

Jacqueline Schad

From: Laurie Jovick [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2024 11:53 AM
To: Jacqueline Schad
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment; Lincoln Field

This Message originated outside your organization.

I am the mother of two children, ages 9 and 11, who live in and attend school in Ashland. I am writing to advocate not only for my own children but for all current and future youth athletes in our community. I am asking you to please consider an alternative site for the Sunstone housing development. Specifically, I implore you not to sell the district-owned Lincoln Field.

There is no question that Ashland faces a critical need for affordable housing. However, as representatives of Ashland's students and families, I urge you to weigh the long-term implications of this decision. Providing opportunities for children to play sports is vital to their physical health, emotional well-being, and personal development. Organized sports teach teamwork, discipline, resilience, and community engagement—skills that extend far beyond the playing field. The community opposition to the development of Lincoln Field is evident, as demonstrated by the more than 600 signatures on the Change.org petition opposing this location. This outcry is not about opposing affordable housing but about protecting a resource uniquely valuable to our schools and students. Due to its proximity to the high school, Lincoln Field offers a convenience and synergy that cannot be replicated at another site.

There are those that argue the field is never used, which highlights the disappointing lack of outreach made to the athletic community. As the high school soccer, football, baseball and softball coaches will attest, they already have too many teams with inadequate space for them to practice and have games. They are eager to expand their programs and there is potential for new team sports such as flag football. Losing Lincoln Field would worsen an already challenging space shortage, directly affecting high school teams and indirectly impacting youth sports programs. Youth sports, such as soccer, baseball, and softball, are already struggling for adequate practice and game space. If more high school practices and games are pushed to North Mountain Park, the competition for field access will intensify, leaving even fewer opportunities for younger athletes.

For many families, including mine, the opportunity to participate in sports is an essential part of the childhood and school experience. As you work to increase enrollment in the Ashland School District, please also prioritize retaining and supporting the students already here.

I respectfully ask you to prioritize the well-being of Ashland's youth and protect Lincoln Field for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Laurie Jovick