

Overview:

Three methods were developed to collect data for this study:

- A meeting with competitive and recreational sport 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, when provided;
- A public meeting to report on the initial findings of the stakeholders meeting and to solicit further information and needs. Each participant was asked to respond to a questionnaire about their families use of sports and recreation facilities, level of quality and the needs of the community;
- A random 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.

Stakeholders Meeting:

On November 8, 2006 a meeting was held with competitive and recreational sports stakeholders. 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:
3 = Excellent/State-Of-The-Art/Varsity/Competitive/Tournament
2 = Adequate/Recreational/Local Play
1 = Poor/Sub-standard
4. What improvements are needed at each venue?

The responses of the participants are summarized as follows:

- Practice facilities are limited. Often fields are utilized for both practice and competition and, over time, reduce the quality of the fields;
- Additional or upgraded practice and competition venues are required in baseball, soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, and softball;
- Constant coordination is required and occurs between Parks and Recreation, the School District and private groups to operate these programs;
- Parks and Recreation could not provide the number of programs it does without the school district facilities;
- Schools are providing needed after-school programs that limit the availability of gymnasiums;
- Organized programming limits the availability of the current neighborhood recreation centers for free (open) recreation time;
- Some venues lack amenities for spectators (parking, restrooms, concessions;)

- In addition, some venues lack amenities or location to attract outside tournaments (crowd control, proximity of fields;)
- Most frequented venues for Youth Sports:
 - OUTDOOR: YSI, Broken Arrow and Holcom
 - INDOOR: East Lawrence, Holcom, and Community Building;
- Identified Needs:
 - Additional Softball / Youth Baseball Fields (6-8 fields)
 - Upgrades to outdoor Varsity Sport Venues (Baseball, Softball, Soccer, Football)
 - Upgrades to existing venues (Holcom, YSI, Hobbs)
 - Additional Soccer Fields (4 practice and 4 competition fields)
 - Additional Indoor Basketball / Volleyball Courts (8-12 “cross” courts)

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. Each person in attendance was asked to complete a brief questionnaire. The results of this meeting are as follows:

- 20 people spoke at the meeting about their specific desires and needs. The only sport that was identified at this meeting that had not been previously included was hockey. Two members of the public spoke on their desires for the city to provide this type of facility.
- 68 questionnaires were completed at the meeting and the demographics of the respondents were:
 - 91% Residents of Lawrence
 - 9% Residents of Douglas County
 - 53% Live North of 15th/Bob Billings
 - 47% Live South of 15th/Bob Billings
- Which facilities require the most improvement? (Responses in order of most votes)
 - Haskell
 - Hobbs Park
 - YSI Soccer
 - 4-H Baseball
 - FSHS Baseball
 - YSI Football
 - LHS Baseball
- Is there sufficient practice fields/courts for your organization?
 - 71% yes
 - 6% no
 - 23% do not know
- What capital funding source(s) would you support to build additional venues or renovate existing facilities? (Please check all that you support)
 - 71% Sales Tax
 - 76% Bond Issue
- Have you visited out-of-town facilities that Lawrence should consider building?
 - 93% YES

- 7% NO
- Examples of facilities: Hummer Park, Olathe District Athletics Complex, College Boulevard Athletics Complex, Shawnee Mission Schools, BV School District, Johnson County Facilities, Heritage Park, 3+2 Baseball Park, Pepsi Ice, Field of Dreams, JoCo Softball Complex
- Do you participate in out-of-town tournaments?
 - 80% YES
 - 20% NO
 - Locations: Topeka, Kansas City, Manhattan, Emporia, Olathe, Springfield, Colombia, Wichita, Salina, Hutchinson, St. Louis, Nevada, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Florida

Random Public Survey:

The Play Committee conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey 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 was contracted to provide this survey. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone. In January 2007, 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.

The following is a condensed summary of the survey. The complete summary, prepared by Leisure Vision / ETC is attached.

- **Demographics:**
 - 53% respondents have 1 or 2 persons in household; 47% have 3 or more.
 - 47% of the respondents were male; 53% were female
 - 25% were located in Northwest Lawrence, 19% in Northeast Lawrence, 27% in Southeast Lawrence, and 29% in Southwest Lawrence (as divided by Iowa (east/west) and 15th Street (north/south))
- **Sports Participation:** From a list of 18 sports organizations, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones that their household belongs to for sports activities. The following summarizes key findings:
 - The sports organizations that the highest percentage of respondent households belong to are: Kaw Valley Soccer (10%), Lawrence Parks and Recreation (LP&R) Basketball (8%) and LP&R Adult Softball (7%).
 - When all LP&R activities are combined, 26% of the respondents participate in a Parks and Recreation activity.
- **Outdoor Venues:** From a list of 19 various outdoor sports facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they and members of their household have used, rate the condition of the facilities as either excellent,

good, fair, or poor and feel are most in need of repair. The following summarizes key findings:

- The outdoor sports facilities that the highest percentage of respondent households have used in are: Holcom Baseball/Softball Fields (22%), YSI Soccer Fields (19%), Broken Arrow Park Softball Fields (17%), YSI Baseball Fields (16%) and Clinton Lake Adult Softball Fields (15%).
- The outdoor facilities that the highest percentage of respondents rated as excellent are: Clinton Lake Adult Softball Fields (35%), FSHS Varsity Baseball at FSHS (27%) and YSI Baseball Fields (24%). It should also be noted that 11 of the 19 facilities had over 50% of respondents rate them as either excellent or good.
- Based on the sum of their top three choices, the outdoor sports facilities that respondent households feel are most in need of repair are: LHS Varsity Football at Haskell (8%), Lyons Park Softball Field (7%), YSI Soccer Fields (7%), Hobbs Park Softball Field (7%), and Broken Arrow Park Softball Field. It should also be noted that LHS Varsity Football at Haskell had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choices as the outdoor facility they feel is most in need of repair.
- **Indoor Venues:** From a list of six various indoor sports facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they and members of their household have used, asked to rate the condition of the facilities as either excellent, good, fair, or poor, asked to indicate which they feel are most in need of repair. The following summarizes key findings:
 - The indoor sports facilities that the highest percentage of respondent households have used are: Holcom Park Recreation Center (44%), Community Building (33%) and East Lawrence Recreation Center (32%).
 - The indoor facilities that the highest percentage of respondents rated as excellent are: Langston Hughes Elementary School Basketball Gym (44%) and Free State High School Varsity Basketball and Volleyball Gym (35%). It should also be noted that 4 of the 6 facilities had over 75% of respondents rate them as either excellent or good.
 - Based on the sum of their top three choices, the indoor sports facilities that respondent households feel are most in need of repair are: Community Building (23%), Holcom Park Recreation Center (19%) and East Lawrence Recreation Center (14%). It should also be noted that the Community Building had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choices as the indoor facility they feel is most in need of repair.
- **Lawrence School District Facilities:** The respondents were asked the following questions concerning the facilities of the Lawrence School District:
 - Respondents were asked if they feel that Lawrence School District facilities should be made available to the general public for recreational activities when they are not being scheduled for school programs. The following summarizes key findings:
 - Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondent households feel that Lawrence School District facilities should be made available to the general public when not being used for school programs.
 - Respondents were asked if they support Lawrence High School and Free State High School sharing a new state of the art facility for various varsity sports. The following summarizes key findings:

- Between 66% and 75% of respondents indicated they are in favor of Lawrence High School and Free State High School sharing facilities for each of the six varsity sports.
 - Respondents who support Lawrence High School and Free State High School sharing a new state of the art facility for various sports were then asked if the new facility should be located at one of the high schools or at a neutral site. The following summarizes key findings:
 - For all six varsity sports, between 71% and 80% of respondents who feel that facilities should be shared prefer a neutral location for the shared facilities.
- **Potential New Indoor and Outdoor Venues:** From a list of 13 INDOOR and OUTDOOR sports facilities that could be developed, respondents were asked to indicate all of the facilities that their household would use if they were developed. The following summarizes key findings:
 - The facilities that the highest percentage of respondent households would use if developed are: indoor ice arena (33%), indoor fieldhouse with basketball/volleyball court (28%), and outdoor tennis complex (19%).
- **Support for Tax Sources to Fund New Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities:**
 - Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for four tax sources that could be used to fund the development and operations of new and improved indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The following summarizes key findings:
 - 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.
 - Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 among six various indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The following summarizes key findings:
 - Respondents indicated they would allocate \$24 out of every \$100 to new and expanded outdoor community sports facilities and an additional \$24 to new and expanded indoor community sports facilities. The remaining \$52 were allocated as follows: new school district football stadium for all high school and community use (\$18), new school district soccer stadium for all high schools and community use (\$9), new school district basketball and softball complex for all high schools and community use (\$9), and new school district tennis complex for all high schools and community use. The remaining \$9 was allocated to “other”.
- **Support in an election:** Respondents were asked how they would vote if an election was brought before the public to build and operate the types of indoor and outdoor sports facilities that are most important to them and their household and with the funding sources that they indicated they would support. The following summarizes key findings:
 - Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents would either vote in favor (39%)

or might vote in favor (20%) of building and operating the types of sports facilities that are most important to their households. In addition, 16% of respondents would vote against, and 25% indicated “not sure”.

- Of the 41% of respondents who indicated either “vote against” or “not sure”, 48% indicated they do not support paying any increased taxes for sports facilities, and 42% indicated they need more information.