

## PLANNING REPORT

# Planning and Zoning Commission

Thursday, November 6, 2025

## Radiant Life Soccer Fields 24-036CU

[www.dublinohiousa.gov/pzc/24-036](http://www.dublinohiousa.gov/pzc/24-036)

### Case Summary

Address	7100 Post Road
Proposal	Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use to allow soccer fields at an existing church. The 24.48-acre site is zoned R, Rural District.
Request	Request for review and approval of a Conditional Use under the provisions of Code Section §153.236.
Zoning	R: Rural
Planning Recommendation	<u>Approval of the Conditional Use.</u>
Next Steps	Upon approval of the CU, the applicant may install and use the fields.
Applicant	Aaron Underhill, Underhill & Hodge, LLC
Case Manager	Sarah Tresouthick Holt, AICP, ASLA, Senior Planner (614) 410-4662 <a href="mailto:sholt@dublin.oh.us">sholt@dublin.oh.us</a>

### Site Location Map



5200 Emerald Parkway  
Dublin, Ohio 43017



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# 24-036CU - Radiant Life Soccer Fields



## Site Features

- 1 Existing church, 2007 construction
- 2 Church addition, 2017 construction
- 3 Proposed soccer fields

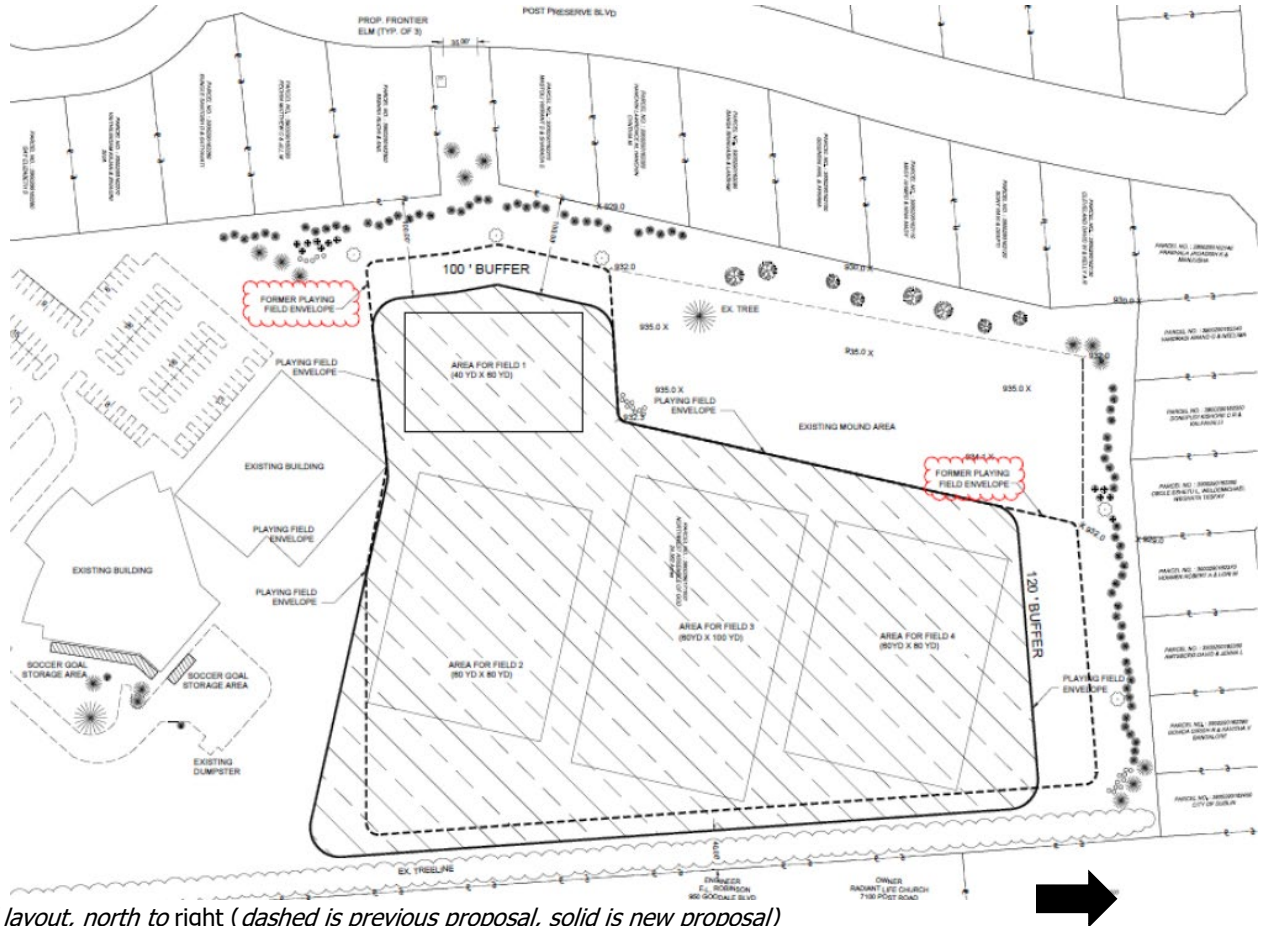




## 1. Request and Process

Applicant statement:

- Radiant Life Church's mission is to engage with and enhance the community
- They desire up to four soccer fields within existing green space
- The proposed use is for the smaller DSX Soccer Club only, for practices and camps



*Revised layout, north to right (dashed is previous proposal, solid is new proposal)*

### Process

Conditional Use (CU) approval is required due to the expansion of the church use within an R, Rural zoning district, per Code §153.019(B)(7). Code §153.236(C) applies and ensures CUs are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood character and do not create adverse effects. The criteria focus on parking, noise, public services, economic impact, and operational details. If approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), no further approvals are required.

### RLUIPA

The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice notes that the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) of 2000 is a Federal law that protects religious institutions and individuals from discrimination in zoning and landmarking laws. Specifically, churches cannot be treated on less-than-equal terms with nonreligious uses, meaning that any religious application shall be handled and enforced in exactly the same manner as nonreligious uses.

## 2. Background

### Site Summary

The 24.36-acre site is zoned R, Rural and is located northeast of the intersection of Post Road and Post Preserve Boulevard, between the Gorden Farms and Post Preserve residential neighborhoods. The site currently has a 48,916 square-foot church complex, 288 parking spaces, a single-family residence, and stormwater ponds on the southern portion. The northern portion of the site is an open field and is the proposed site of the soccer fields.

### Zoning Summary

The current zoning requires a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet for most uses and a minimum of 5 acres for religious uses. In this case, approximately one half of the 24-acre property is currently not used. The church could seek a lot split without a public process based on Ohio State law, and sell the northern portion of the property. Either the church or a new owner could seek approvals of uses by right (minimal/no public process) including single-family residential (13 houses); agriculture, including animal and poultry husbandry; schools and parks; storage of agricultural products; and child care. Other CUs include temporary mobile homes; private school or college; sales of agricultural products; boarding and care of animals; commercial grain elevators; and daycare centers. These uses would be subject to the applicable development standards in the Code.

### Site History

- 2005, Dubscovery (Dublin's on-line GIS tool) shows Post Preserve neighborhood under construction and Gorden Farms constructed
- 2007, approval of site plan for church
  - Site zoned R, Rural, religious uses permitted by-right on parcels over 5 acres
  - Plan shows "future construction" on north side of property, but no soccer fields
  - Dubscovery shows church and berm under construction; Post Preserve neighborhood is complete
- 2011, zoning update for R, Rural zone
  - Religious uses are permitted as CU on lots larger than 5 acres
- 2012 - 2016, Dubscovery shows 3 sets of soccer goals in more-manicured lawn area, close to existing main church building
- 2017, additional new church building approved
  - No indication of soccer fields on site plan
- 2021 – 2022, Dubscovery shows one soccer goal in northern field area
- 2023, church starts grading for soccer fields
  - Law Office: confirms expansion of religious use is CU
  - Staff requested CU application from applicant
- 2024, application is submitted and tabled at PZC on September 19 (see minutes, attached); no presentation/hearing at that time
- 2025
  - 3/6/25, application tabled at PZC (see minutes, attached)
  - 6/17/25, meeting with staff, adjacent residents and attorney, and applicant (see agenda/results, attached). Changes presented:
    - Remove tournaments from proposal
    - Reduce fields from 5 to 4
    - Increase field envelope setback from 60' to 100' on west, 120' on north

- Reduce east field envelope setback from 60' to 40'
- Increase spectator buffer area from 50' to 100'
- Add 53 evergreen trees to landscape buffer area
- Further applicant changes based on 6/17/25 meeting (this application):
  - Clarify that DSX (smaller, 200-member group) is only user
  - Identify maximum users per practice session; refine traffic memo
  - Decrease practice hours Fridays and Saturdays; decrease teams/players both days
  - Identify hours for camps Monday through Thursday
  - Will create Code of Conduct: to be signed by parents, non-compliance results in non-participation
  - Applicant installed some landscape screening, at own risk
  - Plans available to residents for 3-week review
- Comments from Adjacent Neighbors' Attorney (full letter attached):
  - Concern about intensity of the proposal, the number of players for the summer camps, inadequate screening, and traffic impacts. Overall: "CU approval criteria not met"
  - Concern this is a "commercial" use because DSX players pay dues or fees to participate. Staff notes exchange of money does not determine zoning category.
  - Concern regarding maximum numbers of players at practice switches. Would be 160 players total on site.
- Response from applicant:
  - Code of Conduct created as part of overall Management Plan, review by staff: parking, trespassing, location of spectators, use of noisemakers, background checks of coaches addressed
  - Maximum number of campers: 80
  - Increase practice times on Saturdays: starting at 8:00 am vs. 9:00am
  - Remove all references to tournaments

### 3. City Plans and Policies

#### Envision Dublin Future Land Use Plan

Envision Dublin notes this site as Civic/Community, taking into account the existing church use and ownership. Principal uses include government buildings, recreational facilities, institutional and educational campuses. Supporting uses are parks and open spaces. Key considerations state "these areas serve a range of roles depending on their location, characteristics, sensitivity, and management".

### 4. Project

#### Operational Details and Analysis

The applicant has provided the CU Statement, a Management Plan, and Code of Conduct, attached. These documents create the conditions under which the CU may be operated; verified complaints are enforceable, including potential revocation of the CU by the City.

To summarize, the proposed use is for up to four soccer fields on the northern portion of the parcel. Use of the fields will be as follows:

Practice

- March 1st through June 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup> through November 6<sup>th</sup>
- Monday through Saturday
- 4:30 pm through 8:00 pm M-Th, max # players 80
- 5:00 pm through 7:00 pm F, max # players 30
- 8:00 am through 1:00 pm Sa, max # players 30

#### Summer Camps

- June through July, maximum of five weeks
- Monday through Thursday
- 8:00 am through 11 am and 5:00 pm through 8:00 pm
- Maximum of 80 campers

Per the Site Plan, the applicant shows an increased 100' and 120' buffer around the fields to the Post Preserve neighborhood; the Gordon Farms buffer is shown at 40'. The Management Plan describes an increased 100-foot spectator buffer to be marked by temporary flags during camps. Specific field layout is shown but may change from year to year to avoid the overuse of individual locations. Previously-requested between-field spacing is shown.

The applicant proposes that soccer players and spectators use a bathroom inside the church for sanitation. Portable toilets shall not be permitted per the Management Plan. Regarding trash, the Management Plan states:

- Two temporary receptacles between fields and parking lot, >100' from church boundary
- At least one temporary receptacle per field during summer camps
- To be emptied in church's dumpster after each soccer event
- Will be stored indoors or within church's dumpster enclosure when not in use

Other details include that no soccer-related vendors or food trucks are permitted. Soccer goals will be stored near the existing building and screened as shown on the plan. Additional users or tournaments will require a separate CU approval; however, the church may continue to use the property for their customary activities.

#### Landscaping/Buffering

The homes in Post Preserve back directly to the proposed fields, and the existing mound shown on the submitted plan is approximately 4 - 5 feet tall, confirmed by staff. The Gordon Farms development has a thick tree row between it and the fields; residents in that development have not expressed any concerns with this proposal.

In September of 2024, staff recommended an undulating vegetated screen, and the HOA requested two rows of arborvitae for screening. The latest landscape plan, including the addition of 53 more evergreens, combines both approaches and is satisfactory to staff.

#### Traffic and Parking

The applicant provided an updated traffic memo, consistent with the CU Statement and Management Plan, and staff is satisfied. Post Preserve Boulevard, Springview Lane, and Postlake Court are public roads; Post Preserve Boulevard does not permit on-street parking, and Springview Lane and Postlake Court permit parking on one side. Roads within Gordon Farms to the east are private and no on-street parking is permitted.

The Code of Conduct requires that all parking and drop off activities occur on the church's property/parking lot. Use of public streets is not permitted. The church has 288 parking spaces on site. Based on the capped participant numbers, parking will be adequate, including when practice sessions switch and up to 160 players may be on-site for a brief period of time.

Staff has confirmed that a dedicated left turn lane is provided at the church's parking lot access onto Post Road. Based on the Code of Conduct, this is the only entry/exit point for the CU.

**Stormwater and Easements**

There are no stormwater or easement concerns with this application. No grading is proposed.

**5. Plan Review**

Conditional Use	
Criteria	Review
1. Harmonious with the Zoning Code and/or Community Plan.	<b>Criterion Met.</b> The proposal is consistent with the zoning and Envision Dublin.
2. Complies with applicable standards.	<b>Criterion Met.</b> The proposed CU has no additional development standards.
3. Harmonious with existing or intended character of the general vicinity.	<b>Criterion Met.</b> Staff previously supported the request with no conditions; however, since the June 2025 meeting, the applicants have created a specific Code of Conduct that addresses parking issues and background checks for coaches, among other topics. The Management Plan and the Site Plan have been revised to remove tournaments, reduce number of fields, increase buffers, reduce hours, and increase landscape buffer and spectator setback.  Both the residents' and the applicant's attorneys provided letters (attached) that refer to other Dublin soccer/sport locations, relative to distance from residential lots. Staff measured on Dubscovery the distances from these fields to the nearest residential lot lines and found: Earlington Park = 129' with similar landscaping as proposed, Avery Park = 40' with wooded buffer, Coffman shows 28' to sport fields. This proposal shows a minimum distance from the west field to a rear yard line is 115' and on the north it is 135'.
4. The use will not have a hazardous or negative impact on surrounding uses.	<b>Criterion Met.</b> Since the June 2025 meeting, the applicant has provided the Code of Conduct and revised the Management and Site Plans to

address neighborhood concerns. Tournaments have been removed, fields reduced, setbacks increased, and landscaping increased. The setbacks and landscaping is comparable to public fields within the City, as noted above.

5. The use will be adequately served by public facilities and services.

**Criterion Met.** The proposal will be adequately served by sanitation and water.

6. The use will not harm the economic welfare.

**Criterion Met.** This use would provide needed additional soccer resources for the community. The revised Management and Site Plans, plus the Code of Conduct, preserve economic welfare of the surrounding properties to the maximum extent possible and are responsive to the requests of the neighbors.

7. The use will not be detrimental to any person, property, or the general welfare.

**Criterion Met.** The specific requests of the Post Preserve neighborhood have been addressed in the revised Site Plan, Management Plan, and Code of Conduct, especially with the removal of tournaments. Parking and trespassing have been addressed in the Code of Conduct. A number of residential areas within the City are adjacent to parks and playfields, so this is not materially different than those situations.

8. Vehicular circulation will not interfere with existing circulation.

**Criterion Met.** The revised traffic memo and Management Plan address previous concerns. Soccer-related parking will not be permitted on adjacent streets, per the Code of Conduct, even though public parking is permitted in some locations. There is adequate parking on site, and the road system is adequate for the projected traffic.

9. Not detrimental to property values in the vicinity.

**Criterion Met.** The removal of tournaments, increased field and spectator setbacks, and increased vegetated buffer, address this requirement. The provided Code of Conduct addresses parking, trespassing, coach behavior, and parent behavior.

10. Will not impede the development or improvement of surrounding properties.

**Criterion Met.** The surrounding properties are developed, so no impediment is presented. The proposed use is contained on site via the Management and Site Plans, and the Code of Conduct prevents trespassing.



## Recommendation

**Planning Recommendation:** Approval of the Conditional Use.