

Questions from Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, April 24, 2024

These are great questions and highlight why we have been in ongoing discussions with members of the South Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN), the City of Salem Parks and Recreation department, and the Mission Street Parks Conservancy, among others. We are working hard to put together a plan that fits the needs of the park, best utilizes the existing ballpark, and draws in more families of all income levels to experience Bush's Pasture Park.

Important to understand is that we are not building a new field. Willamette's privately owned baseball diamond has existed since 1950. The current baseball stadium structure has existed since 1989. Willamette's adjacent football stadium has existed since 1950 and both the football stadium and the adjacent city-owned tennis courts currently have sports lighting.

Also, please note that we aren't adding a new use to Willamette's ballpark. Willamette's athletic complex has regularly hosted outside users since its inception. The New York Giants professional football team even held their preseason camps at Willamette for a few years in the 1950s. Currently, the football stadium regularly hosts collegiate, high school, and youth football; collegiate, high school, and youth track events; and professional, high school, and youth soccer. Willamette's ballpark, weather permitting, regularly hosts collegiate, high school, and youth baseball. For over 30 years (1989-2020), the ballpark hosted 30+ American Legion baseball games every summer.

What is the anticipated pedestrian flow through the park before and after baseball games, and what impacts might this have on sensitive ecological areas?

Fans will continue to be encouraged to use the main stadium complex entrance on the north side of the park off Mission Street. That entrance will continue to serve as the main entrance to Willamette's athletic complex and the location for ADA access.

Willamette currently has a south gate entrance to its athletic complex located between the baseball stadium structure and the batting cages. This entrance helps capture fans coming from the south. While there haven't been any recent issues with this location, it was mentioned during a site walk with SCAN members that there is potential for a bottleneck of fans at the south gate that may spill off of the current bark dust trail onto vegetation. As part of the plan to create accessibility and security at the ballpark, we are considering moving the south gate east and installing a fence around the south perimeter of the ballpark seating structure. The new location of the south gate will better handle the flow of park users walking on the adjacent bark dust trail and spectators entering the ballpark.

There was a discussion with the City of Salem Parks and Recreation staff about adding a new north/south trail that runs along the ridge where a self-made trail exists to connect the existing west/east barkdust

path with an already established asphalt path. Staff would like to examine future traffic patterns before making any decisions about additional pathways.

What measures will be taken to prevent damage to sensitive areas like the oak savannah remnants and camas prairies?

As a stakeholder in Bush's Pasture Park with events taking place on the athletic fields since 1950, Willamette has, and will continue, to take adequate measures to ensure the health of the park. As this use isn't anything new, the many years of empirical evidence show that most users of the athletic complex will come from the north, utilizing the main entrance to the football stadium off Mission Street. Willamette and the Salem Baseball Club, as is done with any other outside user, will closely monitor the traffic flow to events at Willamette's athletic complex and work with other park stakeholders to mitigate any new concerns.

An extraordinary measure of this project is the significant reduction of irrigation thanks to installing synthetic turf. The CLMP lists the leading threat to the oak trees as root rot caused by excessive irrigation. The elimination of irrigation at the ballpark will significantly help the oak savannahs directly east and south of the ballpark. According to Willamette's athletic complex manager, the current ballpark grass alone needs over 1,000,000 gallons of water a summer and none of that would be necessary with artificial turf.

Can a visual diagram of the stadium with proposed entrances, showing the connection to parking, be provided?

The map below shows an overview of the area with the entrances highlighted by yellow circles. The main entrance will continue to be the McCulloch Stadium entrance to the north, but there is also an existing gate to the south that we plan to move slightly to help avoid sensitive areas of the park.

We will encourage the flow of parking and visitors to be at the north entrance utilizing lots on the Willamette University campus, the Mission Street lot, and street parking to the north of Bush Park along Church Street. We understand that folks who know about them will use the lots on Lafelle Street on the south side of the park. There is access to and from the stadium from those lots following existing pathways.

We also want to encourage the use of public transportation, walking, and riding bicycles to the stadium. The blue rectangles on the map show bus stops surrounding three sides of the park.



The map below shows the spaces available on Willamette's campus, one block to the north of the stadium entrance. There are 204 spaces in the areas blocked off in yellow and 415 spaces in the area blocked off in blue. Those are permit-only spaces during the school year but can be made available for larger events on weekends and during the summer.



How will the stadium's construction and operation align with the goals and management guidelines set out in the Cultural Landscape Management Plan for Bush's Pasture Park?

Willamette's ballpark already exists and the only construction taking place is the replacement of the playing surface with synthetic turf, the installation of light poles (similar to what currently exists at the adjacent football field and City tennis courts), the installation of poles for new protective netting and the installation of a concrete pathway and perimeter fence around the south side of the ballpark structure for accessibility, security and aesthetics. The storage of equipment/materials will all occur on Willamette's property during construction.

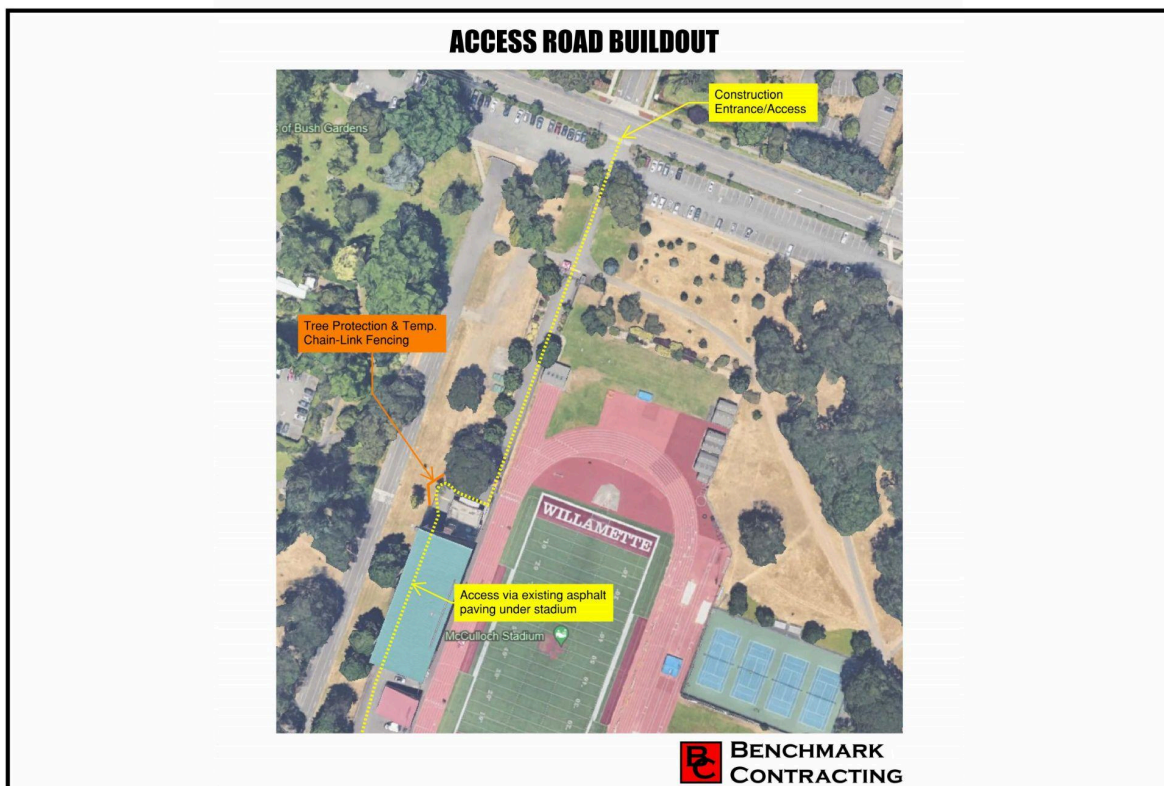
The overarching vision of Bush's Pasture Park as expressed in the CLMP are: protection and enhancement of oaks, wildflowers, and Pringle Creek; natural exploration; active play and recreation; family gatherings; a sense of history; and areas for reflection. This project, as a whole, aligns with this vision. By better utilizing an existing resource and making it available to the community, this project brings a wider spectrum of Salem residents and visitors to the park to experience it and its cultural landscape. With the reduction of irrigation, gas-powered equipment, and fertilizers, no removal of trees, shrubs, or natural vegetation, adequately placed entrances, and almost all of the work on Willamette's property, this project maintains the integrity of the cultural landscape by conserving the unique existing assets and resources. This project will introduce new users to the park for active play, recreation, and family gatherings. As a byproduct, these new users will get introduced to the opportunity for natural exploration, a sense of history, and reflection.

Will the improvements necessitate modifications to the existing park pathway system to limit plant community fragmentation and minimize disturbance to restored habitat?

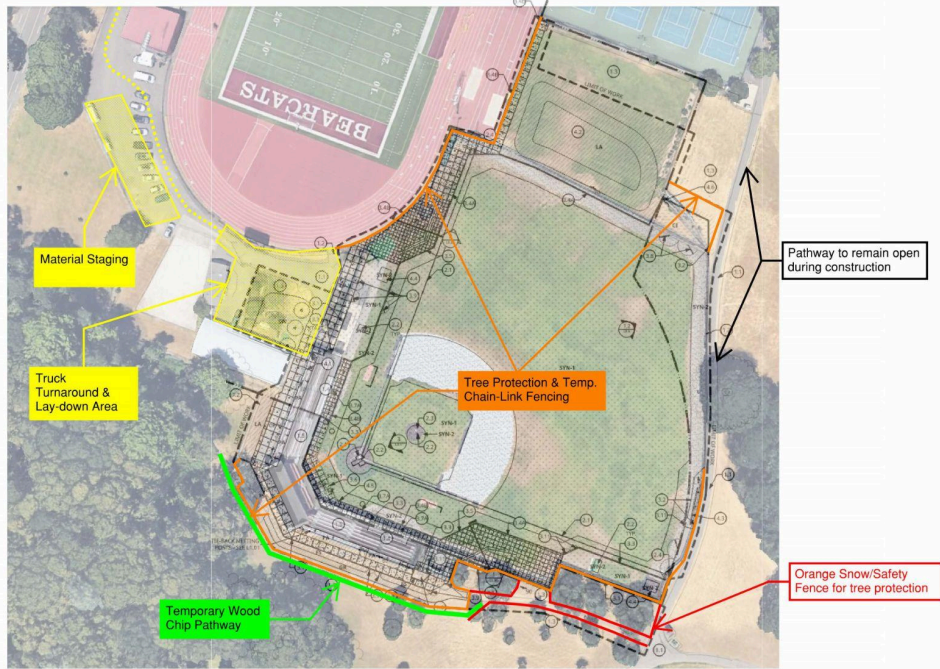
We will monitor future traffic patterns to and from the facility to evaluate any necessary modifications. We plan to work closely with Parks Department staff to make those evaluations. Because we are not creating any new entrances, we hope existing paths will be adequate.

Is there a detailed map showing areas where construction equipment and materials will be moved and stored, ensuring compliance with city ordinances protecting trees?

The contractor the university will be using has walked the site several times and provided a detailed plan for the movement and storage of construction materials and equipment. The main flow of traffic will enter through the north gate to McCulloch Stadium and be contained within the current facility footprint and all materials will be stored within that footprint as well. They will install the necessary construction barrier around the site and take all necessary tree protection measures.



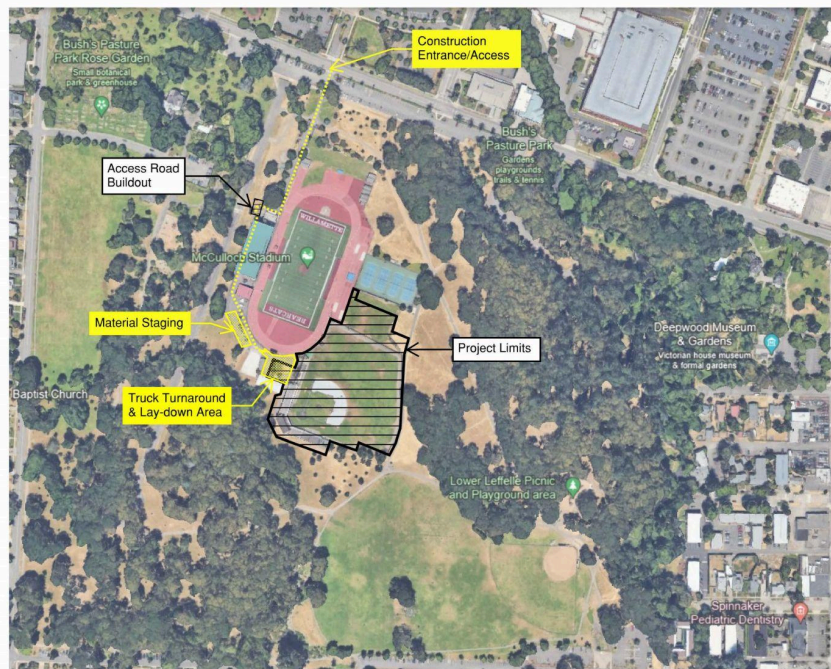
BASEBALL FIELD IMPROVEMENTS



SPEC KEENE STADIUM & JOHN LEWIS FIELD



CONSTRUCTION STAGING & LOGISTICS PLAN



SPEC KEENE STADIUM & JOHN LEWIS FIELD



Will the new expansions follow previous agreements between Willamette University and the City of Salem, or will there be different terms?

The university and the City of Salem have developed a revised agreement and that document is attached as part of the meeting notes. The revised agreement does include the university providing some additional resources to the City in the form of field access, installing windscreens on the city-owned tennis courts, and free use of McCulloch Stadium for future kids' relay events.

Are parts of the 1982 agreement between Willamette University and City of Salem regarding park and facility use still in force?

The university and the City of Salem have developed a revised agreement and that document is attached as part of the meeting notes.

How will the aesthetics of foul ball netting be managed to minimize impact on park aesthetics and local wildlife?

There is existing netting at the ballpark that is 30' tall and stretches from one dugout to the other behind home plate. In its existence, we are not aware of any impact on local wildlife and do not have any recorded complaints about aesthetics. In monitoring activity at the field since our last meeting with SPRAB, we have noted that birds often use the wires that hold up the netting as a perch (see photo below).



We have followed up with netting professionals to ask questions about wildlife impact and based on their experience they have shown no concerns about our proposed netting plan.

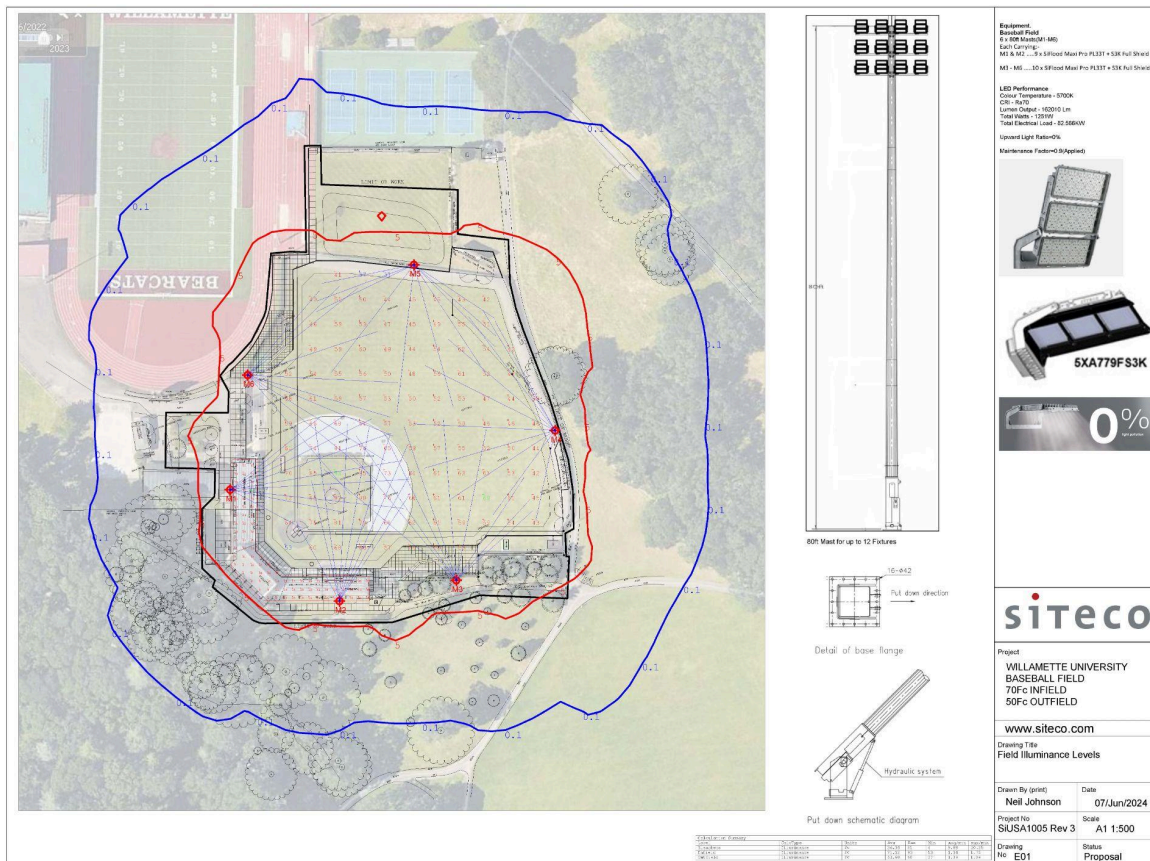
Will Minor, CEO
 Netting Professionals, LLC
www.nettingpros.com

Alex Fletcher, West Sales Manager
 Sportsfield Specialties
www.sportsfield.com

What are the specifications for the new lighting and any electronic display signs? Will this lighting comply with DarkSky International standards and minimize light pollution?

The current lighting design has 6 light poles distributed around the stadium. The pole locations and type of fixture are shown on the diagram below. The university has been in conversation with several lighting companies and is favoring a company named Siteco because their fixtures are dark sky compliant. The design of their poles also allows for them to be maintained without the need for heavy machinery, which will help limit the need for large vehicles during any future maintenance.

The lighting technology will light the field with minimal light throw to other areas of the park. The diagram below shows the projected light levels within the stadium and the edge of any light within the park. The blue line shows where light levels are projected to be at 0.1 footcandles, which is the edge of any light cast by the new fixtures. The red line shows 5 footcandle perimeter



The image above also shows the design of the poles and the type of fixture that will be used.

What are the proposed specifications for the PA system, including decibel limitations?

There is an existing PA system at the baseball field with speakers attached along the front facade of the press box. For normal competition field operations, sound levels should run 80 to 85 dbA with peaks at 90 dbA. The current levels in the seating area are in the 65-85 dbA range and because of the directionality of the speaker system, there is limited noise outside of the venue.

This type of distributed speaker system places many, smaller speakers, typically on structures at the top of seating areas to project sound to the seating below. That way the distance each speaker must project sound is much shorter than the “throw” from a single point cluster, the sound power level is lower and, as with the crowd sound, the distance the sound travels is shorter. Distributed sound systems have been demonstrated at many stadiums to have a smaller community sound “footprint” than a single cluster of speakers that tries to project to the entire venue from one location.

Similar to other concerns raised, Willamette commits to make a good-faith effort to address any future concerns related to stadium noise.

What design is proposed for the new outfield fencing, particularly in terms of height and opacity/lack of transparency?

The current configuration of the outfield fence that borders the park will remain in place with some necessary repairs being done to that existing fence. The current outfield fence is 10’ tall chain link with a semi-transparent windscreen attached. We hope to be able to update the windscreen on the fence and would like to keep the current level of transparency.

Have Native American representatives taken a position on the proposed stadium development?

Luke Emamuel with The Salem Baseball Club reached out to both the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in late 2022 regarding this project and have continued to provide updates. Both the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have responded in support.

How will insurance for the stadium be coordinated?

Any Willamette University events at the stadium are covered by university-held insurance. Any non-Willamette group using the space is required to provide proof of insurance before using any university facility.

Are there any trees designated for removal as part of the project?

No trees will be removed as part of the project.

How will the increased demand for parking during games affect regular park users and local neighborhoods?

Empirical evidence from many years of Willamette football, baseball and track events, high school football, baseball and track events, professional soccer games, summer American Legion baseball, and youth events have established a good understanding of parking needs. We don't anticipate any increase in demand for parking as compared to the days of other Willamette events.

The planning standard for parking for spectator sports is 3 people per car. There are over 430 parking spots within Bush's Pasture Park. With the introduction of sports lighting and the games being played in the evenings, there is also potential for spectators to park at 9 am to 5 pm businesses in the area (just within one block of Bush's Park, there are an additional 1,100+ parking spaces at 9 am to 5 pm business parking lots). With the walkability/bike-ability of the park and having four different bus routes touch the park, there should be more than enough parking spaces for park users and ballpark spectators. To be good neighbors, a good park stakeholder and have an accessible venue for the fans, it is important to Willamette University and Salem Baseball Club to work with area businesses to make their open lots available.

Parking at the Bush House Museum and Deepwoods Estates will be off-limits to stadium visitors and left available to regular park users. Signs can be created stating as such and if needed, staffing can be provided to help facilitate.

What responsibilities will the operators of the ballfield and Willamette University have regarding burdens placed upon Salem Parks maintenance crews and Bush Park itself?

To address this question requires an understanding of any existing burdens that athletic events currently place on Salem Park maintenance crews and the park itself. We hope those burdens have been addressed already in the past as this proposal isn't for a new use but for a use that has occurred for many years in many different shapes.

Willamette University is committed to the health and beauty of Bush's Park and expects that anyone using its facilities will treat that space and the surrounding area with respect.

How will the availability of alcohol on Willamette University property affect park users and park property?

Willamette University already provides alcohol on its property for certain sporting events. Outside users of Willamette's property, particularly professional soccer, have sold alcohol during their matches at McCulloch Stadium and the university has had alcohol at select football games throughout the years. At times they have also taken advantage of the multiple reservable areas within the park to have alcohol through the City's permitting process.

The purchase and consumption of alcohol at any university facility will only take place within the confines of that facility and follow all OLCC guidelines. The ability to install a perimeter fence on the south side of the ballpark will greatly help in the ability to manage and monitor spectators and their consumption and prevent any trash from leaving the ballpark.

What alternatives, like using Chemeketa Community College baseball fields, have been considered to avoid the intense use of Bush's Pasture Park?

The addition of a summer collegiate team following the use of Willamette's collegiate season fits into the fabric of amateurism that has been a staple of Bush's Park since 1950. Any potential new impact would simply stem from more families, more Salem residents from all parts of the community, and visitors to the area coming to an event at the ballpark and getting the opportunity to experience the park in the process. With the current trend of crime and vandalism in Bush's Pasture Park, we would hope that the presence of additional positive activity would enhance the safety of the area.

An exhaustive search effort was made to vet all possible locations in and around Salem that could provide the first synthetic turf baseball field and softball field available to the local high schools and community. Salem-Keizer School district property, Chemeketa Community College, and Geer Park are just a few of the sites vetted. None of those sites met all of the criteria in the way that Willamette's facilities do. Having access to both a softball and a baseball field is critically important for the school district and Willamette; a central location is key for access by all of the local high schools; and being in Salem and close to downtown helps continue the growth of our outstanding city.