

Overview

In 2006, a committee of interested community volunteers came together to study the needs and potential for state of the art competitive and recreational sports venues within the Lawrence, Kansas community. The committee requested the support of local organizations to financially support a feasibility study and needs assessment to evaluate the need and potential support for these facilities. The City of Lawrence, Lawrence Public School District, Douglas County, Kansas, and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce partnered to financially support this study.

PLAY Committee Members

Kelly Barth, Mark Buhler, Dave Corliss, Fred DeVictor, Rick Gammill, Mike Grosdidier, Sue Hack, Paige Hofer, Bonnie Lowe, Pam Madl, Julie Manning, Scott Morgan, Wayne Osness, Linda Robinson, Bob Sanner, Ernie Shaw, Doug Stremel and Doug Vance.

The Mission Statement of PLAY

Partners for Lawrence Athletics and Public Youth (PLAY) is a partnership of The City of Lawrence, Douglas County Kansas, Lawrence School District 497 and The Lawrence Chamber of Commerce to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study to evaluate the need and potential support for state of the art competitive and recreational sports venues for our community.

Background and Process

In August of 2006, the PLAY Committee selected Treanor Architects, P.A. of Lawrence, Kansas as the prime consultant to complete this assessment and needs study. Treanor Architects brought a team of consultants to assist in this study: Green Play LLC, Landplan Engineering, Richard Caplan and Associates, and Leisure Vision/ETC. This team has worked together over the last eight months to conduct a needs assessment, a random public survey, worked with the PLAY committee to identify new and improved venues, and developed this final study and report.

The first step in the needs assessment was to collect data from a variety of sources. Three methods were developed to collect data for this study. The design team has completed the following:

- *Meeting with competitive and recreational sports stakeholders*

On November 8, 2006 a meeting was held with competitive and recreational sports stakeholders. Each stakeholder was asked to respond to a questionnaire to identify the state of the current venues and to identify current needs. This information was compared to current roster numbers and the organizations waiting lists. Twenty-five participants attended this session. Each person in attendance was asked to respond to the following questions:

1. What venues do you use for practice and competition?
2. Do you have enough fields/courts to play on THIS YEAR? If not, number of additional needed for THIS YEAR.

3. Please rate the condition of the sports venues your organization utilizes.
 4. What improvements are needed at each venue?
- *Public Meeting*
On November 20, 2006 a meeting was held to provide a brief overview on the outcomes of the stakeholders meeting and to allow the public to comment on the state of recreational facilities in the City of Lawrence. The public meeting included a report on the initial findings of the stakeholders meeting and solicited further information and needs. Each participant was asked to respond to a questionnaire about their family's use of sports and recreation facilities, level of quality and the needs of the community;
 - *Random Survey*
A random Community Attitude and Interest Survey of the Lawrence community was conducted asking twenty-three questions ranging from their participation in sports activities, their perception of the condition current venues, the desire for school district varsity sports to share venues, the need to new athletic and or recreational venues, and financing options to support these venues. The survey was conducted during January and February of 2007 to establish priorities for the future improvement of indoor and outdoor sports facilities to serve youth and adults in the Lawrence and Douglas County community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Lawrence and Douglas County.

Leisure Vision/ETC provided this survey. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone. Surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 412 surveys having been completed. The results of the random sample of 412 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-4.8.

From the above data collection methods, the information was evaluated to develop potential new venues and improvements and additions to existing venues that would meet the identified needs.

Existing Venues and Benchmark Communities

The design team reviewed information provided from Lawrence Parks and Recreation (LP&R) and the Lawrence School District on the existing athletic venues in the community. LP&R operates (3) community recreational facilities. All three of these facilities are twenty-years or greater in age with a renovation of East Lawrence Recreation Center occurring in 1997. The latest building developed by LP&R is the Lawrence Indoor Aquatic Center in 2001. As identified in the LP&R long-range master plan, additional indoor recreation venues are required to meet the current needs of the community.

The outdoor venues for LP&R are used for both recreational and competitive athletics. The latest youth venue constructed in Lawrence is the YSI sports complex. Built in the

1980's, LP&R began to maintain the venue in 1996 and improvements were made to the venue at that time. The latest outdoor venue developed by LP&R is the Adult Softball Complex.

Venues for Lawrence High School (LHS) and Lawrence Free State High School (FSHS) were also evaluated. A majority of the deficiencies identified are with the outdoor venues. LHS's varsity athletics uses a combination of school district facilities and LP&R facilities. The venues are dispersed around the community. Limited teams have practice facilities at the school location. Many of the teams use competition venues for practice, which limits or reduces practice due to scheduling conflicts. FSHS has a majority of their practice and competition venues at the school site. Again, FSHS teams use the fields for both practice and competition. These venues also lack fan and team amenities similar to the LHS venues.

In addition to existing venues in the Lawrence community, the design team also reviewed other communities and their current venues. This review was limited to information provided by LP&R and the school district. This review was limited the amenities provided at these venues and construction and operational costs, if available. This review has been used to provide comparisons to venues developed in this study.

New Venues and Improvements / Additions to Existing Venues

The following new venues and proposed expansions or improvements to existing venues have been developed through the above data collection phase. The venues have been reviewed and further developed with the input of the PLAY committee.

- Venue #1- Indoor Ice Arena
- Venue #2- Indoor Fieldhouse
- Venue #3- School District Sports Complex
- Venue #4- Upgrades to the YSI Complex (as identified in the 1515 Acre Park Masterplan)
- Venue #5- Upgrades to Free State High School
 - Venue #5a- Upgrades required in conjunction with a District Complex
 - Venue #5b- Upgrades required without a District Complex
 - Venue #5c- Conversion of existing football field into football stadium
- Venue #6- Upgrades to Lawrence High School
 - Venue #6a- Upgrades required in conjunction with a District Complex
 - Venue #6b- Upgrades required without a District Complex
 - Venue #6c- Upgrades required without a District Complex; softball and baseball stadiums
- Venue #7- Upgrades to Haskell Stadium

The proposed venues address the immediate and critical needs of the recreational and competitive athletics community. They do not address all of the current needs. Additional needs and potential solutions have been addressed later in this documents. The proposed venues do not address the growing future needs of this community.

For each venue a program or scope of work has been outlined and construction and project costs have been estimated.

Venue #1- Indoor Ice Arena

Overview: The Indoor Ice Arena was the highest rated venue identified in the public survey for potential new indoor or outdoor recreational facilities.

Estimated Size: 40,656 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$ 8,155,053.00

Development Costs: \$ 2,446,516.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$10,601,569.00

Venue #2- Indoor Fieldhouse

Overview: The Indoor Fieldhouse was the second highest rated venue identified in the public survey for potential new indoor or outdoor recreational facilities.

Estimated Size: 100,266 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$16,408,729.00

Development Costs: \$ 4,922,618.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$21,331,347.00

Venue #3- School District Sports Complex

Overview: The Lawrence School District Sports Complex would be a neutral site venue that would provide sporting venues for varsity, junior varsity and other sports levels for baseball, football, soccer, softball, tennis, and track and field.

Estimated Size: Approximately 762,000 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$14,445,668.00

Development Costs: \$ 4,333,700.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$18,779,368.00

Venue #4- Upgrades to the YSI Complex (as identified in the 1515 Acre Park Masterplan)

Overview: The 1515 Acre Park Lands Masterplan identified infrastructure, improvements, and additions to the soccer, football, and youth baseball / softball fields at the Youth Sports Inc. (YSI) Sports Complex. These upgrades begin to address the identified field deficiencies, and the lack of amenities at this complex.

Estimated Size: As outlined in 1515 Acre Park Lands Masterplan

Construction Costs: \$13,403,983.00

Development Costs: \$ 2,948,876.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$16,352,859.00

Venue #5- Upgrades to Free State High School

Overview: During the stakeholders meeting, upgrades were identified to the existing sport venues at Lawrence Free State High School.

Venue #5a- Upgrades required in conjunction with a District Complex.

Venue #5b- Upgrades required without a District Complex.

Venue #5c- This option changes the existing football field into a varsity football complex.

Venue #5a

Estimated Size: Approximately 5,324 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$1,325,011.00

Development Costs: \$ 397,503.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$1,722,514.00

Venue #5b

Estimated Size: Approximately 7,406 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$2,484,376.00

Development Costs: \$ 745,313.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$3,229,689.00

Venue #5c

Estimated Size: Approximately 26,910 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$2,899,708.00

Development Costs: \$ 869,912.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$3,769,620.00

Venue #6- Upgrades to Lawrence High School

Overview: During the stakeholders meeting, upgrades were identified to the existing sport venues at Lawrence High School.

Venue #6a- Upgrades required in conjunction with a District Complex

Venue #6b- Upgrades required without a District Complex

Venue #6c- These upgrades are similar to Option #6b except the softball and baseball fields are new stadiums.

Venue #6a

Estimated Size: Approximately 880 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$2,654,489.00

Development Costs: \$ 690,167.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$3,344,656.00

Venue #6b

Estimated Size: Approximately 4,830 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$3,067,187.00

Development Costs: \$ 920,156.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$3,987,343.00

Venue #6c

Estimated Size: Approximately 4,830 gross square feet

Construction Costs: \$4,109,662.00

Development Costs: \$1,232,899.00

Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$5,342,561.00

Venue #7- Upgrades to Haskell Stadium

Overview: In lieu of a District Sports Complex upgrades are required at both high schools and at the Varsity Football venue- Haskell Stadium.
Estimated Size: Approximately 20,438 gross square feet
Construction Costs: \$5,422,817.00
Development Costs: \$2,060,671.00
Total Project Costs (excluding land acquisition): \$7,483,488.00

Potential Funding and Partnership Opportunities

This study reviewed a variety of funding opportunities. The community survey asked respondents to respond to the methods they would support. The top two favored methods of financing were tourism tax and sales tax. Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents are either very supportive (32%) or somewhat supportive (30%) of some increase in tourism tax, and 53% are either very supportive (17%) or somewhat supportive (36%) of some increase in sales tax. In addition to these methods, additional funding opportunities have been identified and explained in this study.

In conjunction with the above funding opportunities, this study reviewed current partnership opportunities. Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between separate agencies, such as government entities, school districts, private business, and non-profit organizations. Partners jointly develop revenue producing facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Regardless of the development of new venues, the PLAY Committee needs to adopt the creation of a Sports Authority to create an atmosphere that would allow any new sports venues and each sports organization long-term successes. These entities (also known as Sports Corporations or Sports Commissions) are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include sports facilities and/or programs that will better the community as a whole and their special interest. This entity would operate any new sports facilities and provide a business approach to these sports venues to ensure the fair and equitable allocation of access, resources and fees among all sports entities. Each sport within the community would organize into one association for their sport and have representation on the Sports Authority board. Typically, the officers for the Sports Authority would be knowledgeable, non-biased at-large members appointed by the PLAY Committee. The Sports Authority creates bylaws to enhance the tournaments, scheduling, pricing, rentals, marketing, operations, maintenance, and capital replacement for the sports venues within the community.

In addition, a sample partnership policy, field use policy, and sponsorship policy documents have been included in the Appendix and is intended to be utilized as guidelines for partnership agreements, facility usage agreements, and sponsorship agreements. For the purpose of example, these samples utilize a parks and recreation agency as one of the partnering entities although the document can be utilized as an example for any type of partnering entity such as the Sports Authority, School District, Sports Associations, etc.

Potential Economic Impact

Economic impacts occur during the construction period and also during operations. The construction phase impacts are short-term effects, whereas the operational phase

impacts long-term effects. Economic impacts are conveyed through measures of direct spending, total output, personal earnings, and employment. The economic and fiscal impacts presented represent the estimated net new impacts associated with a potential ice arena, an indoor fieldhouse and a school district sports complex.

The net present value, in 2007 dollars, of the economic and fiscal impact from operations of the three facilities could approximate \$44.9 million in direct spending, supporting the equivalent of direct 22 full time jobs which could generate \$766,000 annually in personal earnings.

Upon completion, it is estimated that these projects will produce a combined total of approximately \$710,000 in annual fiscal revenues for the City of Lawrence and Douglas County. Over a 20-year period, the projected fiscal revenues will total approximately \$14.2 million. These direct on-site annual fiscal revenues will comprise of sales tax and guest taxes.

Conclusions

Based upon the demand identified by the stakeholders, the interest of the community, and the financial impacts of the proposed venues, we would recommend further development of the following venues:

Venue #2- Indoor Fieldhouse:

This project was the second highest rated venue identified by the public survey and the largest identified indoor need during the stakeholders meeting. The facility has been developed to meet the *current* identified needs of the community- both Parks and Recreation programs and private sports organizations. The facility should be designed so that it may be expanded to meet the growing needs of the sports and recreation community. In addition to meeting the needs of the current programs, this facility would allow additional programming and or open gym to occur at the current neighborhood recreation facilities.

Venue #3- School District Sports Complex:

There are multiple solutions to meet the School District's sports venues needs. The largest identified deficiency was the lack of adequate practice venues that forces the sport to be practiced on the competition venue. This not only deteriorates the competition venue because of the over use, but limits practice times when there are conflicts between games and practices of a different level of that sport. The other identified deficiencies were the lack of amenities at current venues that limited their use, the ability to control spectators, or support the particular sport. The development of this venue would not address the limits in practice facilities, but would address the needs for competition venues. In addition to a District Complex, alternative options to meet the practice and competition needs of the high school teams would need to be developed.

Venue #4- Upgrades to the YSI Complex (as identified in the 1515 Acre Park Masterplan)

The improvements and additions proposed in the 1515 Acre Park Lands Masterplan are consistent with the needs and deficiencies identified during the stakeholders meeting. These improvements would begin to address the needs and concerns of the largest identified sports organization (Kaw Valley Soccer) and the growing needs of youth programming of the Parks and Recreation Department. The implementation of this plan would require further discussion with the State of Kansas in regards to the future development of K-10 (Lawrence Trafficway.) In addition to this phases of the 1515 Acre Park Masterplan, additional phases of the masterplan could be developed that would further enhance the recreation and competitive needs of the community.

Venue #5a- Upgrades to Free State High School (Upgrades required in conjunction with a District Complex)

With the development of a District Sports Complex, the improvements required at FSHS would improve the practice facilities and the non-varsity competition venues. These improvements, while they are focused on the practice and junior varsity competition needs, also address equity issues between sports organizations.

Venue #6- Upgrades to Lawrence High School (Upgrades required in conjunction with a District Complex)

With the development of a District Sports Complex, the improvements required at LHS would improve the practice facilities and the non-varsity competition venues. These improvements begin to provide practice venues on or in near proximity to the LHS campus.

As stated above, the PLAY Committee needs to adopt the creation of a Sports Authority to create an atmosphere that would provide current and new venues and each sports organization long-term successes. Prior to the development of new venues, the entities that operate and own the venues, along with the organizations that organize and operate the individual sports activities need to begin to operate in this method in order to ensure the long-term success of any new venues.

A final recommendation is for the four supporting entities of this study continue the dialogue and develop a long-range plan to address the needs identified in this study.