

SAVE EDISON SCHOOL FIELD FROM ARTIFICIAL TURF

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

On May 9, 2023 the Westfield Town Council voted to adopt a **\$11.8 million** bond ordinance (on first reading) for a new **artificial turf** multipurpose athletic field at Edison Intermediate School. There are many concerns with artificial turf including:



COSTS

- **\$11.8 million is just the upfront cost to construct the field.**
- Interest payments on the bonds, periodic replacement of the plastic grass carpet and infill, and annual maintenance will more than **double the cost** over the 30-year period of the shared service agreement with the Board of Education.
- Cost of **destroying a natural grass ecosystem** cannot be measured in dollars \$\$\$.



HEAT

- Plastic grass can be more than 50 degrees **hotter than natural grass.**
- Field temperatures often exceed 150 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Children are less able to regulate body temperature, raising their risk of **dehydration** and **heat stress** or **heat stroke.**
- Artificial turf fields absorb energy from the sun, becoming **heat islands.**



INJURIES

- Falling or sliding across plastic turf grass often leads to turf burn, a **painful abrasion.**
- Studies also show that players are much more likely to sustain **foot and ankle injuries** while playing on plastic turf compared to natural grass.
- Head contact with plastic turf is disproportionately associated with **concussions.**

The Edison field is adjacent to a tributary of the Robinson's Branch of the Rahway River that flows into the Middlesex Reservoir.



TOXICITY

- Artificial turf fields, aka plastic grass, contain **toxic chemicals** including: PFAS, carcinogens, neurotoxins, and endocrine disrupting chemicals.
- Health experts warn that **children are uniquely vulnerable** to harmful exposures from artificial turf.
- Toxic chemicals in plastic grass can cause **neurodevelopmental and endocrine disorders, obesity, renal and cardiovascular diseases and cancer.**



ENVIRONMENT

- The top layer of all artificial turf fields is a **plastic carpet** containing million of blades of plastic grass.
- Plastic grass blades break up into **microplastics** (plastics particles less than 5 mm in length).
- The microplastics and infill, usually ground up used tires, migrate off the field and **contaminate the air, soil, and water** with toxic chemicals.
- Worn out artificial turf fields are burned, landfilled or dumped illegally, in each case releasing toxic chemicals into our air, soil and water.
- There are **no artificial turf recycling** facilities in the the U.S.



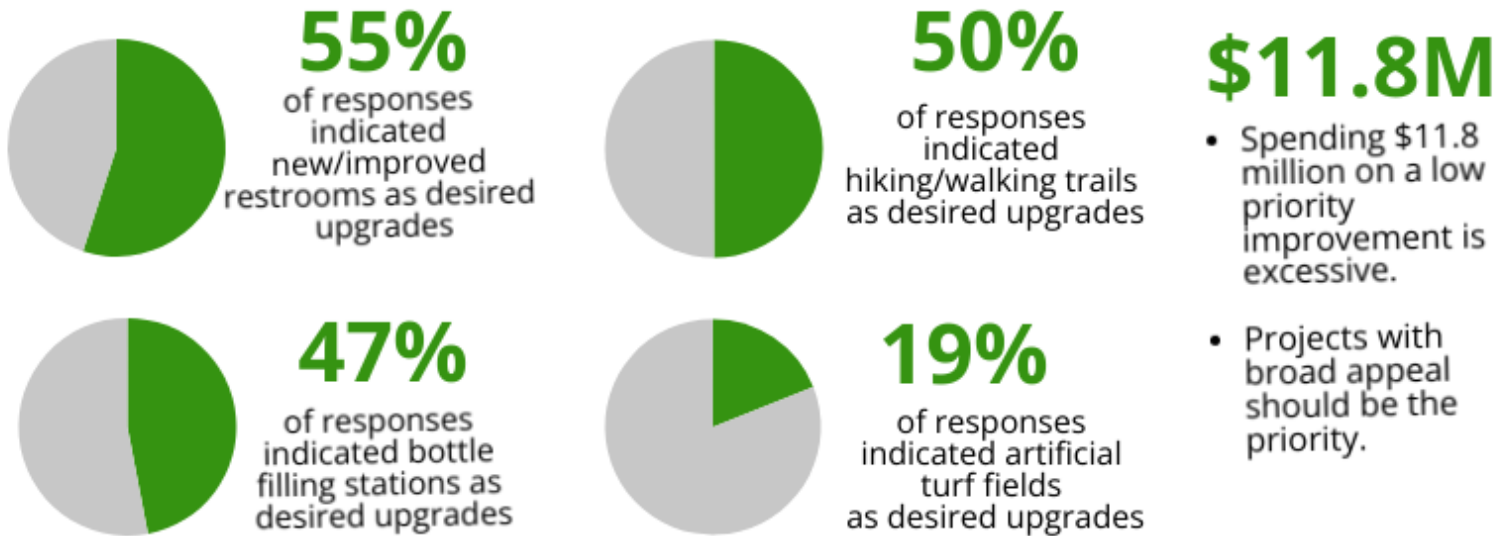
CLIMATE CHANGE

- Artificial turf **emits carbon dioxide, methane** and other greenhouse gases from cradle to grave that contribute to rising global temperatures.
- **Natural grass fields form carbon sinks** that capture and store carbon dioxide in the rootmass and soil.

WHAT DO WE SUPPORT?

- We believe that residents should get the chance to vote on an expenditure of \$11.8 million, especially one that comes with significant risks.
- We also believe that Westfield's athletic fields need improvements, but they can and should be improved without the use of artificial turf and toxic chemicals.
- We believe the Town of Westfield should invest in natural grass athletic fields specifically designed to withstand sports activities and maintained using organic and regenerative practices.

Per the mail survey of Westfield residents conducted in connection with the Parks Master Plan:



New or improved natural grass fields were not even an option in the survey!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1 LEARN
Scan the QR code for references and links to more information about artificial turf, or email WestfieldCRAFD@gmail.com.

2 ACT
Sign our petition to require a referendum. A referendum will allow you and every voter in Westfield to vote on this issue at the polls.



TAKE ACTION NOW!

If you have not already hand-signed our referendum petition, email WestfieldCRAFD@gmail.com or call or text **(908) 652-5174** to arrange for someone to come by with a petition for you to sign.