



# Amesbury

William Scott  
Director Office of Community Development  
City Hall, 62 Friend Street  
Amesbury, MA 01913-2884

(978) 388-8110 - 313  
scottw@amesburyma.gov

## Memorandum

To: Mayor Gray  
From: William Scott  
RE: Fields Study  
Date: November 2, 2018

### Introduction

This memorandum is in anticipation of a presentation for the November 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. The consultant for this project will be available, no action by the City Council is requested at this time.

This is the first instance of a detailed analysis of the City's athletic fields and the organizations that use the fields. Because this was the first instance of a detailed inventory and review of field use there is a higher level of detail necessary as the information is new and not an update of previous studies. Therefore the analysis was done in a more methodical approach as prior information was not readily available in a completed report. The field's project has reached the conclusion of the inventory stage. This inventory includes both the facilities and the programs using those facilities. A primary advantage of a more methodical approach has been the coordination of this project with the school projects. Both consulting teams have been in communication to avoid conflicts or redundancy in planning each project. This coordination will lead to the advantage of planning both projects in a manner that complement each approach. The end result of this stage of the analysis is a clear picture of the field usage, and facilities conditions. This level of detail is required to set the baseline for all future actions and determine the community needs based on use and asset viability.

### Allocation and Facilities

There are several steps that are necessary to move from the inventory to a capital plan recommendation. At this stage we have enough information to begin the discussion on the allocation of organizations and the impacts on the assets. Rather than focus on minor improvements, (benches and backstops) we will be proceeding with a bigger picture of field allocation to address use and coordination of the organizations and assets. There are examples of usage by teams that are on fields not appropriate for their sport; such as teams playing in outfields, on fields that maybe less optimum for the standards of their sport, or facilities that need improvement, such as grading and drainage. Therefore the next step will be an exercise to allocate use across the assets then to recommend improvements to accommodate that allocation, including new facilities where necessary.

## **Sports Fields Master Plan Attached**

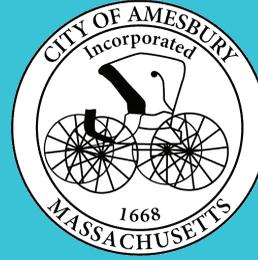
This is not the full Master Plan, it is the inventory and assessment of fields and the organizations that use the assets. This document outlines the requirements for athletic assets as compared to national standards, and as measured by local use. The inventory and assessment goes further to document the standards and conditional issues with each of the assets and the use by various City and community organizations. Additional data supporting this report is available and will be posted online by the time the City Council meeting is held.

## **Next Steps**

The next part of the plan will be a field allocation schedule with a capital plan identifying the improvements necessary to support that approach, and a plan to document the new, or expanded facilities necessary. After that deliverable is created the next step will be to refine the capital plan to definitive costs estimates and propose projects for the DIF funding. This approach allows the City to become more involved in allocation across all of the leagues and assets, o then support that allocation with a capital plan. The key to this stage is the continued coordination with the school project, the understanding of the short and long term league needs, and the coordination of improvements to reduce any downtime in the use of assets.

## **City Council**

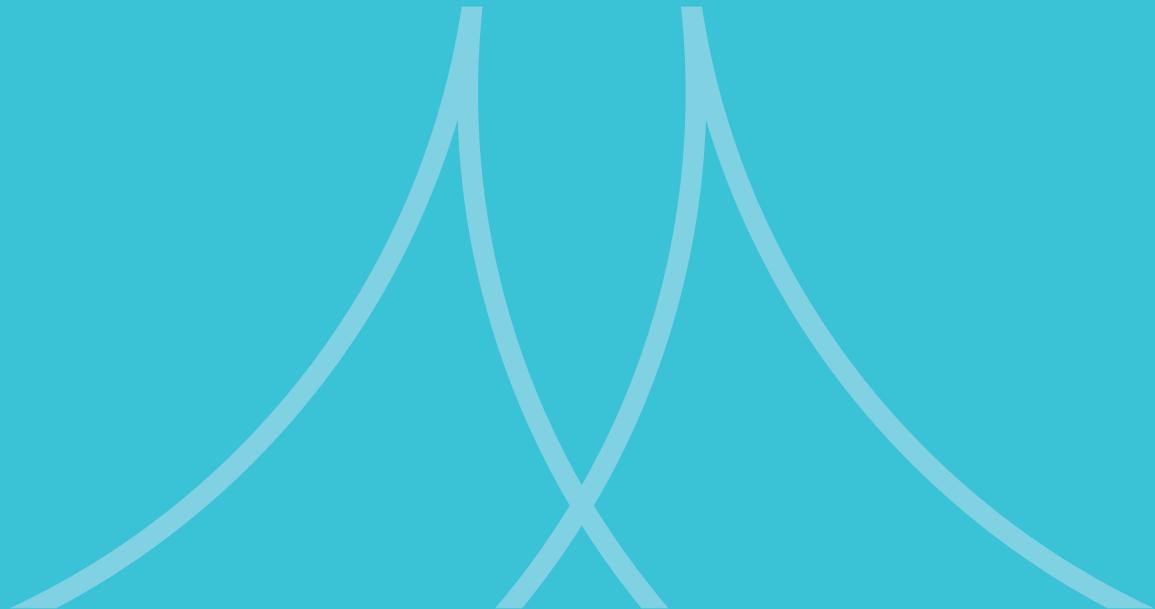
The consultant will be available at the November 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting for an update presentation outlining the report, I will review the next steps in more detail. The initial step of this process is this inventory and assessment of the assets and organizations. Now we will move to development of plans and recommendations with continued outreach to stakeholders.



# SPORTS FIELDS MASTER PLAN

SPORTS FIELDS ASSESSMENT, CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGETING, & MASTER PLANNING

City of Amesbury, Massachusetts





## Town of Amesbury

# SPORTS FIELDS MASTER PLAN

## PRELIMINARY DRAFT

*Prepared for:*

### **City of Amesbury**

**62 Friend Street**

**Amesbury, MA 01913**

*Date:* **October 2018**

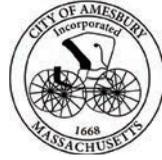
*Prepared by:*



*Engineering, Planning, Landscape Architecture  
and Environmental Science*

1350 Main Street, Suite 1012  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Tel. 413-241-6920





## Town of Amesbury

# SPORTS FIELDS MASTER PLAN

### **Acknowledgments:**

Mayor Ken Gray

City of Amesbury Staff Liaison:  
*William Scott, Director  
Economic & Community Development*

City of Amesbury Departments:  
*Youth Services Department  
Department of Public Works*

Committees & Organizations:  
*Athletic Organizations Stakeholder Committee*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# INTRODUCTION

In spring of 2018, the City of Amesbury initiated a project to assess the community's needs for sports fields and to develop master plan recommendations for future capital investments.

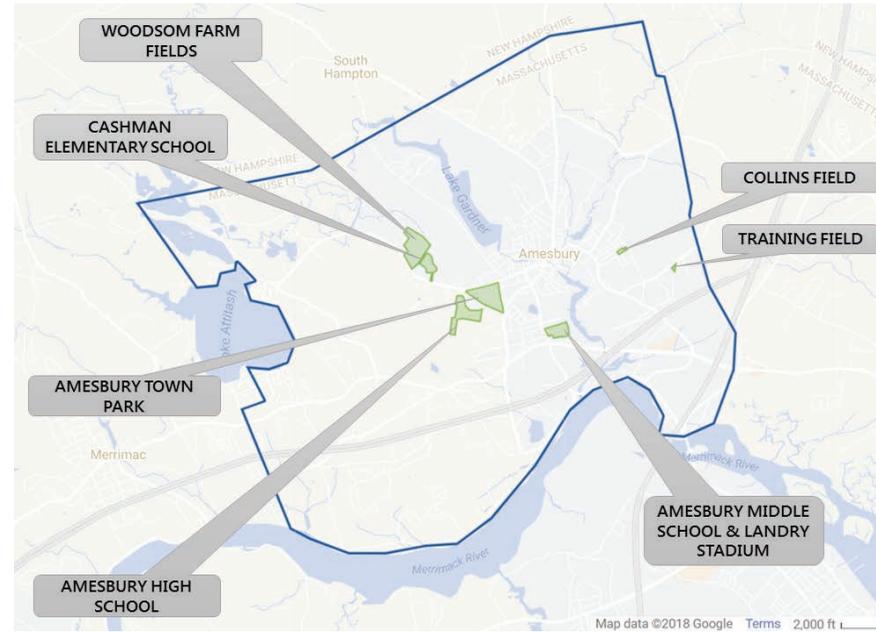
The planning process led by Milone & MacBroom, Inc., focused on Amesbury's public sports fields under the jurisdiction of both the city and the high school.

The development of the master plan relied upon the expertise and knowledge those who oversee the facilities and understand the athletic programs and sports fields better than anyone else. The assessment and planning process included a variety of direct stakeholders such as the high school Athletic Director and key athletics associations like the Amesbury Soccer Association, the Amesbury Girls Youth Softball League, the Amesbury Little League, the Amesbury Babe Ruth League, and others. The process also included coordination with staff at Youth Services, the city department that oversees scheduling, and the maintenance personnel at the Department of Public Works. The collective input of all parties informed the study and helped identify the scheduling, programming, and demand for athletic fields.

As part of the assessment process, Milone & MacBroom conducted a field assessments of the physical conditions of the facilities. The visual inspections documented the existing conditions of the facilities and identified short-term and long-term improvements to address maintenance and upgrades.

The study also included an evaluation of the facilities of similarly sized communities in the northern region of the United States. The comparison with these benchmark communities helped to identify necessary adjustments and improvements to bring Amesbury's facilities in line with standard norms.

The assessment findings are synthesized herein and have informed the associated recommendations and guidance for capital planning to address maintenance and investment needs for sports fields infrastructure over the next decade.



## Sports Fields included in the Needs Assessment & Master Plan:

- ✦ *Amesbury High School*
  - Baseball diamond
  - Football field
  - Back Field
- ✦ *Amesbury Middle School*
  - Perry Field softball field
  - JV Softball field
  - Multiuse field
- ✦ *Amesbury Town Park*
  - Pony Field baseball diamond
  - Little League baseball diamond
  - T-Ball field
  - Softball diamond
  - Multiuse field
- ✦ *Cashman Elementary School*
  - Baseball diamonds
  - Front Field multiuse field
- ✦ *Collins Street Park*
  - Softball field
- ✦ *Landry Stadium*
  - Football field
- ✦ *Training Field*
  - Multiuse field
- ✦ *Woodsom Farm Fields*
  - Soccer fields

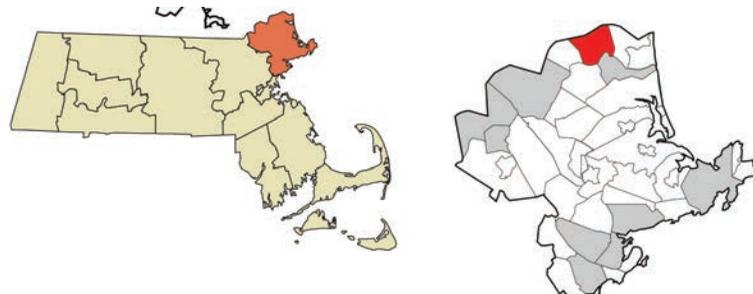
# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The city of Amesbury is located in Essex County, Massachusetts, on the left bank of the Merrimack River. It is one of the northernmost communities in Massachusetts. The 2010 census recorded a population of 16,283 with a projected 2017 population of 17,500. A former farming and mill town first settled in 1645, Amesbury is mostly residential today.

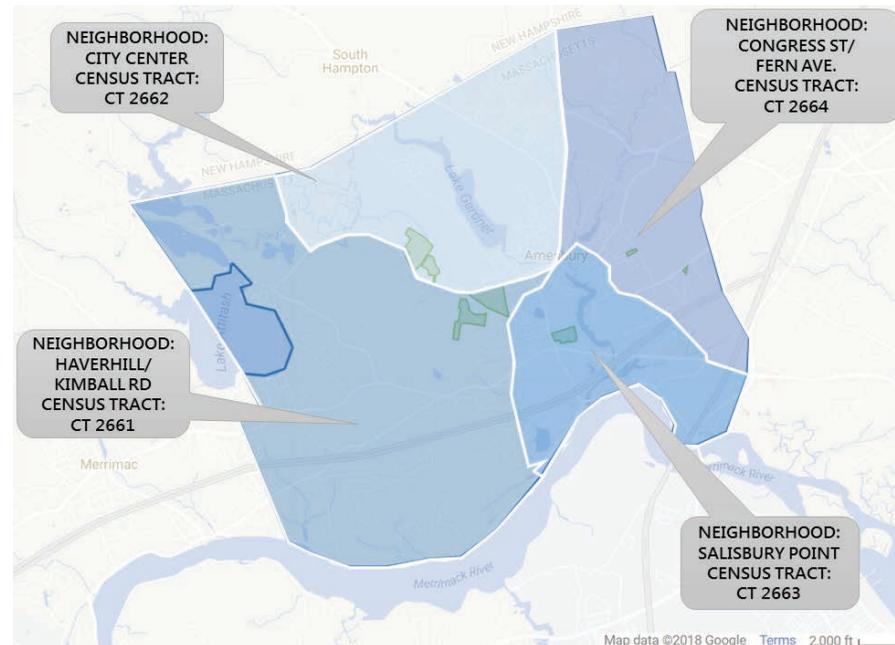
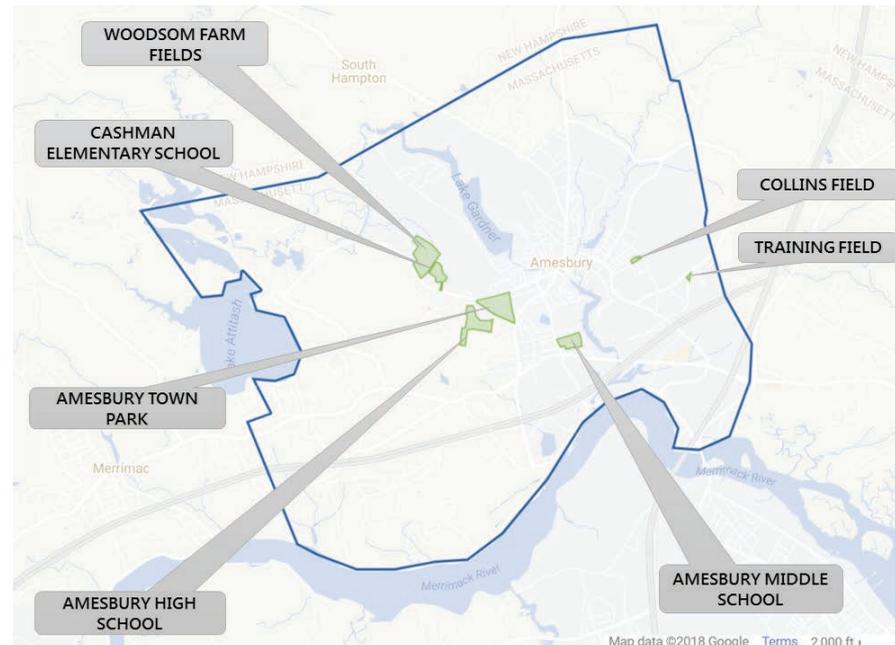
Covering 13.7 square miles, Amesbury is comprised of 12.3 square miles of land and 1.5 square miles of water. It is bordered by the Merrimack River to the south, New Hampshire to the north, the town of Merrimac to the west, and the coastal town of Salisbury to the east.

The city is rich in its natural resources that provide ample recreation opportunities. Lake Attitash and Lake Gardner, several ponds, a public beach, the Merrimack and Powwow Rivers, open space preserves, farms, numerous parks, the Town Forest, and the new Riverwalk dot Amesbury's natural landscape. Additionally, the New England Sports Park and the Amesbury Golf & Country Club provide additional recreation amenities to the region's residents.

Amesbury had a population of 16,283 in the 2010 census with a projected 2017 total population of 17,457 (up 7.2%).



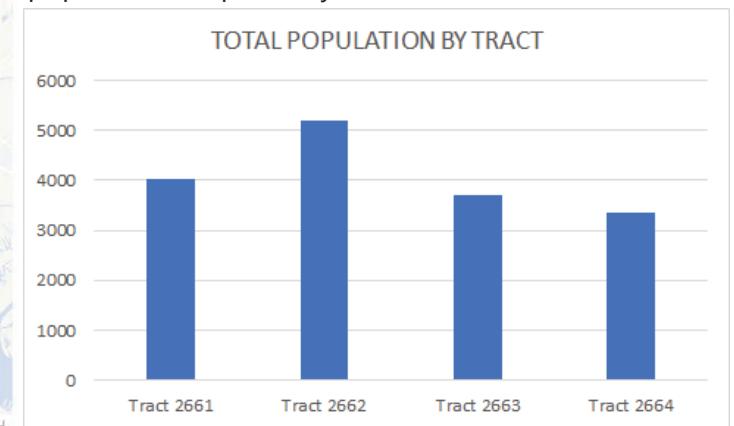
Images, Top Left: Location of Essex County, Massachusetts; Above Right: Location of the City of Amesbury within Essex County.



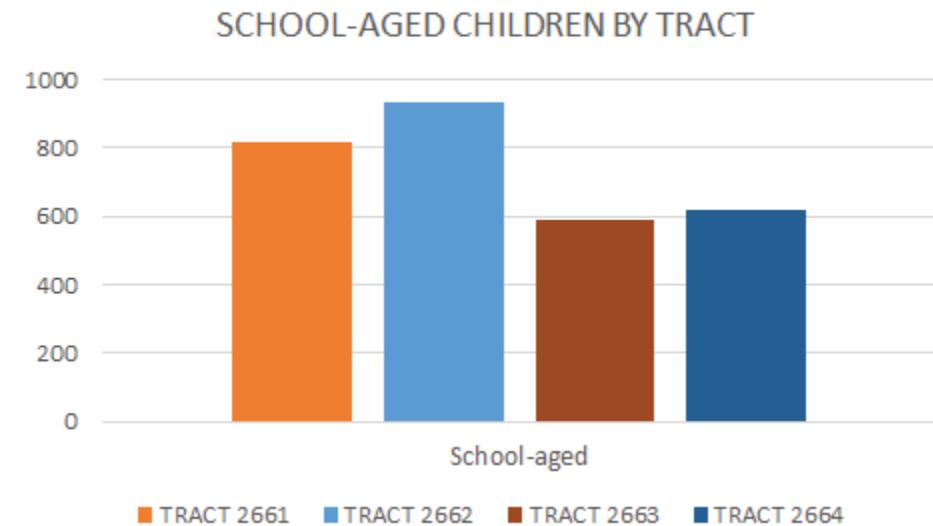
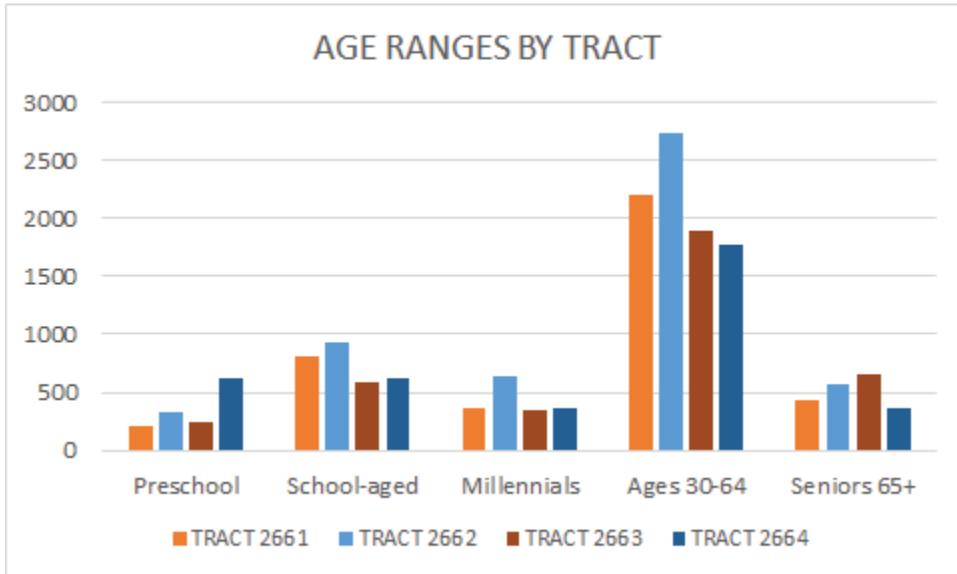
As with Essex County in general, the city is anticipating small continued growth moving into the next decade. The population per square mile is currently 1,327.8, and it is the 117th largest community in Massachusetts.

There are four census tracts in the city, divided into the City Center, Haverhill/Kimball Road, Congress Street/Fern Avenue, and the Salisbury Point neighborhoods. Census tract 2661 is served by the Amesbury Town Park and Amesbury High School Athletic Fields. Census tract 2662 is served by the Woodsom Farm Fields, Cashman Elementary School Athletic Fields, and Amesbury Elementary School. Census tract 2663 is served by the Amesbury School Athletic Fields. Census tract 2664 is served by the Collins Field and Training Field.

The City Center neighborhood makes up a third of the city's population, followed by the Haverhill/Kimball Road area on the west side of Amesbury where just over a quarter of the city's residents live. The Congress Street/Fern Avenue and Salisbury Point areas on the east side of the city make up 20% and 23% of the population, respectively.



The mix of age ranges is fairly even throughout the neighborhoods. Preschool and school-aged children comprise approximately 25% of the population. Millennials (ages 20-29) make up about 10% of the population, on average. The highest percentage of seniors (18%) is found in the Salisbury Point neighborhood.

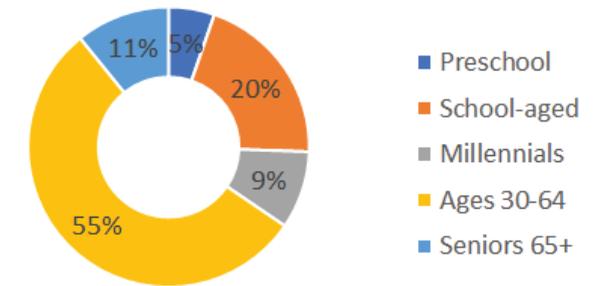


## COMMUNITY PROFILE

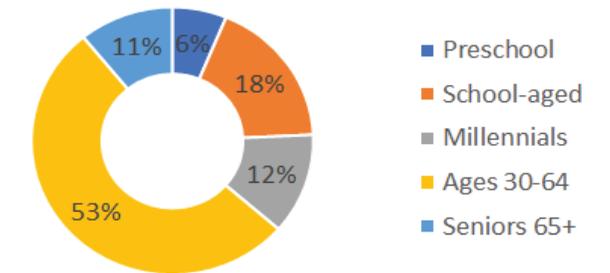
### Quick Facts:

- ✦ The overall distribution of age ranges is fairly consistent throughout the Amesbury census tracts.
- ✦ School-aged children make up between 16-18% of the population. Preschoolers make up between 5-7% of residents.
- ✦ The highest population is found in the City Center, where approximately 30% of residents reside.
- ✦ The highest percentage of seniors (18%) is found in the Salisbury Point Neighborhood.
- ✦ Amesbury population has expanded over 7% since the last census, and continued growth is anticipated.

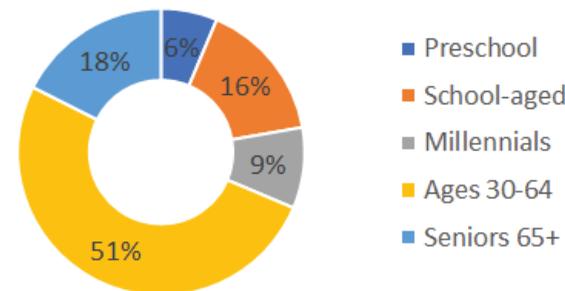
POPULATION STATISTICS - TRACT 2661



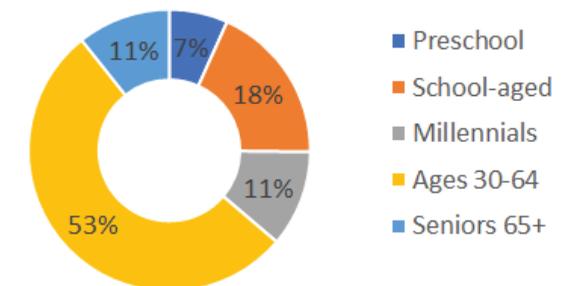
POPULATION STATISTICS - TRACT 2662



POPULATION STATISTICS - TRACT 2663



POPULATION STATISTICS - TRACT 2664



## AGENCY PROFILE

Amesbury does not have a Parks and Recreation Department. Youth Services (YS) runs the city's community recreation programs and camps, but it is not directly involved in organized athletic programs, which are run by various youth athletic organizations. The department has recently upgraded its scheduling system, and it now offers an online calendar showing field reservations. With a more sophisticated system, YS hopes to streamline and control scheduling of public athletic facilities and increase revenues. YS has no dedicated parks staff.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for trash collection and mowing of the city-owned athletic facilities. Over the years, facilities have been added while department staffing and its operations budget have remained fairly level. As a result, the department is limited in its ability to maintain the properties.

The School Department oversees several athletic facilities that are part of this study, including at the high school, middle school, Cashman School, and Landry Stadium. The School Department oversees scheduling and maintenance of these facilities. The department typically contracts out for mowing of the school athletic facilities and receives limited support from the DPW for general maintenance.

Several athletic organizations have agreements with the city for use of specific athletic facilities. The organizations often invest in updates and provide additional maintenance to the facilities. The Amesbury Soccer Association (ASA) has a long-term lease with the city for use of Woodsom Farm Fields. The organization has held the lease for over 20 years, and the ASA is currently raising funds for significant upgrades to the soccer facility.

Amesbury Little League uses the two baseball diamonds at Cashman Elementary School as its home field, and the organization has made significant investment and improvements to the facilities including field upgrades and the addition of restrooms and concessions.

Collins Field is primarily used by the Amesbury softball league, which holds a lease agreement with the city. The DPW and the softball league share mowing responsibilities during summer months. The organization has made significant improvements to the Collins softball field and associated facilities.



# BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES COMPARISONS

Amesbury has a broad assortment of athletic facilities that fall under the city's jurisdiction for public use. Part of the assessment process included referencing similar communities to determine how Amesbury's facilities and programming compare to communities throughout New England.

In Amesbury, there are seven dedicated soccer fields, two football fields, and six multiuse/overlay fields. The soccer and football fields could also be classified as multiuse fields. The city has six baseball diamonds of varying sizes and four softball fields available for public use in both municipal parks and the public schools.

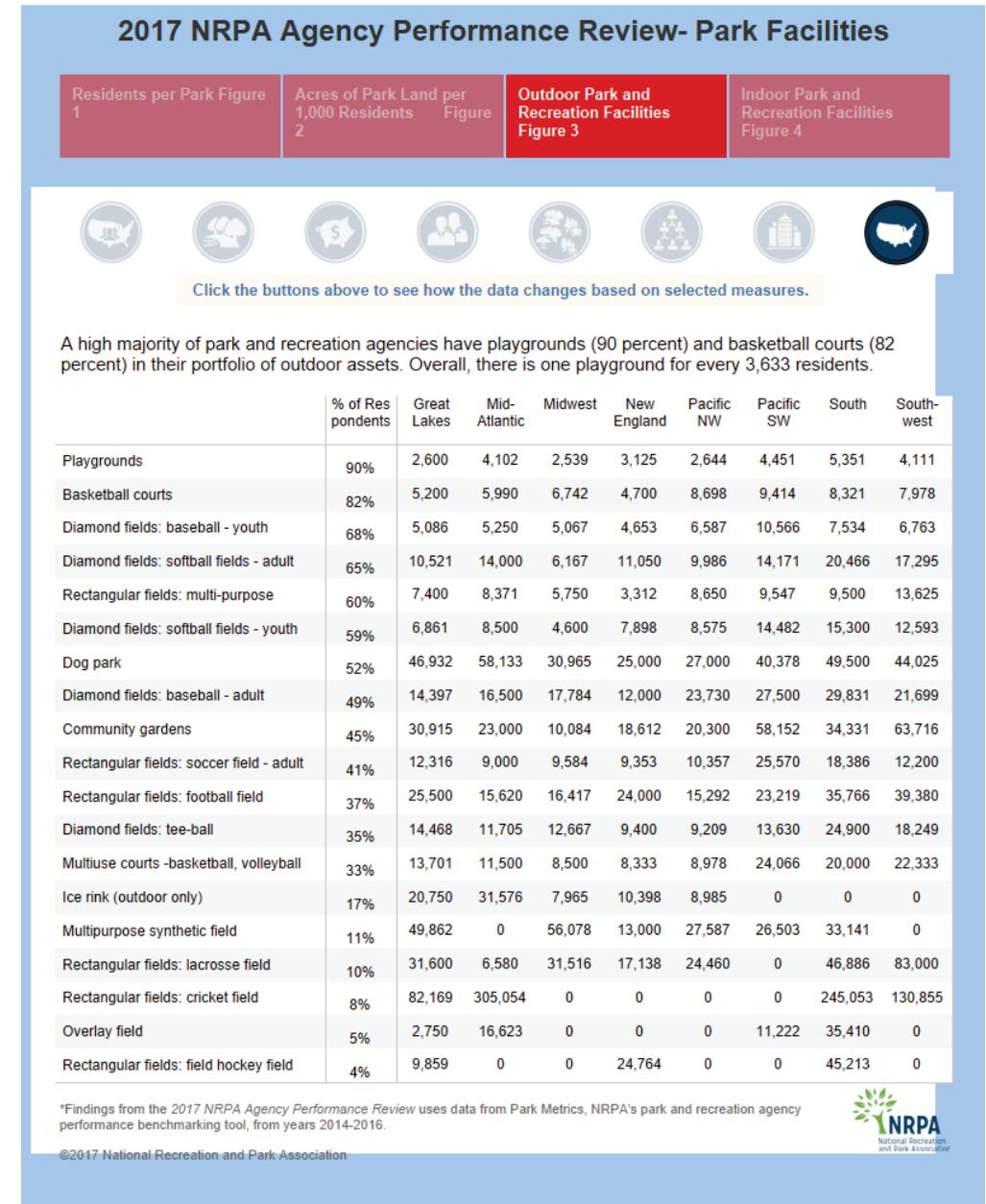
To assess whether the provisions for these facilities are in line with what other communities provide, we referenced the annual park metrics survey results by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) as well as the typical averages for communities of similar populations and similar climates (i.e., benchmark communities).

**NATIONAL BENCHMARKS.** The national benchmarks for athletic facilities are cited as both a percentage to indicate how many communities have the facility type and as a number representing number of residents served by each facility. This benchmark is used as a communitywide indicator for facility types and numbers. However, the benchmark does not provide guidance for level of service related to the facility's location to population centers. In Amesbury, for example, most facilities are clustered close to the center of the city. Since the athletic facilities serve regional populations, this is not as much of an issue as it would be for neighborhood parks that serve populations within walking distance.

Field	Field Inventory							
	Rectangular			Diamond				Overlay
	Soccer	Football	Multi-use	Baseball Large (90')	Baseball Small (60')	Baseball T-Ball (50')	Softball (60')	Outfields
Amesbury High School		1	1	1				1
Amesbury Middle School							2	1
Amesbury Town Park				1	1	1	1	1
Cashman Elem. School			1		2			
Collins Field							1	
Landry Stadium		1						
Training Field			1					
Woodsom Farms Fields	7							
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

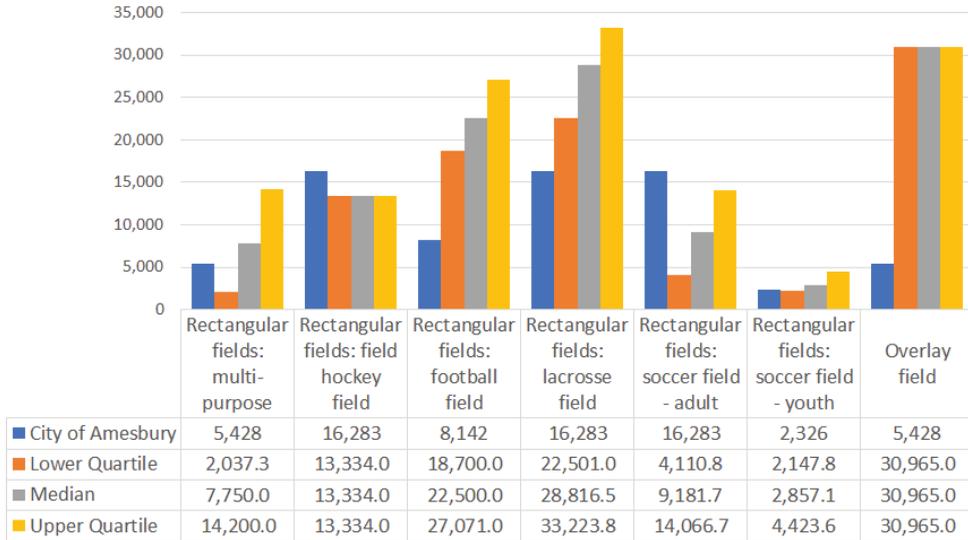
According to the national benchmarks, as populations grow, a higher number of residents are expected to share facilities. Given the population of Amesbury, we would expect the city's facilities to fall between the lower quartile and median benchmarks.

Based upon this comparison, Amesbury appears deficient in youth baseball and T-ball fields as well as full-size soccer fields. In the New England region, median

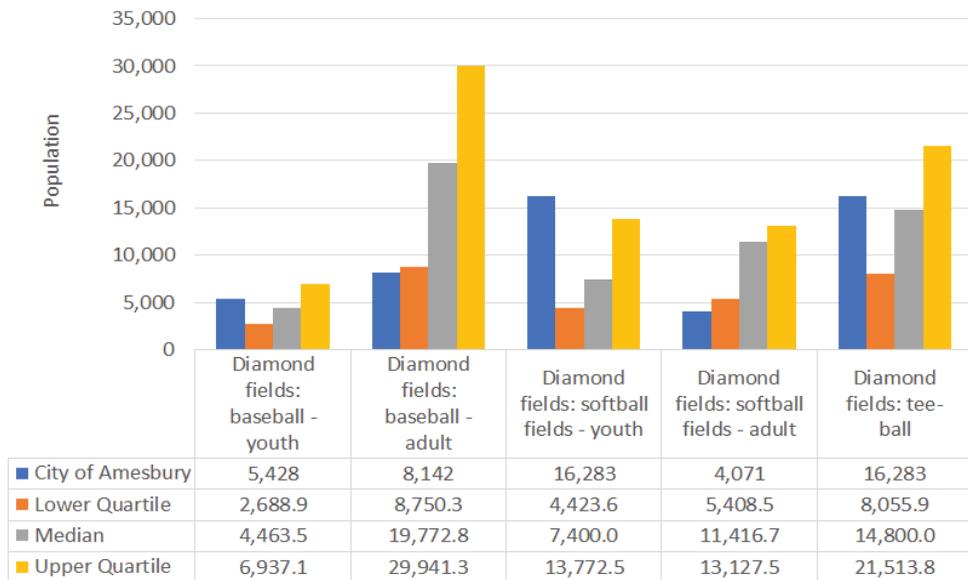


Graphic from the 2017 Annual Park Metrics Report. Courtesy of <https://www.nrpa.org>

Park Metrics - Rectangular Fields



Park Metrics - Baseball & Softball Fields



CITY OF AMESBURY PARK METRICS BENCHMARK COMPARISON				
	Amesbury	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Diamond fields: baseball - youth	5,428	2,689	4,464	6,937
Diamond fields: baseball - adult	8,142	8,750	19,773	29,941
Diamond fields: softball fields - youth	16,283	4,424	7,400	13,773
Diamond fields: softball fields - adult	4,071	5,409	11,417	13,128
Diamond fields: tee-ball	16,283	8,056	14,800	21,514
Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	5,428	2,037	7,750	14,200
Rectangular fields: field hockey field	16,283	13,334	13,334	13,334
Rectangular fields: football field	8,142	18,700	22,500	27,071
Rectangular fields: lacrosse field	16,283	22,501	28,817	33,224
Rectangular fields: soccer field - adult	16,283	4,111	9,182	14,067
Rectangular fields: soccer field - youth	2,326	2,148	2,857	4,424
Overlay field	5,428	30,965	30,965	30,965
Multipurpose synthetic field	16,283	16,996	20,220	23,444

towns typically have one youth baseball diamond per 2,689 residents. Amesbury has one per 5,428 residents. The city has one tee-ball diamond per 16,283 residents compared to one per 8,056 residents in the lower quartile and one per 14,800 residents in Median communities.

Comparison of the rectangular fields shows that Amesbury is deficient in full-size soccer fields but within expected ranges for youth soccer fields. The city seems to lack true multipurpose fields. Amesbury appears to all within acceptable ranges for its overlay and multiuse fields, which can be used for multiple sports.

According to the Park Metrics survey, populations over 23,000 typically have one multipurpose synthetic field. With a population approaching 17,000, Amesbury may want to consider adding this field type to address the use limitations of natural fields, which typically are limited to 20-24 hours of weekly use to maintain a healthy surface.

## QUICK FACTS FOR AMESBURY

### Quick facts:

- Amesbury appears deficient in youth baseball and tee-ball fields.
- Amesbury falls within the expected numbers of full size diamonds.
- Amesbury may be deficient in softball fields. The city does not distinguish between adult and youth fields.
- Amesbury appears deficient in the number of full-size soccer fields.
- Amesbury falls within the expected ranges for multiuse and overlay fields.
- Amesbury does not have a multiuse synthetic field. Most populations over 23,000 have at least one.



# ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES

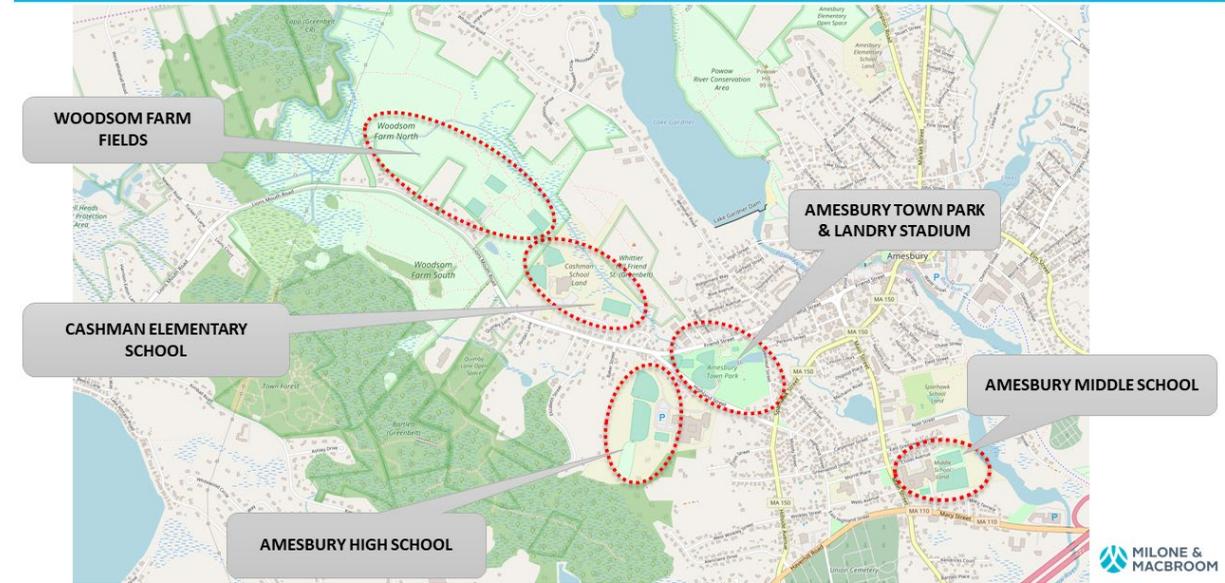
The master planning process included a visual physical assessment of the designated public sports fields and facilities to document the existing features and conditions. The facilities assessment included meetings with the Recreation staff and the Department of Public Works to identify ongoing issues, management practices, as well as the roles and responsibilities impacting use.

The facility assessments that follow are intended to provide an overview of each facility, including the general overall condition of the sports fields and various amenities. Combined with the Department Profile and the Field Use Assessment information, this information will be used to develop an overall understanding of the community's needs related to the city's public outdoor sports fields. This information will allow us to outline needs to prioritize projects within existing facilities and to identify needs for new facilities.

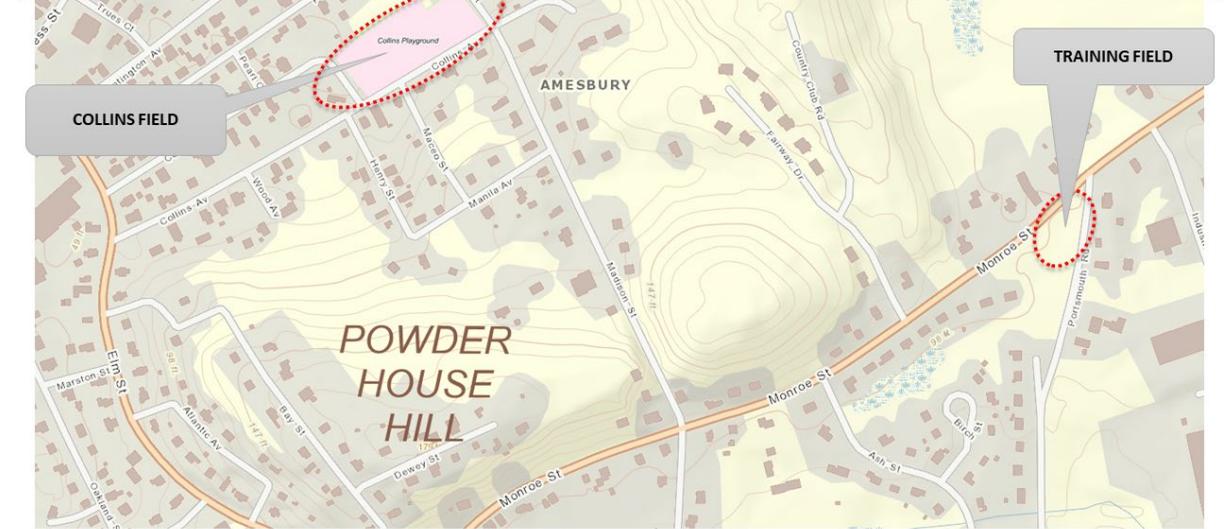
This section, which focuses on the physical assessment of existing fields, includes general recommendations and considerations for action, including planning, maintenance, and future improvements. The Capital Plan identifies priority projects and an overall action plan for implementation. Reference the Appendices for a detailed breakdown of the proposed projects and budgets.

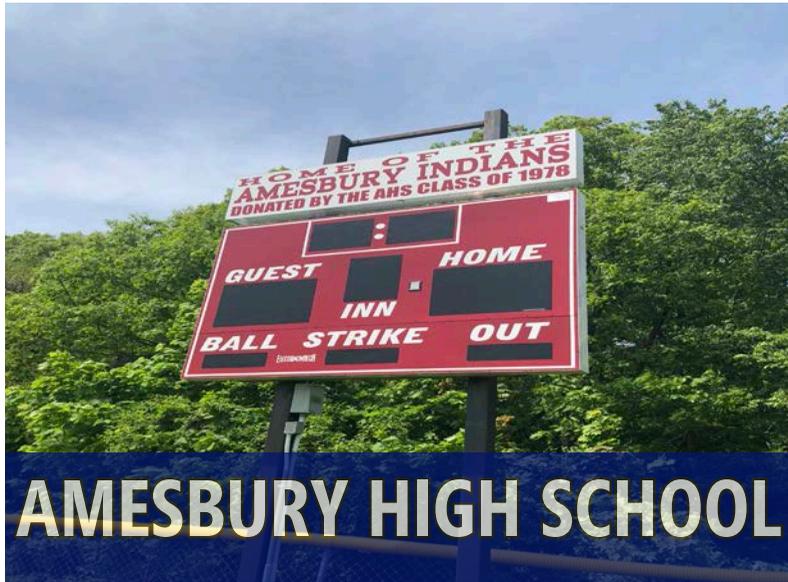


## Amesbury Athletic Facilities



## Amesbury Athletic Facilities





## AMESBURY HIGH SCHOOL

**FIELDS DESCRIPTION:** Amesbury High School is located at 5 Highland Street across the street from Amesbury Town Park. The fields are located to the west of the school and are nestled between wooded slopes to the west and south. The fields are primarily used by the high school athletic teams. The large paved lot between the school and field provides ample parking for events.

Features include:

- Baseball Field ( $\pm 90'$ )
- Multiuse Field (Baseball outfield - 290' x 180')
- Track and Field (360' x 160' Football/multiuse field inside track)
- Back Field (multiuse practice field)
- Tennis Courts (4)

**ASSESSMENT SUMMARY: BASEBALL AND MULTIUSE FIELD:** The high school's JV and varsity baseball teams as well as Amesbury Youth Baseball use the diamond field. The high school's JV and varsity field hockey teams predominantly use the outfield. The high school would like to accommodate lacrosse and soccer in the future.



This outfield multiuse area has drainage issues that cause soggy conditions in April and October. There is one existing drain in the right outfield where ponding occurs due to the large slope between the track and baseball field. During the wet season, the teams are required to reschedule or move to Town Park where fields are not the appropriate size.

The interface between the outfield and raised infield creates a trip hazard and affects the planarity of the playing surface. The outfield dimensions are too short, and the batting cage is not used because it blocks spectator views in its current location. Outfield fence and dugouts are in fair condition, but there is currently no foul ball protection for spectators. The turf is in good condition, but the infield requires consistent maintenance.



There are no accessible pathways to player areas or bleachers, and there are no lights for evening use. The stairs between the track and baseball field should be upgraded with handrails. There is an existing water service to water fountains located at the dugouts and irrigation on the west side of the field. There is also electrical service to the existing scoreboard.

**TRACK:** The existing track was constructed in 2008. It is in fair condition and appears to have some resiliency left; however, it should be replaced or resurfaced in the next few years. It is used by the track and field team as well as the public. There is very limited space between the track and the perimeter fencing; therefore, the current layout of the space cannot accommodate spectator seating. There is a steep slope on the eastern side of the track toward the parking lot and a large slope to the west that is densely vegetated. The school has expressed a desire for a fatter track with a wider field capable of fitting a soccer field. To accommodate this, the track could shift to the east, and a retaining wall could be built abutting the parking lot. There is also

# Amesbury Athletic Fields - Amesbury High School



potential to utilize the western slope for spectator seating. Accessibility will need to be considered.

The interior field is in good condition except for typical center field deterioration from high use. The crown has an even slope, but water builds up on the edge of the field most likely due to the lack of perimeter drainage. There is existing irrigation running along the western side of the field. There is an existing lip on the outer edges of the track, which is a hazard to runners. There are no existing lights illuminating the field, but this site would be a good candidate for lighting since there are no abutting neighbors. The school has a need for lighted fields so they could host home night games coinciding with practices on neighboring fields.

There are temporary storage containers located on the south end of the track, but the high school would like a more permanent storage solution. There is also a desire for restroom facilities, a ticket booth, and concessions on site. While the parking supply is more than adequate, there is no accessible pathway from the parking lot. The only handicap-accessible parking spots are on the opposite side of the large parking lot.

BACK FIELD (MULTIUSE PRACTICE FIELD): The back field comprises a large open area to the south of the track. It is utilized for football and field hockey practices in the fall, track and field events in the spring, and conditioning in the summer. There is an adventure course running along the treeline on the eastern side of the cleared area that is rarely used. The current field configuration is too narrow for a soccer field. There is potential for expansion, but there are wooded hills on both sides and possible wetlands to the south that would need to be further investigated. Various equipment and track and field amenities are located within this space including discus. A maintenance road currently provides access to this field, but if use increased, there might be a need for a more formalized roadway with parking at the top of the hill adjacent to the field.





## AMESBURY MIDDLE

### AMESBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL

**FIELDS DESCRIPTION:** Amesbury Middle School is located at 220 Main Street, and the school's athletic fields are situated to the east of the building. The fields are also bound by the Powwow to the west, Landry Stadium to the north, and a residential area to the south. The athletic facilities are primarily used by Amesbury High School's softball and soccer teams as well as the Amesbury Jets youth football league, youth soccer, and golf for tadpoles. The fields are also utilized as a recess and gym class area for the middle school students. While the fields do not currently generate income, the Middle School would like to start charging the various programs that consistently use the fields to help cover maintenance expenses.

Field features include:

- Softball Field ( $\pm 60'$ ) – "Perry Field"
- Softball Field ( $\pm 60'$ )
- Multiuse Fields (outfields - 270' x 150')
- Tennis Courts (3)



**Assessment Summary:** The athletic fields at Amesbury Middle School are served by limited parking located off Rosedale Street. There is a paved access path along the northern edge of the fields that extends from the parking lot. The fields are used for recess as well as for athletic team practices and games. As a result, the fields receive lots of use beyond organized sports. Overuse is evident throughout the site. The turf condition is fair, with crabgrass and broad-leaved weeds showing evidence of overall compaction and nutrient deficiency. An irrigation system currently serves Perry Field and extends slightly beyond the outfield perimeter. There is a need for new scoreboards, lighting, and outfield fencing throughout the site.

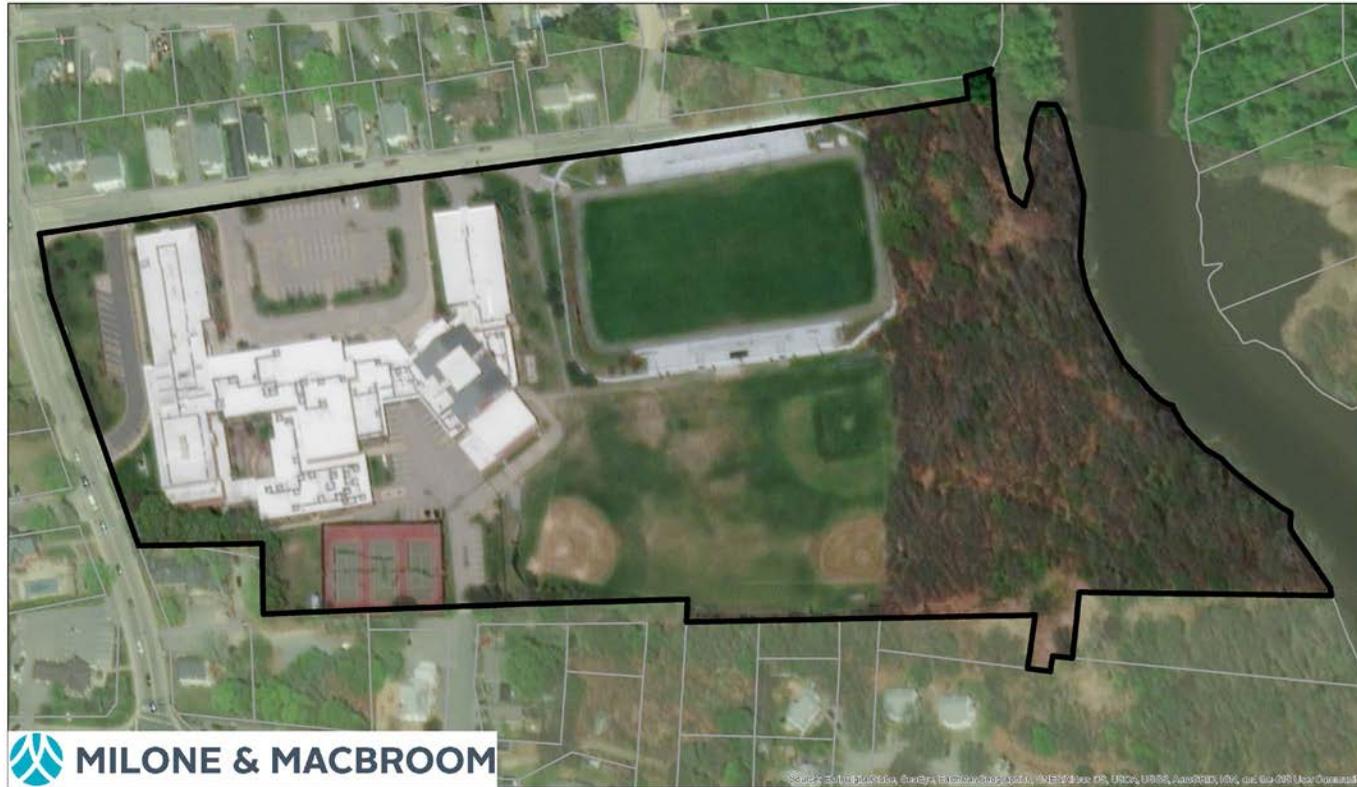
**PERRY FIELD:** Perry Field is within the southeast corner of the site and serves as the varsity softball field. It is in good condition overall, with the exception of wear spots in the outfield grass where the soccer field goals back up to the infield. These areas of excessive use have limited grass growth and compaction.



There are safety issues related to the varsity softball field that should be addressed. The current orientation of the field and lack of fencing offer no protection for parked cars, spectators, or adjacent property owners from foul balls. The existing bleachers are in good condition but are too close to the field. Additional spectator seating is needed as onlookers currently set up portable chairs on the adjacent access road, which abuts the foul line. There have been instances of spectators being hit by foul balls in this location. Reorienting the field further away from the existing parking would help address these safety concerns. There is also a need for an accessible route to Perry Field and its associated spectator seating.



## Amesbury Athletic Fields - Amesbury Middle School



SOFTBALL FIELD /MULTIUSE FIELDS: The remaining areas of the Middle School athletic facilities are contiguous with Perry Field. Two diamond fields are located on the eastern side of the site. The northern diamond field is a discontinued baseball field that is predominantly grass. The southern softball field is primarily used for JV softball and has a more clearly defined infield although it requires maintenance. The field also needs upgrades, including backstop and fencing. The multiuse field shares the outfield spaces. Overall, the play surface quality is in fair condition, and there are no known drainage issues. The JV soccer team uses this field, and the goals back up to the softball fields, which results in less grass growth and more compaction in these areas. There are bleachers located on the northern edge of the fields against Landry Stadium that appear to be rarely used in their current location.



## AMESBURY TOWN PARK

**FIELDS DESCRIPTION:** This 23-acre community park is located at 140 Friend Street, with points of access off Friend Street and Highland Street. The park boasts multiple athletic fields as well as a skate park, disc golf course, splash park, pond, restroom facility, basketball court, and large playground. It is bound by Friend Street to the north, Highland Street to the south, and Greenleaf Street and residences to the east. The fields are mainly used by Amesbury High School's JV baseball and softball teams and Little League. The park as a whole is also used for recreational activities including birthday parties, school field days, and other miscellaneous events.

Field features include:

- Baseball Field ( $\pm 90'$ ) – “Pony Field”
- Baseball Field ( $\pm 60'$ ) – Little League
- Softball Field ( $\pm 60'$ )
- T-ball Field ( $\pm 50'$ )
- Multiuse Fields (Pony Field outfield) – “Upper Field”/“Lower Field” (Softball outfield)
- Skate Park – Adjacent field space
- Other Features: Playground and splash pad; basketball court



**ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:** The northeastern corner of the park, which features a playground, splash pad, and basketball court, has been recently renovated and provides a great example of the park's potential. The park has limited accessible pathways. A walkway around the perimeter of the park is desired to allow residents safe access to the park and recreational opportunities. Accessible paths must also be created from the parking areas to the spectator seating, dugouts, and other facilities.

There is limited parking provided in the two small off-street parking lots, so the majority of parking utilization remains on-street. Improvements to the paved parking lot off Highland Street should include curbing, signage, and striping to delineate parking spaces. Improvements to on-street parking along both Friend Street and Highland Street would be beneficial as well. The parking area is not ADA compliant, and there are no designated accessible spaces. Security measures such as an access gate should be added to the access road between Friend Street and Highland Street parking lot. The gravel road links the upper and lower portions of the park, providing a wide circulation route for the pedestrians and maintenance vehicles. The surface of the road should be addressed to ensure safety and accessibility.

There is an existing water line that runs along the access park road that could be utilized for future services. The majority of the fields ultimately drain to the pond located in the center of the park. A portion of this drainage will likely require replacement in the nearterm.

The existing storage facility located adjacent to the Highland Street parking lot is used for storing overflow items for the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Fire Department. It would be beneficial to expand this storage facility so athletic



## Amesbury Athletic Fields - Amesbury Town Park



equipment could be kept here as well. There is also a need for restroom facilities on the western side of the park to service the athletic fields.

The turf throughout the park overall is in fair condition. Surfaces require fine grading for a safer and playable surface. There is a high percentage of weeds and compaction throughout, and infields would benefit from regrading. These issues would be mitigated by adopting consistent best management practices like fall aeration, topdressing, over-seeding, and regular watering.

**PONY FIELD:** This large baseball field is highly utilized by Amesbury High School's JV and freshman baseball teams, as well as summer programs. The varsity team is unable to use this field due to the left field being too short. The field is in fair condition, is not irrigated, and has topography issues. Water from the adjacent parking lot runs onto the field and dugout areas, and the slope of the field generally runs easterly toward the access road.

Dugouts should be fully enclosed to improve safety of players. The backstop fencing needs repair and should be raised. There is a lack of chain link fencing on either side of the field to protect the spectators and cars from foul balls. New fencing should be at least 6' high with adequate fence toppers and gates for field access. The bleachers are not code compliant as they are not ADA accessible and require handrails, kick plates, and fall protection. They otherwise appear to be in fair condition and well maintained.

**MULTIUSE FIELD (PONY FIELD OUTFIELD):** The outfield of Pony Field has been utilized as a practice field in the past. It is currently used for cheerleading practice, flag football, and ultimate Frisbee. There is no irrigation and the grade is generally very flat. The steep slope bordering the edge of the field and the skate park to the north may be hazardous to players. Other hazards include lack of perimeter fencing and no protection from utility poles or existing concrete pads in the field area. There are two older pole lights that serve this field for evening use; however, they likely produce significant glare for neighbors. The city may consider removing them.

**LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD:** This field was renovated three years ago and has updated fencing with appropriate yellow fence topper as well as irrigation that is maintained by Amesbury Little League. The turf is in good



condition, but the grading could be improved to eliminate low spots and the lip around the baseline. The city may consider shifting the field back to provide a greater distance between the backstop and home plate as well as a longer outfield, preferably a 300-foot distance from home plate. Trees are encroaching into the playable area and need to be trimmed. The skate park encroaches on the right field, and the fencing, which is in disrepair, is currently unsafe.

There are elevated spectator benches behind the backstop with noncompliant handrails. There are no accessible pathways from the elevated area down to the field, and the access stairs are not code compliant.

**T-BALL FIELD:** The field is mainly used by minor league T-ball and mini-hawk sports camp run by the Recreation Department. The field is tucked in the northwest corner at the perimeter of the Pony Field outfield. The field is in fair overall condition, although turf exhibits a fair amount of weed growth and compaction. Maintenance is required along the baseline to adjust grading and add clay infill.

The field has newer player benches, and the backstop fence is in good condition. Additional fencing could be installed as an upgrade to the field. There are no spectator areas for parents.

**SOFTBALL FIELD:** The field, located in the lower portion of the park near Friend Street, is mainly used by Amesbury Youth Softball and Little League. The field is not irrigated and is in poor condition, with a high percentage of weeds, bare spots from overuse, and compaction. The infield requires maintenance to eliminate weeds, and the baseline is very worn and compacted. Trees impact the outfield, and the disc golf course could interfere with field activities.

There is no spectator seating, and player benches are in fair condition. The backstop fence is in good condition; however, foul balls are a consideration, particularly so close to the playground and splash pad areas. The field requires perimeter fencing and fence toppers. The distance from the backstop to home plate should be increased. There are no accessible routes to player benches and other areas of the park.





# CASHMAN ELEMENTARY

## CASHMAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**FIELDS DESCRIPTION.** Cashman Elementary School is located at 193 Lions Mouth Road. The two Little League baseball fields are located to the northwest of the school, and the multiuse field is located to the east. They are bound by wetlands to the east, Woodsom Farm fields to the northwest, and residential properties to the south. The baseball fields are primarily used by Amesbury Little League and the multiuse “Front Field” by high school lacrosse. The fields have all been recently renovated and are generally in great condition.

Field features include:

- Cashman Baseball Field North (±60') – “Packer Field”
- Cashman Baseball Field South (±60') – “Randall Field”
- Multiuse Field (360' x 180') – “Front Field”

**ASSESSMENT SUMMARY.** The Little League facility is maintained well and has two baseball fields, often called the “Upper Field” and “Lower Field.” Formally, they are known as Packer Field and Randall Field.



**PACKER AND RANDALL FIELD:** The Little League baseball fields are in excellent condition overall. The fields have lighting for evening use, and there appears to be new drainage and scoreboards. These two baseball fields are currently the only lighted athletic facilities in Amesbury. They are also the only fields in Amesbury to meet the Little League International standards.

The dugouts and fencing are in good condition with appropriate fence toppers. There are storage bins located in the dugout areas, which are screened to provide appropriate protection from foul balls. Both infields are well maintained and in excellent condition. Randall Field’s outfield has a high percentage of weeds, and Packer Field’s outfield has areas of compaction. Both fields have an in-ground irrigation system installed and maintained by Amesbury Little League. There is currently no formalized spectator seating adjacent to the field. The batting cage to the west of Packer Field is in great condition.

Additional parking could be provided for events on the west side of the school where cars currently park on the lawn. There are no accessible parking spaces dedicated for the lot nearest the fields or accessible pathways leading to the dugouts.

The concession, restroom, and storage buildings are in great condition. These buildings were built and continue to be maintained by Amesbury Little League. There are accessible ramps to the facilities and outdoor picnic tables; however, there is no accessible path from the parking lot or fields to the buildings.

**MULTIUSE FIELD:** The “Front Field” to the east of Cashman Elementary School is primarily used by the high school’s lacrosse and soccer teams, but youth soccer uses the facility during the fall season. There are accessibility issues from the parking lot



to the field, as well as access issues for maintenance vehicles. There is underutilized space between the parking lot and the field that could potentially be developed for parking closer to the field.

While the field is in excellent condition, there are emerging patches of crabgrass that should be addressed. There are no signs of overuse or compaction although there are bare spots from cleats in some places. There is poor drainage on the field, and it is often wet and unusable due to its low elevation. There is an existing water service to the middle of the field; however, watering is not consistent due to limited staffing.

### Amesbury Parks - Cashman Elementary School





## COLLINS FIELD

### COLLINS FIELD

This field is located at 37 Collins Avenue and is bound by Madison Street to the east, Collins Avenue to the south and west, and residential properties to the north. This field is primarily used by the Amesbury softball league and youth flag football.

Features include:

- Softball/Youth Flag Football Field
- ½ Basketball Court
- Playground

### ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:

**SOFTBALL FIELD:** The softball field, dugouts, storage shed, utilities, and a batting cage at Collins Street were installed by the Amesbury softball league, who maintains the facility and shares costs with the city for mowing by third party volunteers. Overall, the softball field and facilities are well maintained and in good condition. The turf outfield shows emergence of crabgrass and weeds, which can be addressed by implementing best practices for annual field maintenance. The infield is in good condition overall, with limited pooling of water evident near the right field dugout. The outfield is short and needs to be leveled.

There are no accessible pathways in the park, but a sidewalk exists along the street frontage. There is off-street parking for a few cars, and overflow parking is on-street. There is also accessible parking between the softball field and playground. The two existing aprons off Collins Avenue offer potential to pave a formal parking lot in this area.

The backstop, outfield fencing, and dugouts are in good condition. There is currently no spectator seating or scoreboard. Bleachers would naturally fit on the east side of the field between the fence and playground. Foul balls are a safety concern due to the proximity of the adjacent playground area and residences. There is a 12' high fence along a portion of Collins Avenue, but this fencing should be extended along the eastern side of the field to eliminate danger to bystanders.

There is irrigation on the eastern outer edge of the field and electric and water services in the maintenance shed. The electric for the batting cages does not currently function. The water service is potentially shut off at the street as the current users have never been able to operate the water. There are no restroom facilities on site, so portable toilets are rented for the playing season.





## LANDRY STADIUM

### FIELDS DESCRIPTION:

Landry Stadium is located east of the Amesbury Middle School building and south of Childs Avenue. The stadium is also bound by the Powwow River to the west, Childs Avenue to the north, and the school's remaining athletic fields to the south. Landry Stadium is primarily used by Amesbury High School's football, soccer, and field hockey teams as well as the Amesbury Soccer Association (ASA) for special events and games.

Features include:

- Stadium seating
- Natural grass football field (360'x160')

### ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:



Overall, Landry Stadium field is in excellent condition. The stadium was refurbished in 2002 and is currently used as the primary location for the high school football night games, JV soccer, field hockey, and occasionally ASA town league on weekends. The field is currently too narrow for soccer but has the potential to be widened closer to the bleacher limits. Landry is used infrequently but with some upgrades could become much better utilized. The stadium can seat up to 3,300 people; however, it does not provide adequate egress routes with only one field-level access point.

Landry Stadium does not have restrooms, locker rooms, or concession facilities on site. For varsity football games, the home team is bussed to Landry from the high school and bussed back to use the locker rooms there. The stadium's lack of restroom facilities requires custodians from the middle school to be on call for restroom access during field use. For highly attended events such as the Thanksgiving football game and graduation, portable toilets are rented out and located at the entrance to the Stadium. There is a maintenance shed located inside the stadium. The underside of the stadium seating is used for equipment storage.



There is very limited parking for the stadium as it directly abuts a residential neighborhood along Childs Avenue. There are three accessible parking spaces adjacent to the stadium, and the stands are wheelchair accessible. The remaining spectators must utilize the few on-street parking spaces or be shuttled in from parking lots around town. The city has expressed an interest in hosting music events at Landry Stadium, but the lack of restroom facilities and egress points makes large events unfeasible. Off-site parking would also need to be considered to address the lack of parking at the middle school

The field itself is in great condition. It is well drained, and the turf is in excellent condition. There is existing irrigation, and the lights are in fair condition. Landry Stadium is currently the only lighted athletic facility in Amesbury except for Cashman Elementary School. Previously, a track encircled the field, but it is now a gravel path. This perimeter space could be better utilized as a formal walkway or for field expansion to allow for soccer use.



# TRAINING FIELD

## TRAINING FIELD

### FIELD DESCRIPTION:

This two-acre property located at 57 Monroe Street comprises a small, triangularly shaped field at the intersection of Monroe Street and Portsmouth Road. The field is surrounded by a residential neighborhood and is mostly a passive-use space. Use of the field for organized sports is primarily limited to weekends, when the Little League uses the space for practices. Flag football teams also use the field on Sundays although this time is not formally scheduled.

Features include:

- Open Space/Multiuse Field



### ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:

Because of its size and shape, Training Field offers limited opportunities for use as a formal field space. Largely a passive open space, there is no dedicated diamond, field delineation, or typical facility amenities. The turf itself is in good condition, with minimum weed growth and compaction. Layout of fields may be limited due to the various signage, flagpole, and monuments located throughout the site. The property offers a few small player benches, picnic tables, and pedestrian benches at the perimeter of the field space.

There is a small parking area that has capacity for approximately five cars directly off Portsmouth Road. Some of the field and the parking lot are within the right-of-way of Portsmouth Road. The majority of visitors park in the shoulders of the adjacent roadways. If this field were to increase use, parking would need to be formalized to reduce impacts on adjacent properties. There are no accessible routes throughout the site or ADA parking.





## WOODSOM FARM FIELDS

**FIELD DESCRIPTION:** Woodsom Farm Fields are located at 223 Lions Mouth Road. While the entire property encompasses a large area, the athletic fields are limited to approximately 10 acres on the southern portion of the site, which serve as the home base for the youth soccer activities. In addition to the athletic fields, an extensive trail network is also located on the property that is used by both the high school cross country team and the public. The fields are bordered by Cashman Elementary School baseball fields to the southeast, wetlands to the north, private farmland to the south, and the Farm Learning Center trails to the west. The property, along with the open site across the street to the south, is utilized as a public space for the Parks and Recreation Department to host community events such as fireworks displays and triathlons. The Flying Aces Club flies its model airplanes on this site one Saturday a month, and rocket launching is often practiced as well.

The access driveway off Lions Mouth Road is not well-marked, and the small parking lot is shared by users of the Farm Learning Center and the Woodsom Farm trails. Additional parking is provided in overflow areas south of Lions Mouth Road.

Features include:

- West Woodsom Practice Fields (1) 280' x 140', (1) 300' x 180', (2) 200' x 120'
- East Woodsom Hay Field
- Trails



**ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:** The ASA Town League has used and maintained the soccer fields at Woodsom Farm for 20 years. The organization holds a lease through the town for use of approximately 10 acres of unimproved field space on former pastureland. The fields are used largely as practice fields for the ASA Town League during the months of March to November. The poor play surface of the pastureland and lack of full-sized fields require the organization to find alternative field space for younger players as well as the U14-U18 teams.



Overall, the fields are in poor condition with compacted soils and uneven playing surfaces. Leveling the fields would require a mass earthwork operation. ASA is currently raising funds to develop new fields in the eastern part of the property bordering Cashman Elementary School. The plans include a range of field sizes to accommodate every Division: (2) U14, (1) U12, (1) U10, and (4) U6-sized fields. The project focuses on safe, playable field space. No lighting, concession buildings, or stadium seating is proposed. No water or irrigation supply currently extends into the property, and services would need to be extended from either Lions Mouth Road or Cashman Elementary. There is an existing storage building on site, which the ASA shares with the Police Department. Porta-potties are provided adjacent to the parking area.

The parking lot at Woodsom Farm often exceeds capacity, and if these fields were to receive more use in the future, it would be necessary to expand the existing parking lot or extend the maintenance drive at Cashman Elementary School to provide

parking on the east side of the site. There is a lack of accessibility throughout the site, with no existing paths connecting the parking lot and the athletic fields. Additionally, safety provisions should be in place to raise visibility of pedestrians crossing Lions Mouth Road from the remote parking area. Traffic speeds on the street may also need to be addressed. The existing signage should be updated as well to clearly designate the point of entry to the facility and to the parking lots.

## Amesbury Parks - Woodsom Farm Fields

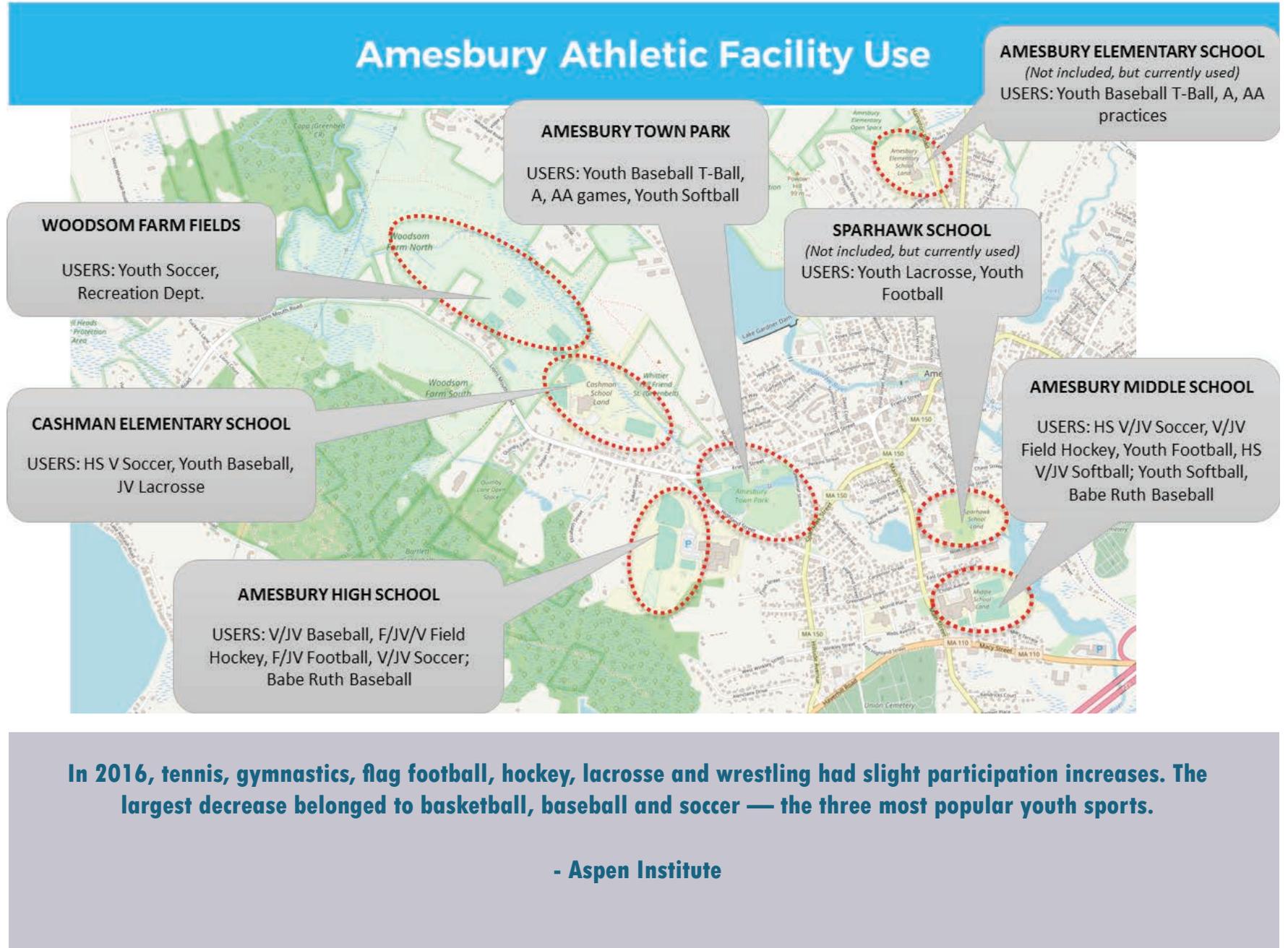


# ATHLETIC FIELDS- USE ASSESSMENT

Amesbury has an active and engaged athletics community, particularly with regard to youth sports. While the schools and outside organizations run a full range of sports teams and activities, it falls upon the City of Amesbury to provide and balance the scheduled use of the facilities. The Facilities section of the master plan document provides an overview of the athletic fields for each facility, documenting the field types, users, general conditions, and improvement needs (if any). This section supplements this data by documenting use and calculating field demand by field type, average weekly utilization, seasonal demand, and capacity of the existing fields. The detailed field use demand data is included at the end of this report.

As an industry standard, the maximum recommended field use for natural turf per week is 24 hours. This level of use assumes that field maintenance follows best management practices. Use beyond the 24 hours/week threshold undermines the sustainability of the field. At higher levels of use, the turf quality suffers due to higher compaction rates and lack of rest periods, which allow turf to regenerate.

The analysis examined the patterns of use and calculated seasonal as well as weekly field demand. The results are compiled in two documents of the Appendices: the Athletic Field Use document, which was developed in coordination with the athletic organizations and the Recreation Department, and the Field Use Tables, which provide calculations for field demand. This information is summarized herein and includes key findings of the analysis, particularly regarding needs associated with field capacity.



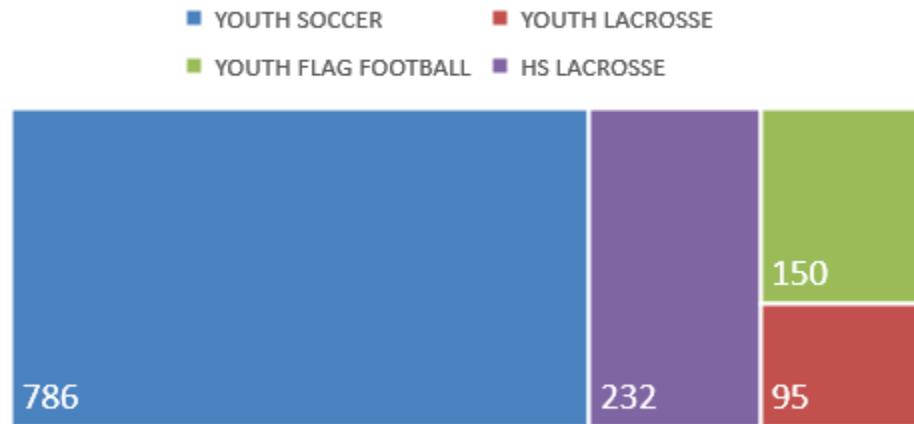
**FIELD USE.** As part of the needs assessment process, Milone & MacBroom, Inc. surveyed athletic organizations to collect data related to field conditions, patterns of use, maintenance, and game/practice schedules. Using this information, we documented athletic field use to understand the overall utilization and demand for field space organized by field type and size as well as the season of use. The resulting field use assessment tables are included in the Appendix of this report, and they provide detailed documentation of field use by organization divisions and teams with the goal of identifying the “load” on each field and determining the adequacy of the number of fields and/or field space that Amesbury has to meet the demand (capacity).

**FIELD DEMAND.** Field demand is measured by the overall number of hours per week fields are used for athletic events, whether games or practices (events). Event hours are impacted by a variety of factors, including the number of teams, as well as the frequency and duration of events. In some instances, field demand is impacted by sharing of practice fields or in cases of divisional play between teams within an organization. The analysis compared seasonal and weekly demand by athletic program season, and field designation. Our assessment also identified the level of program demand for specific athletic facility types so that the specific field requirements can be better understood, particularly as they relate to field capacity.

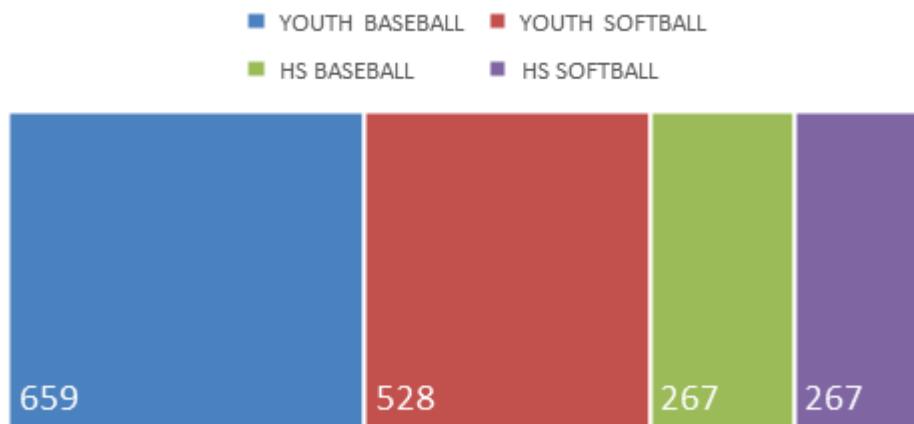
**FIELD CAPACITY.** As part of this study, we identified the overall field capacity based upon hours of use and available field space. The factors of field capacity are described in the sidebar to the right. Results of the field capacity and use analysis are discussed in the following section.

This analysis considered the capacity of natural turf fields to be 24 hours in use per week. Based on the calculated utilization rates for specific fields, the field capacity analysis categorized their ability to accommodate current athletic activities within this threshold. Varying programs have differing spatial demands that also impact overall field capacity. Our analysis included the identification of overall field size requirements of each sport and division to better understand

SPRING SEASON DEMAND - BY PROGRAM  
(RECTANGULAR FIELDS)



SPRING SEASON DEMAND - BY PROGRAM  
(DIAMOND FIELDS)



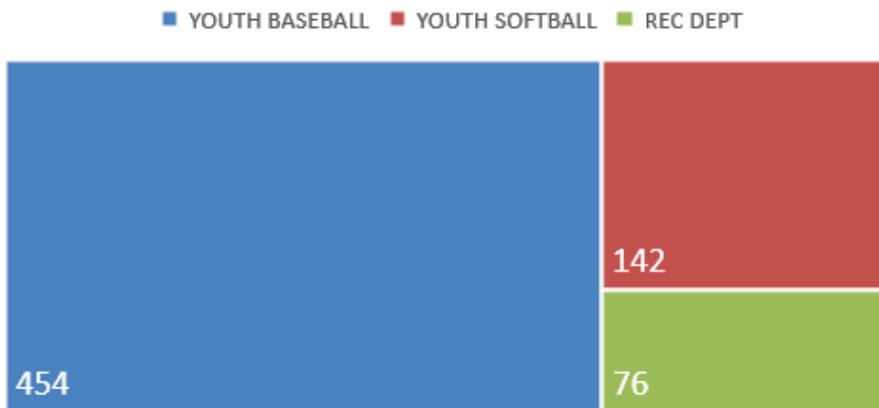
### FACTORS OF FIELD CAPACITY:

- ✦ WEEKLY AMOUNT OF PLAY. To maintain the quality of the turf suitability for safe athletic play, use should be limited to a maximum 24 hours per week on a natural turf field. Synthetic fields do not have a limit for hours of use in terms of sustainability.
- ✦ SINGLE PURPOSE VS. MULTIPURPOSE. Diamond-shaped fields are generally considered single purpose while rectangular fields (and sometimes outfields) are suitable for multiple sports. These considerations impact capacity.
- ✦ TIMES WHEN EVENTS OCCUR. Generally, the number of available field time needs to correspond to after-school hours and weekends, which limits capacity.
- ✦ EVENT UNITS. The duration of practices and games (events) may differ between sports and even divisions. Duration of events needs to be factored into overall field demand for field capacity analysis.

### SUMMER SEASON DEMAND - BY PROGRAM (RECTANGULAR FIELDS)



### SUMMER SEASON DEMAND - BY PROGRAM (DIAMOND FIELDS)



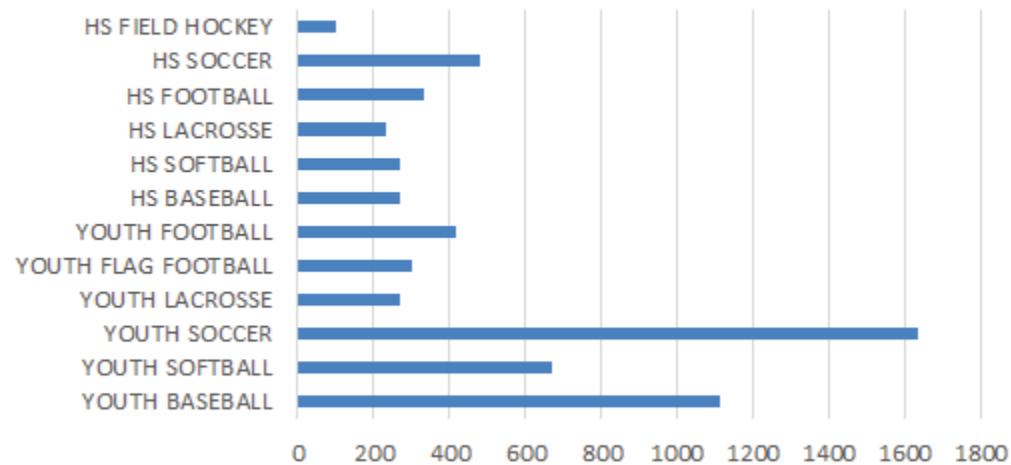
overall field space demand and capacity. This allowed us to identify where there may be competing needs for fields and whether the existing availability of field space meets the requirements of any given activity. This information informs the recommendations for better balancing levels of use.

**FIELD USE ASSESSMENT.** Following is a brief summary of our analysis and assessment of the field use, demand, and capacity data. This section provides our findings based on field type and other factors, all of which inform our recommendations for athletic facilities.

**RECTANGULAR FIELDS.** Demand for rectangular fields in Amesbury is highest in the fall when use hours reach nearly 1,900 hours over the season. Spring season utilization is just over 1,700 hours, and summer utilization is around 550 hours. Youth soccer accounts for the greatest demand each season, peaking in the summer (77%) and spring (62%). In the fall, field use is more evenly distributed with youth football, youth soccer, high school football, and high school soccer accounting for 86% of the field demand. Youth flag football and high school field hockey programs combine to make up the remaining demand.

The field use assessment showed that current utilization rates based on the recommended 24 hours of maximum use suggest that field capacity is exceeded at the Cashman Front Field during the fall season and will be at capacity during the spring season when high school varsity lacrosse comes on line. The high school soccer and travel soccer (U14-U18/19 Divisions) teams use the field for practices and games.

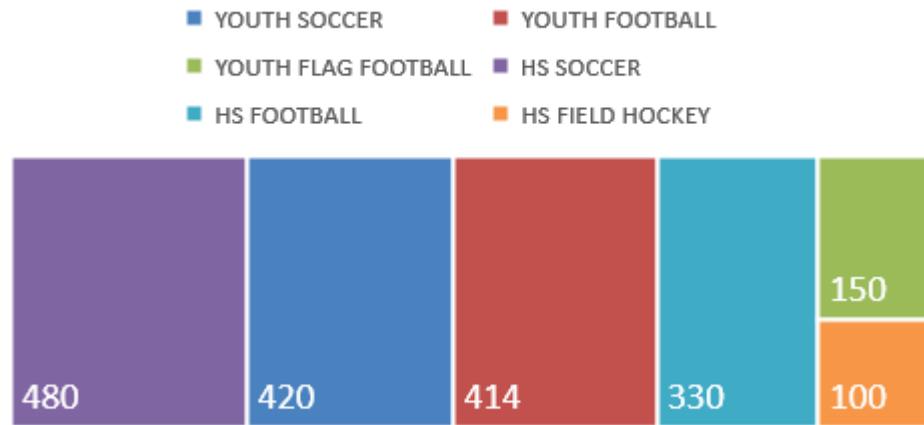
### ANNUAL TOTAL DEMAND BY PROGRAM



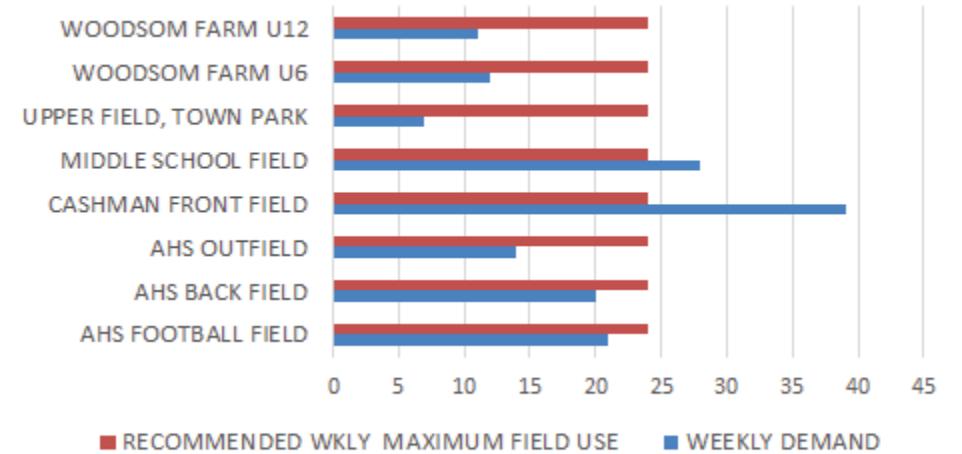
Spatial capacity is not adequate to meet existing program needs for spring soccer and lacrosse activities at existing fields. As a result, Cashman Front Field is generally overutilized, particularly during the spring season. Flag football, which requires local practice fields, and high school lacrosse, which is an emerging program, will likely increase the demand for field space in this size range in the spring. Competition for appropriately sized field space is already impacting some

youth programming. Development of full size soccer fields at Woodsom Farm, as currently proposed by the Amesbury Soccer Association, would address travel team needs. Currently, high school soccer teams divide their time between the Front Field at Cashman Elementary and the overlay field at the Amesbury Middle School. The analysis shows that two full-size fields are required to meet high school soccer demand. Existing fields at the Middle School and Cashman School can accommodate the levels of use by the high school soccer teams but not additional uses. With both high school and travel team soccer team uses, the Cashman Front Field is currently overutilized.

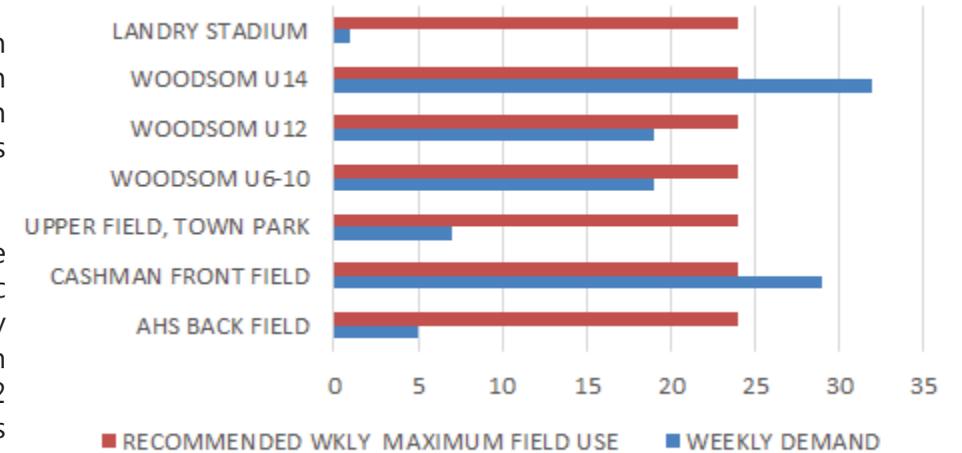
FALL SEASON DEMAND - BY PROGRAM  
(RECTANGULAR FIELDS)



RECTANGULAR FIELD USE - FALL SEASON



RECTANGULAR FIELD USE - SPRING SEASON



**DIAMOND FIELDS.** Field demand for baseball and softball fields is highest during the spring season when utilization reaches over 1,700 hours. Field use is split fairly evenly between youth baseball (38%), youth softball (31%), and high school baseball and softball (32%). Youth baseball accounts for the majority of summer use (68%) followed by youth softball (21%). The Recreation Department (Youth Services) utilization of diamond fields for programs and events is just over 10% of total seasonal demand. There is no fall demand for diamond fields.

The spring demand on the city's softball and baseball diamonds surpasses the fields' ability to accommodate the uses and remain sustainable and healthy over the long term. Based on the information provided by the athletic organizations, spring demand by the Babe Ruth and high school baseball teams greatly exceeds the capacity of Pony Field at Town Park. Weekly utilization is approximately 40% greater (14 hours) than the recommended maximum use for natural turf. Demand for the Little League fields at Cashman exceeds capacity by approximately 30% (11-12 hours). Demand for softball fields also creates pressure on Collins Field and Perry Field in particular. Perry Field is shared by the high school softball team and Amesbury youth softball league teams. Demand exceeds capacity by 45% (15 hours) on this field.

Shifting some demand may help relieve some of the overuse in the near term. The JV field use is slightly under capacity and may be able to absorb some additional use (up to 8 hours per week). The lower field at Town Park is also underutilized (16 hours per week). There may be other opportunities to shift uses, such as moving practices to multiuse fields in the short term. The

baseball field at the high school is underutilized (12 hours per week) and may help relieve some of the demand on Pony field in the short term. In the long term, the findings suggest that the city should consider developing more high-quality baseball and softball facilities, such as renovating the existing substandard fields (JV field at the Middle School and the lower field at Town Park, for example).

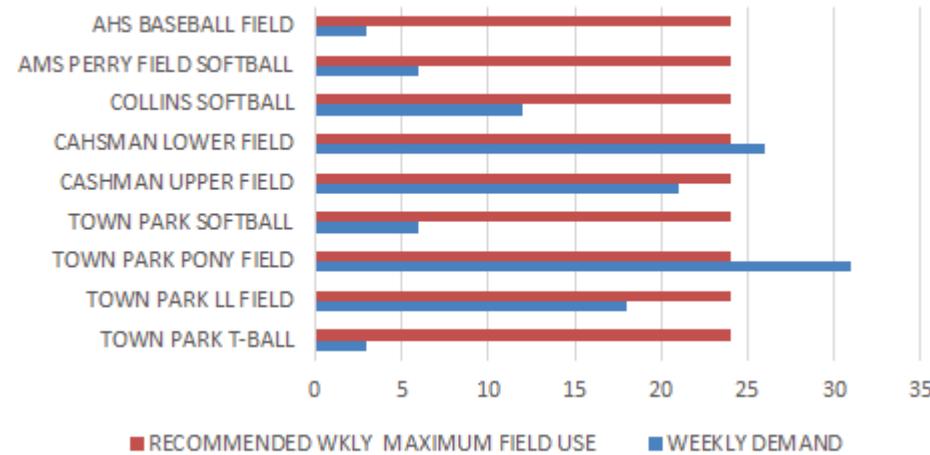
**SUMMARY.** The summary of the field use and capacity assessment is provided on the right. Overall, there is a demand for larger fields that can accommodate a wider variety of athletic activities. The deficit in full-size soccer fields could be addressed by the development of large multiuse fields, for example. While certain diamond fields are overused (Perry Field, Collins Field), other fields are underutilized. Investment in those fields or construction of new, high-quality softball fields will help meet demand.

Continued monitoring and close coordination between the city, town, and athletic organizations will be required to better manage levels of use. Short-term strategies to even out field time can reduce overuse of certain facilities, but in the long run, the city will want to consider expanding its athletic facilities to better accommodate existing and future activities.

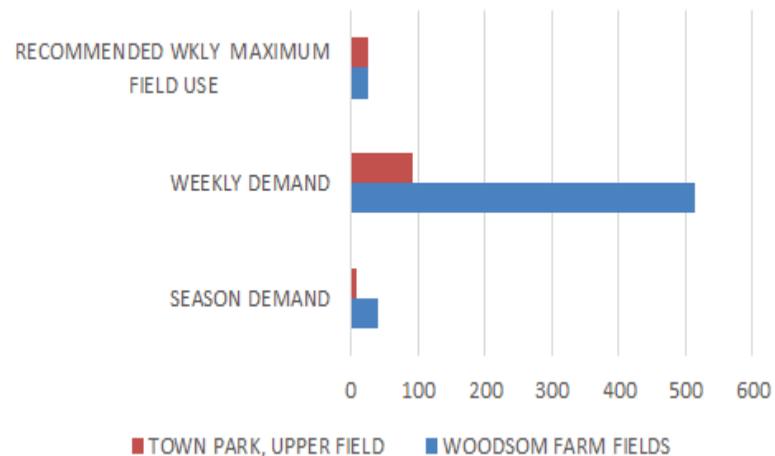
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR FIELD USE AND CAPACITY:

- ✦ FULL-SIZE SOCCER FIELDS.  
The city is currently deficient in full-size soccer fields. Demand is highest at Cashman Front Field, which is over capacity during the fall season.
- ✦ LARGE MULTIUSE FIELDS.  
With the expansion of new sports, such as lacrosse, flag football, and possibly (future) ultimate Frisbee, the city may need to expand existing and/or develop new, larger multiuse fields to better accommodate a greater variety of sports.
- ✦ BASEBALL FIELDS.  
During the spring season, there are approximately 8 net hours a week of unmet need for 60-foot diamonds and 16 net hours per week of unmet need for 90-foot diamonds.
- ✦ SOFTBALL FIELDS.  
There is a need for high-quality softball fields. Existing spring demand for Perry Field and Collins Field exceeds capacity. However, demand could be reduced by shifting use to Town Park and the JV field, both of which require improvements.

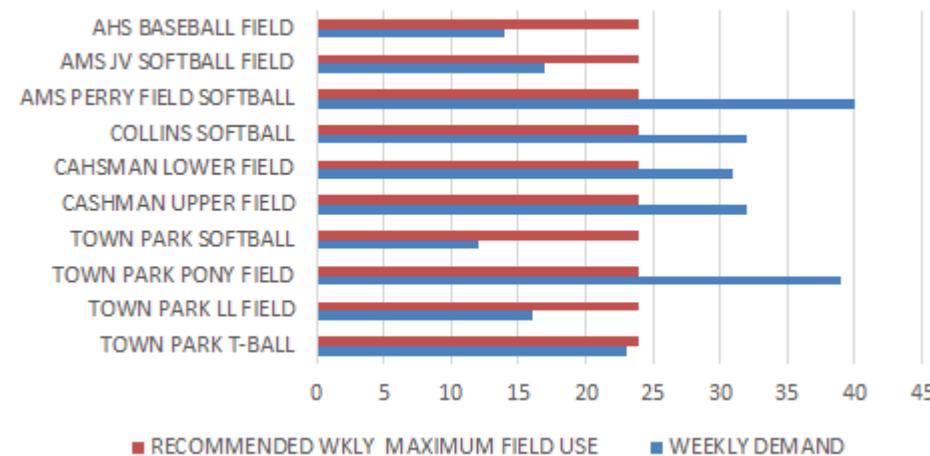
DIAMOND FIELD DEMAND - SUMMER SEASON



RECTANGULAR FIELD USE - SUMMER SEASON



DIAMOND FIELD DEMAND - SPRING SEASON



## **ATHLETIC FIELDS - RECOMMENDATIONS**

The field use and capacity analysis demonstrated that there are several considerations for improving field utilization. The following are recommendations:

**CAPACITY.** The spatial capacity of existing field facilities needs to be considered in the planning for organized athletic programs since Amesbury's athletic facilities are shared by multiple sports each season. There appears to be higher demand for large multiuse fields that can accommodate regulation field sizes. This need is most pronounced during spring season, when there is high demand for soccer and lacrosse field space. At these times, baseball and softball outfields cannot be used, thereby exacerbating field demand. Moving forward, athletic organizations, the high school, and the city should coordinate when planning new activities that need to be accommodated by the outdoor athletic facilities. The required field space for sports programming should also be considered within the context of field space availability to avoid overcrowding or incompatible uses.

**SCHEDULING.** Due to the very high demand for field space, the city should have full control of scheduling for its facilities. Steps should be taken to improve coordination with user organizations to ensure that their needs are met and the facilities are not overscheduled. The city may want to consider establishing a preseason coordination policy for the organizations that programs use of the facilities and establishes a regular method of communication with partner organizations as well as the high school. The city should also consider using its online recreation management software service to improve efficiency and services.

**UNMET DEMAND.** Current scheduling of field facilities includes overlapping activities and/or the use of suboptimal field space. As noted previously, the spatial capacity of the facilities should inform which activities are compatible and how many activities can safely be accommodated within a given time period.

The field-use analysis suggests that the city should consider developing new or expanding existing large, multiuse field space to address unmet demand. It should be noted that the introduction of new or expanded programs such as the flag football or varsity lacrosse program would increase the projected demand.

The city's higher-quality diamond fields are over capacity, and even with shifted use to other fields, use is approaching (softball) or exceeding (baseball) full capacity. Use of these facilities should be monitored in coordination with the youth baseball and softball organizations and high school to anticipate specific future needs for additional diamonds.

**FIELD SUSTAINABILITY.** Ensuring a sustainable and resilient natural athletic field requires effectively managing the levels of use and maintenance. Scheduling and considerations for capacity must go hand in hand with regular maintenance and field rehabilitation efforts, including rest periods.

To the extent possible, athletic fields should be irrigated through the growing season, which improves the health and resiliency of playing fields. When necessary, the city should install automated systems to reduce demands on the Department of Public Works staff. The city and its partner organizations should consider developing an aeration and overseeding program for all athletic facilities. The plan should be formally adopted and roles and responsibilities well defined to ensure that maintenance needs are consistently met.

### **KEY MANAGEMENT GOALS:**

- ✦ *Maintain a dense turf cover with enough vigor to recover from damage from play.*
- ✦ *Control field use to avoid overuse.*
- ✦ *Factor in sufficient field rest, such as the rotation and temporary closing of fields.*
- ✦ *Include soil aeration and overseeding in addition to mowing, fertilization, and irrigation.*
- ✦ *Provide regular, deep irrigation of the fields.*
- ✦ *Restrict use when turf and soil are extremely wet to limit compaction and root damage.*

*Excerpted from Management of Natural Turf Sports Fields, Park, Bradley S. and James A. Murphy. 2014 Turfgrass Proceedings, Rutgers University.*

