

GPNA Upper Fields Summary

The Project

The subject site includes the Grant High School campus, owned by Portland Public Schools (PPS), and Grant Park, owned by the Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation (PP&R). PPS is listed on the application as the applicant, and PP&R is listed as the property owner, not a co-applicant. The application proposes improvements to the Upper Field, which currently consists of a single play field for combined soccer, lacrosse, and baseball located west of the school building that straddles the property line between the school and park parcels. The larger play field (the Lower Field) to the west is not part of this proposal.

The proposal would expand the existing, artificial turf Upper Field by ~20 feet to the south to accommodate a new softball diamond and outfield. Also proposed are two new covered dugouts for the softball field, 30-foot-tall backstop fencing, new field lighting (consisting of 7 polls ranging in height from 70 to 80 feet), changes to pathways around the edges of the field, and approximately 195 lineal feet of new bleacher seating for the softball field (similar to the existing bleacher seating for the baseball field). While the current and expanded Upper Field is and will be suitable to multiple ball sports, there is space for only one sport at a time. The application also seeks approval to use a portable, voice-amplifying public address (PA) system with speakers attached to the field backstop fencing for both the baseball field (speakers facing south and east) and softball field (speakers facing north and west).

The application seeks conditional use permit approval for the expansion and lighting aspects and an adjustment to the 50-foot maximum structure height for the 7 field light poles that are proposed to be 70-80 feet tall. The application will be decided by the City's Land Use Hearings Officer following a May 10, 2021 public hearing, with a possible appeal to City Council. Staff issued a comprehensive report and recommendation of approval with the following conditions on April 29, 2021:

- A. As part of the building permit application submittal, each of the required site plans and any additional drawings must reflect the information and design approved by this land use review as indicated in Exhibits C-1 through C-3. The sheets on which this information appears must be labeled, "Proposal and design as approved in Case File # LU 20-214838 CU AD."
- B. The 10 trees shown in Exhibit C-3 to be protected with tree protection fencing must be preserved unless determined by a certified arborist to be dead, dying, or hazardous. If any of these trees is removed for one of these allowable reasons in the future, it must be

replaced with a new tree meeting the minimum planting requirements in Zoning Code Section 33.248.030.C.1 in the same general area of the site along NE US Grant Place.

- C. The conditions of approval from LU 16-269579 CU AD continue to apply to the site, with the addition of the clarifying sentence above for LU 16-269579 CU AD condition of approval C.
- D. High school sporting events in the Upper Field must end no later than 9:30pm, with field lights around the Upper Field turned off no later than 10:00pm.
- E. Non-school-related use of the Upper Field through Portland Parks and Recreation must end no later than 9:00pm, with field lights around the Upper Field turned off no later than 9:30pm.
- F. The Upper Field's PA system must not be used after 9:30pm and the volume must continuously comply with the limitations in the Portland Noise Control Code (Title 18).
- G. The Upper Field's PA system may be used only by Portland Public Schools for school events. Field users who reserve the field through Portland Parks and Recreation may not use the PA system.
- H. Within and adjacent to the Upper Field, signs advertising a business may not face south toward NE US Grant Place. Signs which face inward toward the field are not subject to this requirement.
- I. Custodial staff must remove litter from the Upper Field area after every scheduled game.

If the staff's recommendations are adopted by the Hearings Officer, the expanded use would permit PPS to use the Upper Field for school team practices and games until 9:30 p.m. at night, with the lights being off by 10 p.m. It would permit "periodic" use by PP&R permittees every day and every time slot in which the upper field is not scheduled for use by a school team all year long until 9:00 p.m. Here is the staff report: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/783361>

The Process

PPS and PP&R, as a whole, have not communicated well with the GPNA or individual residents. We have been requesting meetings for months, and they have only just now agreed to set a time to meet with us. PP&R's refusal to engage, in particular, has created suspicion about the project and prevented the GPNA and the affected neighbors from getting clarity about the nature, extent, and intensity of PP&R's use of the Upper Field and mitigation strategies to reduce impacts to livability. This is particularly troubling since the nature, extent, and frequency of PP&R use of the upper fields has been ill-defined, but the sample schedule provided with the

application indicates that PP&R use of the upper field could be the majority (75% or more) of the field use. We have a meeting set for May 5, 2021 at 7 p.m. with both PP&R and PPS.

The GPNA established a subcommittee to gather information and formulate a summary and recommendation on the proposal. This report is the product of the subcommittee's efforts, which also included a neighborhood survey, the results of which are described in greater detail below.

The Concerns

As a preface to the concerns identified by the subcommittee and the neighbors who responded to the subcommittee's survey, it is important to understand what this application includes and what it does not. The application is limited to the Upper Field and proposes to expand the baseball field to include a regulation softball field, plus certain improvements accessory to the softball field, plus field lighting. The field lighting will increase the hours of play/practice on the field, but only one field (baseball or softball) can be used at a time. When in use, however, the combined field can be used for all manner of field sports, including rugby, lacrosse, field hockey, ultimate frisbee, soccer, football, etc.

First, the subcommittee and all responding neighbors fully support school use of these fields and the increased school play/practice that these improvements will allow. Second, the subcommittee and all responding neighbors fully support youth team play and their use of these fields. Third, the strongest concerns expressed relate to the potentially significant level of use by PP&R permittees at all times and days when the field is not used by school teams (every day, 365 days per year until 10 p.m.). Several neighbors have particular concerns about use of the field by PP&R adult team because of personal observations that adult teams are far more boisterous, loud, often engage in unpermitted consumption of alcohol, create greater amounts of litter, have the potential to generate more vehicle trips and exacerbate parking problems, and also have greater wear and tear on field surfaces.

Adult team use of artificial turf fields may have the additional impact of being much more intense than youth or school teams, which could hasten field wear and deterioration and significantly speed-up the time when the fields would have to be rehabilitated, repaired, or replaced. PP&R is not a co-applicant on the application, and its level of use is extremely unclear, but potentially significant by all measures. While all increased use of the upper field will necessarily increase the impacts to livability on the adjacent residents, it is the PP&R use that is most concerning, in part because it is so ill-defined, and adult team use by PP&R permittees stands to be the most impactful.

Use by PP&R Permittees

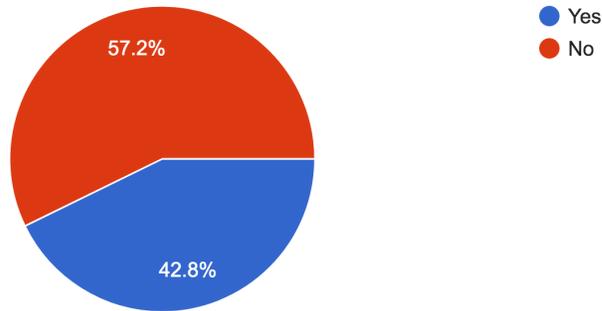
The primary concern identified by the subcommittee is the under-stated, ambiguous but potentially significant use of the upper fields (in terms of hours of use, number of teams, and intensity of use) by PP&R permittees. Potential PP&R use of the Upper Field would be all times/hours that the field is not scheduled or used by school teams up to 10 p.m. 365 days per year. The potential impacts to livability from this ill-defined, open-ended level of use include increases in trash/litter, traffic volume, parking demand, restroom demand, noise, music, especially in the late-night hours following the 10 p.m. lights out, and light glare and sound pollution from field play and spectators. Several neighbors object to the potentially significant level of PP&R's use of the expanded field, especially with the lights on until 10 p.m. each night.

The survey results show that most residents do not object to lights until 9 or 10 p.m. as a general proposition, but use of lights and the increased hours of field play time they will allow drive all of the impact issues that were raised.

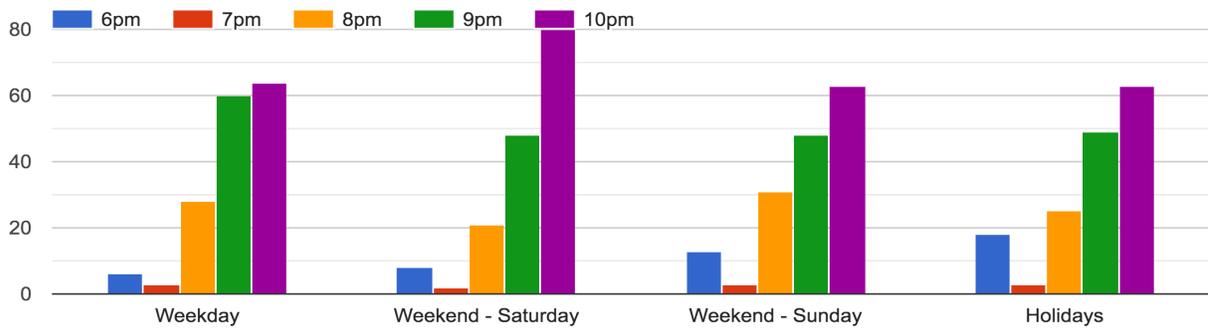
See survey results on the next page.

Is proposed operations till 10pm / 365 days a concern?

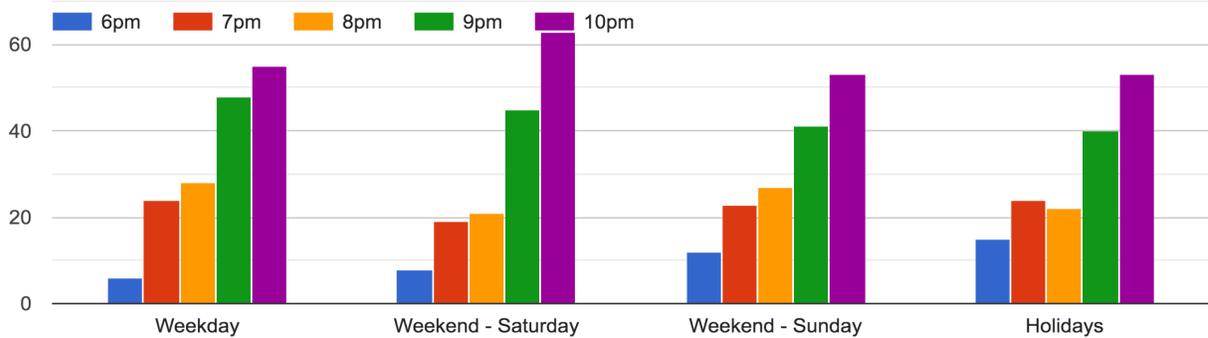
166 responses



Time field activity should end during Summer hours ~ 9pm sunset on average



Time field activity should end during Fall/ Spring hours - 7:30 pm sunset on average



Fence Signage

The fence that faces US Grant Place has become home to signage that is out of character with the neighborhood and a Park. These signs have become a target for graffiti and more signs will exacerbate that problem. The staff report recommends a condition that would eliminate any signs that face US Grant Place, but the condition is not particularly well or precisely worded.

Light Pole Height

The light poles are proposed to be 70-80 ft tall, which some neighbors are concerned are too tall and will cause light pollution. These concerns raise nuisance as well as aesthetic issues.

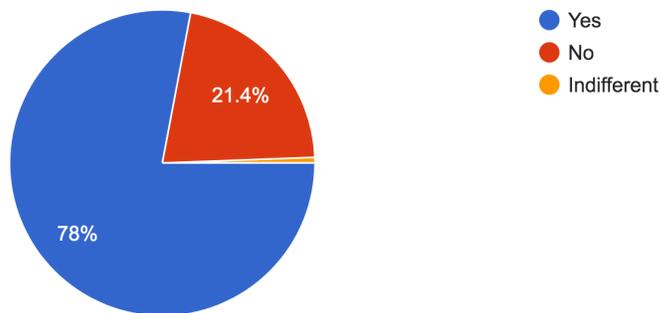
The application asserts that the adjusted height of 70 and 80 feet would equally or better meet the purpose of the normal (50-foot) height limit for these structures in the zone. The technical lighting information submitted with the application shows that the light fixtures are LED, quite bright and directional. This contrasts with traditional incandescent (sodium or mercury) light bulbs. According to this information, taller poles will enable the light fixtures to be aimed at more of a downward angle onto the field with less of a horizontal aspect associated with shorter poles that would otherwise cause light glare on near-by homes. According to the applicant's lighting analysis, keeping the poles at the maximum 50-foot structure height would make light glare worse on neighboring homes than the taller poles. Some on the subcommittee suggested asking for telescoping the poles that could be raised for nighttime field play and lowered when not in use, but that would be massively more expensive option for PPS with only a marginal aesthetic benefit.

One solution may be to make sure the light fixtures are few, small, super focused, and thoroughly shielded (tested and adjusted) to prevent any peripheral light transmission and glare from the field. Also, a condition of approval prohibiting any colocation or use of these poles for wireless telecommunications – governmental or private – should be considered.

According to the survey, most respondents supported adding lights as a general proposition:

Do you support adding lights to the Grant upper field, extending operations into the night?

168 responses

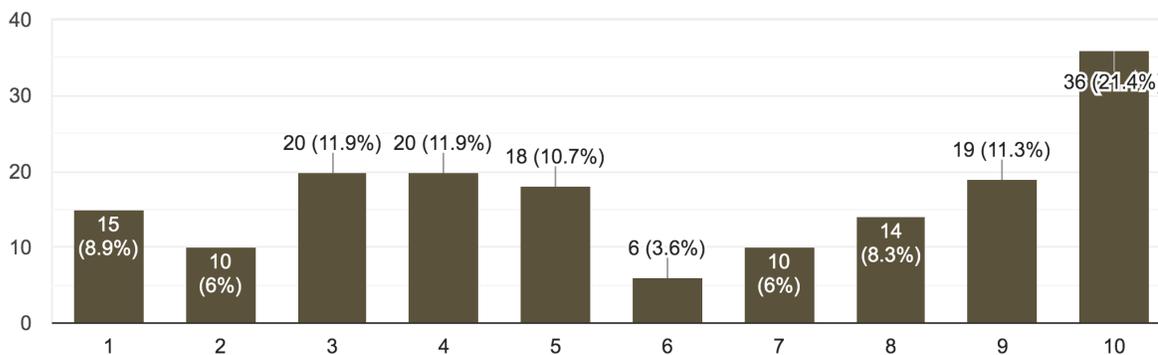


Trash

Additional use of the upper field will lead to more trash and there is currently only one trash can. Here are the survey responses regarding litter:

2) Rate Litter Impact

168 responses



Parking and Traffic

Several neighbors expressed concerns about congestion from parking, lack of a loading zone, bus parking on US Grant PI, bike safety on US Grant PI, and the lack of a crosswalk at NE 35th Ave/Grant PI and NE 36th Ave/Grant PI. The application includes a 2017 traffic study (now 4 years old) that fails to take into account the now increased student capacity of renovated Grant High School, it does not accord any trips or parking demand to PP&R use of the field, and does not consider the vehicle trips that adult team play would generate through PP&R permitted use.

To the extent that the applicant addresses any of these concerns it states imply that use of the site will not change and that traffic volumes will not significantly increase with this proposal but will be spread over more hours (until 10 p.m.).

Parking issues: The subcommittee's conclusions drawn from the applicant's traffic study related to parking include the following:

1. The shortage of available parking results in parents using the round-about at NE US Grant Place and NE 35th Avenue as a drop off/pick up zone which creates an unsafe environment for pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
2. The Grant High School north parking lot is the only on-site parking available for Grant High School and its 1,700 students and has only 65 on-site spaces available that are not otherwise reserved (handicap, PPS-only, etc.). There is not enough on-site parking for any single event. These should be used for all events; however, they are all taken during the school days by teachers, students, and PPS vehicles until ~5:00 p.m. On-site parking has always been an issue for Grant High School, but it is more of an issue since the remodel and increase of 170 students, from 1,530 to 1,700 and the undisclosed amount of PP&R use of the fields, especially if there is adult team play.
3. The current transportation study barely mentions, and does not take into consideration, the adult leagues that PPR proposes to use the field on weekday evenings from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm and the weekends until 10:00 p.m. Adult leagues have the potential to generate more vehicle trips than a Grant High School softball game, which should be addressed.
4. The 21 homes on NE US Grant Place use one to two on street parking places daily. Since the pandemic, homeowners use them more since at least one resident works from home. This eliminates at least 21-42 spaces from NE US Grant Place for public parking that is counted in the study. The study counts 84 on street parking spaces available on NE US Grant Place from NE 33rd Avenue to NE 36th Avenue. The homes on NE US Grant Place from NE 33rd Avenue to NE 36th Avenue have single driveways and use the street parking to accommodate their families.
5. The 18 homes on NE 36th between NE Brazee and NE US Grant Place also use at least one to two on street parking spaces daily. This eliminates at least another 18-36 spaces from NE 36th Avenue that is counted in the study. The study claims there are 71 street parking spaces available on both the east and west sides of NE 36th Avenue.
6. Unsafely/illegally parked vehicles block driveways, impair vision (site distance), and create safety issues. Unsafely/illegally parked vehicles are not addressed in any study or memo. Parking patrol needs to be implemented especially if PPR can use the field 365 days a year until 10:00 p.m. This is an issue we deal with now, but it will become more dangerous with the increased usage and us neighbors should not have to patrol our street. If we are put in that position, our homes, vehicles, and persons could be put in danger of vandalism or physical harm.
7. Team bus parking should be prohibited on US Grant Place, but loading and unloading could be made safe with a designated loading zone. When buses park on US Grant

Place, they narrow the lane, impair visibility, and make it unsafe for cars, bicycles, and pedestrians to maneuver around.

Drop-off and Pick-up Issues: The subcommittee's conclusions drawn from the applicant's traffic study related to drop-off and pick-up include the following:

1. There is no designated unloading or loading area on NE US Grant Place. It has become very dangerous with parents stopping in the roundabout, blocking the view and kids running across the street where they are dropped. It has been particularly dangerous at NE 35th Avenue. Jill Lee witnessed eight elementary school age children walking east on the south side of NE US Grant Place trying to cross north at NE 35th Avenue where there is a circle and NO crosswalk. One car was stopped illegally in the circle facing west on the north side of NE US Grant Place dropping off a child. A car traveling west on NE US Grant Place squeezed between this stopped vehicle and the circle and proceeded west, seeing the kids at the last second slamming their brakes just in time to avoid hitting the children trying to cross. This is happening more and more. NE US Grant Place should be a very safe place for all kids walking from Beverly Cleary to their homes east of NE 33rd Avenue. NE US Grant Place should have extra restrictions, at least during the hours between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. It does not appear that the applicant's traffic memo addressed K-8th graders walking along and across this street as a presumptively safe route to school. An increase in all youth sports practices and games at the Upper Field will increase these pedestrian safety hazards.
2. There is an unloading and loading area on NE 36th Avenue, which is much wider than NE US Grant Place and a more appropriate place for all children to be dropped-off.
3. The north parking lot of Grant High School is also another safe place for all unloading and loading to occur, and now has good flow with a round-about at the west end.
4. Parents sit and idle their cars waiting for their children, often in a no parking zone, in the roundabout at 35th Avenue or blocking driveways.

Traffic Issues: The subcommittee's conclusions drawn from the applicant's traffic study related to traffic include the following:

1. The newly remodeled Grant High School was only in session for one term before the pandemic closed it down. We have yet to really see what the traffic impact is due to the increase in Grant's student population size (from 1,530 to 1,700). Before the shutdown, we had a glimpse of the impact resulting from the new gym's location adjacent to NE US Grant Place; in the evening, the street was packed with vehicles during basketball games and other school events. People are opting to park on NE US Grant Place instead of using the north lot because of the location of the gym's entrance. If this is any indication, then the increase of 170 students has already impacted traffic and parking. This has not been taken into consideration in the current proposal, and a new study should be done once the school is fully operational.
2. NE US Grant Place is not only used by Grant students, staff, and adjacent neighbors. It is a designated bike boulevard for commuters and neighborhood families. It is also a busy pedestrian thoroughfare for students/families walking to/from Beverly Cleary K-8 and Grant High School. It is a connector street for people coming from west of NE 33rd to

the Hollywood district's restaurants and library (and Grant Park). Increased traffic combined with parking/unloading/loading issues described above do not support a safe commuting environment.

3. We need at least two crosswalks added to NE US Grant Place between NE 33rd Avenue and NE 36th Avenue. There is only one crosswalk on NE US Grant Place at the corner of NE 33rd Avenue. There were at least two pedestrians hit at that corner during the pandemic. Adding more activities than school activities (i.e., PP&R 365 days a year until 10:00 p.m.) will increase traffic.
4. Excessive traffic speeds are an issue on NE US Grant Place, especially in the evening. While on-street parking has a calming effect on vehicle speeds, the increased field use later into the evening will create/exacerbate pedestrian safety as players step between parked cars into an active travel lane to cross the street or access their cars.

Bicycle traffic and routes: To the extent that it matters, it appears that PBOT is building a neighborhood greenway on NE Hancock from NE 32nd to NE 42nd Avenues to provide a low-stress alternative to US Grant Place. The route will include a smoother NE Hancock, traffic calming features like speed bumps, a bike-accessible crossing of NE 33rd, and connections to the NE Tillamook neighborhood greenway to the west and Kelly Plaza and bike lanes at NE 42nd Ave to the east. The NE Hancock neighborhood greenway provides direct access to Beverly Cleary school as well as the NE 38th Avenue neighborhood greenway to the north. However, given the long and well-established use of US Grant Place as the principal bike corridor in this part of the neighborhood, it is not clear how much bicycle traffic will divert to NE Hancock for this segment of the bike boulevard.

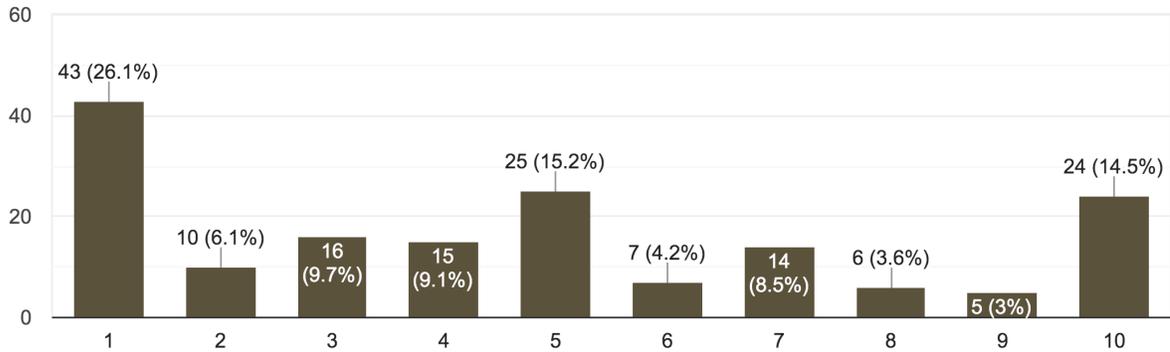
<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/pbot-projects/construction/tillamook-neighborhood-greenway-enhancement-project-phase>

Facilities

Will guests have access to restrooms, water fountains, etc.? Here are the survey responses regarding litter:

7) Rate Access to Restroom Impact

165 responses

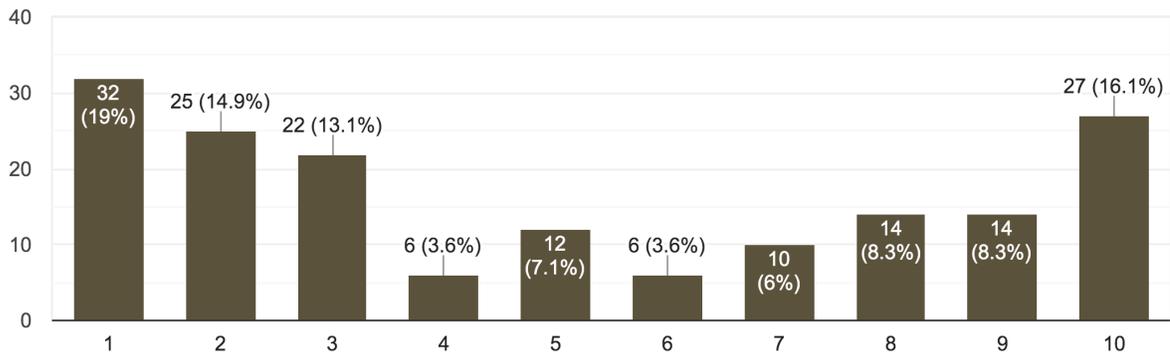


Sound Pollution

The addition of a PA system may create sound pollution. The staff report recommends limiting the PA to school use, prohibiting PP&R permittees from using it and requiring a 9:30 p.m. end time for PA use. Here are the results of the neighborhood survey:

1) Rate Noise Impact

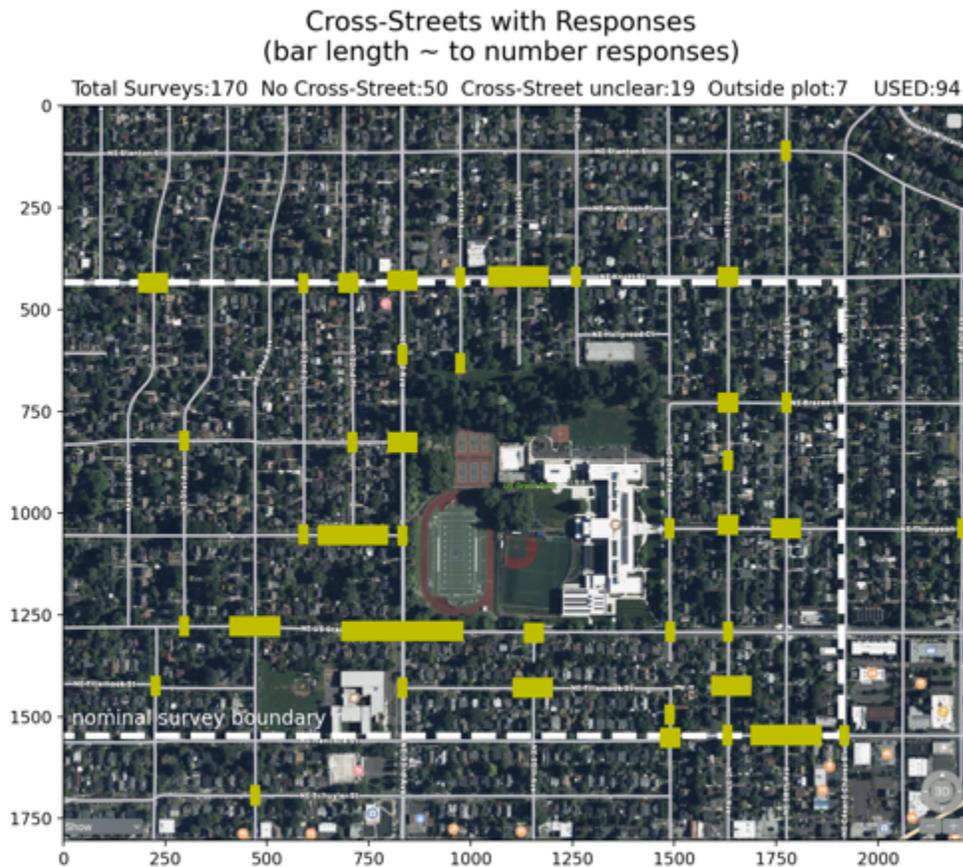
168 responses



Neighbor Input

See full [Results from Neighborhood Survey](#). Overall, the survey reflects opinions on both sides of many of these issues. There is both support for the project and concerns about its impacts.

The survey reflects neighborhood input from the following locations:



Next Steps

1. Present the list of concerns that we have heard from neighbors and a set of conditions that address those concerns to PPS, with the hope that PP&R begins to participate, so that the applicant can address the concerns and respond to the proposed conditions at our upcoming meeting on May 5. We don't need a general overview of the project; we need answers to specific questions and a response to the identified impacts and proposed solutions.
 - a. What will PP&R's use be in terms of type of permittee, frequency, adult versus youth teams?
 - b. What is the plan to mitigate sound and light pollution?
 - c. What is the plan to mitigate traffic concerns?
 - d. What is the plan to mitigate the fence signage issue?
2. GPNA should consider what position to take
 - a. Support project with conditions recommended by BDS staff.

- b. Support the project with conditions deemed necessary to mitigate identified livability impacts and necessary to achieve the approval criteria regarding impacts on the residential neighborhood.
- c. Support the project with respect to PPS but oppose PP&R use because there is no clear statement about nature, extent or intensity of PP&R use, or limitations.
- d. Oppose the project due to its unmitigated impacts on the neighborhood and the applicant's unwillingness to entertain meaningful mitigation or communicate with affected neighbors about identified impacts.

Conditions Proposed to Address the Impacts

The following conditions were drafted by the subcommittee to address the concerns related to livability impacts caused by the upper field expansion and improvements proposed in this application. These conditions are designed to bring the proposal into alignment with and achieve the compliance with applicable approval criteria and are presented as a starting point for discussion of the identified impacts and needed mitigation.

- A. As part of the building permit application submittal, each of the required site plans and any additional drawings shall reflect the information and design approved by this land use review as indicated in Exhibits C-1 through C-3. The sheets on which this information appears shall be labeled: "Proposal and design as approved in Case File # LU 20-214838 CU AD."
- B. The 10 trees shown in Exhibit C-3 to be protected with tree protection fencing shall be preserved unless determined by a certified arborist to be dead, dying, or hazardous. If any of these trees is removed for one of these allowable reasons in the future, it shall be replaced with a new tree meeting the minimum planting requirements in Zoning Code Section 33.248.030.C.1 in the same general area of the site along NE US Grant Place.
- C. The conditions of approval from LU 16-269579 CU AD continue to apply to the site, with the addition of the clarifying sentence above for LU 16-269579 CU AD condition of approval C.
- D. High school sporting events (games, matches and practices) in the Upper Field shall end no later than 9:30 p.m., with field lights around the Upper Field turned off no later than 15 minutes after play/practice ends or 10:00 p.m., whichever is earlier.
- E. Use of the Upper Field by permit through the PP&R shall be limited to youth sports and youth teams only. All non-school-related use of the Upper Field through PP&R shall end no later than 8:00 p.m.

Alternative for discussion:

- F. Use of the Upper Field by permit through the PP&R shall be limited to youth sports and youth teams only. Non-school-related use of the Upper Field through PP&R shall not use the field lighting system.
- G. The Upper Field's PA system shall not be used after 9:30 p.m., and the volume shall comply at all times with the limitations in the Portland Noise Control Code (Title 18).
- H. The Upper Field's PA system shall be used only by PPS for school events. Field users who reserve the field through PP&R shall not use the PA system.
- I. Advertiser/sponsor signage is prohibited on the south side of the fence facing US Grant Place. [not intended to prohibit signs facing into the field, not visible from the street]
- J. PPS shall install and service on a regular basis a total of 5 garbage cans for users and spectators of the Upper Field. Custodial staff shall remove litter from the Upper Field area after every scheduled game and practice. [need to understand better PPS responsibility vs. PP&R responsibility as well as custodian operations at the school to better address increase in garbage and litter]
- K. The Upper Field's light system shall not be used for governmental or private wireless telecommunications facilities.
- L. PPS shall have a policy to inform all visiting schools that visiting team bus parking shall occur along NE 36th Avenue and on-site in the school parking lot and that team bus parking on US Grant Place is not allowed. [this approach is apparently already working; need to adopt a PPS policy to keep team buses from parking on US Grant Place]
- M. PPS shall make available restrooms for all games/practices at the Upper Field. [need a discussion about how to do this either through restrooms inside Grant High School, porta-potties and/or use of the existing but closed Grant Park restrooms].
- N. The light poles along the south side of the field nearest to US Grant Place shall be limited to a maximum height of 50 feet with the light fixtures on those poles adjusted to provide adequate illumination to the field. [need to discuss technically feasible to prevent spillage of glare and does not negatively impact field of play]
- O. PPS shall apply to and work with PBOT and GPNA on the following issues:
 - a. To establish a passenger loading zone for safety along US Grant Place.
 - b. To address traffic congestion issues along US Grant Place and all intersections adjacent to the school/park property.

- c. To establish a pedestrian cross walk at the NE 35th Avenue round-about and related or alternative improvements to provide better protection for pedestrians crossing US Grant Place.