

Capital Project-Lights at Nottingham Stadium

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Trustee give advance approval of this capital project pending resolution and confirmation of the following conditions:

1. Final confirmation and approval of scope and technical requirements from the selected vendor.
2. Project approval from the Office of the State Architect.
3. Full scope of project cost not to exceed \$1.6 million.
4. Funding commitments or pledges for the project cost from non-operating sources prior to commencing the project, with 50% or more funding to be received by December 2026, and the balance to be received no later than December 2028.

If these conditions are not met by April 1, 2026, the project will be postponed until the conditions are met, and a new request for approval will be required at that time.

BACKGROUND

The background, cost, and timeline information on this capital project is attached.

	2/11/26		2/11/26
Responsible Staff	Date	President	Date
Board Action	Date		

BRINGING SATURDAY NIGHT LIGHTS TO UNC'S NOTTINGHAM FIELD

Background

Installing stadium lights at Nottingham Field is a transformative opportunity for UNC Athletics that will significantly enhance the gameday experience, expand our reach, and elevate the overall profile of UNC Football. The phrase “Friday Night Lights” is synonymous with high school football and speaks to the importance of creating a similar college gameday experience on our campus. Evening games consistently drive higher attendance across college athletics, and lights will allow UNC to create a true event atmosphere that draws more fans, students, alumni, and community members to campus aiding UNC in our ability to reach our 2030 goals. Night games are especially appealing to families and working professionals who cannot attend afternoon contests, creating a more inclusive and vibrant environment that strengthens our connection to the region and builds our brand.

Lighting Nottingham Field also positions UNC Football for greater media exposure and recruiting success. Night games are common in high school and college athletics and bringing that standard to UNC will increase opportunities for television and streaming coverage, enabling more fans to follow the Bears and expanding the program’s brand beyond Greeley and Weld County. From a recruiting perspective, the ability to host official visits during marquee night games is critical. Prospective student-athletes want to experience the energy of a packed stadium under the lights – an atmosphere most are already accustomed to from high school contests – and stadium lighting will allow UNC to showcase its program in a way that aligns with peer institutions. Currently, UNC is the only Big Sky Conference program without lights. As such, this project is essential to maintain competitiveness and perception within the conference.

From a competitive standpoint, lights will help create a stronger home-field advantage and enhance team performance. Night environments generate energy and intensity that motivate student-athletes and intimidate opponents, and they provide coaches with greater scheduling flexibility. Lighting will also unlock new revenue opportunities through increased ticket sales, concessions, and parking, while enabling UNC to host additional events such as high school games, community showcases, concerts, and special events that can generate both revenue and community engagement.

Finally, lighting Nottingham Field is a statement of institutional commitment. It demonstrates that UNC is investing in football, student-athletes, and the future of Division I Athletics at UNC. It also provides the infrastructure necessary to host playoff games, ensuring that UNC is not limited by facilities when competitive success demands a home postseason environment. This project is not just about lights - it is about visibility, competitiveness, pride, and the long-term growth of UNC Athletics.

This project represents a strategic, privately funded investment that will generate long-term returns through increased attendance, expanded media exposure, enhanced recruiting, additional event hosting opportunities, and new revenue streams from ticketing, concessions, and parking. Most importantly, it signals UNC’s commitment to competitive excellence and institutional ambition in a rapidly evolving college athletics landscape.

Cost & Timeline

The total project cost is approximately \$1.6 million, the entirety of which will be paid with private philanthropic support and sponsorship revenue so that no university money is used for the project. To complete installation in time for the 2026 football season, a final go/no go decision must be made by April 1, 2026. That green light is dependent on the following conditions: satisfactory progress in the procurement process and construction planning, sufficient donor pledges and sponsor commitments, and approval of bridge funding to manage the gap between construction expenses and the realization of donor revenue. If the necessary commitments are not reached by April 1, or if the construction timeline and details cannot be finalized by that time, the project will be deferred until after the 2026 season.

Athletics and Advancement have already secured more than 1/3 of the project cost and will work in partnership to raise the remaining \$1M through targeted one-to-three-year pledges from key donors and sponsors. Leaders in both areas feel confident in UNC's ability to secure the necessary funds to move forward with this project. By allowing donors up to three years to fulfill their commitments (with any final pledge payments due by December 2028), we increase the amount of money that can be raised by giving donors flexibility to manage their own financial circumstances.

Work is already underway with UNC Facilities leaders to finalize engineering and construction requirements. While the final money is being raised, university leaders will continue to work to solidify these important details in order to align with an April 1 go/no go deadline.

Nottingham Field Lights

2/10/2026

Task	Quant	Unit	Un / \$	Task \$	NOTES
Field Lighting Supply & Installation Quote	1	LS	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	2/6/26 Quote
Added Site Lights in & around stadium	1	AL	\$200,000	\$200,000	
Irrigation Repair	1	AL	\$10,000	\$10,000	
UNC FM Shops Support	1	AL	\$7,000	\$7,000	
UNC IM&T Support	1	AL	\$3,000	\$3,000	
SUBTOTAL ALL WORK				\$1,420,000	
Design / Bidding Contingency @ 5% of Non-Field Light Scope				\$11,000	
Construction Contingency @ 3%				\$42,000	
TOTAL CONSTRUCTION SCOPE				\$1,473,000	
A/E Fees - Enginer of Record - Complete design / CA during Constrution				\$30,000	
A/E Fees - Perimeter Lighting				\$10,000	
Environ Consultant				\$0	
Geotech / Material Testing				\$2,000	
Site Survey				\$0	
Code Review / Inspection				\$6,000	
Comissioning				\$0	
Xcel Energy				\$2,000	
UNC Construction Services Project Management @ 0.5% of Construction				\$7,000	
TOTAL PROJECT COST				\$1,530,000	

ADDITIONAL INFO

Estimate based on Code Compliant June 2024 Design.

Design to be updated to comply with Current Codes

Estimate assumes minimal cost impact to comply with new codes

Estimate based on Construction in 2026. IF postponed until 2027, escalation will need to be added