounding neighborhood. Light spillover was much more difficult to manage prior to LED lighting, which is now available. And yes, plans include special sports netting to make sure foul balls do not hit spectators, parked vehicles or structures near the fields.

#### **4. Are synthetic turf fields safe?**

The safety of our students is always our No. 1 priority. Extensive research has been conducted over decades on the safety of synthetic turf materials by federal and state governments, universities, independent labs and environmental organizations. The science concludes that the use of synthetic turf poses no known health risk to children or adults. [Click this link](#) to read more about the use of recycled tire rubber as infill materials. This research was done by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention/Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in



collaboration with the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Our district will continue to monitor the latest research regarding turf.

### **5. *What are the environmental impacts of synthetic turf fields?***

Potential environmental impacts of synthetic turf installation are minimal and, in some respects, can reduce environmental risks. A primary consideration involves stormwater handling systems, as a synthetic turf field is treated as a semi-impervious surface for computational purposes. The NYSDEC stormwater regulations must be adhered to while designing the stormwater handling systems. Generally, such requirements ensure that the quantity and quality of stormwater discharge is equal to or less than pre-development conditions. Stormwater pre-treatment, underground storage, and infiltration systems are just a few of the available measures associated with synthetic turf systems.

The environmental benefits of synthetic turf include a reduction in surface runoff, which could carry sediment and fertilizer residue. Moreover, the required regular mowing, irrigation, and mechanical reconditioning of grass uses a great deal more water and fossil fuels and generates more carbon emissions than would the occasional re-conditioning efforts of a turf field. The synthetic turf infill is prevented from reaching the stormwater runoff systems by the turf mesh and underlying stone and construction fabric. The infill does require the occasional refresh as it gradually compacts, and it can be reclaimed and reused or collected and used for fuel. There is no situation that would allow infill migration into stormwater systems that lead to the lake. Nor does the inert infill create any chemical leachate, as confirmed by extensive EPA review.

When the turf is due for replacement after its expected lifespan, the surface and infill are the only items that need to be addressed. The existing rubber pad, stone and drainage system would remain. The environmental impact of replacing synthetic turf fields is further minimized through recycling programs that are widely available to process and reuse the field surface materials. The infill materials are also commonly recycled to be sold and reused as an alternative to brand new rubber infill.

### **6. *What maintenance is required for synthetic turf fields?***

Whether turf or grass, maintenance is required for any field. However, the type of maintenance varies (for example, grooming vs. mowing, watering and painting lines). Recommended maintenance for turf fields is that they should be swept monthly. This would include a magnetic bar towed behind a sweeper to pick up any small metal objects.



### **7. *What is the life expectancy of a synthetic turf field?***

Synthetic turf quality has improved dramatically over the past two decades. Now, quality turf fields like those being considered by the District have an expected lifespan of about 15 years. At that point, replacing the field surface and infill would be eligible for state building aid as part of a capital project, which would pay for the majority of the cost without the need to divert any funds reserved for our educational goals.

### **8. *How does the cost of ownership compare between synthetic and grass fields?***

Quite a few investigations have been done to determine the cost benefit of installing a synthetic turf field. The initial installation cost has typically been the main concern. This initial cost can vary widely. However, once a turf field is installed, its maintenance requirements (and the overall costs associated with it) are typically much less when compared to a grass field, which greatly offsets its initial upfront cost.

Typical grass fields require constant care to maintain a safe playable surface for physical education classes, team practices and games. Unlike turf fields, repeated use over a short time frame can cause grass to develop bumps, divots and wear patterns. To minimize these effects, they can only be utilized a handful of times per week. Weather also has an immediate and often lingering impact on grass field usability. Rain and snowmelt create slippery, muddy and unsafe conditions that often result in canceled practices and rescheduled games. By comparison, turf fields incorporate drainage systems that grass fields cannot compete with, allowing them to be used continuously with 60-plus hours of use in any given week.

When analyzing the cost benefits to education and athletics, we look through the lens of cost-per-use of any given field system – synthetic turf or grass. A grass field, by its nature of not being resilient to continuous play and its need for rest and maintenance, has a cost-per-use of approximately \$750 per use over a 20-year time frame. By comparison, a synthetic turf field can be utilized almost four times as much, requiring little in regard to maintenance expenses, and costing roughly \$270 per use over the same time frame.



# West Irondequoit Central School District

## Promise Project 2027 Vote



**9. *Can old artificial turf be recycled in some way when it needs to be replaced?***

Yes, recycling programs are widely available to process and reuse the field surface materials. The infill materials are also commonly recycled to be sold and reused as an alternative to brand new rubber infill.

**10. *Studies claim that some of the chemicals included in turf are carcinogenic and may cause cancer. Has this been considered?***

Claims and concerns about the safety of synthetic turf field and its components have been reviewed and considered during the project planning process. Multiple reputable sources and qualified professionals have concluded that cancer and non-cancer risks are low. The NYS Department of Health fact sheet on crumb-rubber infilled synthetic turf athletic fields includes information and sources on these claims and studies at [www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/synthetic\\_turf/crumb-rubber\\_infilled/fact\\_sheet.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/synthetic_turf/crumb-rubber_infilled/fact_sheet.htm). A crumb rubber study published by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is available at [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/46856.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/46856.html). In addition, specific and commonly cited claims made at the University of Washington are addressed by the Washington State Department of Health at [www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/documents/pubs/210-091.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/portals/1/documents/pubs/210-091.pdf).

***The vote is 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> at District Office, 321 List Ave. Questions?***

***Email [public\\_info@westiron.monroe.edu](mailto:public_info@westiron.monroe.edu) or call 585-336-3067.***