

1415 Saginaw Street South
Salem, OR 97302
April 2, 2024

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
c/o City of Salem

Sent via email to Leann Moore, Staff Assistant at: lmoore@cityofsalem.net

RE: Proposed expansion of Willamette University baseball stadium into Bush's Pasture Park

Dear Chair Norris and Members of SPRAB:

At your March meeting, I expressed my concerns about a proposal to expand the physical footprint of the stadium owned by Willamette University into the public space in Bush's Pasture Park. I am writing to reiterate my opposition to this proposal and to explain why it falls outside of the [Bush/Deepwood Cultural Landscape Management Plan](#) (CLMP), recommended for adoption by SPRAB on July 8, 2021, and adopted by City Council on July 26, 2021.

The CLMP embraces four main goals:

- Goal 1: Deliver an enriching park experience for Salem residents and visitors, centered on the cultural landscape.
- Goal 2: Build awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the significance of this landscape to the Indigenous People of this area.
- Goal 3: Support and protect the legibility of the historic character of the Bush's Pasture Park and Deepwood Estate Gardens and their context.
- Goal 4: Enhance the ecological health of the Oregon white oaks, camas/wildflowers areas, and Pringle Creek.

CLMP Executive Summary at i; reiterated in City staff report to Council, File No. 21-305.

None of these goals is even arguably served by fencing more of the park for the exclusive use of Willamette University for stadium purposes. The "cultural landscape" referred to in Goal 1 means the "unique existing assets and resources," not additional development. Emphasis added; CLMP at 4. Moreover, well before stakeholders heard anything about the proposed stadium expansion, the CLMP identified "overuse" as one of the top three challenges to the future of the park. CLMP at 50. The proposed addition of about 30 baseball games during a three-month period serves only to magnify concerns about overuse.

The CLMP provides that park management should “[s]upport and advance a varied set of recreational activities across the park.” CLMP at 58. Fencing off park land might arguably support recreational activities (i.e., baseball games for those who play and those who watch), but only activities in the Willamette stadium. No new or expanded recreational activities in the park would be created. No benefit would accrue to park users, as opposed to Willamette or the users of its baseball stadium. On the contrary, the park would become more crowded and more noisy throughout its entire peak summer season.

Suffice it to say that the proposed expansion of the stadium footprint is inconsistent with both the letter and the spirit of the CLMP, which this Board recommended and the City Council adopted without a single dissenting vote. CLMP at 775. In fact, this is precisely the sort of development that the CLMP was intended to prohibit. What has changed since the plan was adopted? Nothing, except someone has a new idea. And all new uses must be consistent with the CLMP and the original deed (land transferred only for “park and playground purposes” and uses incidental to park and playground uses). Deed, CLMP at 381.

As I mentioned in March, suggestions for new ways to use the land in Bush’s Pasture Park come up all the time. The need to respond to these new ideas based upon established principles spurred the development of the CLMP. Many new ideas involve fencing the public off from just a little bit of park land. Each would chip away at the park. Ten feet here, half an acre there: it adds up. The character of the park would change. Eventually, Bush’s Pasture Park will look like the Riverfront Park – lots of pavement, lots of events, lots of crowds – a popular spot, to be sure, but not the beautiful, culturally rich natural area that Bush’s Pasture Park is today.

“It is unique to have such a large and natural park in the heart of a city. The retention of the property for this purpose alone is important to Salem’s development as one of the most beautiful small cities of the West.”

Emphasis added; Stuart Bush, 1960 Letter to the Editor, CLMP at reverse of cover.

Please do not support this expansion into park property.

Sincerely,

Christine Chute
Ward 2

Attachment: Photo of one effected park visitor taken on March 22, 2024



A red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) enjoying its lunch on a spot that will be fenced off under the proposal to expand Willamette's baseball stadium. The new paving suggested in project drawings would run over top of the hawk, while the fence would move to his right.

Rob Romanek

From: John Slagle <slugduck@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 12:18 PM
To: salem_parks
Subject: Construction Project For Expansion of the WU Baseball Stadium in Bush Park

It has come to my attention belatedly and the attention of many of my neighbors who live in the neighborhood adjacent to Bush Park that there is an ongoing effort to bring a Minor League Baseball team and (upgraded) stadium facilities to Bush Park. Many of us are concerned and even taken aback by this proposal that seems to be gathering some inertia despite the fact that many of us who live in close proximity to the Park have had little or no contact from the City about this highly impactful Proposal. I for one had not heard a thing about it before two days ago.

I want to go on record as a resident that I find the thought that this would be a good idea to be highly suspect. Here are just a few of my concerns:

NIGHTTIME NOISE

LIGHT POLLUTION

PARKING (that will most assuredly impact the surrounding neighborhoods)

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY

MOTOR TRAFFIC IMPACT

FOOT TRAFFIC IMPACT (on the Grounds of Bush Park as well as the Neighborhoods)

These are just a few of the concerns I have off the top of my head. There will be more problems. This is especially true when you are talking about the frequency of games that will be played on a weekly basis. The proposal seems to me to be a completely inappropriate use of the "Jewel" of our City Park System. Bush Park should be protected NOT abused and exploited for the financial gain of Business Men and Willamette University.

John Slagle
Janice Sorensen
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503-400-0701
slugduck@Yahoo.com

Rob Romanek

From: Lori Lucas <lucasloriy@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 9:06 AM
To: salemparks; Vanessa Nordyke; scanneighborhoodsalem@gmail.com
Subject: Proposed construction, Bushe's pasture park

Good morning,

I am against these changes as it will change the feel of this beautiful historic park. Once you place it in privatized hands it becomes a disaster. Also I was wondering if this goes against the Bush family will. They stated that a portion was for willamette university and the rest for the citizens of Salem. Nature is our best asset and we the people should be able to continue to wander it in the peace it was intended for.

Thank you,
Lori Lucas

Ps: I live across the street from the park and know constant events is going to be a hassle for parking, noise and garbage. Please don't do this!!