Meeting Minutes: Alameda High School Athletic Field Project

Date: March 3, 2026
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: Wood Middle School Temporary Campus | 1801 Sandcreek Way, Alameda, CA

Attendees
Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Staff
Project Consultants: Brelje & Race (CEQA), W-Trans (Traffic), QKA (Architect)
Neighbors and Community Members

District staff and consultants presented an overview of the proposed Alameda High School Athletic Field Project. It was emphasized that the project is currently in the conceptual phase, and that the purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project, present preliminary concepts, and receive community input prior to further design development and environmental review.

I. Project Background and Site Context

- Thompson Field: undersized for a competition track.
- **2023 Wood Campus Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration:** Identified the former Lum Elementary School site—currently used as the Wood Middle School Temporary Campus—as a potential location for an athletic field with track facilities.
- **Proposed Program Elements (Conceptual)**
    - Regulation 8-lane all-weather track
    - Accommodations for Track & Field events
    - Multi-use field striping for football, soccer, and flag football
    - Approximately six light poles
    - Bleachers on both sides of the field (estimated 1,000–1,500 seat capacity); final configuration to be determined
    - Retention of some existing portable buildings for team rooms and restrooms
- **Proposed Use**
    - The new athletic facility would be used for practices and games for football, flag football, soccer, high school track & field, middle school track and field
    - Occasional use includes graduation (once per year) and the Island Bowl (every other year)
    - Discussed the typical season, practice and game schedules, and anticipated attendance for each
- **Preliminary Timeline**
    - Wood Middle School relocation to permanent campus: **Summer 2026**
    - Otis Elementary use of temporary campus: **2026–2028**
    - Earliest potential construction start of athletic field**: Summer 2028**
- **Funding Source:** Measure B Bond, approved by voters in June 2022

II. Environmental and Technical Features

- **Lighting and Glare**
    - Attendees were encouraged to visit the Encinal High School athletic facility to observe light fixtures equivalent to what is proposed.
    - Preliminary lighting modeling indicates light levels at the residential property line of approximately 1–2 foot-candles (FC) (standard goal is 1 FC).
    - Light levels within neighboring yards were modeled below 1 FC; additional analysis may be required as designs advance.
    - Glare modeling indicates minimal to no glare impacts on nearby residences.
    - Lighting technology has evolved significantly in recent years, allowing for improved precision and reduced impacts.
- **Acoustics**
    - Presenters acknowledged that sound may be mitigated using various methods that need further investigation.
    - Additional acoustic assessment will be done as project is refined.
- **Traffic**
    - A traffic study was completed as part of the 2023 Wood Middle School CEQA process. Additional evaluation will be conducted during planning for the Alameda High School Athletic Field Project, taking into account specific use scenarios and a range of potential traffic mitigation measures.

The following summarizes community input and questions, along with comments from District staff and consultants where provided.

III. Community Input and District Staff and Consultant Comments

<u>Traffic and Safety</u>

- Residents expressed concerns about existing congestion on Otis Drive during school pickup/drop-off and questioned how large athletic events would be accommodated.
- Multiple attendees cited frequent traffic accidents on Otis Drive and Grand Street and difficulty making left turns out of the neighborhood.
- Concerns were raised about emergency vehicle access, parade-level congestion during events, and limited access created by bike lane improvements.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- Traffic impacts and potential mitigation measures will be evaluated as part of the environmental review process.
- Operational strategies, including dismissal timing and event traffic management, will be evaluated.
- Any changes affecting public streets or traffic controls would be under City jurisdiction.

Parking

- Residents reported ongoing issues with blocked driveways, red-zone parking, and limited street capacity, particularly during weekends near Rittler Park.
- Some community members suggested using the former Naval Air Station or other off-site locations for parking.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- New parking is currently under construction as part of the new Wood Middle School campus, which will help but not cover all parking needs of future athletic field.
- Event operations would be designed to clear traffic efficiently, and parking enforcement could be utilized as needed.

Lighting

- Residents expressed concern about lighting duration and impacts, referencing experiences at other facilities. Questions were asked about lights remaining on when the field is not in use.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- Lights can be scheduled, remotely controlled, and turned off when not in use.

Site Security and Access

- Questions were asked regarding site security, locking the field, and preventing unauthorized use.
- Concerns were raised that additional access points could increase crime or encampments.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- The athletic field would be secured with perimeter fencing consistent with District standards.

Use of the Facility

- Residents asked whether the field would be used only for school activities or rented for non-school events. Concerns were expressed regarding impacts from large events.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- The District does not anticipate allowing excess wear from large-scale non-school events. Community use would be managed through the permit process.
- The existing Wood Middle School field will remain for Wood student use.

Other Comments

- Concerns were raised about the field's proximity to homes, the height and aesthetics of bleachers, and views from Kitty Hawk Road.
- Open metal bleachers were described as visually undesirable by adjacent residents.
- Questions were raised about sound travel toward residential areas.
- Community members expressed differing views on whether Snowberry Walk should remain open or be closed, some citing concerns including potential increases in traffic, crime, and safety issues.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- Bleachers along the fenceline are not anticipated to be higher than the current fence.
- Sound-mitigating features such as partitions were discussed and will be further studied during design and environmental review.
- Snowberry Walk access options are constrained by Division of State Architect (DSA) regulations and will continue to be evaluated as part of the project planning process.

Alternative Sites and Outreach

- Several residents questioned why neighborhood input was not part of earlier site selection.
- Alternatives suggested included the former naval base, existing Thompson field, sharing facilities, and off-site venues like College of Alameda.
- Some contributors emphasized the student benefits of improved athletic facilities and noted the challenge of siting such facilities on an island with limited land.
- Others requested improved public notification and outreach.

District Staff and Consultant Comments:

- Thompson Field cannot accommodate a regulation track. Naval base offsite options are far for students, and College of Alameda rental fees have been increasing. Sharing at Encinal has pushed practice times to hours that are late for students.
- District staff noted that project information has been posted on the AUSD website.
- Based on the comments and questions raised during this meeting, the District will follow up with next steps and continue to engage the community. Community members may submit additional input to construction@alamedaunified.org, and the District will provide further opportunities for public participation and feedback as the planning process continues.