

## Angela Lazzari

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**From:** Liza Viana  
**Sent:** Friday, May 8, 2026 10:01 AM  
**To:** Angela Lazzari  
**Subject:** FW: Lower Columbia update  
**Attachments:** LowerColumbiaCouncilUpdate2-13-26.docx; LowerColumbiaCouncilUpdate2-13-26.pptx

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**From:** Liza Viana <lviana@bhtwp.com>  
**Date:** Friday, February 13, 2026 at 8:59 AM  
**To:** Dr. Kim Feltre <kfeltre@bhpsnj.org>, Nicholson, Jennifer <jnicholson@bhpsnj.org>  
**Subject:** Lower Columbia update

Good morning Dr. Feltre and Jenn,

Attached is an update on the Lower Columbia project.

Also, here is the update again on the improvements being planned for the playgrounds and lower tennis courts/pickleball courts, that Rec is spearheading this year.

- Playground equipment upgrades to both lower and upper playgrounds, since the equipment is dated and worn. We are installing all decking, steps and related parts replacement. We are trying to get this project done before Playground Camp starts immediately after school gets out.
- Lower tennis and pickleball courts - work for these include foundation work, refurbishment, soil erosion and sediment control measures, new base, netting, striping, new fencing, etc...

Tennis/pickleball construction would need to be done between the spring and fall GL tennis schedule. Everything is preliminary at this point, and Carolyn George from our Rec Dept plans to discuss with CJ Hendricks as well.

Please let me know if you need any additional information from us on these projects so we can move forward. Thank you!

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**February 13, 2026**

**Lower Columbia Update:**

Over the last couple of months, we worked with Harbor Consultants to have the land survey completed and the concept drawing done. Harbor's environmentalist found hydric soils around the entire area. Hydric soil is an indication of wetlands. The NJDEP uses 3 classifications to identify wetlands: vegetation, standing water, hydric water. The NJDEP, will most certainly deny our application to install a synthetic field. Therefore, we pivoted and decided that the most feasible and cost-effective solution is to install a new natural turf field with a new topsoil/sand and stone base to allow drainage, an irrigation system to assist with new growth, sod, and lights. Since this solution is more affordable, we expanded the project to be a refresh of the entire area. Below is a list of improvements we are requesting to be added as alternates on the bid.

1. Create an entrance to the field
2. Resurface the basketball courts
3. Replace existing fencing
4. Install fencing around entire area
5. Replace baseball backstop and benches
6. Install hydration system for people and pets
7. Replace the soil under baseball field
8. Install lights at baseball field
9. Replace shade structure at Playground camp entrance (alternate bid)
10. Replace lego hut shade structure (alternate bid)

In late November 2025, the Mayor and Deb Varnerin met with the Board of Education Superintendent, Business Administrator, Athletic Director and Recreation Commission to discuss the new path. Harbor Consultants were there to answer any questions. Since the field will be installed during the CMS baseball season, we reserved the Snyder baseball field and committed to busing the baseball field from CMS to Snyder for their practices and games.

Below is a tentative timeline for the project.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Harbor contract increase	12/08/2025
Harbor contract amendment – Council approval	12/17/2025
Prepare bid documents	02/23/2026
Council approval to go out to bid	03/24/2026
Bid closing	05/05/2026
Council approve/accept bid	05/19/2026
Project start*	06/01/2026
Project completion	12/01/2026

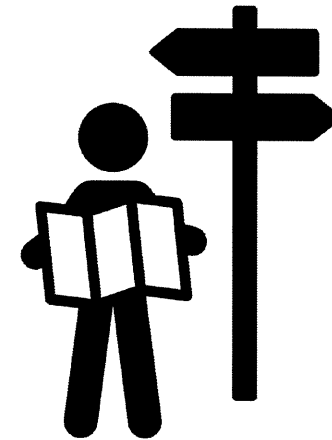
This project will be funded 100% by grants, state appropriations and donations. No funding match is required. The Mayor and Debbie met with Connell to discuss their donation and ensured they support the new plan. Below is list of the funding sources for this project.

<b>Source</b>	<b>Amount</b>
State Appropriations (Scutari)	\$250,000
Community Improvement Fee (FiServ)	\$150,000
2024 Local Recreation Improvement Grant	\$71,000
2024 Union County Kids Recreation Grant	\$35,000

Connell Donation	\$250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$756,000</b>



**Where are we now?**



**Where are we going?**

LOWER COLUMBIA

DEBRA VARNERIN  
12/1/2025

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Lease agreement finalized



Land survey completed



Concept design completed



Met with BoE Superintendent, Business Administrator and Athletics Director



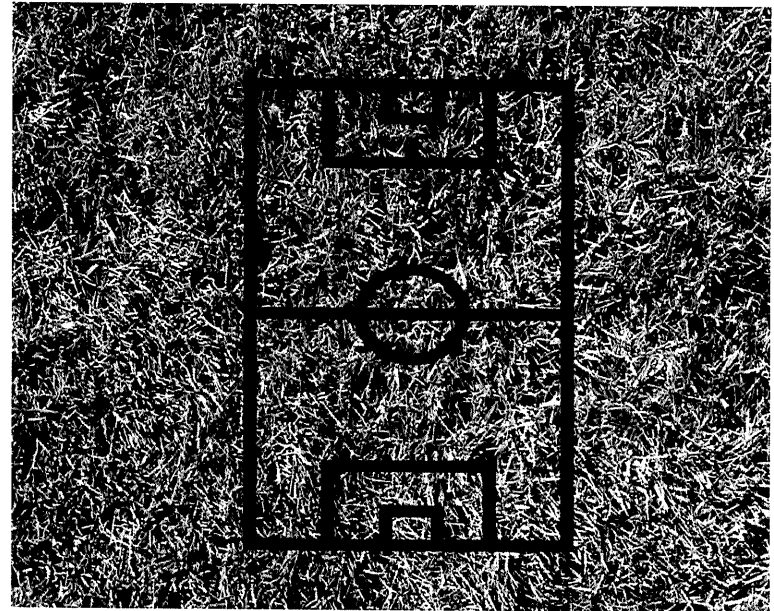
# WHY WON'T THERE BE A SYNTHETIC FIELD?

- Visual inspection by engineer showed no concerns
- NJDEP website does not identify field area as wetlands
- Environmentalist inspection discovered hydric soil

Wetland Classifications
Vegetation
Standing Water
Hydric Soil


# DIFFERENCE WITH NEW NATURAL TURF FIELD

- Removal of clay base and add new sand/soil mixture
- Under field drainage system
- Irrigation system
- Lights





# RENOVATIONS BEYOND THE FIELD

- Create an entrance to the field
  - Resurface the basketball courts
  - Replace existing fencing
  - Install fencing around entire area
  - Replace baseball backstop and benches
  - Install hydration system for people and pets
  - Replace the soil under baseball field
  - Install lights at baseball field
  - Replace shade structure at Playground camp entrance
  - Replace lego hut shade structure
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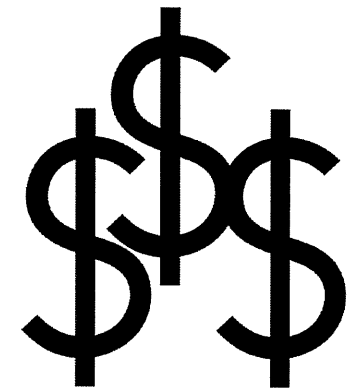
## NEXT STEPS / TIMELINE

Task	Target Date
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\*Snyder baseball field has been reserved for CMS baseball from 3/1 through 6/1, Monday – Friday, 3:30PM-6:00PM

## FUNDING SOURCES

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QUESTIONS?

