

SPORTS TURF MANAGER

... for better, safe Sports Turf

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Demographics and Sports Turf Planning

MORE OTS HIGHLIGHTS FROM JEAN MONTEITH OF MONTEITH, ZELINKA, PRIAMO LTD.



Demographics can have a wide use in sports turf planning. If you understand demographics you then know how many people will live in your community, how old they are, how many children they have, their income, their education level and ethnic characteristics. You will not only know who is there today but through proper projections, you can predict how that community will change over the next five, ten or even twenty years. Will it have more children or will it be an aging neighbourhood?

Putting Demographics to Use

Once you know this information you are in a better position to pinpoint where demands for any given sport will be in the future. You can identify where surplus fields will be located (e.g. demand for sports fields will decline in aging neighbourhoods) and most importantly you can plan for the future by ensuring sufficient land has been acquired in the right locations for those land extensive playing fields. It will also help financially by giving you the information you need so you do not over build as a reaction to what may be a short lived peaking of a particular age group's demand for a particular sport.

Planners must consider demographic trends. For example, seniors, on average, do not like the noise or the activity asso-



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ciated with nearby sports fields. Thus, before upgrading older sports fields in aging neighbourhoods, planners should look at land acquisition and costs in other locations that may be more demographically suitable. Examine who the main users of the sports fields will be and determine what they like or want in a sports facility and what they don't like. How well will it need to be maintained? Be aware that there are huge differences in sports field user demographics.

Current demographics indicate trends toward better turf maintenance and a desire for higher quality facilities. Convenience and accessibility are a few of the points that should be taken into consideration. Today, bigger is better – you can achieve multiple users in a single location with a stronger emphasis on scheduling and permitting uses of the same fields. More than one field for the same sport in the same area means more attention must be paid to seven day scheduling. Fields must be maintained for more play and longer playing times. Much more attention will need to be paid to turf management in order to maintain these fields to a high standard due to excessive wear. Rain date strategies will need to be discussed with staff as well as participants.

Capture Rates

Predicting demand is always difficult for planners. One technique is to identify the "capture rate" for each sport. The capture rate is the number of people who play a given sport by age group. For example, you can determine the number of persons who will play youth soccer by matching the capture rate of youth soccer (say 12% of all youth are enrolled in a soccer program) to the number of youth who will live in the community five years from now or ten years from now. By multiplying the 12% by the number of ... *con't on page 2*

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