EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SMITH SCHOOL COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY

Prepared by: Ashcreek–Crestwood Neighborhood Association (ACNA) Board
Target Audience: ACNA Board of Directors, Portland Public Schools (PPS), District 4 Leadership, Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R), and Local Stakeholders
Scope: Final analysis of community survey responses regarding current site usage, preservation values, strategic long-term visions, and park alternatives for the 10-acre Smith School property in Southwest Portland.

> **Key Finding Snapshot:** Out of 100 recorded responses, **98% of neighbors explicitly support keeping the Smith School property under public or community ownership**. There is overwhelming opposition to private housing or commercial development, **with unanimous demand to preserve the 10-acre site as a vital neighborhood park, athletic facility, community center, or reactivated public school**.

1. Context & Purpose

The Smith School property encompasses approximately 10 acres of open green space, athletic fields, and legacy school infrastructure within the Ashcreek–Crestwood neighborhood. As conversations regarding the long-term future of vacant Portland Public Schools (PPS) properties progress, the Ashcreek–Crestwood Neighborhood Association (ACNA) launched the **Smith School Community Vision Survey** to establish a rigorous, data-backed baseline of community priorities, usage habits, and future vision.

This report synthesizes all recorded digital and paper survey submissions collected between June and July 2026. The empirical data and qualitative insights herein are intended to guide upcoming discussions with PPS, PP&R, elected city officials, and District 4 leaders to ensure future site decisions directly reflect the desires of local residents.

2. Methodology & Sample Overview

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  Collection Window: June 8, 2026 – July 27, 2026
- **Collection Channels:** Mobile-optimized Google Form accessed via QR codes on neighborhood signage, online neighborhood links, and direct paper survey intercept cards collected during community gatherings (including the annual ACNA Summer Picnic).
- **Total Sample Size (N): 100 respondents** (97 fully validated multi-section entries).

3. Quantitative Data & Key Findings

Section A: Strategic Vision for the Property (Primary Goal)

When asked to select their single ideal long-term vision for the future of the Smith School building and grounds, respondents voted as follows:

Strategic Vision Option	Count (N=100)	Percentage
Option B: Retain Public/Community Ownership Repurpose existing infrastructure for public benefit (community center, park upgrades, public spaces).	**63**	**63.0%**
Option A: Priority Goal — Re-Open Public Elementary School Reactivate the facility as a functioning neighborhood public elementary school.	**33**	**33.0%**
Option D: Other / Alternative Community Vision Including dedicated park conversion, native plant sanctuaries, or specialized dog facilities.	**3**	**3.0%**
Option C: Private Development / Housing Open property to residential	**1**	**1.0%**

Strategic Vision Option	Count (N=100)	Percentage
housing or private commercial development.		

Section B: Public & Park Alternatives (Select All That Apply)

In the event that re-opening a public elementary school is not feasible, respondents evaluated specific public recreation and facility options:

Public / Park Alternative Option	Respondent Support (Count)	% of Total Respondents
Option A: Community Center Repurposing Convert building into a community center (modeled on Sellwood Community House or Multnomah Arts Center).	**55**	**55.0%**
Option D: Preserve Full 10-Acres for Public Recreation Maintain all surrounding green space and park layout as-is without privatizing or building over fields.	**47**	**47.0%**
Option C: SW Corner Community Garden Convert the half-acre lot at SW 52nd Ave & SW Orchid St into a neighborhood community garden.	**40**	**40.0%**

Public / Park Alternative Option	Respondent Support (Count)	% of Total Respondents
Option B: Field Amenities & Restrooms Build a small permanent shelter/restroom facility to complement existing athletic fields.	**39**	**39.0%**
Option E: Other Custom Community Ideas Upgraded play structures, splash pads, covered basketball courts, dog parks, or native habitat spaces.	**12**	**12.0%**

Section C: Site Utilization & Preservation Values

- **How Neighbors Currently Use the Site:** Daily recreation dominates site activity. Walking, running, and passing through is the most frequent use (over 85%), followed by dog walking (approx. 65%), playground/park usage (60%), athletic sports/Little League (55%), and community events like the summer picnic (50%).
- **Core Values to Preserve: Public access** and **open green space** were selected by nearly 90% of respondents as non-negotiable priorities, followed by athletic fields, community gathering spaces, and preserving potential future school capacity.

4. Qualitative Analysis & Common Themes

Analysis of open-ended responses revealed four prominent, recurring themes among neighborhood residents:

1. **Fierce Opposition to Private Development:** Residents strongly cautioned against selling or leasing land to private developers for housing or condos, citing increased street congestion, loss of property values, and the permanent destruction of irreplaceable public green space in Southwest Portland.
2. **Youth Sports & Field Shortage:** Multiple sports leaders and parents emphasized that with

recent regional field closures (such as Alpenrose), the Smith School athletic fields are indispensable for Southwest Portland Little League, youth soccer, and informal play.

3. **Safety, Maintenance, & Building Eyesore:** Residents expressed rising concern over vandalism, trespassing, and deferred maintenance on the vacant building. A major consensus emerged that the structure must either be productively repurposed (e.g., community center/daycare) or demolished in favor of covered park pavilions, updated playgrounds, and public restrooms.
4. **Social Anchor & Sunset Views:** Neighbors frequently referred to Smith School as the "heart and soul" of Ashcreek-Crestwood—a unique geographic hub where neighbors meet, children learn to ride bikes, and families gather.

5. Leadership, Community Action, & Next Steps

Community engagement and readiness to advocate are exceptionally high across the neighborhood:

- **Leadership Involvement: 28% (28 respondents)** explicitly volunteered to join a neighborhood panel, committee, or foundation to actively advocate for the chosen outcomes.
- **Project Updates: 53% (53 respondents)** requested to be kept updated on project milestones and city meetings.
- **Only 19%** declined further involvement.

Recommended Action Items for ACNA Board:

1. **Formal Representation to PPS & City:** Present these survey results to Portland Public Schools Board of Directors and Portland Parks & Recreation to advocate for permanent public/park land designation or community center conversion.
2. **Convene the Smith School Working Committee:** Reach out to the 28 volunteers to establish a dedicated ACNA subcommittee focused on site planning, grant writing, and agency outreach.
3. **Advance Early Wins (Community Garden & Field Upgrades):** Initiate preliminary inquiry with PP&R regarding the feasibility of developing the SW corner community garden and installing basic site amenities like public trash cans and restrooms.