

Los Alamos County Artificial Turf Study

P a r k s & R e c B o a r d





Photo courtesy Los Alamos Daily Post

Introductions

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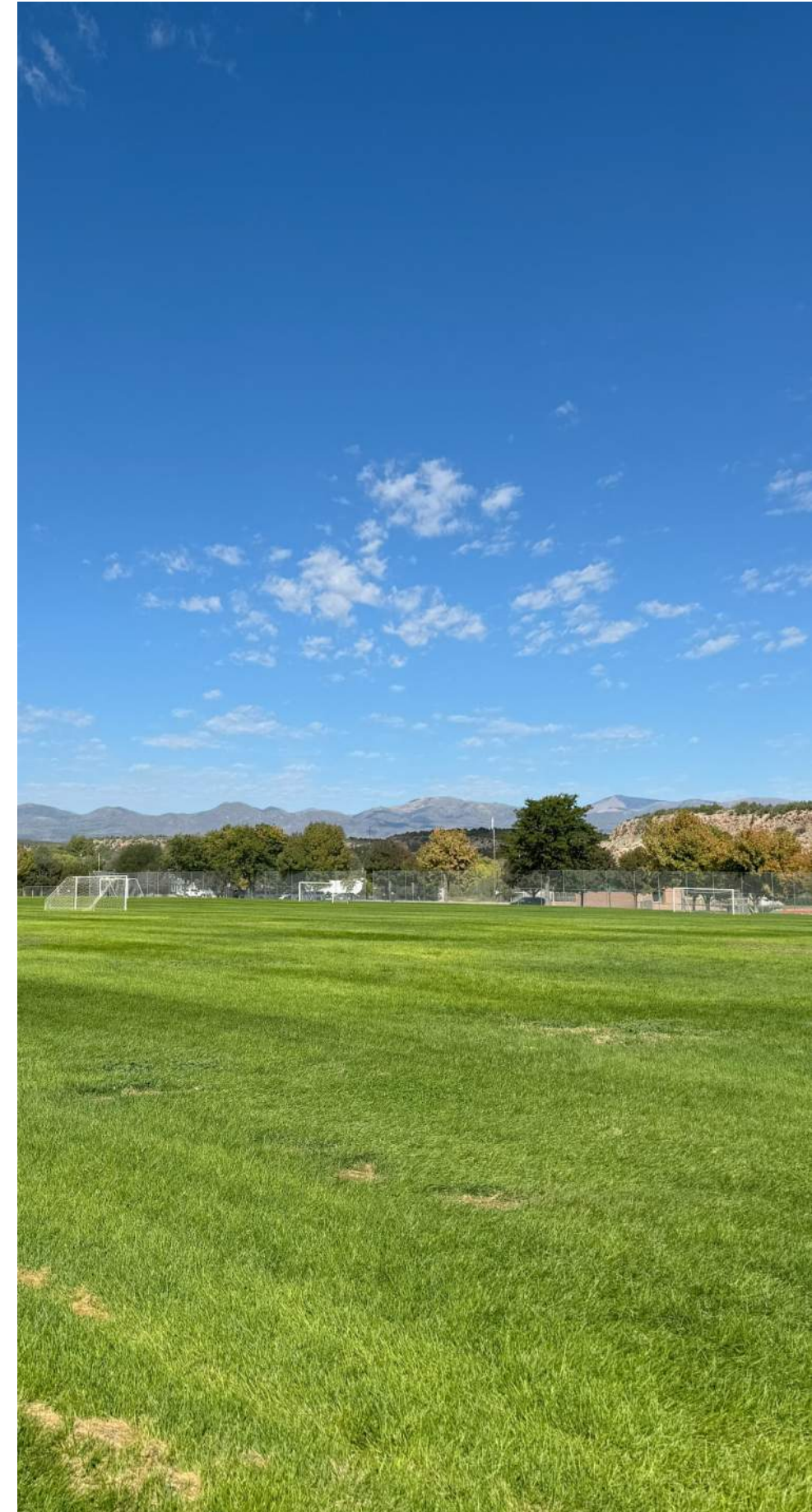
George Radnovich
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Principal Landscape Architect

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R&R Engineer
Principal Civil Engineer



Purpose of the Study

- The Study was driven by increasing demand for high-quality, multi-use athletic fields capable of supporting a growing number of teams, leagues, and year-round programming, specifically at North Mesa Sports Complex and Overlook Park.
- Key goals included identifying opportunities to improve field safety and playability, address maintenance challenges, optimize site layouts, and extend field usability through artificial turf installation where appropriate.
- Make recommendations for field realignment/reconfiguration, synthetic turf products and installation options, accessibility, amenities, lighting, maintenance and management.



Process of the Study

- Public Engagement and Active Collaboration with User Groups and LAC Staff
- Collect Feedback regarding: Field User Experience, Desired Improvements, Human and Environmental Concerns
- Assessment of Existing Conditions
- Analysis of the Above
- Recommendations
- Cost Estimates and Phasing Plans
- Deliverable: Artificial Turf Conceptual Study Report – current version uploaded to Project Webpage



Public Engagement

Table 2.1 Summary of Meeting Dates and Focus			
Meeting	Date	Focus/Format	Key Topics
Meeting 1	October 30, 2024	Listening Session 1	Initial community values, experiences, needs and priorities
Meeting 2	January 30, 2025	Listening Session 2	Field usage patterns, concerns, desires, and preferences
Meeting 3	February 27, 2025	Concept Presentation	Field layout options, co-location of facilities, field re-orientation, parking and circulation, flex fields
Meeting 4	April 23, 2025	Concept Refinement	Refinement of field layout options, amenity concepts
Meeting 5	May 15, 2025	Final Framework Review	Full plan review, prioritization, and lighting concepts

Public Engagement

- **Focused Group Interviews:**
 - Los Alamos Public Schools (LAPS)
 - Los Alamos Youth Soccer League (LAYSL)
- **Community Survey:** 216 responses (Closed February 7th)
- **Follow up Feedback Survey:** 141 responses (Closed March 31st)
 - **Insights shared by the following groups:**
 - Los Alamos Little League
 - Los Alamos Youth Lacrosse
 - Los Alamos Softball Association
 - Los Alamos Adult Competitive Soccer
 - Los Alamos Extreme (youth football)
 - Athletes, parents, and supporters of youth, LAPS, and adult sports
 - Dog park users
 - Residents of surrounding neighborhoods and LA County generally
 - Residents of Espanola, Pojoaque, Santa Fe, Nambe, and surrounding areas
- **Project Webpage hosted by LAC to post relevant information/notices**
- **Dedicated Project Email for public input**



Public Engagement – Process for Gathering Information

- **Community Engagement via Listening Sessions and**
 - Questions and Comments were written down during the meeting on an easel.
 - Compiled into summary notes and posted on Project Website along with the presentation for each meeting.
- **Focused Group Interviews:**
 - Summary notes were compiled and distributed.
- **Community Survey:**
 - Gathered initial feedback
 - Survey Monkey analytics
 - Detailed review of the above and presentation to the public at the following public meeting PEM #1
- **Follow up Feedback Survey:**
 - Gathered feedback on proposed Framework Plans
 - Survey Monkey analytics
 - Detailed review of the above and presentation to the public at the following public meeting PEM #4



What we've heard

Field User Experiences:

- Concern about the number of injuries attributable to the current condition of natural turf at North Mesa and Overlook.
- Due to conditions on all fields, overuse on particular fields, and scheduling conflicts, the number of existing fields cannot accommodate the demand for games and practices.
- Grass at soccer fields is often too high for effective play.
- Gopher holes are particularly an issue at Bomber and Senior fields but are present at all fields.
- Fields are used seven days / week, but much more frequently Monday through Friday.
- Not enough options for youth football and lacrosse (sharing facilities with soccer).

Desired Improvements:

- Options for flex / multiuse fields should be considered when evaluating field realignment, consolidation, and artificial turf renovations.
- Consider dugout improvements, more batting cages, athlete changing rooms, better storage for teams, more bathrooms, safety netting, shade structures for spectators and players, and scoring booths.
- Co-locating baseball and softball game fields would be more convenient for families, would increase attendance, and create more opportunities for new programs, concessions / fundraising.
- Parking and circulation needs improvement at both North Mesa and Overlook.
- Install or upgrade lighting at more fields –this will increase playing time.
- Consider improved/expanded transportation options to/from facilities.
- Expand/improve access to drinking water.
- Higher (15-ft) fencing behind goals at soccer fields, extending 30 ft on both sides of goal.
- Retain as many trees as possible at the facilities (provide much needed shade).
- Accessible pathways, parking, restrooms, seating all need improvement.



What we've heard

Concerns about Human and Environmental Impacts

- **Artificial Turf:**
 - Presence of PFAS / “forever chemicals” in materials
 - Resulting “microplastics” in the environment
 - Life-cycle / recyclability of the materials
 - Increased temperatures during warmer months
 - Water-use to cool down artificial turf
 - Increased risk of abrasions and skin infections
- **Natural Turf:**
 - High water use to maintain natural turf
 - Pesticide & fertilizer use on natural turf
 - Gophers creating significant safety hazards to athletes and pest management challenges for County staff
 - High maintenance demands exceed capacity
 - Grass fields need more resting time than they currently get, leading to overuse



Addressing Needs, Wants and Concerns

Field User Experience and Desired Improvements: Iterative process

- Project team systematically collected, reviewed, and synthesized input gathered via Public Engagement Process, including interviews, community meetings, public surveys, and direct email correspondence.
- Identified key themes and areas of concern, helped refine the guiding questions and objectives of the analysis, and influenced the development of preliminary site concepts within the broader framework plans.
- Gathered insights informed targeted recommendations that respond to the community's priorities, operational needs, and long-term vision for athletic field use in Los Alamos.
- Recommendations captured in the Report and Framework Plans

Human and Environmental Impacts

- Project team compiled research by other Subject Matter Experts, and posted on Project Webpage
- Research informed recommendations, such as specifying cradle-to-cradle system, with products that meet recognized standards for material health and environmental stewardship.



Table 5.4: Summary of Study Recommendations		
Recommendations	North Mesa Sports Complex	Overlook Park
Artificial Turf	Synthetic turf for high-use fields. Recommended installation for Bomber field and Lou Caveglia field.	Synthetic turf for high-use fields. Recommended installation for Hope Field, X Lovato, and Dara Jones field.
	Synthetic turf product: Recycled tufted turf with a resilient recycled infill (cooling effect optional), permeable cradle to cradle pad, with a gopher resistant wire mesh installed at the turf foundation.	Synthetic turf product: Recycled turf with a resilient recycled infill (cooling effect optional), permeable cradle to cradle pad, with a gopher resistant wire mesh installed at the turf foundation.
Accessibility Improvements	Implement phased upgrades.	Implement phased upgrades.
	Short-term Goals: Improved parking surfaces, ADA-compliant ramps, pedestrian connectivity, accessible site furnishings and updated lighting systems. Long-term Goals: field realignments, centralized accessible walkways, grade adjustments for accessibility, accessible site furnishings and Improved lighting systems.	Short-term Goals: Improved parking surfaces, ADA-compliant ramps, pedestrian connectivity, accessible site furnishings and updated lighting systems. Long-term Goals: field realignments, centralized accessible walkways, grade adjustments for accessibility, accessible site furnishings and Improved lighting systems.
Circulation and Vehicular Access	Concentrate parking near the highest-use fields, add a secondary access from San Ildefonso Rd., and relocate overflow parking to a central, larger footprint to improve access, navigation, and event capacity.	Enhance vehicle and pedestrian connectivity between the north and south areas with more defined entrances, reorganized and expanded parking layouts, and improved signage to optimize usability and navigation.
Lighting Systems	Short-term goals: Update existing lighting systems	Short-term goals: Update existing lighting systems
	Long-term goals: Install new Light-Structure System with Total Light Control for Lou Caveglia, Senior, Bun Ryan, and Bomber fields, using shared poles to illuminate adjacent fields.	Long-term goals: Install new Light-Structure System with Total Light Control for Hope, Byers, X Lovato, Virchow, Fields 1-3, and Dara Jones, using shared poles to illuminate adjacent fields.
Field Maintenance	Natural Turf: Maintain natural fields through regular mowing, aeration, fertilization, seeding, and infield care for baseball/ softball, with more intensive mid-season top dressing to reduce compaction and promote healthy turf.	Natural Turf: Maintain natural fields through regular mowing, aeration, fertilization, seeding, and infield care for baseball/ softball, with more intensive mid-season top dressing to reduce compaction and promote healthy turf.
	Artificial Turf: Redistribute infill every 2–3 hours of play, weekly grooming, and routine debris removal to ensure consistent performance and longevity.	Artificial Turf: Redistribute infill every 2–3 hours of play, weekly grooming, and routine debris removal to ensure consistent performance and longevity.

Table 5.4: Summary of Study Recommendations		
Recommendations	North Mesa Sports Complex	Overlook Park
Renewable Energy Technology	Provide 4 EV parking spaces in the primary lot, incorporate solar panels on all new shade structures and buildings, and equip irrigation systems with solar controllers to enhance sustainability and future adaptability.	Provide 4 EV parking spaces in the primary lot, incorporate solar panels on all new shade structures and buildings, and equip irrigation systems with solar controllers to enhance sustainability and future adaptability.
Amenities and Enhancements	Provide new restrooms, a concessions/ equipment facility, playground with shade, pedestrian seating, EV and ADA parking, food truck and bus zones, batting cages, dugouts, player benches, bleachers with shade, announcer booths, and maintenance/equipment sheds	Provide new restrooms, a concessions facility, playground with shade, pedestrian seating, perimeter walking trail, EV and ADA parking, food truck and bus zones, batting cages, dugouts, player benches, bleachers with shade, announcer booths, equipment sheds, and basketball courts
Realignment of Fields	Reorient Minor, T-ball, Lou Caveglia, and Senior fields into a clover-leaf layout with enlarged field sizes, and provide centralized pedestrian areas between fields.	Reorient Byers and X Lovato fields with expanded field sizes, create a larger central parking area, centralized pedestrian corridors, and relocate the dog park and training areas to reduce user conflicts.
Artificial Field Player Equipment	Athletes must use artificial-turf-appropriate shoes with rubber or soft plastic cleats instead of metal cleats.	Athletes must use artificial-turf-appropriate shoes with rubber or soft plastic cleats instead of metal cleats.
Artificial Field Equipment	Maintain artificial turf using sweepers and groomers every 1–2 weeks, with targeted infill redistribution in high-use areas, supported by an appropriate utility vehicle.	Maintain artificial turf using sweepers and groomers every 1–2 weeks, with targeted infill redistribution in high-use areas, supported by an appropriate utility vehicle.



Photo courtesy Los Alamos Daily Post

Next Steps

- Study Report to be approved by Parks & Rec Advisory Board in September/October.
- Final report to be approved by City Council in October/November.

Stay in Touch!



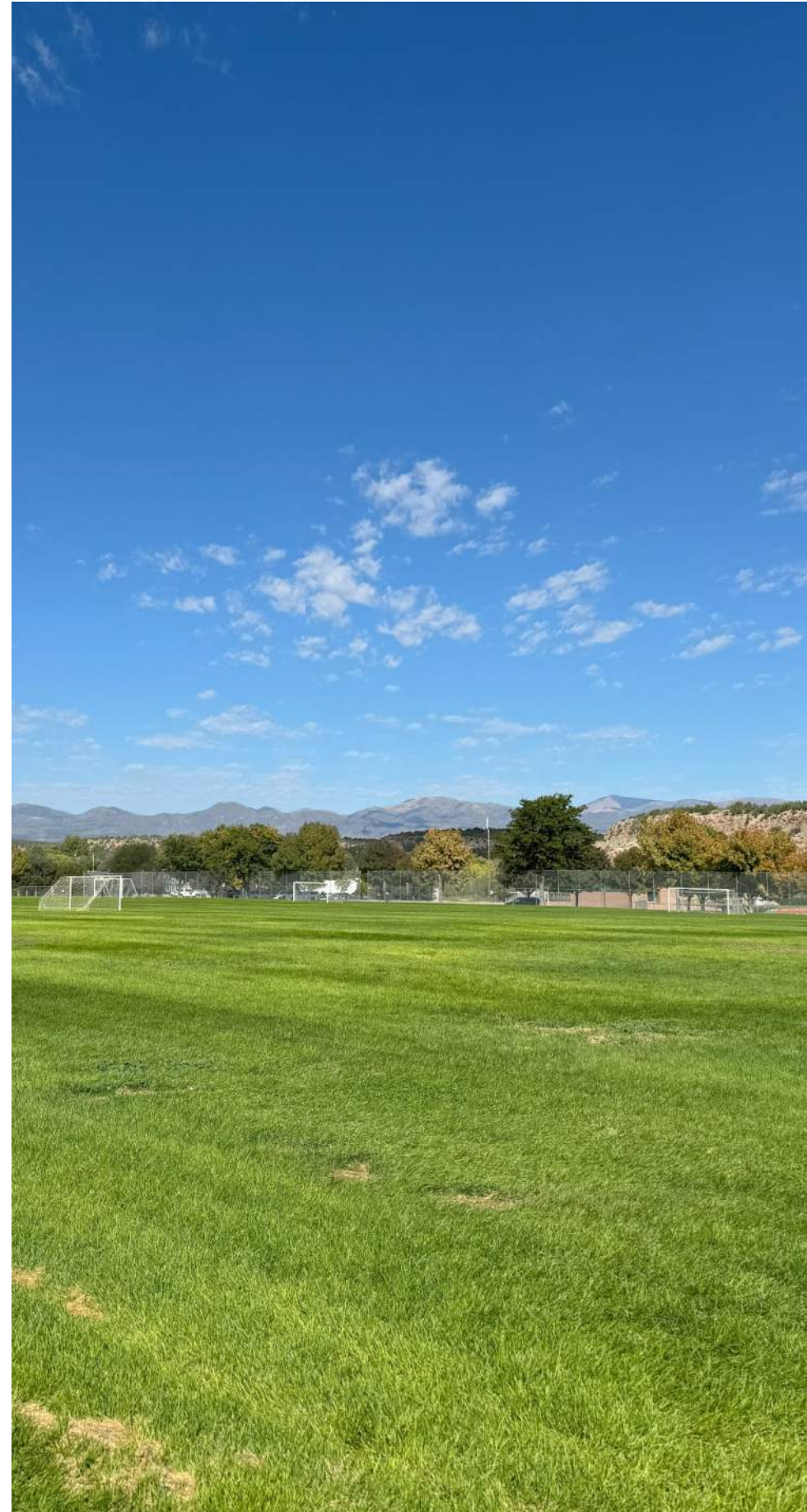
[https://www.losalamosnm.us/
County-Projects/Artificial-Turf-Study](https://www.losalamosnm.us/County-Projects/Artificial-Turf-Study)



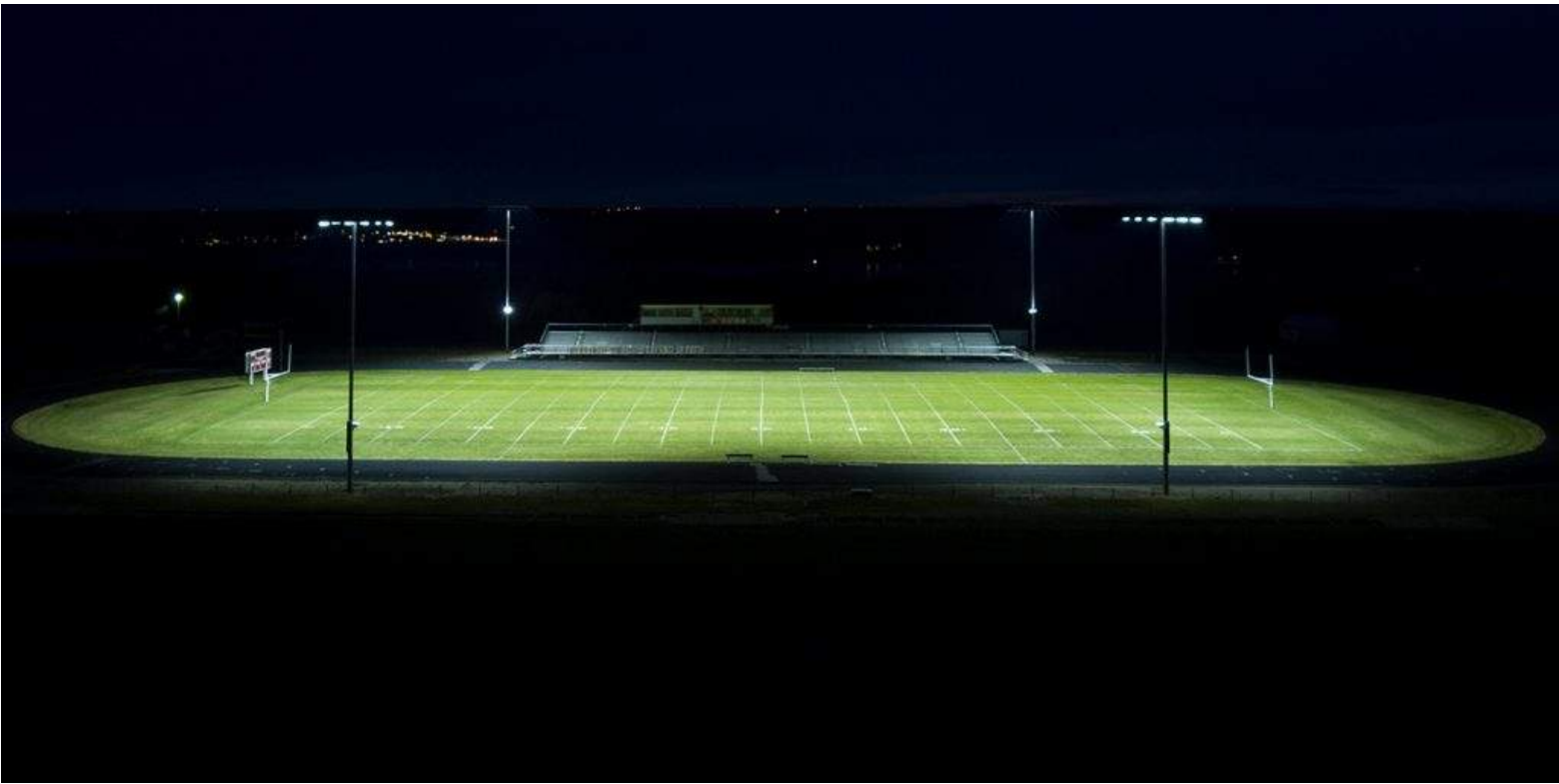
lacturfstudy@nv5.com

Back pocket slides

- **Lighting illustration**
- **Selected illustrations from the report**



Proposed Lighting Improvements



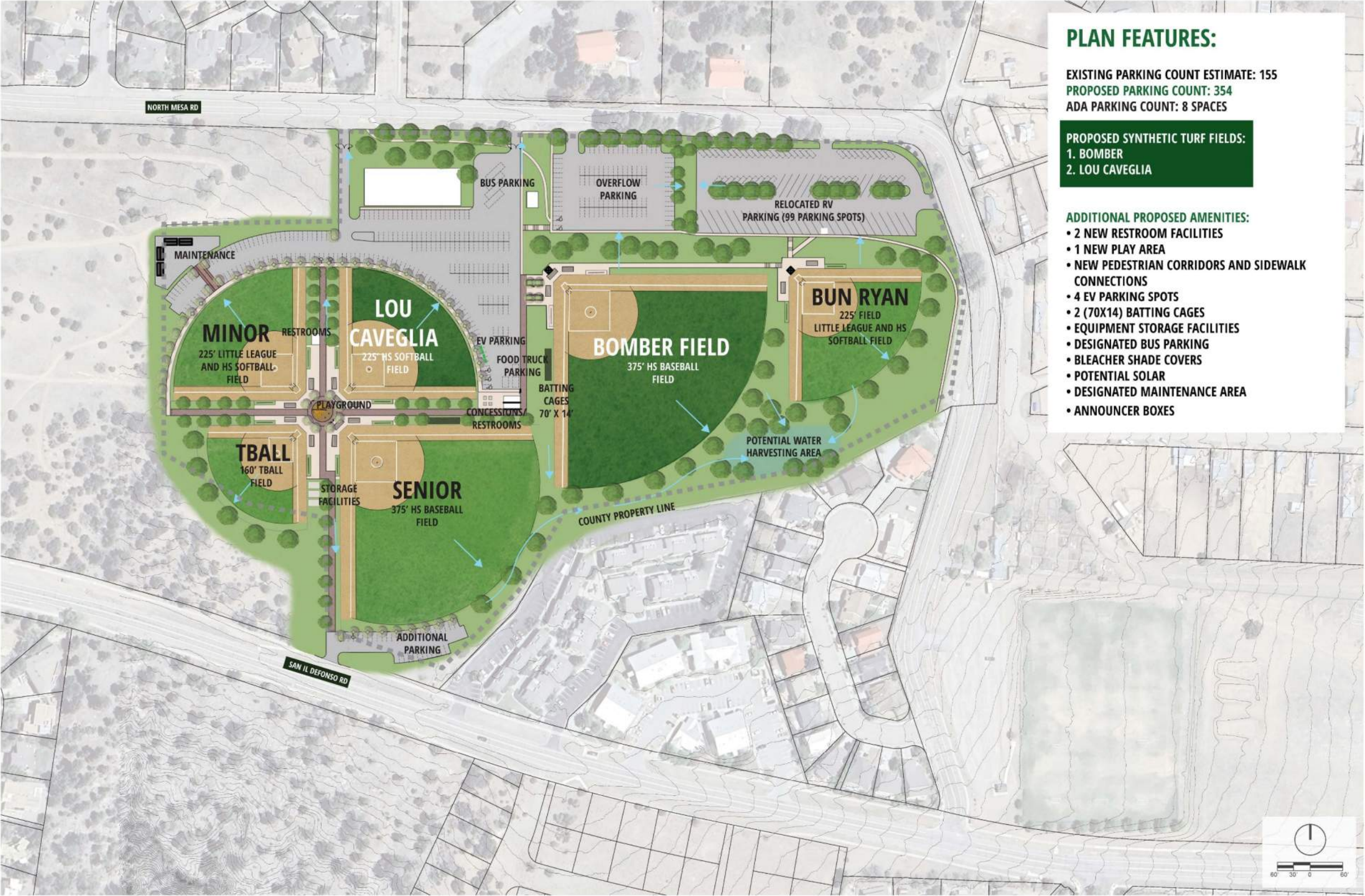
North Mesa Athletic Fields



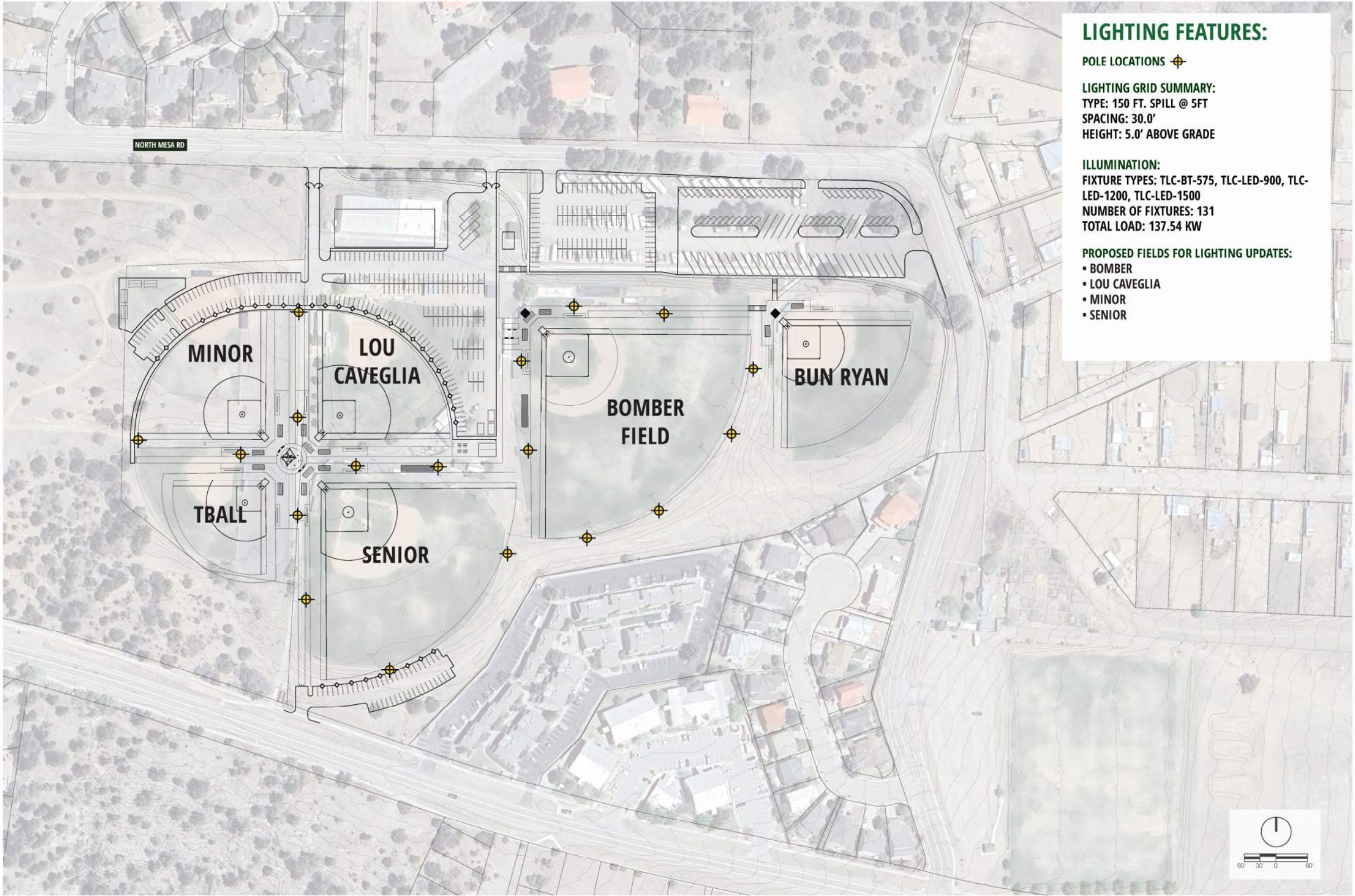
North Mesa Site Conditions Photo Map



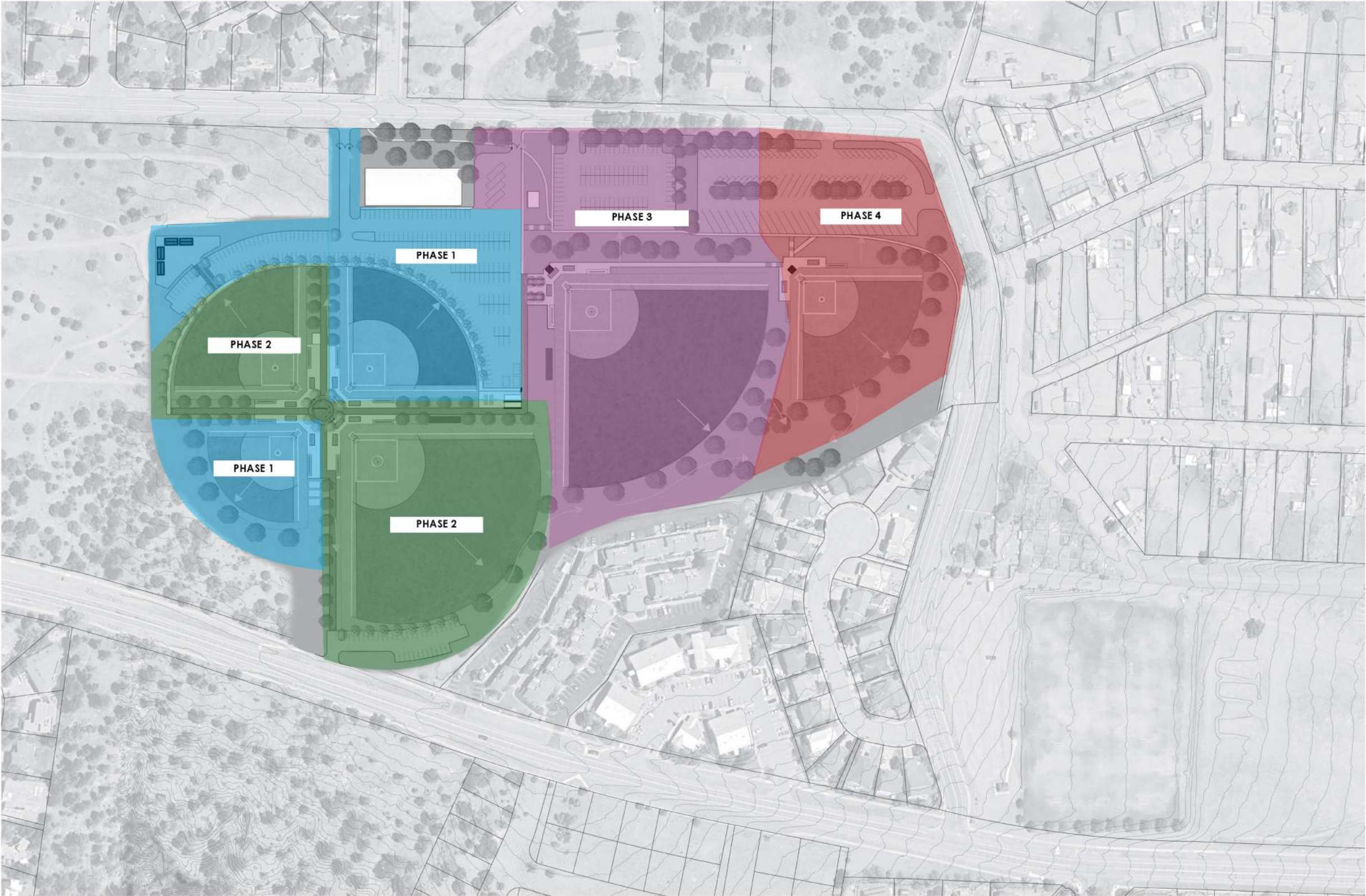
North Mesa Sports Complex



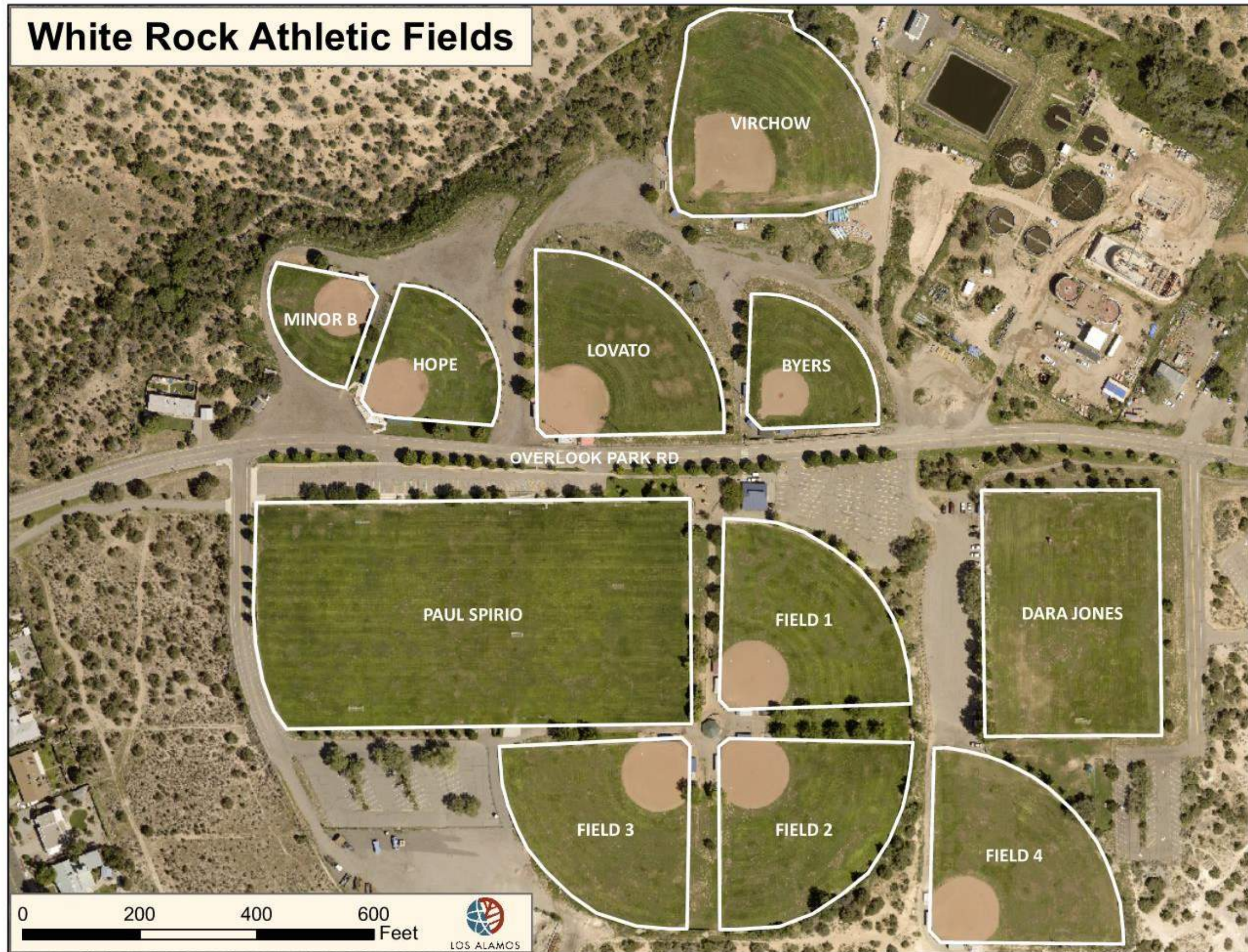
North Mesa Sports Complex – Lighting Improvements



North Mesa Sports Complex – Phasing Plan



White Rock Athletic Fields



0 200 400 600 Feet



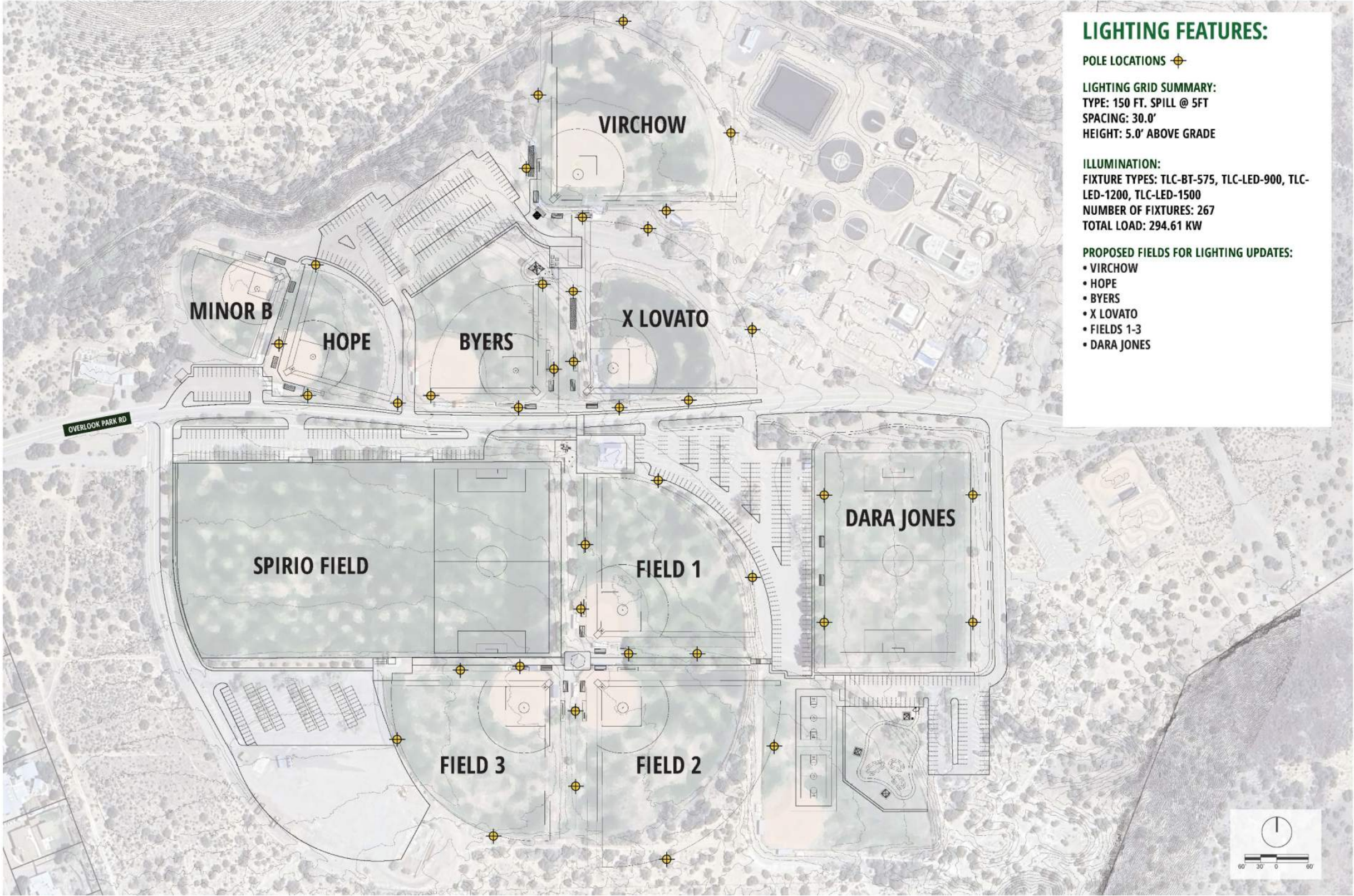
Overlook Park Site Conditions Photo Map



Overlook Park



Overlook Park – Lighting Improvements



Overlook Park – Phasing Plan

