

Rob Romanek

From: Patricia Deminna <patdex@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 6:38 PM
To: salem_parks
Subject: Expansion of Willamette University's baseball stadium

April 5, 2024

To: Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Re: Proposed construction of Willamette University's expanded baseball stadium

I'm writing to voice my opposition to the proposed construction project for the expansion of the Willamette University baseball stadium in Bush's Pasture Park.

I am a resident of Salem and I live in a neighborhood that borders the Park on its north boundary. The Park is a regular destination for myself and my husband; for our neighbors and their children; and for family and friends who visit us from out of town. Bush's Pasture Park is a cherished gem of the city, a vast historic natural area that is located within, and accessible to, the urban environment that surrounds it. All of us who frequent the Park — the neighbors near and far, and the habitués of business, government, and the hospital — are drawn by what the city's purposeful vision has provided and preserved for our community. A world class public park. Ninety acres of walking and running paths, an historic rose garden, a hillside Rhododendron garden, a conservatory, three playgrounds for kids, picnic areas, the Bush House museum, and Bush Barn.

We do not want to see commercial intrusion into the Park or the adverse effects resulting from that commercialization. The planned expansion of Willamette University's existing baseball facility to accommodate a private baseball club is a threat to the ecology of the Park; and the uses for which it was designed, that is, "solely for public park and playground purposes."

The neighborhoods surrounding the park will be exposed to the same adverse effects as the Park itself. Neighbors have justified concerns about nighttime noise, light pollution, insufficient parking; and the adequacy of park security and clean-up after games. Light pollution is problematic for wildlife, too. The excessive use of artificial outdoor light disrupts animal behaviors; affecting their migration patterns, wake-sleep habits, and habitat formation.

Bush's Pasture Park is an unsuitable setting for a private baseball club with a 32-game schedule over a 60-day period during the summer, which is the Park's most active time of the year.

I respectfully request that the proposal for Willamette University's expanded baseball stadium be denied.

Regards,

Patricia Deminna

Rob Romanek

From: J Stembridge <stembrij@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 6, 2024 10:21 AM
To: Leann Moore
Subject: Re: Expansion of Willamette University Baseball Stadium to provide for a commercial baseball program

Dear Members of the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board,

I wish to correct an inaccuracy I made on my letter to you yesterday. I walked the park area today and could not find any signs designating tree removal. I have now been told that the architectural design for expansion of the park includes a new pathway into the stadium that shows there are a number of trees within that perimeter that will possibly need to be removed.

Please do clarify if tree removal is part of the expansion plan.

And if so, it is one further reason to veto this proposed commercial venture in Bush Park.

Thank you again for your service on this Board, and for your interest in preserving public parks for the public to enjoy in perpetuity.

Respectfully,
Joan Stembridge

On Friday, April 5, 2024, 06:22:11 PM PDT, J Stembridge <stembrij@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Members of the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board,

I am writing to urge you to veto the idea of allowing Willamette University to expand the footprint of their Bush Park Baseball Stadium. The expansion is to enable a commercial (for-profit) college-level summer baseball program to play 27 evening games in Bush Park during the months of June, July, and August.

Bush Park is a community wide treasure that is well used and deeply appreciated. It is especially busy in the summer months, when families come to picnic, and people of all ages walk, run, relax and marvel at the natural wonderland in the heart of our city.

Here are a few concerns with the idea of the commercial baseball venture in Bush Park:

- Bush Park does not have enough parking to accommodate the influx of baseball fans anticipated,
- The park is now closed at sundown, but that is anticipated to change to 10pm if a commercial baseball franchise is developed in Bush Park
- There will be flood lights installed for night time usage.

- There will be loud speakers broadcasting the games late into the evening.

- The expansion might require removal of trees: As of today there are reported to be 12 trees in the lower Bush Park area near the stadium with signs stating they will be removed. (If this is accurate information, it is very disturbing to see the park's natural beauty being sacrificed for a commercial venture.)

By far, the most significant concern I have is that by allowing for the expansion of the stadium, the Park and Recreation Advisory Board will be green-lighting the destruction of the peacefulness that draws lovers of nature to the park for rejuvenation.

I urge you to reject this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sincerely,
Joan Stembridge
1695 Winter Street SE
Salem, OR

Rob Romanek

From: Sue Koger <skoger@willamette.edu>
Sent: Saturday, April 6, 2024 12:16 PM
To: salemparks; SCANneighborhoodSalem@gmail.com
Subject: Please OPPOSE Expanding baseball stadium

I have lived in the Bush Park neighborhood since 1995, and am alarmed at the escalation in criminal activity, including violent crime. I am concerned that expanding the baseball stadium will only exacerbate that trend, not to mention traffic, noise, and other impacts on the historic park and surrounding neighborhoods.

Please oppose the use of state funds for what will surely be a public nuisance and degradation of our park. Thank you.

Susan Koger
1710 Capitol St SE
Salem Or 97302

Rob Romanek

From: Luke Emanuel <lukeemanuel@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 6, 2024 5:18 PM
To: Rob Romanek; Scott Archer; rpassage@willamette.edu
Subject: April 11th meeting
Attachments: SCAN Letter of Support.pdf; SCAN Letter of Support II.pdf; Letter of Support-SKPS.pdf; Letter of Support-Boys & Girls Club.pdf; Letter of Support-Marion County.pdf; Letter of Support-Special Olympics.pdf; Letter of Support-Travel Salem.pdf; Letter of Support-YMCA.pdf

Rob,

For the meeting, should we submit to the record the letters of support we have? I have attached them below. Most telling are the two letters from SCAN. They represent our frequent outreach dating back to 2022 and show that the majority of the Board supports our effort. We have also walked with Park 6-8 times with neighbors, Mission Street Parks Conservancy, members of the SCAN board, Representative Tom Andersen and Councilor Nishioka. On top of that, Willamette voluntary held an open house on its campus for the two neighborhoods where the fields sit and had it moderated by the landscape architect.

Let us know what you think.

-Luke



October 29, 2023

Scott Archer, Deputy City Manager
Community Services Department
555 Liberty St. SE
Room 325
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Collegiate Summer Baseball in Salem

This letter concerns recent actions by the South Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN) Board concerning the proposal for collegiate summer baseball in Salem.

The SCAN Board first heard about the proposal in July 2022 when Mr. Luke Emanuel brought the concept to SCAN. Following the presentation, the SCAN Board considered a motion:

Be it resolved that SCAN supports a collegiate summer baseball league in Salem.

The motion was approved on a vote of 8 YES and 3 NO with 2 abstentions.

Mr. Emanuel returned with updates during the year. Most recently, he presented information to the SCAN board concerning the proposed nonbinding Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Salem, Willamette University, and the Salem Baseball Club LLC. Following questions and answers, the Board considered a motion:

SCAN supports the nonbinding Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Salem, Willamette University, and the Salem Baseball Club LLC.

The motion was approved by a vote of 7 YES and 0 NO with 2 abstentions.

You should be aware that the proposal to support the MOU remains controversial among SCAN Board members because it involves changes to Willamette University's baseball stadium in Bush's Pasture Park. Seven board members were not present at the October meeting. One Board member has served notice that he intends to move to reconsider the vote by which the Board has supported the MOU at the November board meeting.

SCAN looks forward to receiving updates on the project and would like to review the final design before construction begins.

Victor Dodier
SCAN President

SOUTH
CENTRAL
ASSOCIATION
OF NEIGHBORS
EST. 1975



November 15, 2023

Scott Archer, Deputy City Manager
Community Services Department
555 Liberty St. SE
Room 325
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Collegiate Summer Baseball in Salem

I am following up on my recent letter concerning the proposal for collegiate summer baseball in Salem.

At its October meeting, the South Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN) board approved a motion stating:

SCAN supports the nonbinding Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Salem, Willamette University, and the Salem Baseball Club LLC.

At its November meeting, the SCAN Board considered a motion to reconsider the motion to support the nonbinding Memorandum of Understanding.

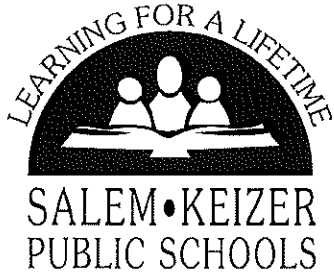
The motion to reconsider failed by a vote of 4 YES and 8 NO with 2 abstentions.

SCAN looks forward to receiving updates on the project and receiving final design materials for a timely review by its committees as well as the Board.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Victor Dodier". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Victor Dodier
SCAN President

cc: Luke Emanuel, Salem Baseball Club



LARA TIFFIN
Coordinator of Athletics & Activities
2450 Lancaster Drive NE / PO Box 12024
Salem, Oregon 97309-0024
503-399-3000

Andrea Castañeda, Superintendent

October 10, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the collaborative effort of the City of Salem, Willamette University and Salem Baseball Club to provide upgrades to the softball and baseball fields owned by Willamette University.

While Salem-Keizer School District does not have the financial means to contribute to the initial development of the softball and baseball fields, the high school baseball and softball teams would greatly benefit from the addition of turf and lights on Willamette's ball fields. We have zero publicly- available synthetic turf baseball and softball fields near the city of Salem. Due to the rainy weather we typically experience every spring, our Salem-Keizer School District's softball and baseball teams cannot rely on a dependable schedule. For competitions, our teams endure cancellations, postponements and spontaneous road trips. Often the change in competition venue translates to games being canceled for the sub-varsity teams, limiting student-athletes' opportunities to develop their skills.

For practices, our high school baseball and softball teams typically find space inside gyms and on the artificial turf on our football fields. Most years, they have not practiced on an actual baseball or softball field before playing their first game. They do their best to simulate game-like situations while in the gym or on the football field, but clearly it is not the same as practicing on an actual softball or baseball field. Having turf fields available for our high school teams to rent would prevent them from having to travel to other cities to play, would give families a reliable schedule to plan around, and would provide athletes the opportunity to improve their skills on a regulation-size field.

In addition, we believe that athletic participation would increase due to having a more reliable game schedule, not only for the athletes but for their families. Our schools could actually host games in town rather than have to travel around the state, leading to less missed instructional time and less need for substitutes for the school employees who are coaches. In addition, the turf fields would reduce the need for maintenance, freeing up the grounds crew to focus on much-needed maintenance elsewhere. Finally, the turf fields are accessible year-round, giving Unified Sports and off-season teams a place to practice. Another benefit is the exposure of our baseball and softball players to a college campus and the promotion of the continuance of their education at the next level.

I foresee the Salem-Keizer School District requesting to rent Willamette's softball and baseball fields on a regular basis. With zero synthetic turf fields in our community, we are clearly behind other communities in what we are providing to our youth. We fully support Willamette University's endeavor to renovate their fields to provide a much-needed venue for the Salem community.

Sincerely,

Lara Tiffin
Coordinator of Athletics and Activities

SALEM-KEIZER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 29, 2024



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF SALEM
MARION AND POLK COUNTIES**

To whom it my concern,

We are pleased to express our support for the Salem Baseball/Softball Turf Project. We will support this project as there would be plans to use the facility in many ways not just associated with baseball/softball.

Boys & Girls Club of Salem Marion and Polk Counties mission is to inspire and enable all youth, grades 1-12, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO NEED US MOST, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens through the development of a positive self-image and self-reliance. Youth can learn many life lessons through playing sport and participating in recreational activities that involve play.

The vision for our Athletics Department is Youth who participate in the Boys & Girls Club athletic programs will: learn about good character and sportsmanship, gain mastery of both team and individual sports, and develop life-long fitness skills and healthy habits.

If this project is funded, the Boys & Girls Club of Salem Marion and Polk Counties will support the Salem Baseball/Softball Turf Project by:

- End of season celebration for T-ball program
- Charity Softball games to raise youth sports awareness and scholarship opportunities for low-income families (potential future event)
- Summer Camp programming
- Flag Football games (unique one-off weekends)

We believe this is an excellent opportunity to bring the community together through sport but create an avenue for our youth at the Boys & Girls Club to take part in sport and play on a quality turf field and safe environment.

Sincerely,

Kyle Buse
Athletic Director

Boys & Girls Club of Salem
Marion and Polk Counties
1395 Summer St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
Phone: (503) 581-7383
Fax: (503) 375-6129
bgc-salem.org

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Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 31, 2024

RE: Marion County Board of Commissioners Support for Salem Turf Fields Project

Dear Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes to express our support for the initiative to install artificial turf and lights at Willamette University's baseball field and softball stadium in Salem.

The need for turf fields in Salem is compelling, considering the lack of such facilities despite the consistently wet conditions in the Willamette Valley. We believe that this project will significantly enhance the opportunities for local athletes, providing them with a year-round, safe, and reliable space for practice and play.

The benefits of artificial turf align with our vision for fostering community development and providing accessible recreational opportunities. The advantages, such as year-round availability, water conservation, and reduced maintenance costs, not only contribute to the well-being of our youth but also align with sustainable practices.

The plan to renovate the existing baseball field and softball stadium at Willamette University, strategically located in downtown Salem is also a key component to this project. Maximizing these central resources for the benefit of the youth through a scheduling agreement with the Salem-Keizer School District showcases a collaborative approach that we wholeheartedly support.

The Marion County Board of Commissioners supports this initiative and believes that the installation of artificial turf and lights at Willamette University's baseball field and softball stadium will not only benefit the local youth but also create premier venues for high school postseason competitions. We anticipate the positive impact this project will have on our community, and we are excited about the prospect of enhancing the sports and recreational facilities available in Marion County.

Thank you for your consideration of this project, and we look forward to witnessing the positive transformation it will bring to our community.

Sincerely,

Kevin Cameron
Chair

Colm Willis
Commissioner

Danielle Bethell
Commissioner



January 19, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the upgrades to artificial turf and lights for the baseball and softball fields in Downtown Salem on the Willamette University campus.

Special Olympics Oregon (SOOR) partners with schools, parks and recreation departments and other sport organizations around the state to conduct sports practices, clinics, and competitions. We are always seeking high-quality, accessible, safe playing fields, courts, and facilities to host our athletes (children and adults with intellectual disabilities) in a variety of sports, health, and fitness activities.

These proposed lighted turf fields would serve as excellent places for our Marion County Local Program to offer a variety of training and competition opportunities during the day or evening in sports such as softball, bocce, and soccer throughout the year as these fields would be multi-purpose and functional year-round.

As a Willamette University graduate who spent several years living in Salem - playing my fair share of soccer games on muddy grass pitches - I think the addition of these all-weather, lighted fields would benefit the community at large by providing more places for participants of all ages to gather and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Hanken', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Hanken
Chief Operating Officer



January 17, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express Travel Salem's enthusiastic support for the collaborative effort of the City of Salem, Willamette University, and the Salem Baseball Club to upgrade softball and baseball fields with turf and lights. The commitment from these partners and the offering of these fields to the community reflects a shared vision for enhancing our community's recreational facilities.

We recognize the profound impact that sports and recreational activities have on our local economy. In 2022 alone, visitors to the region generated an impressive \$782 million, with a significant portion attributed to sports participants and spectators, which underscores the importance of investing in our sports infrastructure.

The proposed field upgrades not only align with our commitment to community development but also present a strategic opportunity to attract more tournaments and events. Turf fields with lights enhance the versatility and year-round usability of the facilities, providing an ideal setting for youth sports and attracting tournaments that inject new dollars into the region's economy.

Considering the economic impact of sports on our region, the requested \$3 million from the Oregon legislature is not just a funding request; it is an investment in the continued growth and prosperity of our community. The positive ripple effects of this investment will be felt through increased tourism, local business engagement, and the overall enhancement of Salem's reputation as a sports destination.

Travel Salem urges you to support this funding request and champion the collaborative initiative to upgrade the softball and baseball fields at Willamette University. Your advocacy for this project will contribute to the long-term economic sustainability of our region while providing valuable recreational opportunities for our community's youth.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to witnessing the positive impact that this project will have on the Salem Community.

Sincerely,

Angie Villery
Travel Salem President & CEO
Angie@TravelSalem.com



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FAMILY YMCA OF MARION & POLK COUNTIES
685 Court St., Salem, OR 97308
503.581.9622 | www.theYonline.org

January 26th, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Family YMCA of Marion and Polk Counties, we would like to offer our support for the Salem Baseball Club. We support their proposal to turf the baseball and softball fields at Bush Park.

We will have a great partnership with the Salem Baseball Club. This project will create many opportunities for our community to grow and thrive. While bringing a professional team to our community, Salem Baseball Club is looking to partner with organizations, such as the YMCA to bring people together in the summer months. By bringing in partnerships, they will be able to provide space for youth and adults to participate in multi-sports camp programs, summer sport leagues among other programming.

The best part about this project is the location, Bush Park is in Central Salem and is a short distance for many families and partners to be able to participate in programming and attend games.

Based on our relationship with Salem Baseball Club, we can confidently recommend Salem Baseball Club for this project.

Thank you for your consideration, please contact if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Brandon Lemon

Brandon Lemon
Chief Operations Officer

blemon@theyonline.org

(D) 503.551.0741

(O) 503.581.9622

At the Family YMCA of Marion & Polk Counties, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY is our cause. We make a difference by focusing on three key areas: Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility. By investing in our kids, our health and our neighbors, the YMCA ensures that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to thrive.