

**City of Avondale Estates**  
**Planning Architectural Zoning Board**  
**Staff Review, Development of Community Impact with Concurrent Variances \***

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**April 21, 2025, PAZB Meeting**

**Applicant:** The Paideia School: Alan Wieczynski, Breedlove Land Planning

**Property Address:** 1201 Clarendon Avenue (Python Park)

**Property Zoning:** Office-Institutional (O-I)

**Project Summary:** The applicant has applied for a Development of Community Impact (DCI) to make improvements to an existing school sports field complex including converting fields to synthetic turf, rebuilding the field house, interior site upgrades, parking lot revisions, fencing, lighting, sound system, and field score board additions. As a part of this application three concurrent variances have been requested: 1) Sec. 21-6.2.3 to allow a reduction of bicycle parking from 100 spaces to 15 spaces, 2) Sec. 21-6.5.1 to allow chain link fencing material around sports fields and allow the existing vehicle gate to be maintained in its current condition, and 3) Sec. 21-6.5.3 to allow an increase in the height of a fence from 6 feet to 8 feet tall. (The fence height variance was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant.)

**Applicable Ordinances:** The City of Avondale Estates Zoning Ordinance regulations **Sec. 21-7.6 Developments of Community Impact** requires “Any development or building project on a site consisting of two (2) acres or more that is not seeking an amendment or conditional use shall proceed through the developments of community impact (DCI) process.” **Sec. 21-6.2.3** 0.1 short term bike parking spaces required per sports and recreation, participant fixed seat. **Sec. 21-6.5.1 C. Materials** 1. Chain link fences are prohibited in any commercial, mixed-use, or multi-unit building districts. D. Prohibited fences 2. Vehicular gates are prohibited, unless a conditional use permit is secured through the conditional use process outlined in division 7.5 - amendments and conditional uses. **Sec. 21-6.5.3 A. Fences and walls shall not exceed three (3) feet in height when located in the front yard or six (6) feet in height when located in any other (non-front) yard for any commercial, mixed-use, or multi-unit building use.**

**Analysis:** The requested DCI is to renovate the existing school sports complex. The primary impact is the reconstruction of a field house, expansion of the existing parking lot, and conversion of two soccer/ultimate frisbee fields and baseball infield from natural turf to synthetic turf. The proposed turf conversion has significant stormwater and lot coverage implications. The applicant is proposing an underground water quality management retainage system to capture runoff from the 5.81 acres of disturbed area. A landscaped transitional buffer of 5 feet is required and the applicant is exceeding this requirement. Lighting is proposed to be added to the east soccer and ultimate frisbee field. Sound system upgrades are proposed for use during games. The applicant will comply with all lighting and noise ordinances. Field lighting hours should align with residential quiet hours found in the City Code.

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow a reduction in bike parking spaces from 100 spaces to 15 spaces. The ordinance requires 0.1 bike parking spaces per 1,000 fixed participant seats which

equals 100 bike parking spaces required. This requirement exceeds the projected need for bike parking at the school sports complex because the school it serves is not local and the majority of participants and spectators will arrive by bus, van, or car. Fifteen (15) bike spaces will serve the bike parking needs for the proposed sports complex upgrades.

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow chain link fencing as a fencing material for new fence located in the interior of the site along the west and north edges of the soccer/ultimate frisbee fields. The existing fencing surrounding the school sports complex is 6 foot tall galvanized chain link fencing and has legal non-conforming status per Sec. 21.8.3 Nonconformities. The applicant is proposing vinyl coated chain link material which is an appropriate material for fencing surrounding a sports field and is visually less intrusive than galvanized chain link.

A fencing height of 8 feet in the fence segment adjacent to the parking lot interior entrance was originally proposed, however, the applicant has reduced the proposed height to 6 feet and has withdrawn the request for a variance to Sec. 21-6.5.3 to allow an increase in the height of a fence from 6 feet to 8 feet tall. The zoning ordinance allows fences 6 feet in height in the proposed location and the proposed fence segment links into existing fencing that is 6 feet high, therefore, there is no security benefit to the additional height.

**Review and approval criteria for Developments of Community Impact (Sec. 21-7.6.10):**

- A. Design shall be in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood and surrounding area, considering factors such as mass, placement, height, changing land use patterns, and consistency of exterior architectural treatment, especially in areas of historic and special design interest**  
Python Park has coexisted within the City of Avondale Estates for over 30 years. No land use or zoning changes are being requested. The requested variances are related to existing exterior fencing, interior fencing that connects to existing fencing, and bike parking. All other aspects of the project will meet the City Code of Ordinances.
- B. Design components shall be planned such that they are physically and aesthetically related and coordinated with other elements of the project and surrounding environment to ensure visual continuity of design.**  
Design components will largely stay in the same location as their current locations. Where the multipurpose field enlargements are being proposed, existing vegetation will be maintained at a larger width than City buffer requirements
- C. Design shall protect scenic views, particularly those of open space, and utilize natural features of the site.**  
The proposed project preserves existing vegetation at a greater width than City buffer requirements, meets all canopy coverage requirements and exceeds City open space requirements
- D. Design shall protect adjacent properties from negative visual and functional impacts.**  
All adjacent properties to the south, west and north will abut natural, undisturbed buffers greater than code requires. Noise and light impacts will be designed to meet or exceed City code requirements. Traffic impacts will be negligible as only 20 additional parking spaces are being proposed.
- E. Design shall respect the historical character of the immediate area as integral parts of community life in the city and shall protect and preserve structures and spaces which provide a significant link within these areas.**  
No changes in land use or zoning are being requested. Sidewalks, curb cuts and entrances are being preserved in their existing location.

**F. All exterior forms, attached to buildings or not, shall be in conformity with, and secondary to, the building.**

The goal of the project is to create a harmonious campus that speaks to the character of The Paideia School and the City of Avondale Estates

**G. The proposed development is suitable in view of the use and development of adjacent and nearby property.**

Python Park is existing, and no change in land use or zoning is being requested

**H. The proposed development does not adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent or nearby property.**

Through the preservation of existing vegetation, and compliance with code for lighting and noise, the project will not affect the existing use or usability of adjacent properties

**I. The proposed development does not result in a use which will or could cause an excessive or burdensome use of existing streets, transportation facilities, utilities or schools.**

No excessive burden will be placed on public resources, including streets, utilities schools or other such facilities.

**J. The proposed development is in conformance with the applicable zoning district.**

O-I zoning allows for the existing and proposed use.

**K. The proposed development is in conformance with the provisions of the future development plan articulated in the city's comprehensive plan and any sub-area plan.**

The City's comprehensive plan identifies this area's character use as educational, which will remain.

**Review and approval criteria for concurrent variances (Sec. 21-7.2.10):**

**1. There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular property in question because of its size, shape, topography, or a mature tree or tree stands; and**

There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the subject property due to its size of 11.85 acres.

**2. The application of this ordinance to the particular piece of property would create an unnecessary hardship; and**

Application of the ordinance would create an unnecessary hardship because the use of sports field is permitted, and fencing is necessary for a school sports complex to function. The existing fencing material is chain link, and the proposed segments are vinyl coated chain link in the interior of the site around a soccer field. Chain link is an appropriate fencing material for this location.

Application of the ordinance would create an unnecessary hardship because the use of sports field is permitted, and a requirement of 100 bike parking spaces is excessive for the manner in which the property is proposed to be used. 15 bike parking spaces will serve the bike parking needs for the proposed use.

**3. Such conditions are peculiar to the particular piece of property involved; and**

The subject property has conditions that are unique or peculiar to the subject property because the property is large and has a unique use within the community that is supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

**4. Such conditions are not the result of actions of the property owner; and**

The condition of a large parcel used for a school sports complex is not the result of actions of the property owner.

**5. Relief, if granted, would not cause substantial detriment to the public good nor impair the purposes or intent of this zoning ordinance or be in conflict with an adopted master plan.**

Relief if granted, would not cause substantial detriment to the public good by allowing chain link fencing in the interior of an existing sports complex or a reduction in the bike parking from 100 spaces to 15 spaces. Relief would not be in conflict with the adopted master plan, or with the purposes and intent of the zoning ordinance to allow a school sports facility on this site.

**Recommendation:** The proposed changes to Python Park by the Paideia School will not significantly change the current use of the subject property. Investments in the school sports complex are good for the community along with maintenance of the property. Significant improvements in the stormwater infrastructure will protect the community from negative stormwater impacts. Staff supports the Development of Community Impact application with the following conditions: Hours for events and field lighting shall be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. every day in accordance with residential quiet hours found in Sec. 12.4.1.

The majority of the users for the sports complex are coming from distances beyond standard biking distance and many participants will arrive via school bus. Bike parking will be accommodated but not meet the zoning standard which was set to accommodate the needs of a sports complex with more local participants. Staff supports a variance to Sec. 21-6.2.3 to allow a reduction in bike parking spaces from 100 spaces to 15 spaces.

A school sports complex is a permitted use for the subject property. The existing 6 foot high chain link fencing and gate are legal non-conforming structures per Sec. 21.8.3 Nonconformities and therefore, are permitted. The proposed interior fencing additions are necessary for the useful operation of the sports complex and the proposed materials of vinyl coated chain link adjacent to sports fields and aluminum fencing adjacent to the interior entrance are appropriate materials for this use. Staff supports a variance to Sec. 21-6.5.1 to allow chain link fencing material around sports fields and allow the existing vehicle gate to be maintained in its current condition.

The requested variance to Sec. 21-6.5.3 to allow an increase in the height of a fence from 6 feet to 8 feet tall was withdrawn by the applicant in favor of a code compliant proposed fence height of 6 feet.

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\*This review is based on materials received by the applicant at the time of review.  
New information from the applicant may amend the recommendation.