

From: [Pam Reeves](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] [SPF ERROR] Comment to Town Council for October 18 Meeting
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Agenda Item 10B, Staff Report item #10 allocation for purchase of artificial turf

I ask that the council revise this fund title, to a fund to replace ornamental turf with appropriate natural plantings and/or dirt/hardscape and/or outdoor benches or recreational equipment.

Artificial grass creates a large carbon footprint during a journey that includes the manufacturing, transportation and installation of the product. Replacing soil with sand to create a stable bed for artificial grass releases more carbon dioxide stored in the earth.

Because natural materials such as grass absorb carbon dioxide during photosynthesis, replacing them with artificial grass also directly contributes to the increase of carbon dioxide (a primary greenhouse gas) in the atmosphere.

You may also know that artificial grass, however welcoming it looks for our bare feet, provides virtually no habitat for pollinators and other animals and plants that make up a healthy, diverse ecosystem. In fact, these artificial lawns can do substantial harm to the environment and to both vertebrates and insects.

There are several environmental concerns associated with artificial turf including loss of wildlife habitat, contaminated runoff and migration of synthetic materials. Contaminants that are harmful to aquatic life, such as zinc, have been found in storm water runoff from artificial turf.

Recycling artificial grass is a technically difficult process, because the blades of grass and the cloth to which the blades are attached are made of plastic while the under layer is usually made of latex. These different materials first have to be separated before the artificial grass carpet can be recycled.

When the summer heat is on, artificial grass will heat up more than natural plant material and maintain a higher temperature. As with decking or patios exposed to direct sunlight, artificial turf temperature can rise quickly and will not have the natural cooling effect we may be used to from a real grass plantings.

Artificial lawns can cause surface run off contributing to flooding. Natural lawns or planting allow water to drain into the soil surface easily, helping to lock deluges of rain in the ground.

Even with rigorous maintenance, it is possible to have fungus or mold spring up in your artificial turf – these organisms are living outside after all. Mold, mildew, and fungus are powdery growths common in the outdoors

And artificial turf does require water and maintenance. Watering artificial turf fields is common in play areas: it lubricates the surface which reduces injuries. Cools the surface so rug burns are minimized. If you don't clean up messes on artificial turf, they will fester. And certain types of infill are prone to holding odors, too.

You would remove excrement the same way you would do in any public space: with a bag. But manufacturers recommend to rinse the grass with some water after removal of the excrement. Only then can you be absolutely certain that the grass is completely clean. The same applies to urine: thoroughly rinse the spot with water. What about bird, squirrel, cat or other non-leashed animal's droppings? This seems like a maintenance and user nightmare.

Hard water "stains" everything – as hard water evaporates, it leaves a white or discolored powder all over tile, concrete and other elements – even artificial grass. If you see it now, on or outdoor surfaces, you will see it build up on the artificial grass

The cons of artificial grass are the creation of pollution through manufacturing and the fact that it isn't always biodegradable. We must consider other options to be environmentally conscious. Natural plantings and just exposed dirt benefits our environment because they are living organisms. Real organic materials contribute to the ecosystem by supplying oxygen, filtering pollution, and absorbing heat.

