

Worthington

ATHLETIC FACILITIES PLAN



DRAFT

FACILITIES AND PLAYFIELDS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to the teams, organizations, coaches, athletes, parents, and members of the Worthington community that provided valuable input and insight on the athletic facilities.

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Background

Project Purpose

The project purpose is to evaluate and understand facility needs, and create a master plan that members of the Athletic Facilities Plan Team can follow to raise the standards of the athletic facilities in Worthington, Minnesota. This needs assessment is the first of 2 parts, analyzing the needs of the community, based on stakeholder and community input, local and regional demand, national standards, and physical evaluation of existing facilities.

Part two of the project will be the master plan phase, where the needs and wishes of the community will be prioritized and translated into a master design that will be implemented over time by members of the Athletic Facilities Plan Team, including the City, ISD 518, Minnesota West Community and Technical College, and the Worthington Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Strategic Plan

In 2009, the City of Worthington completed a strategic plan to help define a vision for the city, and tie that vision to implementable action steps. Throughout the plan, the importance of extra-curricular activities, especially athletics, was emphasized as an indicator of a high quality of life. The plan identifies the desire to create and maintain an outstanding athletic facility.

Demographics

Changing demographics in Worthington have sparked additional concern about the needs for an analysis of the athletic facilities in Worthington and a vision for making them great.

Three key demographic trend observations that affect use of the athletic facilities in Worthington:

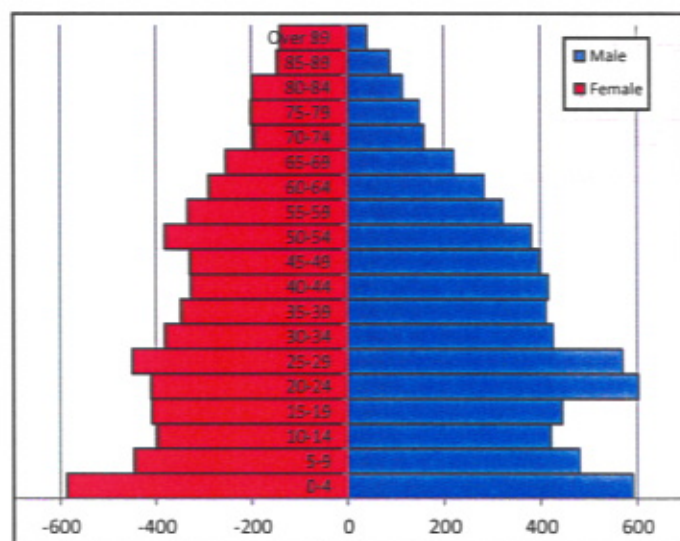
- Worthington is growing,
- Worthington is young, and
- Worthington is diverse

According to the U.S. Census, Worthington's population grew by about 13% in the 1990s and

another 13% in the 2000s, adding nearly 3,000 people in the last 20 years. The school district enrollment rose 4.5% from 2011-12 to 2012-13. Projections for future years anticipate enrollment increases from 2-3.6% annually.

The MN State Demographer's office forecasts projected growth for the city. Based off of 2006 extrapolations, and adjusted to numbers from the 2010 census, projections show Worthington growing from 12,764 in 2010 to 13,659 by 2020 and 14,404 by 2030.

Worthington's population is also young. 34% of households have children under 18 (Minnesota average - 31%). In the 2010 U.S. Census, the largest population cohorts in the city were people aged 20-29 and 0-9. The 0-9 age cohort will put additional demand on athletic facilities in the future above current levels of demand.



Population Age Cohorts - 2010 U.S. Census

Worthington is also a very diverse community. In the 2011-2012 school year, 48.7% of the students were of minority status compared with the Minnesota average of 26.2%. Of all students, 34.3% were reported as Hispanic, compared with the Minnesota average of 7.1%.

Athletics in Worthington

Athletics in Worthington are an important aspect of life to many community members. They serve as community building activity, whether it is a pick-up soccer game after work, church league softball, or basketball with classmates. As a rural regional center, the emphasis has been

on providing a fun and healthy option for the community, especially the youth. Participation rates remain high in Worthington. Providing this activity in a way that is accessible and open to all members of the community remains and must be an important aspect of athletics in Worthington.

Process

The process to create the needs assessment began in the summer of 2012 with a comprehensive survey of the athletic facilities in Worthington, looking at conditions, dimensional standards, materials, and amenities. Along with the survey of facilities completed by the City, ISD 518 and Minnesota West Community and Technical College, local teams and athletic organizations were also asked about their experiences both in Worthington and elsewhere. These results informed the analysis of what people want to see in Worthington, what makes for great places to play, and where examples of those great places are regionally.

In November of 2012, the Athletic Facilities Plan Team held a focus group meeting with coaches and organizations in Worthington to get an “on the ground” perspective from the people who are using the facilities day in and day out.

Following the focus group a community open house was held at Worthington High School to solicit feedback on the existing facilities, future desires and needs, and to react to different models for providing athletic facilities. Community members were also invited to try their hand at designing an athletic facility to show what they want to see in a complex.



"Build Your Own Athletic Complex" game at the community open house



A number of community members participated in the open house, giving ideas, feedback, and preferences on existing and future facilities.

The open house was extended in a “virtual open house” format to allow for on-line input from people who were not able to attend.

The surveys, organization/team input and community input were combined with national and regional standards to help determine local needs.

Recent Upgrades

Worthington has begun taking steps towards improving the facilities in the city. This has been a result of a number of entities showing initiative to raise the quality of the facilities, including the City, the school district, Minnesota West Community & Technical College, the YMCA, programs, teams, and private partners. The projects below do not include all recent improvements, but do include many of the highlights.

YMCA

Recent development of the YMCA has been completed in partnership with the City and Minnesota West Community and Technical College. The facility improvements are recognized by other communities as a successful example of a public/private partnership.



Recognizing the organizations and people who contributed to the new YMCA facilities

Middle School Tennis Courts

In 2011 the school district joined with the City and private partners to build an 8 court tennis facility at the Worthington Middle School. The facility is lit, with concessions, restrooms, moveable bleachers, and storage. It is accessible to both the school district as well as the general public for recreational use.



Worthington Tennis & partners

Middle School Baseball Field

The baseball field at Worthington Middle School, built in 1982, has undergone renovations, including the addition of irrigation and a new scoreboard. Field lights, covered dugouts, batting cages, bullpens, and a small grandstand area with an announcers' booth are all provided. Recent improvements associated with the adjacent tennis courts (restrooms, storage, concessions) help as well.



Varsity baseball field at the middle school

Minnesota West Gym/Fieldhouse

The Minnesota West Community and Technical College gym is currently under construction. The revamped gymnasium/field house will have additional seating, more locker rooms, more office space, concessions and restrooms. The renovation is also connected to the YMCA facility.



Rendering of the new Gym/Fieldhouse facility at MN West - Photo from Worthington Daily Globe

Minnesota West Baseball/Softball

Two of the ballfields at Minnesota West have also undergone improvements, including the full sized baseball field that was developed in 2010 with the help of the Twins Community Fund "Twins Fields for Kids" grant.



Plaque at the MN West baseball field

Facility Evaluations



Worthington Athletic Facilities

The facilities in Worthington are notable for the partnerships that exist between the different facility operators. The City, ISD 518, Minnesota West Community & Technical College, the YMCA, and numerous private organizations (Worthington Country Club, Bowbenders Archery, private schools, and more) work together to provide a comprehensive collection of athletic facilities for the community.

The athletic needs of the community are currently met through a dispersed “system” with facilities provided throughout the city. Facilities are provided in a number of locations which provides neighborhood access, but loses some of the benefits of a consolidated complex such as providing restrooms and concessions in one place. A dispersed facilities system is typically more focused on meeting local demands, rather than providing venues for regional tournaments. The 2009 Strategic Plan identified a policy move away from dispersed facilities and towards an athletic complex.

The following pages include a summary of key existing athletic facilities in Worthington.



Facilities:

- ☐ 3 full sized soccer fields
- ☐ restrooms
- ☐ playground
- ☐ Parking (unpaved room for 150)
- ☐ picnic area with grills

Buss Field

Buss Field contains 3 adult sized soccer fields. The field conditions are very poor with rutted turf and poor drainage. This is in part due to the location of Buss Field on what was once a marsh connected to Okabena Lake. The field is under pressure from high use which further reduces the quality and makes improvements such as reseeded difficult.

There is a plan for the renovation of Buss Field. The plan retains three adult sized fields, crowning and elevating them to better mitigate flooding issues. The plan was estimated to cost about \$280,000 to implement in 2006.



Buss Field



Facilities:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 softball fields | <input type="checkbox"/> skate park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tennis courts | <input type="checkbox"/> trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 basketball courts | <input type="checkbox"/> lake beach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 sand volleyball court | <input type="checkbox"/> restrooms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> parking (200 spaces) | <input type="checkbox"/> playground |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> picnic shelter |

Centennial Park

Centennial Park includes two softball fields, a skate park, a sand volleyball court, two tennis courts, and 2 separate recreational basketball courts. Restroom facilities are also provided. The park is connected to the rest of the community by a trail as well. Parking is sufficient and located centrally to the softball fields, skate park, basketball court and tennis courts. Additional parking exists near the lake and the volleyball court.

The softball fields are in serviceable condition, although some safety and player comfort conditions exist including exposed concrete, lumpy fields and fencing issues. There are some upgrades including bleachers and covered dugouts. The tennis courts are in poor condition, with significant degradation to the court surface. This is in keeping with the city policy directing resources to the new centralized facility at the middle school. The separate recreational basketball courts are new and in good condition and can handle pick-up and recreational games. It is not designed nor intended for organized athletics. The new volleyball court is in good condition. Only having one sand volleyball court does make it difficult for leagues or larger events to operate. The skate park is fairly new, and meets the needs of the community. There are also playground and picnic facilities.



Softball at Centennial Park



Facilities:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 stadium (football, soccer, track) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking (3 lots, 440 spaces) | <input type="checkbox"/> P.E. Softball field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> concessions | <input type="checkbox"/> restrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 gymnasiums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fieldhouse | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 practice fields | <input type="checkbox"/> wrestling room |

Worthington High School

Worthington High School includes Trojan Field, a multi-purpose field that is used for football, soccer, and track. The track restricts the field size, leading to a smaller soccer field (115yds x 57yds) than is optimal. Optimal sized high school soccer fields are 120 yards by 75 yards, and should be 115 yards by 70 yards at a minimum. The crown of the field, which is set for football, can be problematic for soccer.

The stadium also includes bleachers and a pressbox, a concession area, and locker rooms. The concession area is newer, while the bleachers, pressbox and locker room are older and functional, though they will likely need upgrades

soon. To the south of the main stadium is the practice field that is also used for field events during track meets. Neither field is irrigated and both experience heavy use. This leads to the fields being in rough shape by the end of a season.

The high school building houses 2 gymnasiums and a wrestling room that are all in good shape. North of the high school is an open practice field and a softball field used for physical education. Parking is ample and use during sporting events usually does not conflict with school uses, allowing for shared parking. The high school is in a centralized location in the city, with easy access from Interstate 90.



Facilities:

- 8 tennis courts
- 2 softball fields
- 1 baseball field
- 1 track (dirt)
- 2 gyms
- 2 fields
- outdoor basketball
- parking (275 spaces)
- playground



New tennis court facility

Worthington Middle School

Worthington Middle School includes an upgraded adult sized baseball field, two softball fields, a new 8 court tennis facility, 2 multi-purpose fields, including one that can hold a full sized soccer field or multiple youth fields, a dirt track that is used for physical education, but is not appropriate for competition, a recreational outdoor basketball court and 2 indoor gyms.

Recent investment in the tennis courts and baseball field has also resulted in increased amenities. The south end of the facility (tennis, baseball, softball) is served by concessions, restrooms, storage, and seating. It is also adjacent to a trail.



Varsity Baseball Field



Prairie Elementary/Pleasant Park

Prairie Elementary and the connected Pleasant Park include a large field area that can handle multiple youth soccer fields. The fields are graded, have stormwater areas, and appear to have water run to the middle of them. The northeast corner includes a new playground in good condition, and tennis courts and a small basketball court in substandard condition. The school has an indoor gym that is suitable for youth games and practices. Parking is limited to the school parking lot at the south edge of the facility.

Facilities:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> large field | <input type="checkbox"/> gymnasium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tennis courts | <input type="checkbox"/> parking (300 spaces) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 basketball court (out) | <input type="checkbox"/> playground |



Large field at Prairieview Elementary/Pleasant Park



Facilities:

- ☐ 4 tennis courts
- ☐ practice field
- ☐ 1 baseball field
- ☐ 2 softball fields
- ☐ new gym/fieldhouse
- ☐ parking (430 spaces)

YMCA

- ☐ Pool (indoor/outdoor)
- ☐ indoor courts
- ☐ fitness areas (gym, track, classes)

Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Minnesota West Community & Technical College is a 2 year college with students participating in 7 sports: men's & women's basketball, softball, volleyball, baseball, football, and wrestling.

The gymnasium/fieldhouse is currently under construction, but will be completed by the 2013 fall season. This expansion will increase the capacity of the gym as well as add offices and locker rooms in the facility.

The football field is not used for varsity games and has no bleachers (The team plays games at the high school). It meets all dimensional standards

and works well for youth soccer. It is not irrigated or lit.

Minnesota West has one full sized baseball field, developed to a high standard. There are also two softball fields, one of which is a higher standard field, with minor improvements that go along with standard maintenance such as mending fencing. The other field is unimproved and would need significant work to bring it up to game standards. There are no restrooms and only temporary concessions in the southwest portion of the site by the baseball and softball fields. Bleachers are needed.

Four tennis courts are located on the campus, but are in poor condition and may be reused or repurposed for something else in the future.

YMCA

On the Minnesota West campus, the YMCA facility holds the swimming pool, as well as multi-purpose sport courts, an indoor track, a workout facility, fitness class rooms, and a youth room. The facility is good condition and well maintained.

For high level athletic competition, many of the facilities are not designed to the necessary dimensions. The indoor track is focused towards fitness, rather than competition. The basketball courts are sufficient for pick up or more informal Y-league games. Volleyball has appropriate dimensions, although the courts are tight to the drop curtains.

With six 25 meter lanes and a 1 meter springboard, the indoor pool is one facility that can be used for competition through the high school level.



Worthington YMCA Sport-Courts

Others

Although some of the facilities are outside the scope of the study, including most indoor facilities, there was feedback and review on the following facilities:

Worthington Ice Arena

The Worthington Ice Arena has one full size sheet of ice that is operated year round. There is a concession stand, bleachers and a small seating area in the lobby as well as locker rooms.



Worthington Arena (photo from Worthington Arena Facebook)

Olson Park

Olson Park includes the community disc golf course. The course has nine holes/2248 yards long/par 27 and is suitable for players of all skill levels. Players identify the Olson Park as a good course for teaching new players. Expert players may find the course a bit short. A mix of open and wooded holes are provided, and the wind can provide additional challenge on the open holes. The facilities are newer and in good shape. The park is connected by trail and there are campgrounds within with the park that include restrooms and showers.

The Armory

The Armory is used by numerous gymnastic teams including Worthington High School (20 participants), SWAGS (21 participants), and Community Ed (200 participants). The space provides a location where gymnastic equipment can be left up full time. This is a valuable trait of the facility as putting up and taking down the equipment is a significant time investment. The facility is currently undersized for the level of use and number of gymnasts that participate. There are also concerns about the ceiling heights that require the teams to obtain a waiver from the governing committee for gymnastics if they want to hold competitions. Users also expressed concerns about heating and cooling of the building. Available parking is lacking at the Armory for large groups to come and participate there.

Neighborhood Parks

Both Millard Walker and Orchard Knoll are neighborhood parks with recreational focused athletic facilities. Millard Walker has a sand volleyball court and an outdoor basketball court, as well as a playground and picnic shelter, Orchard Knoll has a tennis court and a playground.

Needs Assessment

Athletic facility standards identify the minimum level of service for recreation facilities (ballfields, courts, etc...) to meet the needs of the community. The needs are based on the existing population levels, (12,764 - 2010) and projected population (14,404 - 2030).

The standards are based on recommendations by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), an organization of park and recreation experts and professionals who have examined the recreation and athletic facilities throughout the nation, adjusted them for regional differences, and provided guidelines based on population.

It is important to remember these standards are minimums, and local conditions may necessitate provision of additional facilities. Additionally a community may choose to provide additional fields/facilities based on the desires of that community. A surplus or deficit identified by national standards does not automatically mean the need to add or remove facilities.

These numbers cannot tell the whole story of the athletic facilities system in Worthington. Other attributes such as quality, size, accessibility, location, age, supporting amenities, and durability can be just as important. These attributes vary greatly from facility to facility in Worthington.

The most important considerations when looking at facilities needs to be the local demand, appropriateness, and availability. The standards provide a good starting point and a comparison, but cannot entirely represent the needs of Worthington.

Flexibility is also an important consideration. The better an athletic facility system can adapt to changing conditions, the better it will be in the long run. The introduction of new sports or the phasing out of others will be easier to manage if adaptability is incorporated into the system.

This chapter is organized into an initial chart (right) covering the main facilities in Worthington by type, followed by a more in-depth narrative about each type of facility.

Evaluation is based from listening to the community and athletic organizations, analyzing the facilities firsthand, and analyzing demand in Worthington.



Trojan Field - Hurdles (Photo from BeRecruited.com)

Facility	# of Facilities (City, ISD 528, MNWest, YMCA, others*)	Facilities / Population Minimum Standard	Facilities Minimum Standard (pop: 12764 in 2010)	Current Surplus/ Deficit	Minimum Standards 2030 (projected population of 14,404)	Surplus/ Deficit Based on standards: projected population of 14,404 in 2030	Current Facilities Used for Tournament Play?	Notes - Conditions Unique to Worthington
Adult Baseball	2	1 varsity level per city, plus 1 per 5,000-10,000	2-3	0 to deficit (1)	2-4	0 to deficit (2)	No	
Recommendation	Continue to maintain current fields at high level, including improving drainage, consider adding a field in long term.							
Softball/ Little League	6	1 varsity level per city, plus 1 per 2,500-5,000	4-5	surplus (1-2)	4-6	0 to surplus (2)	No	Slightly higher use than average city
Recommendation	Upgrade fields with drainage and increased maintenance -OR- consolidate fields into one facility							
Fields (Soccer, Football)	9 • 4 w/ football uprights • 4 w/ typical adult soccer dimensions	1 varsity level per city plus 1 per 5,000	4 Based on national standards, not conditions unique to Worthington	Based on needs/demand specific to Worthington additional demand exists deficit (1-3 soccer size fields)	4 Based on national standards, not conditions unique to Worthington	Based on needs/demand specific to Worthington additional demand exists deficit (2-4 soccer size fields)	No	Much higher use than average city
Recommendation	Upgrade existing fields specifically Buss and Trojan Field with irrigation/drainage -AND- Look for opportunities to provide additional full sized soccer fields							
Outdoor Basketball	9	1 per 3-5,000 1 / ngrhhood	3-4	surplus (4-5)	3-5	surplus (3-5)	No	Provide courts based on neighborhood access rather than population
Recommendation	Continue to provide courts for individual neighborhoods as a neighborhood park amenity							
Gymnasium (Basketball, Volleyball)	7**	1 varsity level per city / at least 1 per school	5		5		Yes	Gyms are well used at currently provided numbers
Recommendation	Continue to maintain existing facilities, utilize new facilities for tournaments							
Outdoor Track	2	1 per 20,000	1	0	1	0	Yes	
Recommendation	If stadium is reworked, expand track to fit full sized soccer field inside of it							
Outdoor Rink	0	1 per 10,000	1	deficit (1)	1	deficit (1)	N/A	Dependent on climate
Recommendation	Consider building an outdoor rink based on previous experience with outdoor rinks							
Indoor Rink	1	1 per city	1	0	1	0	Yes	
Recommendation	Work with Worthington Hockey Assn to continue to provide rink/hockey venue in Worthington							
Tennis	17	1 per 2,000	6-7	surplus (10-11)	7-8	surplus (9-10)	Yes	
Recommendation	Examine options for reusing or repurposing neighborhood tennis courts							
Golf Course	2	1 per city	1	surplus (1)	1	surplus (1)	Yes (both)	
Recommendation	Continue to evaluate current courses separate from this needs assessment							
Outdoor Volleyball	2	1 per 7,500	2	0	2	0	No	
Recommendation	Continue to maintain courts							
Pool	1	1 per 20-40,000	1	0			Yes	May be additional demand for outdoor pool for recreation
Recommendation	Continue to maintain the indoor pool for athletic competition. If demand exists for an outdoor pool, analyze separate from this needs assessment.							
Disc Golf	1	1 per city	1	0	1	0	Yes	
Recommendation	Continue to maintain the disc golf course							
Varsity Level facilities should meet all dimensional standards for high school competition, be lit, and include facilities for spectators								
*Some private facilities are included for the role they play providing facilities for Worthington based athletics								
**MN West Gvm is currently under construction (2013 completion) and the old YMCA will house a city gym starting in 2013								

Baseball/Softball

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

Sufficient numbers for current athletic needs for softball and little league baseball.*
Sufficient to slightly lacking for adult baseball.

Condition of Facilities:

Softball/LL: Generally substandard with some improved fields
Adult Baseball: Good quality

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Dispersed layout of facilities makes hosting tournaments difficult. Without improved maintenance, it will be difficult to draw tournaments.

The adult baseball fields in Worthington are both good quality fields. The fields that are in place now meet the level of local demand.

The softball fields in Worthington are generally playable but substandard in quality. Remedying issues such as grading, mending fences, covering exposed concrete at the base of fence poles, and general maintenance of the fields would go a long way toward improving the user experience. Some locations require better stormwater management.

The most significant issue raised by softball and baseball programs was the lack of a centralized set of fields. Although there is a sufficient number of fields, many of the baseball and softball teams reported scheduling conflicts based on the limited supply in any one area. This is a bigger issue when teams have to move after parents had dropped kids off, complicating transportation issues as well as notifying parents that their child would be somewhere other than where they left them.

The dispersed layout of fields is one of major characteristics limiting the potential for tournaments or larger events.



Centennial Park Softball Field

*Softball and Little League baseball fields share dimensions and count as one

Basketball - Outdoor

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

Sufficient to Overprovided -Recreational Only

Condition of Facilities:

Generally high quality

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

N/A

Eight outdoor basketball courts are provided at 7 different parks throughout the community. These are intended as recreational courts meant to serve the neighborhood. Most are in suitable condition for neighborhood park use and half are lit.



North Court at Centennial Park

Golf

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

2 courses (1 public, 1 semi-public)
Sufficient to Surplus of 1

Condition of Facilities:

Good quality

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Both courses can and do host tournaments

Prairie View Golf course is run by the City of Worthington. It is 6,368 yards long (blue tees) and par 71 with a rating of 70.1 and a slope rating of 114. Prairie View is a treeless prairie style links course 1 mile northwest of the city.

Worthington Country Club is 6,274 yards long (blue tees) and par 71 with a rating of 70.0 and a slope rating of 125. The course is located within city limits east of the middle school.

Prairie View is available for public use and Worthington Country Club is available to members and out-of-town visitors only. Both are used by the Worthington High School golf team.

Gymnasiums

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

Sufficient to meet current demand, especially with new Minnesota West Facility

Condition of Facilities:

Generally high quality

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

HS and MNWest both are suitable for tournaments.

Improvements to the high school and MNWest gymnasiums are elevating the facility quality in Worthington. Gymnasiums are still difficult to reserve at times according to the team survey, although options are available at the two facilities mentioned above as well as other schools in the community.

The school district manages many of the gyms in the city. Gyms are typically accessible to non-school teams for a user fee.

The MNWest gym previously held tournaments, including volleyball tournaments of 10-15 teams. The expansion of the facility will continue to make this a feasible tournament location, especially adjacent to the YMCA. The YMCA has sport-court style flooring, which will not work for high level competition but suffices for more informal leagues.



Rendering of the updated fieldhouse at MN West

The gymnastics facilities, currently at the Armory, are provided privately, and are not up to competition standards.

Wrestling uses the wrestling room at the high school, which is sufficient to meet their needs.

Ice Rink

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

1 sheet of ice indoors - sufficient

Condition of Facilities:

Good Quality

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Suitable for weekend tournaments - currently does host tournaments

The Worthington Arena has one sheet of ice with ample room for spectators. Open from Fall to Spring, the present facility is well used and busy although adequate to handle local demand, as well as hosting tournaments that are typically run Friday-Sunday. The location is convenient to hotels and Interstate 90. The City should continue to work with the Worthington Hockey Association to keep the ice rink as an amenity and regional draw.



Worthington Arena (photo from Worthington Arena Facebook)

Indoor Field

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

1 (private)

Currently the Prairie Rehab facility at the Worthington 24 Hour Fitness Center houses the only indoor field facilities, though the YMCA does operate a youth indoor soccer program on a sport-court floor.

There appears to be demand for additional indoor practice space from a number of athletic groups, including soccer, baseball batting cages, and tennis.

Multi-Purpose Fields (Soccer, Football, Other)

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

Although facilities are provided at national standard levels, the overuse of existing facilities shows additional demand exists.

Condition of Facilities:

Sub-Standard

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Buss Field, with 3 fields in the same place would be able to manage small and medium sized tournaments if the conditions were improved and seating was increased. Prairie Elementary/Pleasant Park could handle youth soccer tournaments if striped.

The open fields in Worthington are lacking in maintenance. This is in large part due to the heavy levels of use they are subjected to. Many community members expressed concern over the lack of irrigation at most fields, resulting in very hard playing surfaces. Many of the fields are also lumpy and rutted to the point of being dangerous.

Older fields originally designed for football are not adequately sized for soccer and are limited due to tracks surrounding them. This limits the number of fields that can hold competitive soccer matches. In the 2009 Strategic Plan, the City identified the desire to provide improved playfield facilities, especially for soccer. Improvements to soccer fields are clearly needed, and based on demographics, demand will keep increasing.

High demand also makes maintenance more difficult as seeding does not have time to establish (such as at Buss Field) and there is not enough repair and recovery time for fields (such as at Trojan Field).



Conditions at Buss Field

Swimming

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

Sufficient for current athletic needs.

Condition of Facilities:

Good

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Can host meets up to and including High School level swimming.

The existing pool at the YMCA meets the needs of athletic competition. The pool has 6 lanes with starting blocks and a 10' dive well with a 1 meter springboard. This is sufficient for competition up to and including High School swimming and diving. Most colleges compete with 3 meter springboard as well which is not provided at the YMCA pool. Besides recreation and personal fitness users, the facility is currently used by the Sting Ray Swim Team (63 swimmers, 5-18 years).

Other identified concerns were both the water and air temperature in the pool being too high. This can be difficult to manage in multi-use pools as competitive swimming typically uses a cooler water temperature than recreational swimming.

A large number in the community expressed interest in a larger outdoor pool than is currently provided at the YMCA. A recreational pool is outside the scope of this needs assessment, but it was identified by a number of community members at the open house and the virtual open house. The City considered the costs and the level of use before closing the previous outdoor pool, and transitioning to mainly indoor swimming facilities.



Pool at the YMCA

Tennis

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

17 courts - facilities are overprovided, City is transitioning away from maintaining courts at a neighborhood level.

Condition of Facilities:

New tennis complex is high quality
Park facilities are substandard, consistent with City policy focusing resources elsewhere

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Well suited for hosting tournaments with 1 location and adjacent amenities

The new courts at the middle school create a high quality facility that work well for practice, games, and tournament play. Standards are met for both singles and doubles play, and amenities such as restrooms, concessions, and moveable bleachers are provided. The courts are lit, allowing for more flexibility in use, and extending the useable hours for schools and community members. The courts are used by the Worthington Middle and High School tennis team (55 players) and are available to community members for recreational use when not in use by organized teams.

The City as a policy has directed resources to the combined facility and moved away from providing tennis courts in ones and twos throughout the community.

Dedicated indoor facilities are not provided in the community.



New tennis facility at Worthington Middle School

Track & Field

of Facilities - Excess/Deficit:

Sufficient to meet needs of community

Condition of Facilities:

Good quality for facility at the high school

Suitability for Hosting Tournaments:

Worthington High School can and does host meets and larger relays

The track facilities in Worthington are adequate for competition and hosting meets. Facilities are in place to complete all high school level events including all running events, shot put, discus, high jump, pole vault, long jump, and triple jump.

Currently the track at the middle school is not adequate for competition. It is a dirt track that is used for school purposes (physical education).



Long jump and triple jump pits at Worthington High School

Priorities

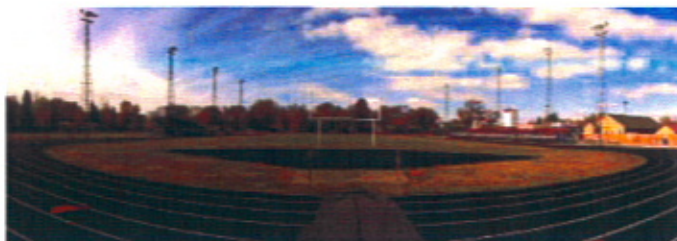
Multi-Use Fields

The most pressing need is for multi-use fields that can handle soccer and football. There are high levels of both formal and informal use on the existing fields and the existing fields are showing very significant wear, to the point of safety hazards.

Soccer fields are an especially glaring need for Worthington, where higher than average demand and a number of fields that are dimensionally inadequate for soccer funnel large numbers of users to Buss Field. The maintenance at Buss Field has been inadequate to meet the demands put on it, and the wear and disrepair is obvious.

In designing these fields, it is important to also consider sports that are not currently popular in Worthington, but have been rising, such as lacrosse and rugby. These sports can be added to a generally designed field with minimal issues, but may compete with existing uses for a limited number of fields. Along with designing fields that are adaptable for different sports, it is important to arrange the fields so that they can be rotated or shifted to avoid specific wearing patterns on the fields (such as where the goalie typically stands or PATs are taken in football).

It will also be necessary to manage the use of the fields, Worthington's open fields currently experience heavy use from teams as well as informal, recreational users. If fields are going to be utilized for tournament play, they must be maintained at a high level to attract teams from other locations. The quality level of fields was the most cited factor for outside teams declining to come to Worthington for tournaments, both for open field sports as well as baseball and softball.

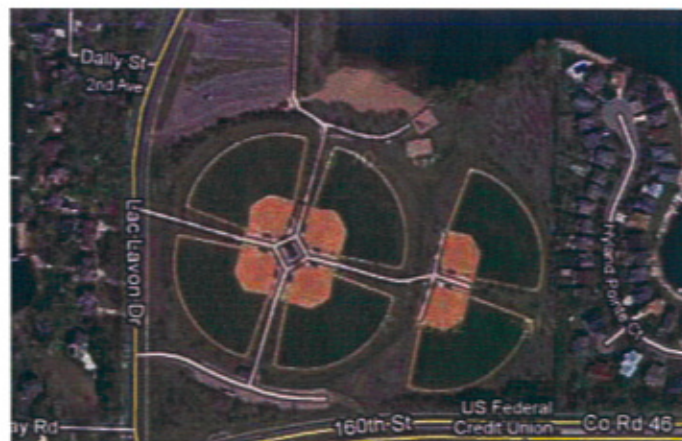


Trojan Stadium - Worthington High School

Grouped Ballfields

The other cited reason Worthington has not held many tournaments in softball or baseball is the dispersed nature of the fields. In order for a tournament to function, teams often play on multiple fields. When fields are next to each other, it makes the process much easier, and allows for flexibility in scheduling if teams play longer than anticipated, or an individual field is found unplayable. The other benefit to grouped facilities is the ability to share amenities such as restrooms, concessions, and parking across a larger set of fields, rather than providing them individually at a number of spread out locations. These accessory amenities are a significant but often times necessary investment and the ability to share them across a number of fields can result in cost savings. Members of athletic organizations and the community at the open house generally felt strongly in favor of grouped facilities.

This could occur in Worthington as a new development, or by expanding around existing athletic facilities, such as at the Middle School and Minnesota West.



Grouped Softball Fields at Lac Lavon Park, Burnsville, MN

Others

Other needs and wishes identified by the community include:

- provision of modern gymnastics facilities to a competition level standard
- examining the potential long term viability of an indoor facility for winter practice
- working with the Worthington Arena to provide a high level of service
- consideration of a BMX track

Notes on Maintenance

Whether the Athletic Facilities Team decides to move forward with a centralized location or revamp existing facilities, the importance of dedicating resources towards maintenance cannot be understated. In both cases, there is a significant level of investment that goes into creating the facilities and bringing them up to appropriate standards. If these facilities are not maintained, you are neither protecting, nor fully leveraging the investment that has been made. As Worthington improves the fields and facilities, there must be a commitment of effort and financial resources to maintain them. This can and should be supplemented at the beginning of the process with irrigation and proper drainage/tiling, but it needs to be kept up throughout the lifetime of the facility, or the need for replacement will come much sooner.

Facilities and playfields that are maintained to a high level show the community takes pride in what it has. Conversely, poor facilities can reflect poorly on a home community. If facilities are allowed to fall into a state of disrepair, that gives users the impression that it is ok for them to further degrade the facilities. Someone is less likely to drop an empty water bottle on the ground if trash/recycling cans are readily available and there aren't any other bottles on the ground. If bottles are strewn everywhere, that gives the person the impression that it is fine to drop his or hers with the rest.



Buss Field

While facility operators are ultimately the ones who must handle major maintenance, widespread community buy-in must happen as well. Teams must be willing to help out with investments of time, taking care of the facilities that they use (raking ball fields, mowing, striping, cleaning).

Facility Amenities

In addition to the actual athletic facilities, other amenities go a long way towards improving the user and spectator experience. The number one amenity identified through open house and online surveys was restrooms. It is important to manage restrooms to be open at the same times people are using the fields while also managing vandalism.

Other amenities that scored high from members of the community were scoreboards, good seating for spectators, concessions, lighting, parking, good drainage, and the ability to collect admission.

Amenities also have the potential to help distinguish the user and spectator experience in the city. This is a bigger factor in tournaments when people are traveling from outside the city and will likely make a decision on what tournaments they want to attend next year.

Administration of Facilities

Another concern expressed by many of the teams, coaches, and organizations was the struggle to reserve practice and game time on fields. Many of the issues stemmed from a lack of coordination. This is especially difficult to manage in a city like Worthington where field time is shared among a number of different users. This is compounded by the spread out nature of the system, where if a field is in use, the next team may have to travel across the city to find an open field.

Worthington would benefit from centralized facility scheduling management. The City, ISD 518, and Minnesota West have all been a part of the Athletic Facilities Plan Team, and should consider establishing a joint powers agreement to prioritize and better manage the scheduling of fields, and allocate resources more efficiently. The group may also consider transitioning from the Athletic Facilities Plan Team into a formalized "Sports Commission." Sports commissions are "Organization[s] created to support the development and hosting of amateur sporting events in their community." They are often run as a part of a chamber of commerce or a convention and visitors bureau.¹

1. Definition from the National Association of Sports Commissions

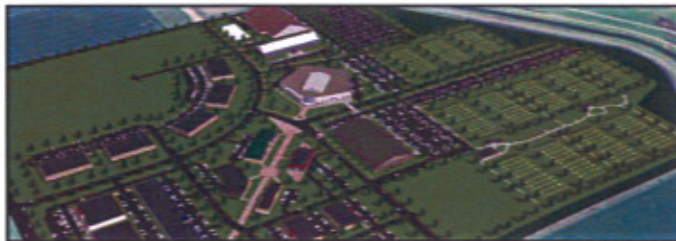
Regional Facilities

Models

Different models exist for the provision of athletic facilities in a community. They range from highly intensive regional centers to dispersed, community wide facilities.

Regional Athletic Centers

- Large Scale
- High Amenity
- High Level of Maintenance
- Tournament focused



Sanford Health Sports Complex, Sioux Falls, SD

- 12 Multi-Use Fields (outdoor)
- 97x64 yard turf fieldhouse
- 9 Basketball Courts
- Physical Therapy Area
- Athletic Training Area
- Concessions
- Playground
- Bike Trail Connection

162 Acres

Mostly Built, Finishing Fall 2013



Southwest Regional Amateur Sports Center Marshall, MN

- 1 Football/Soccer Stadium
- 10-12 Multi-Use Fields (outdoor)
- 1+ Baseball Field
- 2+ Softball Fields
- 2 Indoor Hockey Rinks

Approved, Still in Design Phase

Partnership Complexes

- Meet the needs of different groups (School, City, College, Recreational, etc.)
- Varying scales, partnerships allow for larger facilities
- Efficiencies achieved by collocating playfields and facilities to share amenities (restrooms, concessions, etc.)
- Need to manage scheduling between users



Brookings H.S., Medary Elementary, and Dwiggins Medary Park, Brookings, SD

- 7 Softball Fields
- 2 Baseball Fields
- 8 Multi-Use Fields
- 1 Track
- 3 Tennis Courts
- 1 Basketball Court
- Skate Park
- Playground
- Concessions
- Picnic Shelter

70 Acres / 530 Parking Spaces



Riverland Community College, Albert Lea High School, and Snyder Park Albert Lea, MN

- 6 Softball Fields
- 2 Baseball Fields
- 7 Multi-Use Fields
- 1 Track
- 8 Tennis Courts
- 4 Sand Volleyball Courts
- Concessions
- Restrooms

160 Acres (Total)

Community Athletic Complexes

- Similar to Partnership Complexes, but operated by one group
- Varying scales, may or may not be sport specific
- Efficiencies achieved by collocating playfields and facilities to share amenities (restrooms, concessions, etc.)



Rich Valley Park, Inver Grove Heights, MN

- 6 Softball Fields
- 3 Baseball Fields
- 4 Soccer Fields
- 1 Tennis Court
- Playground
- Concessions
- Picnic Shelter

70 Acres / 530 Parking Spaces



Dred Scott Playfield, Bloomington, MN

- 9 Softball Fields
- 2 Baseball Fields
- 4 Soccer Fields
- 6 Tennis Courts
- 2 Basketball Courts
- 3 Sand Volleyball Courts
- Batting Cages
- Putt-Putt Golf Course
- Playground
- Concessions
- Picnic Shelter

50 Acres / 680 Parking Spaces

Dispersed Athletic Facility Systems

- Facilities provided at a neighborhood level, rather than community wide
- Facilities may be provided by one or multiple groups
- Typically multiple smaller scale facilities
- Scheduling is key because of limited space in any one location



New Ulm Parks, New Ulm, MN

Athletic facilities are spread out throughout the park system.

Competition

Regional facilities in the area that would compete with Worthington for large tournaments include the Sanford Health Complex in Sioux Falls and an approved facility that is in the planning phase in Marshall. While many teams travel to numerous tournaments throughout a season, the large scale tournaments (districts, state tournaments, regional championships, etc...) are likely to choose these facilities.