

Fact Sheet  
Bishop O'Connell High School  
Athletic Fields Renovation Project

Bishop O'Connell High School is undertaking an athletic fields renovation project to address significant shortcomings of the current athletic facilities, with the goal of providing a safe, high quality environment for all students. The fields renovation project is being planned in partnership with Marymount University.

The project will involve the following:

- Redevelopment of the current rectangular field to include a new synthetic turf playing surface.
- Enlargement of the current rectangular field to provide regulation width for soccer.
- Construction of a new six-lane competition track including a six-lane straight away, to replace the existing asphalt track.
- Installation of a new bleacher system for the stadium to replace current bleachers –capacity 1200 (current capacity 1200).
- Permit request for installation of four (4) light poles for the rectangular field, all within the 25' setback.
- Reorientation of the baseball field to reduce offsite baseball infringements and to improve play orientation for safety purposes. The baseball field will also include a synthetic turf surface.
- Installation of new bleachers for baseball – capacity 246.
- Permit request for installation of seven (7) light poles for the baseball field, all within the 25' setback.

Members of the Bishop O'Connell community have both hosted and attended meetings of the Arlington East Falls Church and Williamsburg Civic Association and, in addition, have hosted five “working” meetings in an attempt to reach a Memorandum of Understanding between the school and the neighboring Civic Associations concerning the fields renovation project.

The following information is the direct result of these meetings and has been shared with the “working” group representing both Civic Associations:

### **Athletic Field Lighting**

High quality lighting will be installed in order to take advantage of the latest advances in reducing glare and light trespass into surrounding areas. The lighting will also be designed and constructed to control sky glow and glare with the use of external shielding. There will be separate lighting controls for each field. Field lighting will only be turned on for a particular field if there is a scheduled activity.

Pedestrian-level lighting will be installed around the track and along the central walkway between the rectangular and baseball field. This supplemental lighting will allow the athletic field lighting to be turned off as games end and still provide security and sufficient illumination for community members to safely exit the fields. Pedestrian-level lighting around the track will also allow informal community use of the track when the larger fields are not illuminated.

A Standing Lighting Committee will be created to monitor operational and scheduling issues and provide a forum for the resolution of periodic and ongoing community concerns of light use. The committee will advise Bishop O'Connell of any issues and will make recommendations for their resolution. The committee will consist of representatives from O'Connell, East Arlington Falls Church and Williamsburg Civic Associations, Arlington County Parks and Recreation, and Marymount University.

Bishop O'Connell will study the existing building-mounted security lighting on the playing field-side of the athletic fields and determine the feasibility of replacing such lighting with less intrusive lighting.

#### **Hours of Use of Lights**

- Regardless of season, lights will not be turned on Sunday nights.
- Use of the rectangular field will be scheduled to end at 9:30 pm Monday through Thursday and 10:30 pm Friday and Saturday.
- Use of the baseball field will be scheduled to end at 9:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 10:00 pm Friday and Saturday from September 21 through March 20.
- Use of the baseball field will be scheduled to end at 10:00 pm Monday through Thursday and 10:30 pm Friday and Saturday March 21 through September 20.
- Should a game or practice end earlier than scheduled at either field, the lights will be turned off thirty minutes after the game or practice ends.

#### **Athletic Field Sound System**

A new sound system will replace the existing system which currently consists of very large, high output and high dispersion speakers. The current sound system has no directional control. The new sound system for both the rectangular field and baseball field will consist of directional, low output and low dispersion speakers that will be positioned to control sound levels at the bleachers and reduce sound travel to neighboring properties. The sound level from the speakers will be set so that it **cannot exceed** the levels permitted by the Arlington County Noise Ordinance.

To the extent possible the PA system will not be used after 9:00 pm, Monday through Thursday nor after 10:30 pm on Friday and Saturday. When possible Bishop O'Connell will limit use prior to 12 pm Monday through Friday except for occasional school activities and will not use the sound system for team practices unless warranted by the activity, i.e. dance team or similar. The sound system will rarely be used for community events.

#### **Landscaping and Decorative Fencing**

Bishop O'Connell will plant extensive landscaping on Trinidad and 26<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the renovated fields in a more aesthetically pleasing manner than currently exists. The plan will include a heavy planting of mixed conifers, deciduous and other trees/shrubs for aesthetic and noise mitigation purposes and to reduce glare and light trespass from the field lights. All landscaping plans will follow the regulations and requirements of Arlington County Zoning Section 32A, Landscaping, unless otherwise determined.

Decorative fencing will be installed around the perimeter of the property on 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Underwood Street and along the north side of the fields. Black vinyl-coated chain link will be used for the baseball field but will be heavily screened with planting on the neighborhood side. The existing evergreen planting next to the stadium field on Underwood Street will remain.

## **Parking Management Plan**

Bishop O'Connell proposes the following mitigating measures for addressing parking at high attendance field events at the school.

- Discourage parking on 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Underwood Street, Trinidad Street, and 26<sup>th</sup> Street to mitigate impact on the East Falls Church and Williamsburg neighbors, who will experience the greatest impact from high attendance field events.
- Continuing communication of parking protocols, including maps, to discourage parking on 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Underwood Street, Trinidad Street, and 26<sup>th</sup> Street and to ensure appropriate parking in school lots.
- Continuing current practice of strongly encouraging on-campus parking for all.

## **Parking Plan**

- The school will have event staff (current staff, contracted staff, security, and volunteers) strategically positioned to direct traffic, monitor lots to ensure full use of on campus parking resources, discourage parking on 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Underwood Street, Trinidad Street, and 26<sup>th</sup> Street, guide pedestrians, and provide crowd control on school property and pathways to and from the event.
- The school will develop parking signage directing people to "Event Parking" at the main entrances. These signs will be placed at appropriate locations to manage the flow of traffic.
- The school will assign event staff to provide a presence on neighborhood streets to discourage offsite parking.

## **Communication Plan**

- Development of parking map and parking protocols showing permissible and recommended parking areas. This information will be posted on the school web site and distributed in school communications.
- Communication of parking protocols, including maps to all Bishop O'Connell students and parents.
- Communication with visiting schools by Bishop O'Connell athletic director, sharing location of onsite parking, parking map and protocol.

## **Event Supervision**

- Two Arlington County police officers will be assigned for all home football and basketball games.
- Two additional Arlington County police officers will be assigned for football and basketball games that traditionally generate the largest crowds.
- Although crowds are expected to be fairly minimal (under 150) for night baseball, soccer, and lacrosse there will be at least one administrator and one security person on-site for supervision.

- For football games that traditionally generate the largest crowds, the school will hire a security/staff person to monitor any “spill over” into the neighboring streets during or after the game.

### **Community Use and Benefits**

The track will remain open to the general public while the fields are in use from 7 am until field activity has ended, including Sundays, except for daytime use when school is in session and unless the activity on the rectangular field is deemed dangerous for track users. Bishop O’Connell will allow use of the track during school hours on a case-by-case basis as approved in advance.

Bishop O’Connell will make its athletic fields and track available to the Tuckahoe School for a field day once each spring and fall during the school calendar.

Bishop O’Connell will make its auditorium available to the local community for civic functions in accordance with the school’s schedule.

### **School Liaison**

Bishop O’Connell will convene quarterly meetings with neighbors to share information and discuss concerns for the first year and longer if needed. The frequency of the meetings will be reduced after the transition phase.

For information, please contact:

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- Joe Vorbach, Principal, 703-237-1400, [jvorbach@bishopoconnell.org](mailto:jvorbach@bishopoconnell.org)

For immediate attention around safety and security issues, please call

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