



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

June 10, 2026

Thank you for your continued engagement in the [158 Spring Street & Ahern Field/Play Areas](#) planning process. Throughout this project, residents, families, youth sports participants, neighbors, advocates, and community organizations have devoted significant time and thought to helping shape the future of this public space. The passion people have shown for Ahern Field reflects how much this park means to the East Cambridge and youth sports communities, and I am grateful to everyone who participated in meetings, shared feedback, and contributed their perspectives. Your involvement has helped inform this project at every stage.

From the beginning of this process, there was a commitment to creating a high-quality, multi-use community space that serves the school, broader community and youth sports. The conversation centered not on whether improvements were needed, but on the best way to achieve that goal. City staff believed that a synthetic turf field could help support the various users of the field and address growing demand for recreational space by supporting more consistent, all-weather use. At the same time, many community members expressed a strong preference for preserving a natural grass field and the character, experience, and environmental benefits of natural materials.

After careful consideration of community input, City Council feedback, and the project's overall goals, we have decided not to install a synthetic turf field or the athletic lighting, which was included to support additional permitted use of the space. Instead, we will move forward with reconstructing the natural grass field, including improvements to drainage and irrigation that will enhance field quality and usability. The funds that were committed to lighting the fields were part of the FY25 park restoration capital budget. Those funds can be used to support lighting at Danehy Park to expand playable hours on those existing synthetic turf fields.

This approach reflects the community's preference for a natural grass field and will create the type of open space many residents have told us they want to see at Ahern. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that every design choice involves tradeoffs. While the improvements will enhance the field and provide improved drainage and irrigation, a natural grass surface will continue to have limitations on the amount and intensity of use it can accommodate compared to an all-weather field. We will continue working with the neighborhood, the school community, and our youth sports partners to manage and program the space. And the lighting at Danehy will provide additional bookable time for youth sports on those existing turf fields.

One of the things that makes Cambridge special is the extraordinary level of civic engagement our residents bring to community issues. People care deeply about their neighborhoods, parks, schools, and public spaces, and they are willing to invest their time and energy in helping shape decisions. While this project generated differing viewpoints, those perspectives came from a shared desire to create the best possible outcome for the community. The City's responsibility is to listen carefully, consider the many competing needs and interests involved, and make decisions that balance those priorities as thoughtfully as possible.

As we move into the final stages of design and construction, we remain committed to working with the community to deliver a park that serves residents for years to come. Thank you again for your engagement, partnership, and continued commitment to the future of Ahern Field.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yi-An Huang', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Yi-An Huang
City Manager