
BROOKS RECREATION COMPLEX HARD SURFACE RESTORATION PROJECT FINALLY – A LONG-TERM SOLUTION

After seven years of discussions, review, research, and planning, the Brooks Field Hard Surface Restoration Project is approaching reality. This document explains serious ongoing problems with the complex and the Colony Board's plan to resolve them. The approved solution follows recommendations from an appointed study committee, which consisted of dedicated Colony volunteers. Their recent work was a continuation of efforts that began in 2020.

Current Conditions

The current condition of Brooks' paved areas is approaching unusable status, if not already there. One can only fully appreciate their deplorable condition by in-person inspection, and we encourage that you do so. You will find representative photos at the end of this document. Here is what you will see.

- Uneven playing surfaces, deteriorated to the point that they are beyond a reasonable standard of use
- A crumbling base and disintegrating asphalt that is more like gravel in some areas
- Thick cracks – some as wide as an inch – that are approaching the level of being a safety concern, which could prompt closure
- Sink holes, which could become a tripping hazard
- Peeling court surfaces and broken lines
- Rusted, damaged, and detached fencing

Failing hard surfaces have plagued this facility since its first paving in 1957. The root cause is its location on the Pinelands' high water-table and inadequate base construction. The underlying base is fine sand, which was once the Atlantic Ocean floor. This base leads to constant soil shifting and heaving. Asphalt does not have the tensile strength to overcome this movement. Throughout its history, Brooks paved court surfaces have suffered from the severe cracking that comes from underground hydro-static pressure.

The same challenges facing some Borough roadways (which were originally sand trails) exist at Brooks. The difference is that cracks, heaves, and potholes can be tolerated on roads. They are, however, unacceptable on hard-court play surfaces. Viable asphalt cannot be maintained on sandy soil long-term, without an adequate base. The surface can be repaired and

repaved, but those measures are only short-term or annual solutions. And they are very expensive over time.

Our repair history at the complex is proof. Many paving and repair projects have been undertaken on the footprint over many years, and they have all failed.

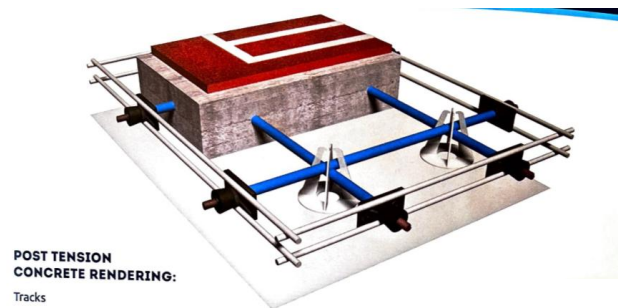
Scope of Work

The proposed solution calls for the complex to be completely rebuilt within the existing footprint and will include: three tennis courts, two basketball courts, and eight pickleball courts. Because the existing (middle) parking lot will be repurposed as playing court (as it once was), adequate parking will be relocated. There will be handicapped parking. The footprint **will not change**. The hard-surface area will be approximately the same as it is now (slightly less). The project will **not** be lit, and concerns for security, member-only access, and noise will be addressed.

Solution Options

The Brooks Committee looked for a “best value” solution – one that meets performance needs with the lowest long-term cost.

Solution 1 - Recommended: A Post-tension concrete slab over the entire footprint. All playing surface coats would be on the slab. Post tension concrete is the best solution for this site, by far. It can withstand the hydro-static pressure of Pinelands soil and maintain an even playing surface. It carries a fifty-year guarantee. Post-tension is the mainstay of court installation in our area because it offers the best value.



The defining element in a post-tensioned structure is the addition of the post-tensioning strands. The steel strands run through ducts embedded in the concrete.

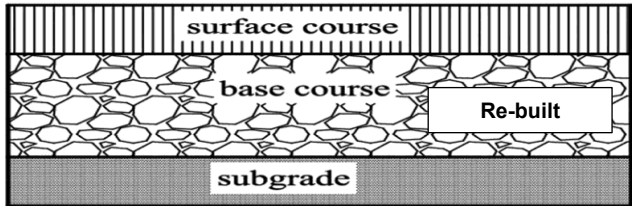
The strands are secured at one end of the structure, with an anchorage device, and then passed out of the opposite edge and is anchored there. This technique uses less steel than in standard concrete pours that use reinforcing bars. It is also stronger than “pre-tension” cabling (pre-stressed) concrete systems. Its durability is unsurpassed.

The weight and strength of these reinforced slabs make them resistant to our adverse soil conditions. The slab structure will move, but the design and construction are such that it moves as one piece and does not crack.

Its disadvantage, however, is that it has a comparatively high installation (up-front) cost. For the Brooks project, the budget is \$1,680,000, which includes the standard 10% contingency. The overwhelming advantage of Solution #1 is in its life cycle, which is guaranteed at 50 years. Applying a comparison formula that considers life and repair cycle with other options, this solution costs \$34,000 per year, the lowest of the options examined.

Solution 2: Substitute Aggregate Stone/Asphalt for Basketball Courts Only. With this option, the court foundations are “mixed.” Pickleball and Tennis courts would remain as post-tensioned, but the base beneath the basketball courts would be re-built with a much-improved aggregate stone base and then surfaced with asphalt courses.

This is not our simple overlay solution of the past, but the life-cycle of the basketball court area would be shortened to ten years as compared to fifty years associated with post-tension. The project budget for the “mixed” solution is \$1,550,000, which is \$130K less than the recommended Option 1. However, our comparison model drives out a \$59,000 annual cost (compared to \$34,000 for the recommended Solution 1) because of the basketball court area’s much shorter 10-year life-cycle. The upfront savings turns into a deficit in a single life-cycle.



A rationale for accepting an inferior basketball court design could be that the sport is more forgiving of a degraded surface than racket sports, but the ongoing maintenance problems, while lessened, would not go away.

The Board accepted the committee’s conclusion that lower initial cost – considered in isolation – does **not** make Option #2 the “best-value” solution.”

Solution 3: Substitute Aggregate Stone/Asphalt for All Courts. Post-tensioned concrete is **not** a part of this solution. Here, the **entire** footprint is aggregate stone/asphalt. The project budget for this solution is \$1,210,000, which does represent a significant up-front cost savings as compared to Solution 1. However, the life-cycle/annual cost comparison soars to \$121K per year! With this solution and a goal of maintaining safe and viable courts, the Colony’s capital expenditure funding model would then be devoted solely to maintaining the Brooks Courts in perpetuity with funds left for nothing else. The court complex would be rebuilt every 10 years.

The Board accepted the Committee’s conclusion that – despite lower initial cost – this solution offered the least value among the three viable solutions considered because of the high maintenance cost – the highest of the three options studied.

Comparison Summary		
Solution	Initial Budget	Annual Cost
#1. All post-tensioned	\$1,680K	\$34K
#2. Mixed	\$1,550K	\$59K
#3. All Aggregate/Asphalt	\$1,210K	\$121K

Best Value Conclusion

All factors considered, the full-tensioned solution (Solution 1) is deemed to be the best-value option and in the membership’s best interest, despite carrying the highest installation cost. In addition to offering superior playing surface and comparatively easy maintenance, this construction model is the **least expensive** over time because of its guaranteed life.

The Committee and Board rejected re-using the simple overlay method (what we’ve done in the past) because of poor performance and the overall highest cost over time. They also rejected abandoning the site which would require destroying and disposing of it and returning the area to grass field. The disadvantages here are that (1) a community founded in recreation needs hard play surfaces and (2) such an endeavor – destruction – will cost around \$750K.

The *Patch and Repair* method was also rejected. This approach involves saw cutting and asphalt patching. We employed such a solution in Spring 2024 at the insistence of our liability insurance underwriter under threat of cancellation. Back then, we saw-cut about

1,000 lineal feet of cracked asphalt on our basketball court, cleaned the trenches, and installed asphalt in them. We undertook this project without choice. But the resultant spiderweb patchwork throughout the basketball complex began to fail almost immediately and is not a realistic solution. It remains on-site as an unacceptable embarrassment.

How Do We Pay For This?

As compelling as the arguments are for the best-value (Option 1) solution and its justifiable cost, the bottom-line for many members is about how to pay for it, and specifically its effect on dues. This is the Colony's most ambitious financial undertaking since the 2004 flood recovery.

And a small dues increase is necessary.

The Board's financial plan calls for (1) a \$1 million bank loan, (2) a minimum of a \$100K new-money fund raising drive (\$200K preferred), and (3) an affirmative membership vote on a **\$50 dues increase**.

Proposed Dues Structure for 2027		
	Regular	65+
Lake Restoration Fund	\$ 145	\$145
Capital Expenditures Fund	160	160
General Operating Fund	470	370
Total	\$775	\$675
The \$50 increase over the current fee structure is for the allocation to the Capital Expenditures Fund. The current allocation is \$110 per member, which, by policy, is evenly split between <i>Capital Projects</i> (\$55) and <i>Debt Service</i> (\$55). The new allocation would be \$55 to <i>Capital Projects</i> and \$105 to <i>Debt Service</i> (i.e. Brooks loan pay-off).		

At this writing, the first two elements (loan and fund-raising) are well under way, and we operate on assumed success with confidence. It is that third component – the dues increase – that is solely in membership hands. Simply stated: If the membership approves a \$50 dues increase, the financing plan works. If the vote fails, it does not.

We need to increase the amount of money in our dues structure that is available for debt payment. The current allocation is \$55 per member. That amount must be \$105 per member – a \$50 increase. At that new level, we can pay off a \$1 million bank loan in less than 10 years.

A Perspective on Dues Increase

The Board fully understands that it is hard to imagine a worse time to come to the membership and ask for a

fee increase – even one that equates to only \$1 per week. We are all deeply concerned about the national inflation rate and its effect on our personal lives.

Add to that, the requested increase follows two recent increases. Yes, they were in response to exceptional circumstances: (1) a \$200 increase in 2023 was to address the effects of having gone 15 prior years without an increase and facilities that had gone years without needed repair, and (2) a \$100 increase the following year was the result of a devastating increase in liability insurance premiums.

Dues Relief: As a part of our fund-raising for this project, there will an effort to increase the Dues Relief Fund, which assists members in financial need. We have a long tradition of helping our neighbors, and that will continue.

Both those crises are now resolved, and the Colony is in excellent financial condition. However, cost-of-living increases are a fact of economic life, and we are not immune from them.

That said, we believe that we've done well over time keeping our expenses in check. For example, one Centennial researcher reports that had our dues kept up with cost-of-living over the years, they would be well in excess of \$1,000 today.

And even if you do not use Colony facilities as you once did – a comment we hear from senior members on occasion – our inflated property values are in large part the result of the Colony Club and its facilities. We cannot allow those facilities to decay.

But again, we know that this is a terrible time for a dues increase. But we fear that delaying a project of this size will put it out of reach. Construction costs are increasing at a rate well beyond the rate of inflation – around 10% per year. The time is now.

Construction Timetable

If the membership approves the dues increase, we are hopeful of an October ground-breaking and a Spring grand opening. Of course, that schedule assumes a successful membership vote.

We ask that you take the time to study this proposal, visit the site, and ask the questions needed to understand the problem and its solutions. If you do that, we believe that you will vote "Yes."

Understanding the Project In Photos

These recent photographs show conditions that exist throughout the Brooks complex. They are representative of conditions on the current tennis, pickleball, and basketball courts. They are the direct result of base-construction that does not work in Pinelands soil. These conditions have existed since the beginning of hard-court play, but not addressed. The recommended solution involves applying a post-tension slab foundation with a 50-year useful life.



BROOKS FIELD CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR HISTORY

1932 – 4 Courts renovated and topped with clay
 1935 – 2 new private courts added to complex
 1957-58 – 4 courts hard-topped (2 per year)
 1964 – 2 courts re-topped
 1973 – 2 new courts; 4 courts repaired
 1974 – 2 courts re-built
 1981 – 2 courts re-surfaced
 1983 – 2 courts resurfaced

1985 – 2 courts re-surfaced
 1986 – 2 courts re-surfaced
 1987 – 2 courts re-surfaced
 1992 – 6 courts, re-surfaced or patched
 1995 – 3 courts re-surfaced
 2004 – All courts re-surfaced
 2016 – Top Coat repair and painted