

JEB STUART PARK MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT FAQ

What is Title IX and what does it have to do with JEB Stuart Park?

We have created an additional FAQ for this subject, which can be found here:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/Downloads/JEBStuart-Title9FAQ.pdf>

Why can't the girls' softball team use the existing, lighted boys' baseball field?

The girls' teams play softball, which requires a smaller field size than baseball. If the girls played on the boys' field, none of the four teams would have enough practice or playing time.

How will this help the girls' softball teams at JEB Stuart?

JEB Stuart is the only high school in the county without a lighted softball field. The girls' teams cannot compete effectively without equitable facilities. Currently, the unlit field allows the girls' varsity and junior varsity teams to have a total of only two hours of practice, which is not enough for basic skills building. Practices often conflict with other important after school enrichment programs. They are forced to forfeit games when it gets dark. Many parents, whose support at games is critical, cannot attend the games to support their daughters because of the early start times. Adding lights to JEB Stuart Park field will allow for longer practice times, later game start times and greater parental participation.

Who will have access to play on JEB Stuart Park Field?

The Department of Community Recreation Services (CRS) uses Countywide Athletic Field Allocation policies and a permitting process to determine field usage. Due to the size of JEB Stuart field, it is only appropriate for use by youth leagues. Currently, CRS foresees that all field time will continue to be allocated to the two current users, JEB Stuart High School Softball teams and Mason District Little League.

How often will the lights be used?

The lights would be used by the JEB Stuart High School Girls Softball teams between March and May. Mason District Little League (MDLL) also uses the field on weekend days during the spring and weekdays throughout the summer. Since field, lighting is not generally needed for practices and not necessary during the longer summer days, MDLL would have minimal light use.

When would the lights be turned on and off?

Youth groups are only scheduled until 9 PM including youth softball, and little league baseball. Therefore, the lights would turn on at dusk and turn off by approximately 9 PM on nights that the field is in use.

What are the current park hours and will the park hours change?

Park hours are dawn to dusk. When the lights are insured the diamond field will be open for 15 minutes beyond the end of the scheduled event to allow people to leave the park. The unlit facilities in the park will still close at dusk.

Will there be more tennis and basketball games due to the lights nearby?

No, the lights will be concentrated on the softball field so they will not extend enough light to the tennis or basketball facilities.

Who will have control of the lights?

Community Recreation Services (CRS) will schedule the lights to come on only for games and practices held after dark. If there is no field use, the lights will not be on. If the lights come on by accident when no game is scheduled a neighbor can call Park Operations Division staff who can turn off the satellite controlled lights remotely via phone or internet.

Will loud speakers be installed to be used during the games, as they currently are with the boys' games?

The Master Plan Amendment does not call for a speaker system at JEB Stuart Park, and the Park Authority has no plans to install one. Park regulations require permission be obtained for amplified sound in parks.

How many lights will be installed?

Currently, a four to six pole system is proposed with 3 to 6 lights on each 70-foot tall pole.

When will the proposed lights be installed?

Park Authority must complete the master plan process and if the master plan amendment is approved, obtain a public use permit (2232 Determination). These processes will last through the summer followed by a light system design. The projected time for light installation is late fall 2009 or early spring 2010.

How will the lights be funded?

Funding to address Title IX issues was set aside years ago and will fund the installation of lights at JEB Stuart Park.

What effect will lights have on crime?

Studies and law enforcement personnel indicate that lights and increased use of the park improve security while deterring unwanted activity there.

Could the barrier be replaced to prevent people from driving into the park at night?

Yes, removable, lockable bollards can be installed. Staff is looking into replacing the bollards along Peace Valley Lane to prevent driving into park.

JEB Stuart Park was well maintained until the last few years. We are concerned about the upkeep of park. What can be done?

For assistance with park maintenance issues, call Park Operations, Area 2 Management at 703-321-0972. The Park Authority also has an "Adopt a Park" program, which can support the partnership between the park, school and community. More information can be found online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/volunteer/adopt.htm> or by calling Park Operations at 703-321-0972.

Will the installation of lights in the park devalue our homes?

The County has no data that suggests that the addition of athletic field lights impacts home values. Numerous economic studies show that homes located near parkland have greater value.

Will the increased playing time bring more traffic or larger crowds to our neighborhood?

No, the diamond field usage is envisioned to be allocated to the present field users (JEB Stuart High School Softball and Mason District Little League) therefore an increase in traffic or crowds is unlikely.

Will the installation of lights interrupt the wildlife in the park?

The lights will have very little impact on local wildlife, since they will only be on for limited amounts of time and light will be contained on the field surface.

Will the lights poles be visible from Lake Barcroft?

No, due to the orientation of the lake in relation to the park and the trees beside it, the light poles will not be visible from the shore of Lake Barcroft.

The closest streets around the park include Beachway Drive, Mansfield Road and Military Drive. How will the light and poles be visible to homes on these streets?

The nearest house on the Beachway Drive side of the park is 150 feet from the field and buffered by 115 feet of trees. Due to the location of the field, height of the trees, and ground plane, neighbors on the Beachway Drive side of the park will not see the poles or light over the treetops.

The nearest house on the Mansfield Road side of the park is 180 feet from the field. The houses on both ends of the street are separated from the field by 70 feet of trees. However, in the middle of the block, there are very few trees between the field and neighboring properties, so the poles may be visible, but light will be contained on the field. .

The nearest house on the Military Drive side of the park is 550 feet from the ball field and buffered by 470 feet of trees. Due to the distance to the field, and density of the trees, neighbors on the Military Drive side of the park will not see the poles or lights through or over the trees.

What is the text in the amendment process?

This is an amendment of a master plan dating from 1986. In 1986, most park master plans only consisted of a graphic showing the park with all proposed features. All master plan amendments begin with the existing master plan. This amendment only proposing the addition of lights to the ball field as well as updating the field layout with the removal of one diamond and rectangle overlay which do not fit due to the new ball field fence. Since this amendment is only proposing minor changes to the plan, the original graphic has been updated to reflect those changes and stands as the entire draft without any supplemental text.

Why couldn't these facilities be provided at another field such as Belvedere Elementary School?

The county has investigated the options and determined that:

- JEB Stuart Park Field is within walking distance of JEB Stuart High School and has been used by the team for over thirty years.
- Using another field would require bussing the students at great expense, which is not covered by Title IX funding.
- The team would still have to negotiate around other teams playing time.
- Many of the nearby fields are not large enough for competition, some of which do not have enough room to expand.
- All of the nearby fields, including Belvedere, would require far more work, at a much greater cost to renovate to the standards needed for high school athletics and Title IX requirements.

Will more lights be installed on the other facilities in the park?

Currently there is not enough demand for evening playing time on the basketball or tennis courts and the Draft Master Plan Amendment only proposes lights for the softball field.

Could natural barriers such as trees be installed to buffer neighbors from the lights in the park?

Title IX mandates and provides funding for lights only, but the Park Authority can plant screening vegetation if deemed necessary and if funding becomes available.

Does the Park Authority have standards for lighting parks and reducing lighting impacts?

Yes, the Park Authority has established strict lighting standards that require lighting systems to meet a minimum standard of 50-foot candles on the infield and 30 foot candles on the outfield of diamond fields. The Park Authority performed a study, which determined that there are many ways to reduce light impacts as viewed by local residents and still meet the on field lighting requirements. Shielding, reflectors, wattages, beam types, mounting height, and aiming angles all affect the light trespass. All lighted fields must also meet the regulations of the Fairfax County Zoning Code, which requires that there is virtually no light spill over the property line.