

Pinellas County Sports Tourism Complex and Events Center
Conceptual Executive Summary
February 14, 2019
DRAFT

I. Overview

Sports is widely considered to be an important part of a community's cultural currency. Amateur sports programming is considered by many a recession resistant, and some would argue recession proof, part of the tourism industry. The sports tourism industry provides direct economic impact through hotel room nights and direct spend, but also is an economic development driver. Sports continues to also be the fastest growing leisure time activity in the United States.

Sports programming is a vital part of the mission of Visit St. Pete Clearwater (VSPC) in driving economic development through the promotion of tourism to Pinellas County, and in particular the generation of hotel room nights. Pinellas County has experienced a steady growth of sports programming despite challenges in not having or controlling amateur sports facilities. VSPC relies exclusively on programming events at local municipal facilities or privately-owned facilities throughout the county. Using local municipalities is burdensome to local governments and creates conflict with local user group displacement. Pinellas County is at a tremendous disadvantage in the market by not having its own sports facilities to control programming and operations.

The ability to attract third party programming while controlling the facility use schedule, plus the opportunity for self-created events would provide a competitive advantage to Pinellas County that does not otherwise exist. There are many communities around the region, state and country that have been recognizing this opportunity for years and have responded resoundingly to these opportunities by building multi-use sports facilities.

*See: **ATTACHMENT 1** for non-exhaustive sample comp set of southeastern United States communities

This executive summary is conceptual and does not present a full disclosure of all factors to be considered in deciding to build sports facilities in the county. What is presented here is an outline of ideas based on several years of VSPC's staff's experience at VSPC and prior experience at other organizations along with preliminary research conducted by staff. The recommendations herein are suggested as a starting point for detailed discussion and research including industry and market experts.

II. Summary of Proposed Facilities and Existing County Sites

- 90 - 100 total acres
 - 75 - 80 acres for fields, parking and infrastructure
 - 15 - 20 acres for events center, parking and infrastructure

*See: **ATTACHMENT 2** for more details

- Possible Locations:
 - Toy Town
 - Sod Farm
 - Airco Golf site

**This is not an exhaustive or vetted list of County sites but are suggested mid-county locations on major roadways in close proximity to both international airports and conducive to supporting regional transportation needs. Privately owned sites might also be considered for viable options.*

III. Business Case/Programming

Pinellas County currently lacks adequately programmable sports venues that keep it competitive in the growing sports tourism market. In addition to lacking programming and operational control of facilities, the third-party organizers are increasingly insisting on single venue models, and Pinellas County currently does not offer sustainable options for that growth.

Construction of the proposed fields and event center would allow for the county to remain competitive in attracting marquee amateur events that currently cannot be hosted due to the lack of contiguous fields, local displacement and available unobstructed indoor space. The proposed fields would provide additional local resources to aid in the burden of residential user group displacement, which occurs with each event hosted. There could also be opportunity for local recreational programming and special events.

The Event Center would not only attract marquee amateur sports events to Pinellas County, but also support programming of local community events i.e. graduations, school sports, meetings and festivals. The Event Center could also house VSPC offices, other County Department offices (ED), and other sports organizations National Governing Body headquarters.

Based upon staff’s evaluation of past and viable future programming, certain sports programming has been identified as strategic business to support the proposed facilities. Additional market research may influence the facilities conceptual development. Other facilities not captured herein may emerge from further market research (e.g. eSports and aquatics).

*See: **ATTACHMENT 3** for detailed programming considerations

IV. Action Steps

- Sports Feasibility Study
 - Programming strategies and goals assessment
 - Existing facilities assessment
 - Historical data
 - Local market assessment (i.e. key demographics, competitors and participation rates)
- Site Feasibility Study
 - Site tours of proposed locations in Pinellas County
 - Comp-set study

- Other major regional sports operations
- Meetings with key regional tourism stakeholders (i.e. transportation, hotel and general infrastructure)
- Project Development Plan
 - Concept
 - Design
 - Construction
- Financial Analysis
 - Project construction cost estimate
 - Project financing – capital project funding program
 - Operating/management business model – county v. outsourced to third party
 - i. Facility operations
 - ii. Programming
 - Operating financial model
 - i. Bed tax support
 - ii. Facility lease and/or rental fees
 - iii. Sponsorships and marketing partnerships

**Other steps necessary for commencing facility operations includes, but are not limited to: business operations, marketing, and staffing plans.*

Prepared by:
Tim Ramsberger, VSPC COO
Sarah Kirchberg, VSPC Director, Sports & Events

Pinellas County Sports & Events Center Comp Set SE United States Only

Outdoor Facilities

1. Wiregrass Ranch Sports Complex (Pasco County)

- Wesley Chapel, FL
- Public-private partnership
- \$44 million
- 224 total acres/7 Fields
- Operator: RADD Sports and P.C.O.T. Department
- Year/Date Open: Fall 2019
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - 128-room Residence Inn Hotel
 - Amphitheater (seating 500 – 1,500)

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact: \$6.5M in year one
- Hotel Nights: 27,000
- Operation/Maintenance: RADD Sports
- Programming: RADD Sports
- Marketing/Promotion: RADD Sports, secondary Pasco Co. OTD

2. Champions Sportsplex of Tampa Bay (Hillsborough County)

- Tampa, FL
- Publicly funded
- \$12.9 million
- 15 multi-purpose fields (222' X 360')
 - 10 multi-purpose fields
 - 4 quad fields
 - 1 championship field
- Operator: Tampa Sports Authority (TSA)
- Year/Date Open: December 2018
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - 330 Parking sports (155 paved/175 grass) w/additional overflow
 - Plaza vendor display area (Approx. 35,000 S.F.)

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact: \$7.3M in year one
- Hotel Nights: 43,800 (year 5)
- Operation/Maintenance: TSA
- Programming: TSA, secondary Tampa Bay Sports Commission (TBSC)
- Marketing/Promotion: TSA and TBSC

3. Collier County Sports Complex

- Naples, FL

- Publicly funded
- \$60 million
- 120 acres/16 fields
 - 1 – three to five though seat covered stadium (December 2019)
 - 8 turf multi-purpose fields (June 2019)
 - 8 baseball/softball fields (Late 2020)
- Operator: Collier County/Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB
- Year/Date Open: June 2019 - 3 Phases

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact:
- Hotel Nights:
- Operation/Maintenance: Sports Fields, LLC (ops); County Parks & Rec (maintenance)
- Programming: Sports Fields, LLC, secondary Collier County CVB
- Marketing/Promotion: Sports Fields, LLC and CVB

4. Panama City Beach Sports Park (Bay County)

- Panama City Beach, FL
- Public-private partnership
- \$23 million (construction)
- 210 acres/13 fields
 - 8 synthetic multi-purpose fields
 - 5 natural turf baseball/softball fields
- Operator: Sports Facility Management (SFM) and Bay County/Panama City Beach CVB
- Year/Date Open: May 2019
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - 1,000+ parking spots

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact: \$13.9M in year one
- Hotel Nights: 37,000
- Operation/Maintenance: SFM
- Programming: SFM, secondary CVB
- Marketing/Promotion: SFM and CVB

5. Boombah Sports Complex (Seminole County)

- Sanford, FL
- Public-private partnership
- \$27 million
- 102 acres/15 baseball/softball fields
 - 9 synthetic turf
 - 6 natural turf
- Operator: Seminole County Sports
- Year/Date Open: May 2016
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - Boombah Naming rights, \$750,000 for 10-years
 - \$100,000 donation by Orlando Sandford Int. Airport

- 3 batting cages
- Bullpens
- Spectator bleachers with shade cover
- 3 Concessions
- Administration building (120 people max capacity)

Financials:

- Economic Impact:
- Hotel Nights:
- Operation/Maintenance:
- Programming:
- Marketing/Promotion:

6. Premier Sports Campus at Lakewood Ranch (Manatee County)

- Lakewood Ranch, FL
- Funding type: Private (2011) Public (2017)
- Project Cost: \$4 million
- 140 acres/22 Multi-purpose fields
- Operator: Manatee County CVB
- Year/Date Open: Early 2011
- Significant Notes:
 - Owned and operated by private company 2011-2017
 - Event support from Manatee and Sarasota Counties
 - Manatee County purchased facility in 2017
 - Recent \$1.7 million in stadium field seating, shade and concessions/restrooms
 - Concessions
 - 8 fields with lights

Financials:

- Economic Impact:
- Hotel Nights:
- Operation/Maintenance: Manatee County CVB and Parks & Rec
- Programming: Manatee County CVB
- Marketing/Promotion: Manatee County CVB

Indoor Facilities

7. Wiregrass Ranch Sports Complex (Pasco County) **Co-located with outdoor facility*

- Wesley Chapel, FL
- Public-Private funding
- \$14 million
- 98,000+ S.F.
- Operator: RADD Sports and Pasco County Office of Tourism
- Year/Date Open: Fall 2019
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - 3,622 S.F. fitness/wellness center
 - 3,300+ combined S.F. auxiliary space

- Offices
- Locker rooms
- Sports medicine room
- Concessions

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact: ~\$10.6 million annually
- Hotel Nights: 18,000
- Operation/Maintenance: RADD Sports
- Programming: RADD Sports
- Marketing/Promotion: RADD Sports, secondary Pasco Co. OTD

8. Haven Field House/Chain O' Lakes Field House (Polk County)

- Winter Haven, FL
- Public-private partnership
- \$22.5 million
- 70,000 S.F. unobstructed space
- Operator: Lakeland Magic and Polk County Sports Marketing
- Year/Date Open: November 2019
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - Second floor exercise area
 - Portable seating

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact:
- Hotel Nights:
- Operation/Maintenance: City of Winter Haven
- Programming: Local programming – City of Winter Haven, Events – City and CVB
- Marketing/Promotion: CVB

9. Rocky Mount Event Center (City of Rocky Mount, NC)

- Rocky Mount, NC
- Public-private partnership
- \$48 million
- 175,000 S.F. event center
 - 73,000 S.F. unobstructed space
 - 15,200 S.F. meeting/auxiliary space
- Operator: Sports Facilities Management (SFM)
- Year/Date Open: October 2018
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - Second story observation deck of main event floor
 - 4 locker rooms
 - 5 team/meeting rooms
 - Break room
 - 2,000 parking spaces
 - Concession with full kitchen & in-house catering services

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact: \$20M annual
- Hotel Nights: 46,000 (year 5)
- Operation/Maintenance: SFM
- Programming: SFM
- Marketing/Promotion:

10. Rock Hill Indoor Athletic Center (City of Rock Hill, SC)

- Rock Hill, SC
- Public-private partnership
- \$25 million
- 170,000 S.F.
 - Obstructed
 - Additional
- Operator: City of Rock Hill
- Year/Date Open: Early Spring 2019
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - Main court – 72,000 S.F. with 700 courtside permanent seats
 - Championship court – 12,500 S.F.
 - a. 1,200 Arena seating
 - b. 1 Main court or 2 side courts
 - 10 Basketball courts
 - 17 Volleyball courts
 - 8,000 S.F. Multipurpose meeting spaces
 - 1,000 S.F. Coaches room
 - Multiple concessions
 - Locker rooms
 - Walking track
 - Full service hotel attached with 200 rooms

Financial Projections:

- Economic Impact: \$13M in year one
- Hotel Nights:
- Operation/Maintenance: City of Rock Hill Parks & Rec
- Programming: City of Rock Hill Tourism
- Marketing/Promotion: City of Rock Hill Tourism

11. Myrtle Beach Sports Center (Horry County, SC)

- Myrtle Beach, SC
- Public-private partnership
- \$13 million
- 100,000 S.F. build
 - 72,000 S.F. unobstructed space
 - 5,500 S.F. meeting/auxiliary space
- Operator: Sports Facilities Management (SFM)
- Year/Date Open: February 2015
- Significant Notes – Comp.
 - 7 team rooms

- 1,500-2,000 seats

Financials:

- Economic Impact: \$31M in year one
- Hotel Nights:
- Operation/Maintenance: SFM
- Programming: SFM
- Marketing/Promotion: SFM and CVB

Pinellas County SportsPlex Facility Desirables

Fields (75 - 80 acres)

1. Softball (≈ 20 acres)
 - a. 6 full-size fields¹
 - b. 1 fastpitch softball 2,000 seat stadium with press box

2. Multi-purpose fields (≈ 24 acres)
 - a. 12 international regulation size²

3. Baseball (≈ 18 acres)
 - a. 6 full-size fields³

4. Sand Courts (1-2 acres)
 - a. 25 volleyball/acre
 - b. 3 soccer/acre

5. Amenities (≈ 7 acres)
 - a. Parking (1,300 spaces)
 - b. Restroom/changing facilities
 - c. Concessions
 - d. Shade structures
 - e. Bleachers, permanent and moveable
 - f. Team benches
 - g. Moveable fences
 - h. Paved trail
 - i. Offices
 - j. Maintenance

Event Center (15 - 20 acres)

1. Unobstructed indoor space⁴ (≈ 4 acres)
 - a. 100,000 sq. ft. main floor
 - b. 50,000 sq. ft. total auxiliary/meeting rooms

2. Amenities (≈ 5 acres)
 - a. Parking (1,200 spaces)
 - b. Contained within Event Center structure
 1. Restroom/changing facilities
 2. Concessions
 3. Bleachers, moveable
 4. Team benches
 5. Offices
 6. Maintenance

¹ Full-size softball is 300' fences to accommodate slow and fast-pitch games

² International (FIFA) regulations, 110-120yd x 70-80yd, accommodate all field sports

³ Centerfield approximately 400'

⁴ 150,000 – 200,000 sq ft, build with 30' ceilings

Pinellas County Sports Fields & Events Center Programming SWOT Considerations

1. Softball
 - a. 6 full-size softball fields¹
 - b. 1 fastpitch softball 1200 seat stadium with press box

2. Multi-purpose fields² (Twelve)
 - a. Adventure/obstacle races
 - b. Archery
 - c. Archery Tag
 - d. Croquet
 - e. Field Hockey
 - f. Fitness Games
 - g. Football – flag, tackle and touch
 - h. Grass Volleyball
 - i. Kickball
 - j. Lacrosse**
 - k. Quidditch
 - l. Rugby
 - m. Soccer**
 - n. Ultimate**

3. Event Center (Unobstructed indoor space³)
 - a. Air Rifle – shooting
 - b. Badminton
 - c. Basketball**
 - d. Boxing
 - e. Cheer/Dance
 - f. Fencing
 - g. Futsal
 - h. Gymnastics
 - i. Handball
 - j. Indoor Archery
 - k. Indoor Soccer
 - l. **Martial Arts** – karate, judo, taekwondo
 - m. Pickleball
 - n. Powerlifting
 - o. Roller Sports – hockey, track
 - p. Table Tennis
 - q. Volleyball**
 - r. Weightlifting
 - s. Wrestling
 - t. Non-competition events – meetings, conventions, graduations, weddings, receptions, special events, social functions

¹ Full-size softball is 300' fences to accommodate slow and fast-pitch games

² Multi-purpose fields sized to FIFA regulations, 110-120yd x 70-80yd, accommodate all field sports

³ 150,000 – 200,000 sq ft, with 30' ceilings (10-12 full-size basketball/20-24 volleyball courts)

Pinellas County Sports Fields & Events Center Programming SWOT Considerations

4. Baseball
 - a. 6 full-size baseball fields⁴

5. Sand Courts
 - a. Volleyball
 - b. Beach Soccer

6. Amenities
 - a. Parking
 - b. Restroom/changing facilities
 - c. Concessions
 - d. Shade structures
 - e. Bleachers, permanent and moveable
 - f. Team benches
 - g. Moveable fences
 - h. Paved trail
 - i. Offices
 - j. Maintenance

7. Other Considerations
 - a. Amateur sports programming is recession resistant but highly competitive
 - b. Pinellas County amateur sports programming strength
 - c. Self-created events (controllable programming)
 - d. Training facilities – MLS, World Cup and Olympic
 - e. Opportunity to collaborate with Olympic NGBs
 - f. County activities
 - g. Possible location for CVB offices
 - h. Collaborative use with Pinellas County Schools (Olympic Sports Day Grades 3, 5 & 7 and graduations)
 - i. Health and wellness initiatives
 - j. Resident activities
 - k. Alleviates recreational displacement
 - l. Population growth creates demand for additional facilities

⁴ Centerfield approximately 400'