

Ewing Park School Property Softball Field Construction Frequently Asked Questions

The Ellwood City Area School District is pursuing a construction project to upgrade the facilities for girls' softball and boys' baseball. After reviewing several options, the board has decided that the best course of action for the district is to develop the property where the former Ewing Park School once stood with a new girls' softball facility and to renovate the current boys' baseball facility. Below are frequently asked questions the board has received regarding this decision:

Will this project be using tax payer funds?

The board intends to carry out a capital improvement campaign to raise funds from donors to pay for the softball and baseball field projects. The board has secured the assistance of a third party to drive this effort. At this time, the intent of the board is to raise enough funds to pay for the entire project.

What is the timeline for construction?

Because construction financing is dependent on raising funds, it is imperative that the district has secured a large portion of the cost before the job can go out to bid. Therefore, no specific timeline has been established. However, the district hopes to begin construction sometime in 2024.

Why did the board choose this option?

The option to build a new facility at the Ewing Park School property helps the district meet three goals: 1. Move the girls' softball facility to closer proximity to all other district athletic facilities. 2. Provide an updated, safe field for our successful girls' softball team. 3. Ensure that district athletic facilities are built on district owned property.

In addition, this option allows the district to phase in construction and complete one field before working on another. This will allow new construction to be scheduled around athletic seasons and will ensure all practices and games continue without interruption. Other options at Helling Stadium would require the entire facility to be constructed at one time which will increase the work calendar creating a scheduling issue which could result in both softball and baseball not having access to their facility for an extended period of time and could interrupt their competition schedules.

Couldn't the district have met those same goals at the Helling Stadium property?

The options provided from HHS DR Architects did include several options at Helling Stadium. However, all of those options are problematic. Two of the three options require the removal of the little league baseball field and the construction of a large retaining wall along Rt. 65. One of the options requires the district to move Carmen Beatrice Blvd. and all utilities entering the stadium. None of the options allow for easy access, especially for disabled visitors and handicapped parking. Construction at the Stadium could trigger expensive upgrades to the field house due to Title IX requirements that we have equal facilities for both boys and girls.

Since reviewing the options that were provided by HHS DR, I heard that the Borough offered to lease Stiefel Field for \$1.00, can't the board consider that as another option now?

The board did consider this option after it was presented. The board held an executive session to review real estate and this offer was discussed. Dr. Shipley spoke during the public meeting on Monday 9/11 about that discussion and that the lease offer did not meet district goals of moving our girls to closer proximity to the athletic complex nor did we want to commit a large sum of money to property that does not belong to the district.

Will there be lights at the softball field?

There will not be "stadium" style lighting at the facility to light the field for practice or games. Lights will be added to the baseball facility at Helling Stadium.

Will the fields be grass or turf?

The field will be turfed. This will allow for better field drainage and will allow a more consistent playing surface regardless of the weather. This will make the field more available to our teams and will reduce the number of cancellations that tend to occur due to spring weather in Western Pennsylvania.

Where will everyone park?

The facility plan includes a parking lot that will hold up to 34 cars. Overflow parking will be at Helling Stadium. On-street parking at this site is very limited and the district does not seek to add any on-street parking. Visiting team buses will drop off their team and then park at Helling Stadium.

After the facility is built, how will emergency vehicles get through on the narrow roads?

The entire facility will be within the boundaries of the current property. There will be no overflow onto the local streets. Therefore, street access for emergency vehicles won't be changed. For many years this property housed an elementary school which required daily pick-up and drop-off of students from school buses daily without issue.

What will happen to the value of the homes immediately surrounding the facility?

A March 2020 review of 33 research studies completed by the National Recreation and Park Association concerning home values near public parks and fields determined that 91% of the studies demonstrated positive effects on home values and suggests an 8%-10% increase to home values for those closest to the park.

Is the property properly zoned for a softball field?

The property is zoned R-1 which allows for public parks and playgrounds as well as public and private schools.

Will the concession stand really cost \$500,000?

The \$500,000 estimate from our architects is based on the fact that we need to provide all utilities to that building. Also, that building will include restrooms and team rooms which must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). However, the board has already said they do not want to spend that much on the concession stand and they have directed the architects to redesign this building at a lesser price tag.

Why do we need the Taj Mahal?

This school board has recognized the importance of updating all district facilities including both school buildings and athletic facilities due to many years of deferred maintenance. The board has been very conscientious of where they spend their capital improvement dollars. Their goal is to provide the best possible environment for our students while being fiscally responsible. Capital improvements have been made with the mantra to improve and update our facilities to meet the needs of the students and staff. This softball field is being designed to include the basics: Field, dugout, press box, parking, restroom facilities, and a concession stand.

What will happen to the trees that line the property now?

The trees are expected to stay where they are.

Why did the district recently place signs around the property?

Through this process the board learned that there was a lot of unauthorized use of the field. Because this creates a liability concern for the district, signs stating that unauthorized use of the property and parking are not permitted. The signs have been designed to allow the district to allow parking on the property for special events.



Softball Field - Option No. 3



**Ellwood City
Athletic Complex Study**

Estimated Construction Cost - Option 3 and Option 3A

* Option "3" scope shows a new softball field at the existing Ewing Park location. It would have parking and a storage / toilet room building on site. All existing trees would remain and no field lighting would be provided.

1 Survey Site Layout	\$ 4,000
2 Mobilization/Demolition	\$ 5,000
3 E&S Controls	\$ 37,000
4 Earth Work and Storm Water Drainage	\$ 165,000
5 Concrete	\$ 70,000
6 Warning Track	\$ 15,000
7 Electrical, Water, and Field Hydrant	\$ 16,000
8 Excavation and Utilities	\$ 105,000
9 Score Boards	\$ 12,000
10 Sod Field	\$ 42,000
11 Press Box	\$ 65,000
12 Foul Poles	\$ 5,000
13 Bases	\$ 3,000
14 6' Fence	\$ 27,000
15 8' Fence	\$ 12,000
16 Back Stop	\$ 26,000
17 Turf Infield	\$ 180,000
18 Grade/Seed, and Topsoil	\$ 19,000
19 Dugouts	\$ 72,000
20 Gates	\$ 18,000
21 Bleachers	\$ 33,000
22 Concession Stand	\$ 500,000
23 Parking Drives	\$ 184,000
24 OH + P + GC	<u>\$ 265,000</u>
Total	\$ 1,880,000

* Option '3A' would be to show a combined solution for both the reconstructed baseball field at the stadium complex and softball field at Ewing Park. It is comprised of Options 1 and 3.

Option 1 Construction Costs	\$ 1,449,000
Option 3 Construction Costs	<u>\$ 1,880,000</u>
Total For Option '3A'	\$ 3,329,000