

STEMMERMANN PARK WIFFLE BALL FIELD PROJECT Q&A

Location:

The proposed location is the area directly south of Wederquist field. The area is between the batting cage, park area, and park bathrooms.

Reasoning for location of the wiffle ball field:

Currently, each night the siblings of kids playing on Wederquist will play a wiffle ball game over in this proposed area. They use the trees as bases. With windstorms last year, several of those trees had to be removed or are damaged. The current proposed area was damaged by the storms and adding a more permanent structure location would enhance the space.

Other options for location would include moving the wiffle field closer to the roadway, while working around the sidewalk and bathroom areas. At the youth sports complex, we could build something similar at Tball 3, which is near the softball and soccer areas, the biggest concern with using that space is having children going back and forth in the parking lot, parents having line of sight on children, and future expansion opportunities with Tball 2 field.

Why build a wiffle ball field:

The idea of a wiffle ball field in this park falls in line with the current park design and youth sports complex offerings. The area would provide a safe space for families while using the park or youth sports complex. The field would enhance Stemmermann Park. The field could be used for other things than wiffle ball, such as kick ball, soccer, and short infield work. Especially if the infield or full area is turf, the area would be used for many things. This area will also be attractive to out-of-town teams and families as they visit Blair and our youth sports complex. During the day we have people using the tball fields daily. We have younger kids to teenagers often playing wiffle ball during the day on the tball fields. We also have a group of senior age athletes that work a couple of times a week to hit ground balls and play catch on the tball fields.

What safety precautions would be necessary:

We would need to build at minimum a backstop around the home plate area of the wiffle ball field to help protect from foul balls on Wederquist Field. We likely would need to add an extension netting to Wederquist Field to reduce foul balls in that direction. Little League is working with insurance to get a new light pole approved for Wederquist. We could add lighting off the back of the new pole to light the wiffle ball area when the Wederquist lights are on for a night game. Since the Little League pays 100% of their electrical bill, that light could only be on during game times to maintain minimum amount of cost to the Little League for electricity. If the field is turf, the area would be very safe for anyone to use.

General cost:

We had the area bid for a wiffle ball field this winter. The numbers are most likely a maximum number to build everything out. In the estimate, the contractor bid for a fully turfed wiffle ball field with approximately 95'-110' fence distances from home plate. The cost for the turf work is approximately 144k. They also estimated fencing a backstop and fully around the field area for another 27k price. For an all in cost of 181k.

Why Turf:

A turf field would have a high initial cost, but would have a very low maintenance cost during the turf's lifespan. Turf would eliminate the need for consistent sprinklers running in the area. Turf would eliminate any mowing/weeding, field draggiwing, field chalking, and general field maintenance. Turf would provide a safer space for children to play with less fall risks. Turf would allow disabled users to have a safer space to play.

Potential cost savings:

- Realistically, the 95'-110' outfield fence distance could be shortened. A distance of 80'-100' would be sufficient, when compared to other wiffle ball fields.
- We also could likely have the fence work done with donated labor.
- We could shrink the turf area to infield only or dirt areas only; I believe it is important to at least have the dirt areas turfed. We would have kids running bikes/scooters on the dirt and digging in the dirt if it was not turf. We would also have a lot more maintenance on the area if it had a dirt/grass infield. If the area is not turfed, we would need to potentially address sprinkler system's needs, as well as mowing and field maintenance responsibilities.

Little League Use:

Little League is not planning on using this wiffle ball field for any programming currently. The idea would be more for a park amenity for families and the community. If space in the future was available and the Little League ever needed space, the field could work for the Tball age. Little League International also has a Challenger Division, which is aimed at individuals with disabilities to have a safe and accessible space. This space would fit the younger ages of the Challenger League if ever pursued. The wiffle ball space on site also gives Blair Little League a similar setup to our biggest competitor for hosting the State Tournament, as Kearney Little League has a full 125' Challenger Turf Field at their complex. Little League is not planning on using this wiffle ball field for programming.

Life Span of a Turf Field:

There is an 8-year warranty on the turf work and installation. The realistic life expectancy of the turf is 12-15 years with a maximum of 20 years.

Potential Funding Options:

- Private donations
- Non-profit state and federal facility grants
- WCCF and local grant funding
- Naming rights to the field
- Banner sales of outfield for continued maintenance