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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## Lesley University may propose renovating Smith Field in Allston in exchange for use of the site

Posted by Matt Rocheleau April 2, 2013 01:09 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Lesley University is gauging community interest in having it renovate the city-owned Smith Field in Allston and, in exchange, have permission to use the space for Lesley athletics.

Some residents expressed concern recently in an online neighborhood forum, saying the concept sounds similar to a [proposal being considered](#) for the state-owned Daly Field in Brighton, which Simmons College wants to renovate in exchange for use of the space.

“Lesley is an urban university where there isn’t much room for expansion,” said an e-mail from Amanda McGregor, spokeswoman for the university, which has three campuses in Cambridge and one in Kenmore Square. “So we continue to look for opportunities to utilize or create athletic facilities.”

She said that university officials met briefly with leaders of a neighborhood group to discuss the idea, but that a formal proposal has not been presented yet.

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“It’s just in an exploration stage,” said McGregor.

She said Smith Field is one of about 30 sites in the area that the university is looking into for their potential to be used for Lesley athletics.

“Lesley’s main goal is to provide the best overall experience for our student-athletes, and state-of-the art facilities are key,” she said.

All university athletics, except baseball, share space on one of two sites owned by the private Buckingham, Browne and Nichols’ school, McGregor said. Lesley baseball uses the publicly-owned Trum Field in Somerville.

Smith Field, located along Western Avenue near its intersection with North Harvard Street, spans 14.5 acres. The park area includes several softball and baseball fields, two basketball courts, a playground and a street hockey rink.

On Monday night, members of a resident task force in Allston told city officials they want to see Smith Field renovated as a community benefit to go along with a proposed mixed-use development project next door to the park, the [Harvard Crimson](#) student newspaper reported.

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