

# Duluth News Tribune

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## Heritage Center gets money for turf surface

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The Duluth Heritage Sports Center took one step closer Thursday toward its goal of providing a multisport facility for the community.

The Grassroots Program, a partnership between the National Football League and the Local Initiatives Support Corp., announced a \$200,000 grant to help provide an indoor turf playing surface at the center.

“We want to provide an opportunity for the neighborhood youth to participate in football,” said Pam Kramer, the executive director of Duluth’s LISC organization. “It is a clear part of neighborhood revitalization in [Lincoln Park/West End].”

Kramer's group helped the Boys and Girls Club of Duluth apply for the grant. The national LISC organization helps administer the grant program with the NFL, including selecting cities to receive money.

The Duluth grant is one of 32 awarded to construct or renovate athletic fields in the areas surrounding each NFL market — in Duluth’s case, the Minnesota Vikings. The grants total \$5.43 million.

“This has always been a core part of our vision and mission to provide a multipurpose facility,” said Dick Loraas, chairman of the board for the nonprofit Duluth Heritage Sports Center Foundation. “This grant is crucial to fulfill this mission. ... This is absolutely fabulous.”

The turf surface will be used in the multisport pavilion, which is under construction next to the newly finished hockey arena at the old Clyde Iron industrial site at 29th Avenue West and Michigan Street. Construction on the pavilion is scheduled to be completed around Oct. 15.

The Boys and Girls Club and youth football programs will be the primary benefactors of the new surface, but it will also be used for other recreational activities from tennis to soccer and baseball.

From October to March, the pavilion will serve as an additional ice facility, with the multisport surface in use from April to September. The type of turf has not been decided, but flexibility of use will be instrumental, said Todd Johnson, executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Duluth.

“It will be a new and unique opportunity for the kids we serve,” Johnson said. “It is going to be a great resource for the kids of [Lincoln Park/West End] and the entire city.”

The Heritage Sports Center is, in part, a replacement for Peterson Arena, the city ice rink that was destroyed by fire in 2004.