

Do you have questions, opinions or concerns regarding the proposal? Here are some ways to share your input:

1. Write to the town council explaining that you support the Miracle Field, but you do not support displacing existing youth sports teams for the field. The Miracle Field should be additive to the community, not a replacement.
2. Attend the next Town Council meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 7:00pm by zoom. Just after the start of the meeting, there will be 2 minutes of public participation where you will have an opportunity to speak.
3. Donate to the Miracle Field at <https://www.miracleleaguenorthernct.org/>

FAQs and Additional Detail

Why is TSC opposed to the Miracle Field?

TSC is not opposed to the Miracle Field! It's a great project that would be an asset to Tolland. TSC is opposed to the proposed location of the field at Birch Grove because it would remove an existing soccer and lacrosse field which is highly utilized. In fact, we oppose building the Miracle field on any existing field that is currently used for youth sports, including soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball, or football. The field should be additive to our community, not a replacement.

Why is the proposal for the Miracle Field asking for the Birch Grove location?

In June 2021, the Miracle Field made a request for the area where the field was located because it had been paved over for the portable classrooms that were in use during the Birch Grove reconstruction. This asphalt base would have saved them approximately \$150,000 in site preparation work. Due to contractual obligations best explained by the Town Council, Board of Education, and BG Building Committee, the decision was made to return the field to its original grass state, eliminating the projected \$150,000 in savings. Per the contract, the field was regraded and reseeded in the fall of 2021.

Wait, how is that an existing soccer/lacrosse field? It was used for portable classrooms during the Birch Grove reconstruction.

Correct. Historically the field has been used for soccer and lacrosse. However, like many other groups in the town we needed to adapt during the reconstructions and move programs to alternated locations.

So TSC was able to function without use of the Birch Grove field for the past 2+ years?

Ironically, we were aided by two horrible events. During the fall of 2019, Connecticut was stricken with the EEE mosquito virus. This severely limited play and many of our soccer activities were modified or eliminated, and our travel teams were moved indoors. Then, as we all know, the COVID pandemic began in March 2020. All athletic activity was suspended for the Spring 2020 season, and severely limited for the Fall of 2021. We saw increased numbers in the Spring of 2021, and finally returned to full participation in the Fall of 2021. This is when having the Birch Grove field off-line really started to negatively impact TSC.

“Negatively Impact”? What happened?

Not having the Birch Grove field online not only had an effect on our U5-U8 programs which would have used Birch Grove, but there was a ripple effect with all our teams. In 2021, our Club consisted of over 650 players and 50 teams. Not having that field available lead to many issues:

- We needed to condense several of our younger rec programs. In particular, due to lack of field space we needed to combine our boys and girls U7/8 rec programs. This led to significant over-crowding with 16 teams and 120 athletes playing at once. Including players, coaches, and spectators, which often led to over 400 people on a single field.
- Many of our older teams had to eliminate practices or share fields. We even had three rec teams that were practicing on a field with no lines or goals.
- Home games needed to be switched to away games and in some cases outright canceled.
- New programs, such as an U7/8 inter-town league could not be offered because with Birch Grove off-line we did not have any field space to line smaller fields.
- Other TSC fields had excessive wear and tear due to overuse.
- We had significant overcrowding and parking issues at Cross Farms.

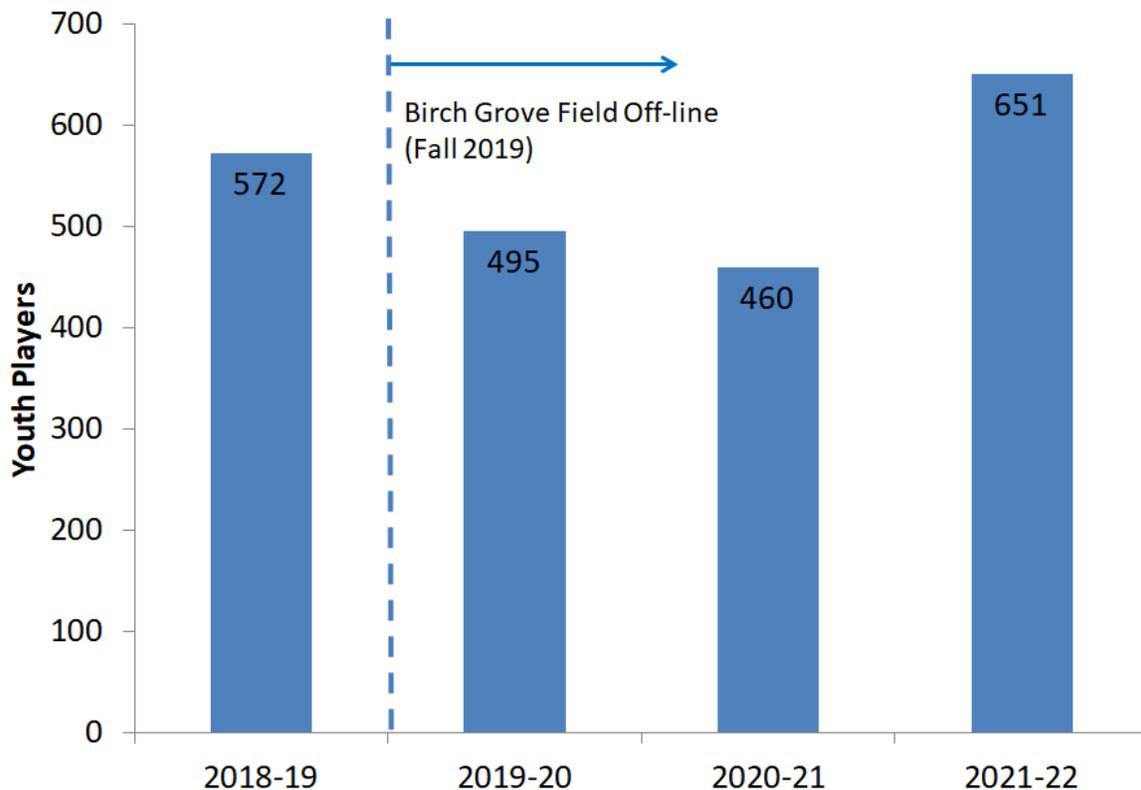


What is the impact of the Club if the field is not restored?

Unfortunately, we would need to limit enrollment in our current programs and in some cases eliminate them. We have been very fortunate to see explosive growth in our programs for example, whereas historically we've had one U9/10 boys rec team; this past fall we've had four.

Our U5-U8 rec numbers grew from about 150 to over 230 players this past fall, over a 50% increase. As these players get older, and hopefully remain in the club, we will need even more field space since field dimensions grow proportionally with age.

Tolland Soccer Club Program Enrollment



Won't the Miracle field be used for TOPSoccer? It says so on the Miracle Field website.

At this time, TOPSoccer does not plan to utilize the proposed Miracle Field. This is due to a number of reasons.

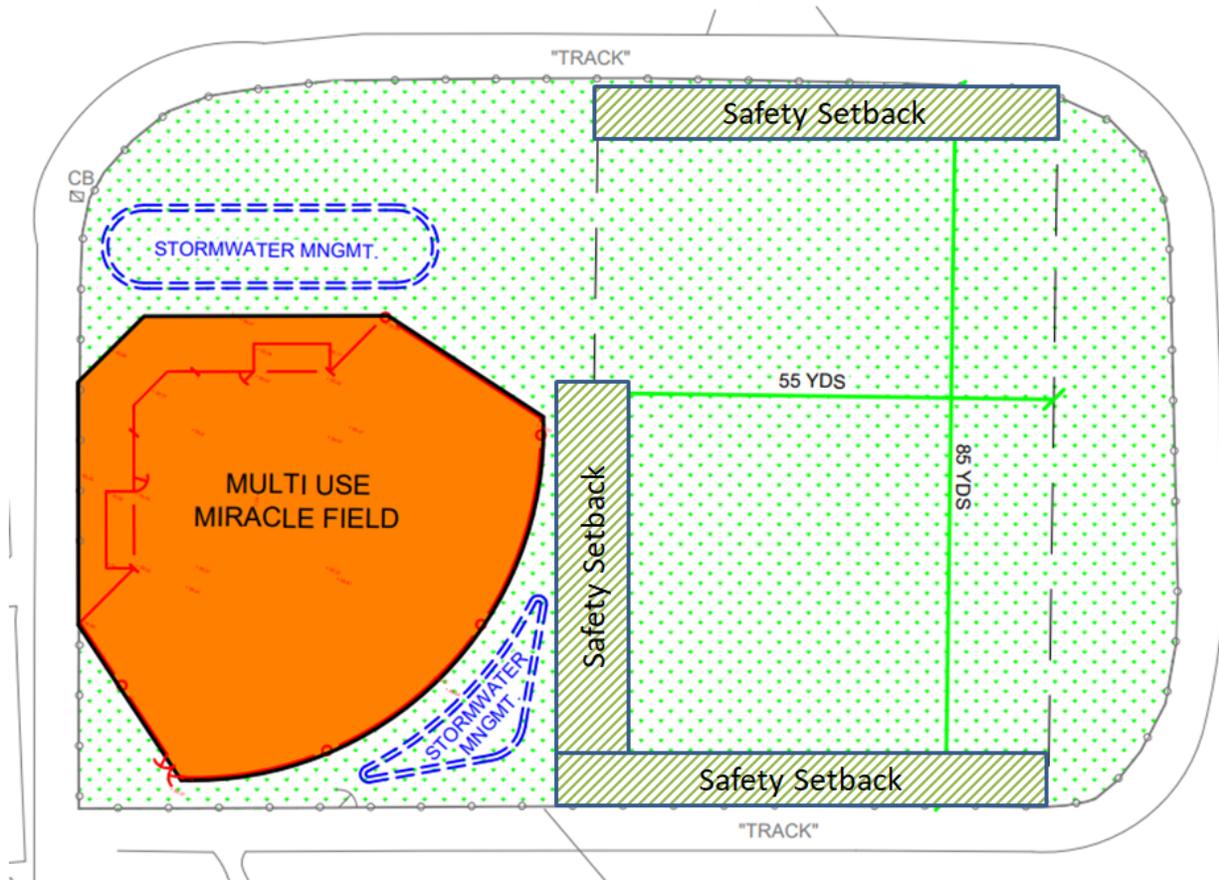
- The Tolland High School turf field is currently used by TOPSoccer, and is perfectly suited for our athletes. It is handicap accessible, the turf surface is ideal for mobility-assist devices such as crutches and wheelchairs.
- Lights are not planned for the Miracle Field. Our TOPSoccer program runs during the fall season on the Tolland High School turf field on Wednesday evenings as well as Saturday mornings. Because the days get short very quickly, we would need lighting to continue the Wednesday evening sessions.
- The THS field has lights, which TSC pays for to utilize on Wednesdays.
- TSC would prefer to maintain consistency within the program in support of our athletes. Potentially splitting locations between the Wednesday and Saturday sessions would not be ideal for athletes, for we have found that they thrive under consistent conditions and locations.



Even though TOPSoccer does not plan to use the Miracle Field at this time, if it helps the Miracle Field continue to raise money for the project we're fine if they continue to use it. We hope that this spirit of cooperation continues on this project.

Could TSC use the remaining area not occupied by the Miracle Field (as proposed by the Miracle Field group) for the usage they had previously?

Unfortunately, the way that the Miracle Field would be constructed, the remaining area could not be used by TSC to support the youth recreation soccer program. With our programs averaging well over 100 participants, the needed space to accommodate players, coaches, instructors, and parents/spectators, would be about the size of a typical 11v11 soccer field (which ranges from 100 - 120 yards long x 65 - 75 yards wide). This would be needed to support the training style and approach for the youngest recreation programs, as well as have the flexibility to size the fields larger for the older recreation programs, without disrupting the style of instruction and training utilized for these programs. The smaller remaining area at the Miracle Field site (about 65 x 55 yards) would cause TSC to either drastically alter the recreation program, need to manage the programs on multiple locations, or limit enrollment in the program.



Not having this field is not allowing kids to play Challenger baseball?

Thanks to great coaches and volunteers, Miracle League baseball (also known as Challenger baseball) has been enjoyed at Crandall's Park here in Tolland for many years. With that said, there are certainly some mobility challenges on the grass and infield at that location. TSC experienced these same challenges when we hosted our TOPSoccer at Crandall's for many years, but these problems have been eliminated since moving to the THS turf field. As stated above, the THS turf field meets the key needs of a program similar to the Miracle Field.