

CASE SUMMARY

APPLICATION TYPE: USE ON REVIEW



File Number: 8-A-26-UR **Related File Number:**
Application Filed: 6/26/2026 **Date of Revision:**
Applicant: UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

PROPERTY INFORMATION

General Location: North side of Washington Pike, west of Maloneyville Rd
Other Parcel Info.:
Tax ID Number: 40 10901 **Jurisdiction:** County
Size of Tract: 26.17 acres
Accessibility: Access is via Washington Pike, a minor arterial with a 22-ft pavement width within a right-of-way which varies between 40 ft and 68 ft.

GENERAL LAND USE INFORMATION

Existing Land Use: Public/Quasi Public Land (church)
Surrounding Land Use:
Proposed Use: Sports playing fields **Density:**
Planning Sector: Northeast County **Plan Designation:** SR (Suburban Residential)
Growth Policy Plan: Planned Growth Area
Neighborhood Context: This area is comprised of single family dwellings on a mix of large and small lots and agricultural uses. Ritta Elementary is approximately one mile west of the subject site.

ADDRESS/RIGHT-OF-WAY INFORMATION (where applicable)

Street: 6701 WASHINGTON PIKE
Location:
Proposed Street Name:
Department-Utility Report:
Reason:

ZONING INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Zoning: A (Agricultural)
Former Zoning:
Requested Zoning:
Previous Requests:
Extension of Zone:
History of Zoning: None noted.

PLAN INFORMATION (where applicable)

Current Plan Category:
Requested Plan Category:

SUBDIVISION INFORMATION (where applicable)

Subdivision Name:

No. of Lots Proposed:

No. of Lots Approved: 0

Variances Requested:

S/D Name Change:

OTHER INFORMATION (where applicable)

Other Bus./Ord. Amend.:

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Planner In Charge:

Samiul Haque

Staff Recomm. (Abbr.):

Approve the request for sports playing fields, with a maximum number of fields and parking spaces as shown on the plan, subject to 9 conditions.

Staff Recomm. (Full):

1. Meeting all applicable requirements of the Knox County Zoning Ordinance.
2. Meeting all applicable requirements of the Knox County Department of Engineering and Public Works.
3. The hours of operation of the playing fields shall be limited to daylight only.
4. Providing 100-ft and 75-ft peripheral boundaries along the northern and eastern lot lines as shown in Exhibit B to buffer adjacent residential dwellings.
5. Providing 35-ft and 50-ft boundaries along the eastern and southern lot lines as shown in Exhibit B, or obtaining a BZA variance to reduce these minimums. No sports playing fields, dog park area, accessory structures, or off-street parking spaces shall be located within the peripheral setbacks in conditions 4 or 5.
6. Retaining all existing healthy, mature, non-invasive trees within the peripheral boundaries and installing supplemental, continuous Type A Landscape Screening (Exhibit B) within all peripheral setback boundaries where insufficient existing trees exist. Undergrowth in the existing vegetation areas may be cleared for walking trails.
7. All site lighting fixtures, pole-mounted and attached to the building, shall be full cut-off fixtures or have housing shields to direct the light toward the ground and to restrict the light source from being visible from the adjacent residential properties.
8. The maximum height of the proposed structures shall be one story.
9. If, during plat approval or construction of the development, it is discovered that unforeseen off-site improvements within the right-of-way are necessary as caused by this development, the developer will either enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County for these improvements or reimburse the County for their direct expenses (if completed by County crews) to make corrections deemed necessary.

Comments:

This request is for a sports complex along Washington Pike next to an active rail line. The proposal includes two baseball/softball fields, one T-ball field, one soccer field, four pickleball courts, a dog park, walking trails, and accessory structures. The property is owned by a church, and the existing church structures, including a day care center, will remain on this 26.4-acre parcel. The applicant is proposing new, dedicated access off Washington Pike for the sports playing fields.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR USES PERMITTED ON REVIEW (ARTICLE 4.10, SECTION 2)
The planning commission, in the exercise of its administrative judgment, shall be guided by adopted plans and policies, including the general plan and the following general standards:

1) THE USE IS CONSISTENT WITH ADOPTED PLANS AND POLICIES, INCLUDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF KNOX COUNTY.

A. The SR (Suburban Residential) place type of the property, as defined in the Knox County Comprehensive Plan, recommends detached residential as a "primary use" and attached residential and civic uses as a "secondary use." A church is compatible with the uses specified in the SR place type, and the proposed sports playing fields will be a secondary use for the church.

B. The recommended landscaping next to surrounding residential properties is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Policy 2 to ensure that development is sensitive to existing community character.

C. The proposed development is also compatible with the subject property's location in the Planned Growth Area of the Growth Policy Plan.

2) THE USE IS IN HARMONY WITH THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE.

A. The A zone is intended to provide for a wide range of agricultural and related uses as well as

residential uses with low population densities and other compatible uses which generally require large areas or open spaces. The proposed sports playing fields are permitted via the use on review process. B. Article 4.94 (Requirements for sports playing fields) requires a minimum peripheral setback of 50 ft when the site abuts a residential zone or a zone permitting residential uses. The periphery is to be left as a natural buffer, or landscaping may be required to provide a buffer. The planning commission may reduce this setback, but not to less than that required of the zoning district (i.e., 50-ft front setback, 35-ft side setback, and 35-ft rear setback for churches and other nonresidential uses). Staff recommends the minimum allowed 35 ft - 50 ft peripheral setback along residential properties near the proposed entrance, and 75 ft -100 ft setbacks abutting Planned Residential zones on the north and east sides (Exhibit B).

C. The proposal does not meet the 50-ft peripheral setback requirement along the south edge of the proposed Girls' Softball Field and does not meet the 35-ft peripheral setback along the west edge of the proposed dog park. The applicant is seeking BZA variances to reduce the peripheral setbacks in these areas. The site plan will require revisions if variances are not obtained.

D. The zoning ordinance stipulates that off-street parking requirements shall be determined by the planning commission during the use-on-review process. The applicant is proposing 188 new parking spaces, and the existing parking spaces of the church could be used if needed.

3) THE USE IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE IT IS PROPOSED, AND WITH THE SIZE AND LOCATIONS OF BUILDINGS IN THE VICINITY.

A. The area is characterized by low density residential developments and large agricultural lands. The proposed use is intended to serve nearby neighborhoods and the broader community, but it is more intense than the surrounding area. In its deliberations, the Planning Commission must determine whether the development is compatible with the surrounding developments.

B. The proposed structures shall be one story, which is consistent with nearby residential structures.

4) THE USE WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INJURE THE VALUE OF ADJACENT PROPERTY BY NOISE, LIGHTS, FUMES, ODORS, VIBRATION, TRAFFIC CONGESTION OR OTHER IMPACTS WHICH MAY DETRACT FROM THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT.

A. The applicant has stated that multiple playing fields are planned to be used simultaneously, so the development could generate significant noise and vehicular traffic during game times. The applicant has stated that the hours of operation would be limited to daylight hours only. Planning staff's recommendation for landscaped peripheral boundaries is intended to provide a visual screen for the abutting residential properties.

B. The applicant has stated that no exterior lights will be installed along the playing fields and walking trails, and the proposed accessory structures will have wall-mounted lights. Staff recommends using full cut-off fixtures or housing shields to ensure abutting residential properties are not adversely affected by light.

5) THE USE IS NOT OF A NATURE OR SO LOCATED AS TO DRAW SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC THROUGH RESIDENTIAL STREETS.

A. Washington Pike is a minor arterial street, so the proposed use would not significantly impact traffic on local residential streets.

6) THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SURROUNDING AREA IS NOT SUCH AS TO POSE A POTENTIAL HAZARD TO THE PROPOSED USE OR TO CREATE AN UNDESIRABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROPOSED USE.

A. There is a rail line running along the western boundary of the property, but it is not expected to create any significant nuisance or hazardous conditions for the nature of the proposed use.

Action: Approved with Conditions **Meeting Date:** 8/13/2026

Details of Action: Approve the request for sports playing fields, with a maximum number of fields and parking spaces as shown on the plan, subject to 9 conditions, with the edit to condition #8 to exclude score boxes and coach boxes from the one story height restriction.

Summary of Action: Approve the request for sports playing fields, with a maximum number of fields and parking spaces as shown on the plan, subject to 9 conditions, with the edit to condition #8 to exclude score boxes and coach boxes from the one story height restriction.

Date of Approval: 8/13/2026 **Date of Denial:** **Postponements:**

Date of Withdrawal: **Withdrawn prior to publication?:** ☐ **Action Appealed?:**

LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND DISPOSITION

Legislative Body: Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission

Date of Legislative Action: **Date of Legislative Action, Second Reading:**

Ordinance Number: **Other Ordinance Number References:**

Disposition of Case:

If "Other":

Amendments:

Date of Legislative Appeal:

Disposition of Case, Second Reading:

If "Other":

Amendments:

Effective Date of Ordinance: