



SPRINGFIELD SPORTS COMMISSION SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT



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HUDDLE UP GROUP



OCTOBER 17, 2019

October 17, 2019

Lance Kettering, CSEE
Executive Director
Springfield Sports Commission
815 E. St. Louis Street
Springfield, Missouri 65806

Dear Lance,

Thank you for your efforts on our recent work in Springfield. You, your team, and your community stakeholders have been quite helpful throughout this process. The groundwork we have set with your local leadership will serve as a strong foundation for future sports tourism, venue, and event development efforts in the Springfield area.

Enclosed is the report detailing our findings. The report includes a SWOT analysis, an overview and evaluation of the venue inventory in the Springfield area, and recommendations to enhance the current sports tourism efforts of the Springfield Sports Commission (“SSC”). The report includes recommendations for facility, event, and organizational development enhancements that would likely drive additional overnight stays and economic impact to the Springfield area. Both the SWOT analysis and the recommendations are built on a “Powers of Three” foundation (three main points, and in most cases, no more than three action items for each).

Please let me know if you have questions about the enclosed recommendations leading up to the roll out of the report and community presentations. We are looking forward to our next visit and our follow-up discussions.

Thank you again for all your support throughout this process!

Yours in Sport,



Jon Schmieder
Founder + CEO
Huddle Up Group, LLC



Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Strategic Planning Project Executive Summary

In the opinion of the Huddle Up Group (hereafter the “Consultant” or “Consultant Team”), the Springfield Sports Commission (“SSC”) has a strong opportunity to solidify itself as a significant sports tourism destination in the Midwest. Throughout this process, Springfield’s community leaders showed a desire to grow sports tourism in the region and to also for the SSC to become more engaged with the area’s stakeholders. Both of these characteristics are positive signs that the SSC is ready to build upon its long history and move ahead to even better things in the future.

This strategic planning project was conducted with the input of four members of the Consultant Team and included a 6-step process, including, but not limited to the following: 50 stakeholder meetings with 31 of those by phone, multiple market visits including tours of 20 sites encompassing 32 different sports venues, a town hall meeting with over 40 of the area’s sports tourism leaders, benchmarking against several high performing sports commissions both regionally and nationally, and finally a rating of Springfield and the SSC through the Sports Tourism Index™ (a proprietary tool developed by the Huddle Up Group).

The enclosed report offers a SWOT analysis and recommendations for both short and long-term execution. This document offers depth on each recommendation along with back up research and benchmarks that support each of the suggestions made by the Consultant Team. For each recommendation, action items are provided and a summary of all action items are provided in the appendices. In summary, there are three (3) primary and three (3) secondary recommendations:

Primary (Near Term)

1. Enhance the SSC’s organizational structure.
2. Strengthen stakeholder relationships.
3. Improve messaging and marketing efforts locally and nationally.

Secondary (Longer Term)

1. Collaborate to identify specific venue enhancement and development opportunities.
2. Develop a sustainable venue funding source.
3. The Consultant Team’s opinion on what specific facilities need to be upgraded or could be newly developed.

In addition, the scope of work for the SSC included an analysis on the potential impact of one new venue development option (an indoor facility). While an outline of this opportunity is noted in this report, the full economic impact analysis is under different cover.

The opportunity at hand is to put in place an enriched sports tourism support system that engages all stakeholders throughout the Springfield region that will drive more economic development and also improve opportunities for community user groups. Through a community-wide effort, the SSC can drive increased economic activity through sport in the form of additional overnight stays, which will provide more lodging and sales tax revenues to the region year over year. With a few key adjustments, the SSC can lead this charge on behalf of the Springfield community for the next decade and beyond.



Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Strategic Planning Project Synopsis and Recommendations

The sports tourism industry has grown consistently over the past 20 years. Studies show that the grass roots portion of this market is worth more than \$14 billion annually to the domestic economy. Whether you use the National Recreation and Park Association spending estimate (\$85 per person per day), the 2011 National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) study (\$208 per person per day), or the Destinations International (DI) economic impact calculator, the value of this niche market is palpable.

Add to this industry growth, the increased popularity of soccer, lacrosse, and other emerging sports (examples: Bicycle Moto Cross or BMX, pickleball, quidditch, rugby, e-gaming and ultimate), the opportunity for the continuing expansion of economic development through sports tourism is tangible.

Throughout the research process, it became apparent to the Consultant Team that there is an opportunity for the Springfield Sports Commission (“SSC”) to enhance its presence in the sports tourism market. The key moving forward is for community stakeholders to work together in building and managing an expanded sports tourism marketing program, and to focus political capital on building relationships locally that can deliver upon the sports tourism mission of the SSC on a recurring basis from one year to the next. Through the execution of a strategic and targeted game plan, the SSC will enhance its position regionally as a player in the sports tourism and events industry.

Methodology

The Huddle Up Group, LLC (“Consultant” or “Consultant Team”) conducted an audit on the current sports tourism work of the SSC, and an analysis of the area’s sporting venues. The audit included two market visits, over 50 in-person meetings with multiple community groups and key stakeholders, and 31 phone interviews. Stakeholders that were engaged included the SSC staff, community leaders, venue managers, athletic administrators, event owners, hospitality industry executives, and additional targets that were identified by the SSC. The Consultant Team also visited 20 sites encompassing over 32 existing sports and entertainment facilities, several of which have multiple sports and/or special event uses. These facilities are listed below, and also in Appendix E, along with potential enhancements/improvements that could be made to each venue.

- Cooper Sports Complex
- Cooper Tennis Complex
- Davis House Archery
- Drury University
 - O’Reilly Family Event Center
 - Weiser Gym
 - Harrison Stadium
 - Breech Pool



- Ewing Sports Complex (Youth BS)
- Evangel University
 - Ashcroft Center
 - Football Field
- Hammons Field (AA-BS)
- JFK Stadium (FB, SO & TF)
- Jordan Valley Ice Rink
- Killian Complex and Softball Stadium
- Lake Country Soccer Fields
- Lake Country Soccer Indoor Facility
- Meador Park & Meador Sports Complex (BS, SB, SW, TN)
- Missouri State University
 - JQH Arena
 - Hammons Student Center
 - Hammons Student Center Pool
 - Betty & Bobby Allison South (Track & Soccer)
 - Betty & Bobby Allison North (Lacrosse & Field Hockey)
 - Betty & Bobby Allison Sand Volleyball Complex
 - Plaster Stadium
- Ozark Empire Fairgrounds and Events Center (“EPlex”)
- Spokes BMX
- Springfield Expo Center
- The Clubhouse Volleyball (BK & VB)
- The FieldHouse (BK & VB)
- US Baseball Park

The Consultants reviewed several historical and internal documents including, but not limited to, the following:

- Facility Funding Options Document
- Springfield Lodging Tax Distribution
- Springfield Sports Tourism Index™ Report
- Springfield Vision 20/20 Comprehensive Plan Common Threads Document
- SSC Board of Directors Roster
- SSC Awards Program
- SSC Budget 2018-2019
- SSC Budget 2019-2020
- SSC Bylaws
- SSC Outline on Staff Structure, Event Assistance Program, Mission Statement, Event Summaries, and SSC Marketing Plan.
- SSC Treasurer’s Report YE June 30, 2018
- SSC Treasurer’s Report YE June 30, 2019
- SSC-CVB Contract



The audit was led by Huddle Up Group Founder + CEO, Jon Schmieder (Phoenix, AZ), Principal, Gary Alexander (Nashville, TN), and Vince Trinidad (Tulsa, OK) of Bobcat Strategies LLC. The audit focused on four (4) themes:

1. Facilities inventory and quality.
2. National best practices for sports tourism and events marketing with similar market characteristics.
3. Identification of the ideal structure for SSC's sports tourism efforts to be sustainable and effective into the future.
4. Collaboration opportunities that would enhance the SSC's overall tourism results.

Discussions were held around national best practices in these theme areas and focus was given to applications for the SSC. The intent of this process was to create community support for the SSC's increased sports tourism marketing and venue enrichment efforts by giving local stakeholders a voice, and to foster a teamwork mentality throughout Springfield.

The Consultant Team took the results from the phone and in-person interviews, as well as the data from the site visits to the Springfield area, then overlaid national best practices to develop and deliver the enclosed recommendations. These recommendations are intended to spark a dialog within the community's leadership hierarchy in order to build a framework for next steps on an expanded sports tourism marketing effort.

The recommendations presented here are based upon what the Consultant Team believes are six (6) universal truths about the Springfield area's tourism and sports market position:

1. There is support for an enhanced sports tourism effort in Springfield.
2. Historically, SSC has done a good job of driving overnight stays through the sports travel and tournament market.
3. The community does not possess an indoor "anchor" venue from which to draw significant overnight stays to the destination.
4. Many of the existing facilities that could host significant tournaments are typically unavailable due to their existing tenants and programs (example: parks and recreation controlled facilities, colleges and universities in the area).
5. With or without a new convention center, SSC must build a sustainable sports tourism model that can drive increased visitation in the near term.
6. Collaboration opportunities exist with local partners that can align with SSC's mission to expand its sports tourism impact.



Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Strategic Planning Project SWOT Analysis

It is the opinion of the Huddle Up Group (“Consultant” or “Consultant Team”) that there is an opportunity to grow sports tourism in Springfield. Through our extensive phone interviews, review of numerous historical documents, conversations with your local event promoters and venue managers, and our knowledge of the national marketplace, we believe there is room for the Springfield Sports Commission (“SSC”) to deliver additional overnight stays to the destination through sports and events. An expanded sports tourism effort will lead to increased economic development and will positively impact the community over time.

In a market the size of Springfield, with its numerous positive attributes, it is critical that grass roots sports tourism and special events serve as tourism drivers for the local economy. Keeping grass roots sports tourism at the forefront of the SSC’s objectives, below is a SWOT analysis of the current sports tourism efforts of the SSC. Each SWOT item features three key issues with no more than three action items for each (“Powers of Three”).

Strengths

1. Leadership – Springfield has a solid mix of community leadership and the SSC staff is well respected locally. Dating back to the partnership between the parks department and the CVB to launch the SSC, there is a positive teamwork environment in Springfield that can be built upon. Several survey respondents shared that they believed the SSC staff was collaborative, responsive, and trying to do a lot with their limited resources. The SSC’s stakeholders unilaterally support an increased emphasis on sports tourism and events marketing in the future. Any new development of the sports tourism market will require the SSC to find ways to continue to partner with the community’s top organizations to move towards becoming the go to sports tourism entity in the region.
2. Destination Offering – Springfield offers event rights holders and visiting teams a hospitable and inviting family friendly community that is well situated to host state, regional, and select national level tournaments. The destination is safe, affordable, and geographically well positioned. Springfield has a solid inventory of sports market friendly hotels, an excellent level of team friendly restaurants, and a good number of attractions in the area (examples: Bass Pro Shop and Wonders of Wildlife). While air lift can present some challenges, Springfield’s location is convenient to access to a large regional drive market. All of these factors make Springfield a viable host site for tournaments and special events.
3. Track Record – Springfield has been an active sports tourism destination for several years. There are multiple organizations that have contributed to a history of hosting national and regional championships (examples: Missouri Valley USTA, Lake Country Soccer, and area colleges and high schools among others). SSC has longstanding relationships with several event rights holders that host annual events in the market (examples: MSHSAA, National Christian HomeSchool Basketball) as well as some that have hosted large national championships that could return in the future (USA BMX).



SSC has the support of the state tourism office as well as its area stakeholders, which will allow for the continuation of sports tourism growth in Springfield.

Weaknesses

1. Facility Challenges – While the Springfield area has a good inventory of outdoor venues to use in attracting marquee tournaments and events, the destination has very few indoor facilities that can be used to attract tournament play and their related tourism dollars. Nearly all of the indoor facilities toured by the Consultant Team are adequate for community use but are not equipped to host regional or national level tournaments. Further, it is unlikely that even with significant enhancements, that these facilities would be of national tournament quality (see Appendix E). The venue challenges in Springfield include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Lack of an Indoor “Anchor” Facility – Springfield and the surrounding area have a very limited inventory of indoor venues that would be considered an “anchor facility,” meaning a facility that has enough fields/courts on its own to host major regional or national events. In addition, the public facilities visited by the Consultant Team were found to be in challenging condition, many in remote areas far from host hotels and attractions, and in general, not ready to host national level tournaments. In today’s sports tourism landscape, event rights holders are seeking out communities that have these anchor venues to host their events. Without strong indoor options, Springfield will be fighting an uphill battle against communities with bigger and better venues. Without a new indoor facility on the drawing board, the SSC will have to focus its marketing efforts on the current outdoor venues that are available. Below is benchmarking information from a 2018 Huddle Up Group survey of over 300 event rights holders, outlining their ideal facility requirements.

Facility Type	Anchor	Tournament Friendly
Flat Fields	Minimum 16 fields	8-15 fields
Pool	50m/8-10 lanes with diving well	25m with diving well
Diamonds	Minimum 12 fields	8-11 fields
Hardwood Courts	Minimum 8 Basketball/16 Volleyball	4 Basketball/8 Volleyball
Indoor Track	200 meter/6 lanes/banked	200 meter/6 lanes

b. Accessibility – The area has a number of high schools and colleges that possess facilities that could be part of the sports tourism game plan in Springfield. However, as is the case with most scholastic settings, these facilities are often



unavailable to the SSC due to use by their own internal user groups. A strategic discussion with each of the schools in the area should be had to find spots in the calendar where both the schools and the hospitality community could benefit. That is, where both sports tourism and the local schools can meet to mutually benefit Springfield. Examples of this would include expanding the relationships with Missouri State University, Drury University, Evangel University, and the area high schools. Some of these local schools have hosted championships in the past and could benefit from hosting even more events in the future.

- c. Calendars – Currently SSC does not have the same level of access to all area venue calendars. The SSC staff is tasked with booking events that drive increased tourism revenues to the area (preferably in off-peak and shoulder seasons). In order to achieve maximum impact, the SSC staff needs to be able to consistently review where the community’s venues have open dates and then attempt to book new events in those open windows. In addition, the SSC would ideally have a “Favored Nation Status” at all area venues, where the SSC would have priority for booking the facilities. This would include venues with relatively short booking windows such as the various parks and recreation departments. Some form of a regularly shared venue calendar/process would be advantageous for the SSC staff going forward.
2. Funding – At this time, the SSC’s sports effort isn’t adequately funded versus the top sports tourism organizations across the country. Most of Springfield’s competitors are operating with far more resources in the three key operational areas (funding, human capital, and physical venues). Drastic staff additions are not necessary, however a small enhancement to the staff in the area of servicing the SSCs sports clientele would likely have positive returns very quickly. In addition, a sustainable funding model for developing facilities and also attracting more events to the community is vital to the future growth of the sports tourism efforts in Springfield. The current event assistance program is vastly underfunded (\$34,500 annually) versus most all of the top sport tourism organizations in the region, such as Joplin (\$130,000), Branson (\$180,000), Oklahoma City (\$500,000), and Tulsa (\$1.2M). While some of the destinations noted in Appendix F are larger than the Springfield area, these examples offer a guide to what resources may be needed to continue to successfully compete in the sports travel market.

Special Note: The SSC regularly receives support from the CVB for specific events (such as state high school basketball and home school basketball), support services in the form of office space/supplies and staffing, fundraising support for event sponsorships, and funding for a portion of a SSC staff position. For the purposes of this report, these contributions have not been included as the focus of this study is on the SSC as a lone entity. However it is duly noted here that there are additional resources that are made available to the SSC through management by the CVB.



3. Organizational Structure – Three (3) potential challenges are present with SSC’s current structure relating to sports tourism:
 - a. Multiple Masters – The current team has two masters, the CVB and the Board of Directors. To date there has not been any friction between the two entities, however there could be a time where one of the two governing factions wants to go in one direction and the other does not. This could put the staff in a precarious position and make moving forward on key initiatives challenging.
 - b. Human Capital – Noted previously in this report, the SSC is lacking the staffing support it needs to compete with the top sports tourism organizations in the region. The addition of a junior level sports event coordinator would fill an important gap the SSC is missing today.
 - c. Bylaws and Organizational Structure – The SSC’s current bylaws are in need of an overhaul. Typical of an organization that is 20-plus years old, the bylaws have been pieced together over time to account for various situations as they have arisen. In addition, there are elements within the bylaws that could prove challenging should the organization undergo an IRS audit. As one example, there is a note in the “purpose” section of the bylaws that identifies professional sporting events as an area of interest. While the SSC is a 501(c)6 non-profit, the IRS tax code for 501(c)3 organizations specifically mentions amateur sports and not professional ones. Most all sports commissions are 501(c)3 organizations, which is something the SSC should evaluate and potential reclassify to in the future. Additional issues with the bylaws and structure of the SSC could include the following:
 - i. The mission/purpose section of the bylaws do not match the mission/purpose section on the organization’s most recent tax returns.
 - ii. Dedicating board seats to top-tier sponsors.
 - iii. The limiting number of members allowed to serve on the Board of Directors (17 plus any Platinum members). This could make it difficult to engage potential new members as 10 of the 17 positions are perpetual in nature. Adding additional seats (example: “up to 25 members”) would allow for additional stakeholder groups to be represented that may not be at the SSC table today.
 - iv. Several sections of the bylaws need basic updates to reflect the current business climate, such as the mention of “cablegrams” and methods to notify Directors of upcoming meetings.
 - v. The manner of voting section could be construed as contradictory to the establishment of a quorum. Additionally, the bylaws are missing a section specific to what percentage of “yeas” versus “nays” constitutes an action by the Board. One would assume 51% however it’s not specifically

outlined in the current bylaws.

- vi. The mention of members being automatically eligible to serve on an Advisory Board.
- vii. The section covering the Executive Director and the relationship with the CVB may not match up with the current relationship between the SSC and the CVB.
- viii. Term limits should be formally addressed. The most common term limits include two terms of three years each before a member must roll off the board.

Should a review of the bylaws be conducted, it is likely that an additional review of the Articles of Incorporation run concurrently.

Opportunities

1. Community Engagement – Through an enhanced sports tourism program, the SSC will have a great opportunity to significantly grow its connection to the community. Specifically, the SSC can use this enhanced sports tourism initiative to galvanize area leaders in the following ways:
 - Education – Sports tourism has the potential to make a significant positive impact on the Springfield marketplace. The Consultant Team believes there is a need for both internal and external education on the historical and future potential value of sports tourism to the area. In the minds of the Consultants, the hospitality community and Springfield area leaders could all benefit from a summary on the overall positive impact sports related business brings to the area today, and how the SSC's expanded sports marketing effort will benefit the community in the future.
 - Stakeholder Engagement – Many high-level decision makers interviewed were unable to articulate the impact sports tourism has on the area. By leading a collective conversation around sports tourism that will focus stakeholders on the building blocks for success (examples: destination marketing, event incubation/creation, and venue development/enhancement), the SSC will be able to better engage community leaders throughout Springfield. There is more on this topic in the recommendation section of this document.
 - Expanded Partnerships – From information gathered through the research process, the Consultant Team believes there is strong support from community leaders to expand the sports tourism effort across the region. Specifically, this includes an increased engagement of the area's event promoters, the area colleges, venue managers, elected officials, parks and recreation directors, and the hospitality community at large. In addition, there are several large national corporations headquartered in the Springfield area (such as O'Reilly Auto Parts, PRIME



Trucking, and Bass Pro Shops) that could provide support to the SSC's expanding vision through SSC membership, event sponsorship, or via general contributions not tied to an event or program. Increased collaboration focused on event hosting, event creation, and venue enrichment with these stakeholders will lead to positive results in economic development through the hosting of more sports tournaments and special events.

2. Created/Owned Events – Springfield has a strong collection of successful locally based event promoters that have a track record of success creating events. There is likely more opportunity to expand this effort to drive more overnight stays through these locally owned and operated competitions. Where possible, these success stories should be replicated to increase the inventory of locally created events that would in turn, deliver increased overnight stays in Springfield. Created (or locally “incubated”) events are becoming more and more popular among destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and sports commissions. Created events can help build a long-term presence that fill the calendar needs of the local hospitality industry, and drive business to the area year over year. Created events allow the managing entity (such as a local promoter in partnership with SSC) to control not only where they fall on the calendar to maximize their impact, but also to take advantage of the profits from successful events.
3. New/Enhanced Facilities – Though there is currently no sustainable funding source dedicated to facility enhancement and/or development, this is an area of great long-term opportunity for the SSC.

Threats

1. Aging Facilities – In most cases, Springfield is behind its regional competitors in regard to facilities. Further, many of the facilities that do exist are aging and in need of upgrades. If this issue goes unchecked, it will not be long before some of the events that have historically been held in Springfield may look for better venues elsewhere. It is important that the SSC make the area's elected officials aware of the value of sports tourism and what is at stake (in lost economic impact and tourism dollars) that could occur if investment isn't made into facility infrastructure.
2. Community Alignment – The long-term success of any tourism program for Springfield will depend on the engagement of partners throughout the region. A unified and successful tourism effort will require that resources and community support be offered by numerous stakeholders in the area (examples: various county parks directors, elected officials, venue owners/managers, various sports clubs, hospitality leaders, area colleges, and the corporate community). Without a unified effort, it will be difficult to make a significant tourism impact on Springfield and the adjoining jurisdictions. Achieving a state of collaboration throughout the region will be mission critical going forward if progress is to be made in the sports tourism and events marketplace.



3. Regional Competition – There are several competitors in Springfield’s geographic region that are well established in the national sports tourism space (see Appendix C). The high level of established competition from nearby communities is only the beginning (most notably Branson, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City). There are several communities in the region that are currently expanding their sports tourism efforts, including Fayetteville, Little Rock, Columbia, Norman, and Lawrence. This list also doesn’t consider Kansas City and St. Louis, both of whom have long-standing and nationally recognized sports commissions. This growing competition makes it more difficult each day for Springfield to remain relevant locally, regionally, and nationally. While Springfield may not want to be “like” some of these communities, their presence in the sports tourism space will require SSC to pick its proverbial spots and be smart about what its focus areas become with the very limited resources it has to work with today.

Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Strategic Planning Project Recommendations

The enclosed game plan includes recommendations for three (3) primary focus areas and two (2) secondary concepts for future consideration. The primary areas should be executed upon in the short-term, regardless of new resource acquisition or if a venue development/enhancement program is put in place. **The secondary recommendations are every bit as critical as the primary ones, however, will likely take more time and strategic planning to bring to fruition.**

Primary Recommendation Areas (Near Term)

1. Enhanced Organizational Structure
2. Strengthen Relationships
3. Messaging and Marketing Platforms

Secondary Recommendation Areas (Longer Term)

1. Venue Enrichment/Development
2. Venue Funding Model
3. Specific Venue Opportunities

Primary Recommendations

Primary Recommendation #1: Enhanced Organizational Structure

There is an opportunity for the SSC to increase its tourism impact on the community, inclusive of the sports and special events market. In order to continue engaging the entire community in a meaningful way, the Consultant Team recommends four (4) action items to strengthen the SSC internally to help advance the sports tourism effort:



1. Board Development – There are several small changes that can be made to strengthen the board, and thusly, the SSC in the long-term:
 - Bylaws – Noted in the SWOT analysis within this document, there are several areas that should be addressed within the bylaws. The Consultant Team suggest a full bylaws review and revamp be undertaken in the immediate future in order to set the SSC up for success in 2020 and beyond.
 - Community Reach – The current board structure has a limited number of at large members that can potentially serve. Within the bylaws review noted above, the Consultant Team recommends the SSC expand the number of board seats for at large members and specifically address the following gaps in the current board membership:
 - Diversity – There is a need to diversify the demographic makeup of the current board membership.
 - Corporate Community – Given the presence of several national headquarters in Springfield (examples: O’Reilly Auto Parts, PRIME Trucking, Bass Pro Shops), there is an opportunity to bring on additional board members that represent these companies. There is also an opportunity to expand the presence of for-profit business leaders in the community that could add great value to the SSC.
 - Membership Program – The current membership program is extensive in number (over 110 members), however the management of such a program can be administratively challenging for a small staff. The program’s marketing, value proposition, and management should all be evaluated going forward.
2. Elevating Sports – The current sports staff is focused largely on sales to drive overnight stays to the Springfield area. The top sports tourism organizations across the country focus on far more than the transactional elements of the industry. Best in class sports tourism organizations drive the facility development conversation, build bridges between community leaders, educate elected officials on the importance of sports tourism, facilitate event creation conversations with local promoters/clubs, and yes they sell their communities as a desirable place to host events. The SSC’s current staffing structure in the sports department won’t likely provide the opportunity for the SSC team to lead these types of big picture initiatives, as the small team is largely tasked with landing (selling) events and then also supporting them on game day.
3. Enhancement of Existing Staff/Program – Related to item #2 above, the top sports tourism organizations in the country have at least one dedicated sports events coordinator (or “services”) position that supports the sales team. The primary role of these sports service professionals is to support their clients on game day and allow them to focus on everything “inside the lines.” If the rights holder clients can focus on producing a top



shelf event and the host (SSC) can help with all the non-tournament elements “outside the lines” the environment exists for the execution of a superior event. In the near term, the SSC could benefit from the addition of a sports event coordinator position within the sports department. This person would ideally have sports event operations experience and on game day would be at the venue supporting SSC’s clients in putting on quality competitions. This would also provide more time for the Executive Director to be more externally facing with community stakeholders and event rights holders on a day-to-day basis. Examples of strong sports tourism destinations that have forged this pathway would include Virginia Beach, Louisville, Tulsa, and Durham.

4. **Strengthen the Grant Program** – In the days of increased oversight of public funds (such as the use of hotel occupancy tax dollars), it is important to systematically allocate any grant funds to achieve maximum return. This is especially true when working with local promoters on the creation of new event assets. The SSC’s current grant program, formally called the “Event Assistance Request Program”, is vastly underfunded versus the higher performing sports commissions in the industry. While the CVB has an event funding program that is strong and sustainable, the SSC doesn’t have a significant funding mechanism for its own grant program without the support of the CVB. In Missouri, similar sized markets such as Joplin and Branson have much larger incentive budgets to lure events and to support their local promoters. The larger players in the region (Tulsa, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Kansas City) also have significant budgets to dip into when they need to close a deal. In order to grow sports tourism in Springfield it is imperative that the SSC find a funding source to increase the resources available for attracting and supporting events.

Action Items: Revamp the board to increase community impact and reach. Strengthen the organization with improved governance (bylaws) and resources (both human and financial). Revisit the membership program and corporate engagement. Add a dedicated sports events coordinator position. Identify a funding source to enhance the grant/incentive program.

Primary Recommendation #2: Strengthen Relationships

Within the daily operations of the SSC sports team, there are two (2) very important stakeholder groups that the Consultant Team believe would benefit from additional (and intentional) outreach on an ongoing basis:

1. **Area Event Owners/Promoters** – There are several organizations in Springfield that have a long history of executing room night driving events. It is in the best interest for the SSC to work in a unified manner to help these entities grow their current events and to support them in building new assets where these events align with the SSC’s tourism based mission. Specifically, enhancing the grant fund to support these organizations would be a positive step. Also, creating an ongoing outreach program directed at these groups would offer more consistency in communications and would build relationship bridges that can be activated upon in the future (example: more consistent outreach to the USTA staff).



2. Area Colleges and Universities – During the research process it became apparent to the Consultant Team that the colleges and universities in the Springfield area have venue assets that are needed to host high profile national events. At the same time, some of these institutions participate more regularly with the SSC on events and are more open access with their facilities than others. In addition, some of the smaller schools have limited staff infrastructure and can get overextended relatively easily. For the larger schools it would be helpful for the SSC sports staff to make it a point to regularly reach out to the key contact at these schools in an effort to keep the dialog open for future event hosting opportunities. For the smaller schools there is an additional opportunity to potentially plant SSC sports interns in their athletic departments to help them facilitate their events when thrust into hosting on campus. This program would help augment the small staffs at these schools and would help SSC build stronger partnerships with these institutions that could lead to more event hosting conversations in the future. Lastly, the creation of a sports-specific visitors guide for teams coming to compete against Springfield area schools (both high school and college) could help capture room nights that at this time are transient in nature.

Action Items: Put in place a consistent partner outreach program such as the “4 Touch Rule.” Set partnership meetings with each of the area schools to trial balloon the intern concept and other ideas that would elevate the partnership with SSC. Create a visitors guide for teams coming to compete in Springfield at the high school or college levels.

Primary Recommendation #3: Messaging and Marketing Platforms

Throughout the research process, the Consultant Team encountered instances where stakeholders (both internal and external) were unsure of the historical importance of sports tourism on Springfield. While this is very common in markets the size of Springfield, there is a good amount of education that needs to take place in the future. The Consultant Team recommends three (3) action items to help improve SSC’s messaging to both internal and external stakeholders:

1. Local Communications – SSC and its stakeholders, elected officials, and the hospitality community at large in Springfield would be well served by a session on the value sports tourism brings to the area today, and what it could drive to the area in the future. To deliver upon this message, the Consultant Team recommends SSC undertake the following actions:
 - a. Value Proposition – Create an education campaign to roll out both internally and externally. This quarterly road show would be presented in a 60-minute coffee workshop format. SSC sports staff would present on the value of sports tourism to the region, and the opportunities available to Springfield in the sports and events marketplace. Presentations should be made to various community groups (examples: elected officials, chamber leadership, civic clubs, high school and collegiate athletic directors, hoteliers, restaurant association, sports venue managers, event owners, etc.). It is important to reiterate that the SSC staff utilize



outside supporters (examples: SSC Board members, event rights holders when in town) as partners in these meetings in order to give these presentations third party validation.

- b. Create Corporate/Hospitality “Forums” – Where the education campaign noted above is aimed at community groups, the SSC staff should also develop a channel to educate and engage the corporate communities in Springfield. The Consultants recommend the creation of a quarterly “6&6 Lunch”. These lunches employ six existing stakeholders (example: an SSC Board member) to each invite one guest from the business community (six stakeholders, six guests, “6 & 6”) to attend an informative luncheon on the importance of tourism, sports and events, and the work of SSC in the sports tourism industry today, and the opportunity for partnership involvement.
2. Targeted Outreach – Most CVBs/DMOs and sports commissions work to generate business by attending travel industry conferences, conducting sales trips, and coordinating familiarization (FAM) tours. SSC has traditionally attended a handful of the major trade shows, some of the sport specific conferences, and has conducted sales missions and special client events with its Show Me Missouri Sports partners. While the SSC staff should attend trade shows where necessary for professional development purposes (examples: NASC Symposium, 4S Summit) as well as the sports specific conferences that are directly tied to current or future business, the Consultant Team recommends that the fall conferences be re-evaluated for 2020 and beyond. There may be an opportunity to reallocate some of these conference and travel funds to launch locally created event products in partnership with SSC’s local promoters. Finally, when attending these national conferences, where possible the SSC should engage elected officials, community leaders, and venue partners in this process, and budget for the costs of travel for one individual to attend each conference or special event where potential partners can be sought out and secured.
3. Trumpet Successes – In all cases where the SSC is involved in the production of an event, the organization should make it a priority to promote the community impact of the competition/tournament. This promotion should be sent out via traditional and also social media outlets, to both media and non-media audiences. The information should include economic impact data derived from the aforementioned DI tool. It is important that in this process SSC steer clear of the perception of taking credit for the event in total, and that the event rights holder or local promoter be included in the promotion process throughout. Further, an ROI should be calculated on the tourism spending return for every marketing dollar spent by SSC (most destination marketing organizations, or DMOs, aspire for a 9-to-1 or better return on each dollar invested in tourism development).

Action Items: Create collateral materials for use at the coffee workshops, schedule one (1) coffee workshop for 2019, schedule one (1) “6 & 6” luncheon for 2019. Identify 2-3 outlets to publicize success in the sports tourism markets, and who will be responsible for messaging to/through those outlets on a regular basis.



Secondary Recommendations

In the near term, SSC will have to grow the sports tourism market with the assets it currently has available to them (financial, physical, and human capital). The natural progression of success would include facility enhancement and development to improve the destination offering and drive more overnight stays through sports. Without a large inventory of “anchor facilities”, and a small handful of venues that can be improved to become more significant tourism drivers, a longer-term vision will need to be placed on venue development for Springfield. Looking at the long-term sports tourism needs of the region, the destination will need to create a structure to effectively leverage opportunities as they arise, and also identify a funding source to use to draw additional investment in new product development (sports venues) and the enhancement of existing facilities.

Secondary Recommendation #1: Venue Enrichment/Development

The Springfield area has several tournament friendly facilities, however very few “anchor” venues that can stand on its own in hosting larger national level events. In addition, without a sizeable convention space that is sports friendly, the ability to drive overnight stays through hosting tournaments in the shoulder and off-peak seasons is challenging. Given these issues, in order to change that paradigm in the future, the SSC and its partners will have to formulate a facility development and enhancement game plan and identify sustainable funding sources to leverage throughout this process. The key steps and recommended projects are noted below.

1. Venue Enrichment/Development – Noted previously in this report, venue development and enhancement are critical to the long-term success for Springfield as a community. For the SSC to positively impact the area’s grass roots sports events community as well as its future sports tourism work, the organization and its partners must identify a funding mechanism for venue enhancement and development projects (see below). This would include special projects needed to consistently land major regional and national tournaments for the area, and to enhance the local user group’s league and recreational play. The current needs for this fund would include, but are not limited to, the following projects:
 - a. Anchor Venue Inventory – The Springfield area currently has a limited supply of “anchor” venues that could be used to drive tourism to the destination. Many of Springfield’s regional competitors have significant indoor and outdoor multi-use sports facilities, including but not limited to the following:
 - Hy-Vee Arena (Kansas City, MO)
 - Overland Park Soccer Complex (Overland Park, KS)
 - Wyandotte Sporting Fields (Kansas City, KS)
 - SportPort International (Maryland Heights, MO)



In addition, there are a few major national players/destinations that likely compete with Springfield on some level that also have thriving sports facilities. These destinations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Grand Park (Westfield, IN)
 - Elizabethtown Sports Complex (Elizabethtown, KY)
 - The Star (Frisco, TX)
 - Toyota Soccer Center (Frisco, TX)
 - Dick's Sporting Goods Park (Denver, CO)
 - Aurora Sports Complex (Aurora, CO)
 - Crossplex (Birmingham, AL)
 - Hoover Metplex (Hoover, AL)
 - Myrtle Beach Sports Center (Myrtle Beach, SC)
 - Rocky Mount Events Center (Rocky Mount, NC)
 - National Sports Center (Blaine, MN)
 - Champions Center (Appleton, WI)
 - Virginia Beach Sports Center (Virginia Beach, VA)
- b. Venue Master Plan – Currently, there is not a region-wide facility master plan for the entire community. While some of SSC's stakeholders have master plans or facility development/enhancement concepts for their own organizations (examples: parks and recreation, individual cities, counties, universities/colleges), there isn't a unified plan that traverses the entire community.
- c. Facilities Guide Development – Similar to the regional master plan issue noted above, the Springfield area doesn't have a universal facilities guide with which to promote the area to event rights holders. As an example, a comprehensive venue guide would include the soccer complexes, colleges and universities, private facilities, and other venues in the region that are used to host events. The current venue guide lives online and isn't inclusive of the key information (such as venue specs) that a rights holder would want to review.

d. Indoor Venues – Springfield is largely void of larger indoor spaces that can be used for tournament play. The existing facilities are highly specialized or small in number of playing surfaces in one location (example: most of the colleges in the area have one playable wood surface, and no more than three, and the private indoor facilities have four basketball courts or less). In addition, the current Expo building, while it does have some tournament friendly qualities, only has 45,000 square feet of open span space. This would limit the number of courts that could be put down for the traditional sports such as basketball and volleyball. It is likely that to grow the impact of sports tourism in Springfield, new indoor multi-use facilities will need to be constructed, and an investment in athletic equipment would need to be made in the form of sports tournament-specific items (examples: sport court, basketball baskets, volleyball nets, pickleball net systems). As tournament opportunities arise, a venue development or enhancement fund would need to be available to be tapped into to pay for these equipment upgrades (see Secondary Recommendation #2 below). These purchases can be used for years into the future to expand Springfield’s reach into the fastest growing indoor sports, and to diversify beyond the traditional competitions. The ability to host indoor events could also strengthen tourism in the shoulder season and off-peak months. The growing sports opportunities could include:

- Pickleball – USA Pickleball’s membership has grown 12-fold in the past five years.
- Cheer and Dance – 1.6 million core participants engaging in the sport at least 13 times per year.
- Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) – Core participation in MMA competitions is up 77% over the past three years, totaling nearly 1.3 million athletes.
- Additional Growth – Boxing and roller hockey also offer a significant growth market in the indoor sports space, rising in core participation 41.4% and 39.5% since 2012, respectively.

An investment in this equipment could also allow for the SSC to host many of the larger more traditional and established sports competitions, including:

- Basketball – 15.6 million people in the United States are considered core basketball players, participating in the sport 13 or more days per year.
- Volleyball – Has a core audience of nearly 3.6 million people.
- Indoor Soccer (Futsal) – Over 2.6 million core athletes participating 13 or more times a year.
- Archery – Core athlete participation in archery (26 or more days per year) is up 8.1%.*



* – The statistics noted above were obtained from the 2016 Sports & Fitness Industry Association’s annual sports participation report. The study measures participation changes over one, three, and five years.

Action Items: Begin to develop a region-wide facility master plan by pulling in each of the independent master plans that may already be in place (examples: parks and recreation, soccer complexes, cities, counties, school districts, colleges/universities, private facilities). Identify areas of need, their costs, and potential impacts (example: conduct a full feasibility study with an operational pro forma for a multi-purpose indoor space). Develop a regional venue guide to be used during the solicitation process at national trade shows. Plan and execute a stakeholder field trip(s) to a top-tier indoor sports facility such as Myrtle Beach, Rocky Mount, Grand Park.

Secondary Recommendation #2: Venue Funding Model

In order to enrich the destination’s venue mix, SSC and its tourism partners would need to identify a sustainable funding source to help activate these venue improvements. Numerous markets across the country have implemented a dedicated tourism-based revenue source to enhance their sports facilities. These taxes are most commonly a hotel occupancy tax or a food and beverage tax (see Appendix A) that are dedicated to the singular purpose of increasing overnight stays through hosting sporting events. Should such a tax, or another funding source be identified, the Consultant Team has outlined below how such a funding model could work for SSC and its sports tourism program:

1. Sports Development Fund – Identifying a dedicated funding source for the venue projects noted above, and those opportunities that may arise in the future, is critical for SSC to grow the sports market. The national best practice for the activation of these newly identified funds would be to use them as a catalyst for a “challenge grant” style program. That is, there would be a formal grant request process for SSC’s partners to apply for funds in a dollar-for-dollar match for capital projects that would drive overnight stays to the Springfield area. For every dollar the partner invests, they would be eligible for a dollar from the SSC Sports Development Fund. Employing this type of a matching program ensures that all parties have a vested interest in the positive outcome of each project, and that SSC’s investments are well protected. In addition, effective use of these funds to drive more overnight stays would subsequently increase the impact of tax collections by these additional visitors. Finally, should this fund be put in place, SSC should tie all grants to the concept of “Favored Nation Status” noted earlier in this report.

A major point of note, numerous cities are increasing their bed tax rate and/or using a food and beverage tax to put towards the construction and/or operation of new sports facilities (Examples: Rockford, Evansville, Shreveport, Spokane, Appleton, Tulsa, Eau Claire, Fort Wayne, Ashland, Millville, Elizabethtown, etc.). In nearly all of these cases, the taxes generated to enhance/build these facilities is to drive incremental overnight stays for the destination. See Appendix A for additional details on this topic.



The Consultant Team has identified and summarized several potential funding sources that could be utilized for facility development. Each of these options are outlined in Appendix H. Of the potential options, the Consultant Team believes the most viable funding sources are (projected annual revenue for each option in parentheses):

- Raising the existing hotel tax .5% (\$585,000)
- Proposed ¼ Cent county parks tax (\$11,400,000)
- ¼ Cent capital improvements sales tax (\$11,000,000)
- New proposed use sales tax (\$492,178)

New restaurant (\$5 million per year) or hotel taxes (\$3 million per year) could also prove to be sources for this purpose. Ideally, the venue development fund would be sustained through some or all of these sources year after year.

Action Items: Identify new potential funding sources to support facility development and/or enhancement. Add to any facility development partnership program a requirement for SSC to issue hotel leads for all facilities receiving a grant and also add a requirement for facility use by SSC at discounted rates or at no cost for a specific number of events each year.

Secondary Recommendation #3: Specific Venue Opportunities

It is of the opinion of the Consultant Team that in Springfield, the need for more sports friendly indoor spaces is the most pressing and would return the highest ROI to the community. Below is a suggested menu of facility development opportunities as well as a suggested list of enhancements that could be made to the existing venues in the region. Additionally, as part of the scope of work for this project, the SSC asked that the Consultant Team offer an economic impact analysis of the potential activity that could take place at the primary facility that is put forward in the recommendations within this report. Those findings are summarized below and the full impact report has been provided to the SSC under separate cover.

The Consultant Team believes the following facility development (new) opportunity would generate the most return on investment over time:

- **Multi-Use Indoor Facility** – The most successful of these types of venues nationally can accommodate the traditional sports (basketball, volleyball) as well as the emerging ones (pickleball, futsal). These flexible venues are often designed to be able to host meetings, trade shows, community events, consumer shows, graduations, bridge and chess tournaments, and similar gatherings of a large number of people. Some of the highest performing multi-use facilities can also accommodate concerts as well. A sampling of some of the top-flight venues in the national sports tourism space would include:



- Myrtle Beach (SC) Sports Center
 - Built – 2015
 - Cost – \$13,000,000
 - Size – 100,000 square feet
 - Configuration – 8 full basketball courts, limited seating

- Rocky Mount (NC) Events Center
 - Built – 2018
 - Cost – \$48,000,000
 - Size – 165,000 square feet
 - Configuration – 8 full basketball courts plus a championship court, also designed to host musical acts, both modular and telescopic seating options

In order for a venue of this nature to host many of the top regional and national tournaments, it must have ample court space, seating, scoreboards, PA systems, equipment, permanent concessions, locker rooms, coach and official meeting areas, and other related amenities. The most important of these characteristics is floor space with appropriate ceiling heights. Using the facility benchmarks noted in the SWOT analysis, a good multi-use facility would need to have at least 100,000 square feet that can be dedicated to court space. This area would also need to have ceiling heights of at least 36 feet to accommodate national level volleyball and basketball events. Should a funding mechanism be secured for the purpose of developing a new facility that meets these benchmarks, Springfield could achieve this goal through one of the following pathways:

1. Build an entirely new sports-specific facility somewhere in the Springfield area.
2. Build an entirely new convention center that meets the specifications sporting groups require to host their events as outlined above.
3. Expand the existing Springfield Expo’s main hall from 45,000 square feet to 100,000 square feet, and add the necessary telescopic seating, scoreboards, PA systems, etc.

Should the SSC and its partners find a pathway to provide a sports specific facility to host events throughout the year, using a conservative 35% capture rate, the Consultant Team believes the following economic activity could reasonably be realized in a calendar year:

- 15 regional and national tournaments
- Over 37,000 tournament attendees
- \$15.99 million in direct visitor spending
- Nearly 21,000 hotel room nights
- Springfield lodging tax collections of nearly \$89,000
- Total sales tax collections over \$160,000
- Community based events and leagues held throughout the entire year
- More than \$270,000 in rental revenues through community user groups



Note: The annual National Christian HomeSchool Basketball Tournament is included in the above projections. While this annual event is already played in Springfield, the addition of a new 8-court facility will allow the tournament organizer to consolidate the numerous sites used today and should improve the likelihood of the tournament staying in Springfield into the future.

Additionally, should a venue enhancement funding source be identified and secured, the following improvements could be made to the area's existing facilities:

- Cooper Sports Complex – The addition of turf and lighting would enhance this facility.
- Cooper Tennis Center – The addition VIP/press box type seating on the upper level of the championship court would further elevate this already excellent facility.
- Jordan Valley Ice Rink – Adding complimentary services to the facility would help in hosting events.
- Killian Complex and Softball Stadium – Opportunity to convert to artificial turf to extend the playing season.
- Lake Country Soccer Fields – The addition of turf and lighting would enhance this facility.
- Ozark Empire Fairgrounds – This site has numerous opportunities for improvements to be made so the venue is more attractive for sporting groups.
- Spokes BMX – Rebuild the track in its current location, or preferably in a new location, dependent on USA BMX awarding events to the enhanced facility.
- The Fieldhouse Sports Center – Support the owners in expanding the venue to eight (8) courts.
- US Baseball Park – Add additional fields to compliment the stadium.

Action Items: Determine which new venue development pathway would be best for success and pursue relevant support for the chosen plan of attack (example: secure a full facility audit for the option chosen and visit a proven national caliber facility). Prioritize current facility enhancement projects that would drive the most return for the community and gather support for those efforts.

Note: A summary of all activation recommendations can be found in Appendix D.



Conclusion

Sports tourism is a \$1.41 trillion industry worldwide, and is projected to grow to \$5.72 trillion by 2021, according to the media and entertainment research firm Technavio. A study by the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) states that the grass roots portion of the domestic sports tourism industry is responsible for over \$14 billion annually. Sports is big business, and the competition has never been more fierce. There are more communities targeting the sports market than ever before. In order for Springfield to be relevant in this niche market, the SSC must build bridges with key players locally to pave the way for an enhanced organizational model that is focused on community partnerships to drive a sustainable sports marketing program. By forging this path, the SSC will position Springfield as a strong player in the sports tourism industry, that will be able to provide value to its stakeholders in a meaningful way year over year.

Springfield has had some success in hosting sporting tournaments and competitions over the years. The Consultant Team believes there is additional opportunity for the SSC and its partners to grow the impact of sports and events tourism in the future. To frame up this vision, the Consultant Team offers four “Big Ideas” for Springfield:

1. The SSC needs to be more intentional about how it plays the sports tourism game. Springfield cannot play the same game that its more well-funded and experienced competitors play in larger markets, who have superior venues and more resources. To be successful in the short term, the SSC has to play its own style of sports tourism game with the assets that are currently available.
2. There are several opportunities to leverage today. The SSC can work with its local event promoters to create small opportunities year over year, with a vision for the longer term. In order for the SSC to seize these opportunities, the SSC team (staff and board) will need to be intentional about an increasingly external focus towards its local event partners and venue stakeholders.
3. Community leaders shouldn't let facility discussions get in the way of blocking and tackling sports tourism efforts that can happen now. There are opportunities to be had, even if new resources or venues don't materialize.
4. The end goal should be for the SSC to become the “go to” organization that the community can lean on for all sports tourism related issues/opportunities (example: be in a position to take on a leadership role with area promoters to remove barriers for them to create tourism driving products).

The SSC and its partners can achieve tourism growth in Springfield through the empowerment of local event promoters/operators to create and grow home-grown grass roots events, develop new event and venue products, and host bid-in state/regional/national championships when necessary. In order to really make an impact on Springfield, its businesses, and even more importantly its citizens, the SSC needs to focus its efforts on three (3) overarching objectives:



1. Create a culture of sports and events development. Develop new events, develop human capital, develop relationships, and develop physical products (venues) when resources become available.
2. Partner with local promoters to build created events that will call Springfield home long into the future that will not be subject to an RFP process with the SSC's competitors.
3. Make the long-term enrichment of Springfield's venue "tool kit" a priority, by leading a community-wide discussion that focuses on the future vision of the community through a sports tourism lens.

In order to pursue some of the "Big Ideas" and objectives laid out above, especially those relating to facility development, the SSC would need to identify a new and sustainable funding source. To be effective in the near term with its current resources, the SSC needs to be strategic in how it promotes the destination. In the future, the SSC must pick up the ball and create an empowering environment for its local event promoters (hosting tournaments) and community partners (venue development) to build a foundation for long-term success.

Specifically, the SSC's sports effort should focus its resources on three (3) initiatives (or "Pillars" as outlined in Appendix I). Each Pillar has a specific target audience, as well as tactics to achieve SSC's tourism goals for each area. The Pillars are meant to be simple and clarifying, so both internal and external stakeholders can easily understand the mission and goals of the SSC and an enhanced sports tourism effort. The Pillars include the following three (3) focus areas:

1. Events – A two-pronged events approach would include the current practice of pursuing a limited number of traditional bid-in events with event rights holders, and an expanded vision for incubating/creating new events and/or growing existing events in partnership with the community's local promoters. As the SSC's expanded efforts take root and new locally produced events are developed, there will be less of a need to focus on competitive bid processes to drive overnight stays. Both the traditional bid-in events as well as locally created and managed events that drive overnight stays will deliver on the SSC's tourism mission.
2. Venue Enhancement – Providing a sustainable revenue stream for venue development will be mission critical for the community going forward. As this funding source takes shape, the SSC should lead a venue master planning process for the entire Springfield region. This master plan would serve as a launching pad to enhance the area's existing venues and to potentially develop new facilities that can positively impact tourism in the area, while also offering better venues for local community user groups to utilize. This should not be lost in the recommendations proposed here – improved venues will give the community's local leagues and programs better places to play throughout the year, as well as drive additional tourism to the community. While this project is focused on tourism, we cannot discount that the local user experience will be greatly improved in the process. As a final point here, these new venues would also have a combined positive effect between driving tourism and local user groups – these new facilities would also



provide more opportunities to host tournaments in Springfield, which means local teams could play in regional/national level tournaments at home, rather than traveling to other destinations.

3. Community Engagement – Messaging the mission of the SSC, the importance of sports tourism to the area, and the historical success of sports tourism in Springfield to various stakeholder groups is critical to future success. In addition, the concept of an expanded sports tourism program would likely draw in new talent/resources and further deepen the sports tourism community’s ties. This effort will provide a place for further venue and event development discussions to take place. The best practice for success with Sports Commission Boards (and Advisory Boards where applicable) is to ensure that they have a defined role. The SSC has several different stakeholder groups, reaching them consistently with a meaningful message will help grow the organization’s reach and influence over time.

The unprecedented growth of the sports tourism industry (see Appendix B) shows the high level of market sustainability that support the expansion of economic development in this space for Springfield. The recommendations suggested here will positively impact the region’s tourism profile and also positively affect the citizens and community user groups on a day-to-day basis. Throughout this project, subjects expressed a desire for community leaders to work together. There is a great deal of support for the SSC to expand its reach in the sports tourism space. With that in mind, there is an opportunity for the SSC to be the connection point in sports tourism through the enhancement of its current sports marketing efforts, that can lead the charge in the creation of new event and venue products. This investment will, in turn, help drive economic development year over year long into the future.

As in any new project, there are numerous variables that would need to be considered in evaluating the ROI and risk in expanding the community’s sports tourism program, including work towards the development of new venue assets. It is the experience of the Consultant Team that the communities who consider the overall impact on their tax base as a whole, will have more success than those that measure success purely by room nights or bed tax collections. That is, the cities that take into account the entirety of the community impact and total economic activity that is generated by a sports tourism marketing program, generally display a higher level of collaboration than those that simply measure heads in beds and sales tax totals.

In summary, the Consultant Team offers what we feel are the four (4) most important things for the SSC to facilitate in the immediate future:

1. The SSC sports staff needs to become more externally focused in developing and growing local relationships. This starts with the board, and an intentional effort to connect with local colleges/universities, venue managers, and event organizers on a routine and ongoing basis.
2. Meet with the leaders of the region’s top tournaments and special events to identify areas where the sports tourism initiative can partner with them to enhance their existing properties, and potentially create new ones. Engaging local promoters in the event



development process to create more owned event assets will have positive long-term effects on the community, including lessening the dependency on bid-in events and transient/corporate tourism.

3. Develop a venue enhancement wish list, along with projected budgets for the desired improvements. Prioritize those improvements in order of those that will drive more overnight stays to Springfield, and formally adopt the list of enhancements as a long-range improvement plan (with or without an identified funding source).
4. Determine potential funding pathways for facility development and enhancement. Further, identify what each option would generate and what percentage of those funds would be attributed to this expanded sports tourism effort and also to other tourism driving programs through the SSC.

In the eyes of the Consultant Team, the puzzle pieces exist in Springfield to expand economic development for the region through sports and special event activities. The only question would be to what extent this development effort can be supported financially in order to best benefit the destination. The Consultant Team believes it is within the power of SSC and its stakeholders to capture more opportunities in the sports tourism and events market, while also enriching the lives of its citizens. This community-wide effort will help the Springfield Sports Commission lead the tourism and business communities in an ongoing and proactive manner into the future.

Report submitted to the Springfield Sports Commission on October 17, 2019.



Appendix A – Trends in Sports Facility Funding

The most common funding source for new facilities is a general fund allocation from the city/county where the facility is located as well as a land contribution for the venue to be constructed (again donated by the city or county). Although the level of success is yet to be determined, several communities around the country have already, or are in the process of, raising their bed tax collection rate to fund sports-related facility development, including:

- Rockford (IL) having already finished a significant expansion of its outdoor sports venues, used bed tax dollars to bond \$10 million towards a new indoor facility. The Downtown Sports Complex carried a price tag of \$24 million and opened in late 2016.
- Evansville (IN) recently opened a new \$15 million multi-use outdoor sports complex that is entirely funded by bed tax dollars. The future management of this facility will also be funded by bed tax dollars and it is run by the DMO itself.
- Spokane (WA) is in the process of bonding \$25 million against future bed tax collections to construct a new athletic field house.
- Shreveport (LA) recently passed a bed tax increase for the expansion of their Convention & Visitors Bureau's national marketing program. This new tax also supports the Independence Bowl (venue enhancements and improved match-ups) and the Shreveport Regional Airport (incentives for new airline routes). This combined effort between three of Shreveport's leading agencies shows the economic development impact that sports tourism can have on a mid- or small-size market.
- Fox Cities (Appleton, WI) recently raised their bed tax rate from 6% to 10% to build a convention center, a new large (hardwood, turf, and ice) indoor sports complex, and to renovate three existing sports facilities used to attract regional and national tournaments. This facility will open in October of 2019.
- Placer Valley (CA) is allocating funds from an increased bed tax as well as a new hotel assessment to construct and manage a \$35 million multi-use all turf sports complex. The 22-field venue opened in 2018 and is managed by the area's tourism bureau.
- Pasco (FL), in partnership with the Florida Sports Foundation, is in the process of developing a new sports complex on 120 acres of county-owned property. Pasco County is investing \$11 million to the project, including \$8.5 million in tourist tax funds and \$2.5 million in unrestricted bond proceeds.
- In January 2016, Warren County (OH) raised the lodging tax one (1) percent to finance a \$10 million, 20 field sports complex. The rate hike increased the county hotel occupancy tax from 3% to 4%. The tax will be used over 20 years to pay off debt the Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau will take on to pay for the complex.



Appendix A (Continued) – Trends in Sports Facility Funding

In addition to the hotel tax examples noted on the previous page, several communities have implemented a food and beverage tax for the purpose of developing or enhancing sports facilities.

- Elizabethtown (KY) passed a 2% food and beverage tax in 2012 to fund the development and management of the Elizabethtown Sports Park. Having just completed its first five years of operations, the “mega complex” has driven nearly \$100 million in direct visitor spending to the community (according to studies commissioned with SportsImpacts, one of the top economic impact agencies in the country). Etown as it is known, is currently looking at facility expansion opportunities to capture even more sports tourism activity.
- For the past 30 years, Fort Wayne (IN) has implemented a 1% food and beverage tax that is used for capital projects. This program has funded several new buildings at the site of the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum arena, including a 100,000-square foot expo center and 5,000 seat baseball stadium. These funds have also been used to renovate the arena’s ice floor, to add 2,500 seats and meeting rooms to the arena. The fund generates \$7.5 million per year and is currently being considered to help finance a new arena downtown.
- Ashland (OR) employs a 5% food and beverage tax which garners nearly \$4.5 million a year. Twenty percent of these funds are allocated to the acquisition and preservation of open spaces for parks and recreation, with 80% of the funds used to retire debt for a recently completed community-wide waterway enhancement.
- Historically, King County (WA) has used intermittent funding from food and beverage taxes to build stadiums such as the King Dome. While this program is not active today, it has been a tool the Greater Seattle area has used in the past for venue development to entice professional sports teams to the area. Similarly, the State of Florida has a professional league stadium venue development program that is also funded by temporary food and beverage taxes, when needed. Finally, Milwaukee used a food and beverage tax to build Miller Park, home of Major League Baseball’s Milwaukee Brewers.
- In 2007, the State of New Jersey created the “Sports and Entertainment District Urban Revitalization Act.” Under this legislation, the community of Millville levied a 2% local food and beverage tax to fund a sports and entertainment district including a 500-acre motorsports park that hosts numerous events including NASCAR racing.

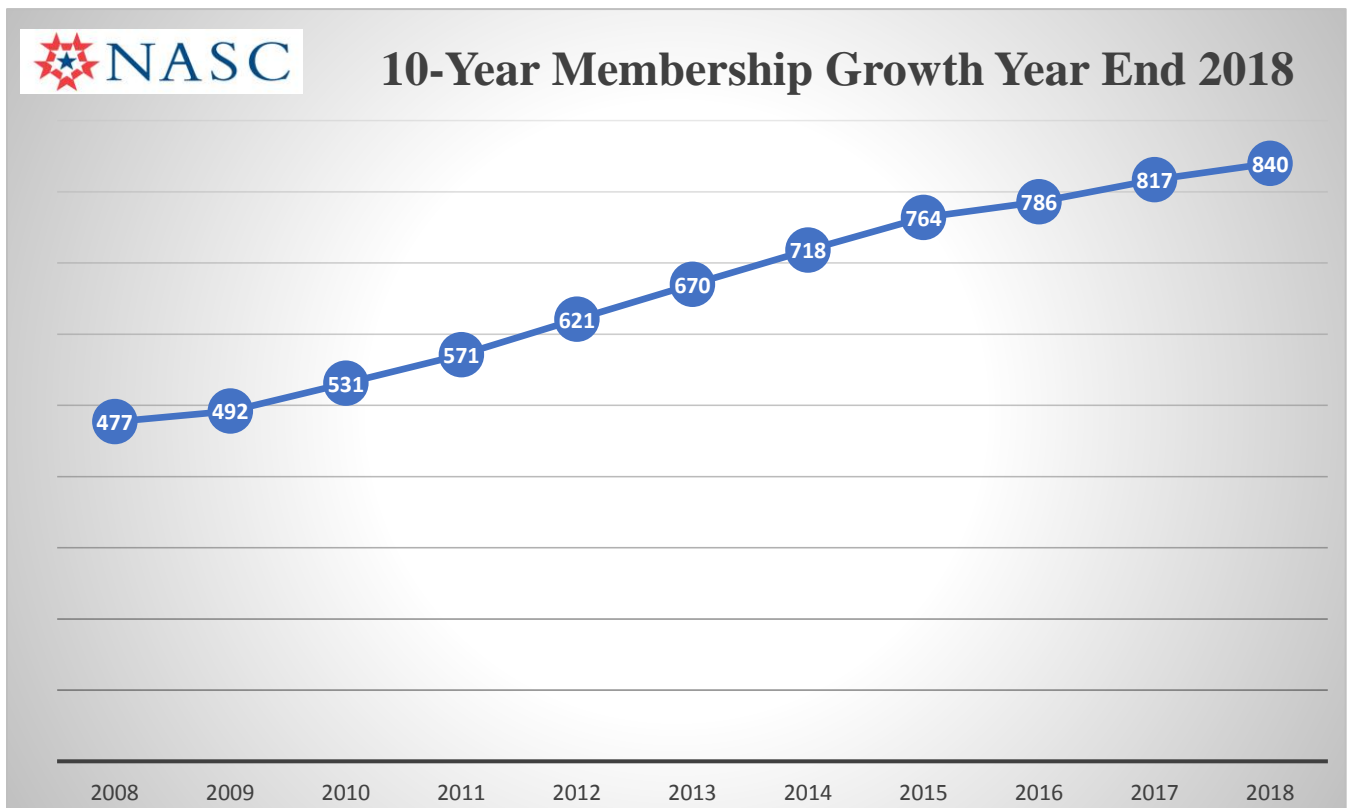
It should be noted that different states have different regulations regarding the use of funds generated by bed and/or food and beverage taxes. The cases outlined above are not exhaustive and should be viewed only as examples for further discussion.



Appendix B – National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC) Membership

Sports tourism has grown exponentially over the past two decades. The nature of the industry is that it is relatively “immune” to market factors such as troubled economies, war, high unemployment, 9/11, or similar factors. Studies by the NASC show that the grass roots sports tourism industry is worth over \$14 billion and that there are more events today, with more participants competing in those events, than ever before.

Projections indicate that the grass roots sports tourism industry (exclusive of mega events like the Superbowl, Final Fours, etc.) is growing at a pace of 12-14% per year, with more growth anticipated in the coming decade. Below is a chart outlining the growth of membership organizations within the NASC, which is a direct correlation to the growth of the sports tourism industry as a whole.

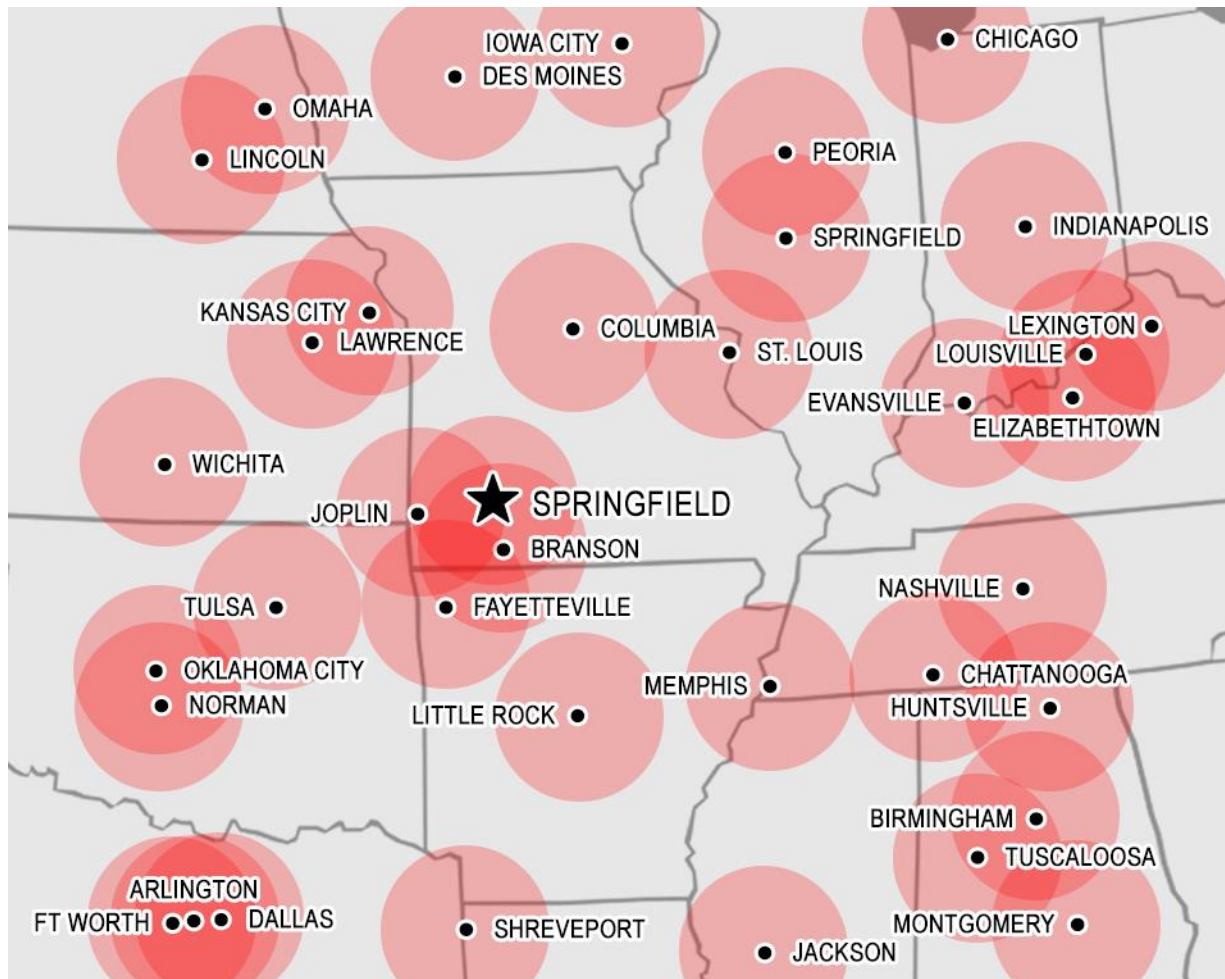


Appendix C – Springfield Sports Commission Regional Competition Analysis

The sports tourism and events industry is as competitive today as it has ever been. Numerous destinations market themselves in this niche industry in the form of a DMO, Convention & Visitors Bureau, city, or through an alternative organization.

Below is a visual representation of the various entities in Springfield's geographic region that are active in the sports tourism and events space. The circles surrounding each city represent a 100-mile drive market for local and regional events.

While tournaments often attract teams from as far away as a full day's drive, this graphic shows the significant level of competition in this industry and the high level geographic overlap amongst these communities.



Appendix D – Springfield Sports Commission Summary of Activation Recommendations

Primary Recommendations (Near Term)

Revamp the board to increase community impact and reach. Strengthen the organization with improved governance (bylaws) and resources (both human and financial). Revisit the membership program and corporate engagement. Add a dedicated sports events coordinator position. Identify a funding source to enhance the grant/incentive program.

Put in place a consistent partner outreach program such as the “4 Touch Rule.” Set partnership meetings with each of the area schools to trial balloon the intern concept and other ideas that would elevate the partnership with SSC. Create a visitors guide for teams coming to compete in Springfield at the high school or college levels.

Create collateral materials for use at the coffee workshops, schedule one (1) coffee workshop for 2019, schedule one (1) “6 & 6” luncheon for 2019. Identify 2-3 outlets to publicize success in the sports tourism markets, and who will be responsible for messaging to/through those outlets on a regular basis.

Secondary Recommendations (Longer Term)

Begin to develop a region-wide facility master plan by pulling in each of the independent master plans that may already be in place (examples: parks and recreation, soccer complexes, cities, counties, school districts, colleges/universities, private facilities). Identify areas of need, their costs, and potential impacts (example: conduct a full feasibility study with an operational pro forma for a multi-purpose indoor space). Develop a regional venue guide to be used during the solicitation process at national trade shows. Plan and execute a stakeholder field trip(s) to a top-tier indoor sports facility such as Myrtle Beach, Rocky Mount, Grand Park.

Identify new potential funding sources to support facility development and/or enhancement. Add to any facility development partnership program a requirement for SSC to issue hotel leads for all facilities receiving a grant and also add a requirement for facility use by SSC at discounted rates or at no cost for a specific number of events each year.

Determine which new venue development pathway would be best for success and pursue relevant support for the chosen plan of attack (example: secure a full facility audit for the option chosen and visit a proven national caliber facility). Prioritize current facility enhancement projects that would drive the most return for the community and gather support for those efforts.



Appendix E – Springfield Venue Needs Summary

Overall, the Consultant Team found very few “anchor” facilities in Springfield. Below is a list of all venues evaluated by the Consultant Team along with areas of enhancement needed for each. The Consultant Team rated each facility on its current quality (CQ) and what the potential future quality (PFQ) likely could be if upgrades were made to the venue. The rating system used the following color codes:

Anchor Facility
Tournament Friendly
Not of Tournament Quality

Facility	Description	CQ	Comments	PFQ
Cooper Sports Complex	Baseball and soccer venue		The five field complex located on the eastern side of the entire complex, is ideal for youth baseball (below 90ft base paths) and for both slow and fast pitch softball. The soccer portion of the complex is run by Lake Country Soccer, the diamonds are run by parks and rec. The infield material is similar in quality to the Killian Complex and Softball Stadium, since it is located in the same campus area. Parking is shared by the adjacent venue. The soccer options in the area are numerous with multiple fields being centrally located. The south fields are not lit, which limits the potential for play during short daylight times of the year on those fields. The fields are well taken care of, however turfing the baseball/softball infields may be an option to extend the playing season and to deal with inclement weather. The open layout limits the ability for a gate to be taken. Unlike the baseball and soccer stadium seen, the majority of the soccer fields are not access controlled.	
Cooper Tennis Complex	Indoor and outdoor tennis venue		The proximity of the venues is the most ideal in the area. If all the sport fields are being used, traffic control becomes an issue. That is a good problem to have as it means that programming is consistent. The tennis venue is the most tournament ready venue we observed during the tour. The Missouri Valley Tennis Section resides out of the center. The only addition we would suggest would be VIP/press box type seating for the championship court.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Drury University	O'Reilly Family Event Center, Weiser Gym, Harrison Stadium & Breech Pool		While they are an asset to the community, getting access to these facilities to host large or multi-site sporting competitions might be challenging. The university would have to be on board with the events that could take place at these venues while making a minimum impact of the student base that support these facilities. It was noted that some of the venues are shared with local high schools for their competitions, which increases the diligence needed to use these venues for select but highly impactful sporting events that would not only be great for the city but also bring potential athletes to the schools on an unofficial site visit.	
Ewing Sports Complex	Youth baseball and BMX		This complex has two sport areas within its footprint: (1) Spokes BMX and (2) a pinwheel that includes the only 13U youth baseball fields (2) in the area. As noted in the Spokes BMX section, the facility is isolated from main road areas and located on a former garbage site. This last factor has caused the ground to become uneven over time. The lack of maintenance to the complex is visible with broken perimeter fencing and poor landscaping. While this complex might serve the community, it does not have the assets to host regional or national level competitions. This complex should focus on recreational sport given the visible deterioration. The facility should also address these issues for future safety concerns.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Evangel University	Ashcroft Center and Football Field		As with the other collegiate sport venues, these offer the opportunity to host regional and national level competitions if access can be granted to the SSC.	
Hammons Field	Baseball Stadium that is host to the AA team of the St. Louis Cardinals Baseball Organization and the Missouri State baseball program		This facility is home to the Springfield Cardinals and also Missouri State’s baseball program. Its central location in the metro area allows citizens to enjoy the Cardinal’s 70 home games and Missouri State’s 25 home games played at the stadium annually. This is one of many baseball specific venues that provide a great hosting capacity to the region. The facility has all of the necessary amenities to host baseball events (or other events such as professional soccer) at the collegiate and professional levels. The facility is also actively used for non-sports related special events and festivals. The large number of home baseball games can make it difficult to secure dates for additional events.	
JFK Stadium	Football, soccer and track & field		Located adjacent to Parkview High School, this multi-use stadium can host football, soccer and track & field events. Its central location to other sport venues adds to the ability to cluster this and other venues for multi-sport competitions. It is observed that, like others in the area, the seating capacity is “right sized” for the overall usage of the stadium. It was observed that additional seating could be added if a sporting event required. With the high school indoor venues across the street, a combination of indoor staging and outdoor competition would be ideal.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Jordan Valley Ice Rink	Indoor ice complex		It is a very impressive complex with two sheets of ice and ample space for regional level events. Not knowing the full programmatic schedule, it would be ideal for year round event and sporting options. The location of Springfield in relation to the region, would be an ideal stop for tournament play with the addition of minor supporting elements on game day.	
Killian Complex and Softball Stadium	Slow pitch and fast pitch softball facility with the ability to host some age group specific baseball events		This is a five field complex with an anchor stadium in the pinwheel. The fields looked groomed and the infield material is what is expected of a regional level complex. While more clay content would be recommended to hold water, the infield did not have any visible bumps that would impede quality tournaments. The central building is multi-purpose with concessions and event operations space. A consideration to convert from grass to turf may be fruitful. It is likely that the addition of artificial turf would expand the playability and increase the dates year round. A more comprehensive cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken to determine if converting to artificial surfaces is feasible. While an expensive undertaking, community leaders might be looking at the conversion to offer expanded local use options.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Lake Country Soccer Fields	Series of outdoor natural grass fields of various sizes		Soccer options in the area are numerous with multiple fields being centrally located. The lack of lighting in parts of the facility limits the potential for play during short daylight times of the year. The fields are in good condition and well maintained. The open layout limits the ability for gate to be taken. Unlike the baseball and soccer stadium, the majority of the soccer fields are not access controlled. The addition of artificial turf to the mix may help extend the playing season and help during tournaments when inclement weather hits.	
Lake Country Soccer Indoor Facility	Indoor venue that offers two full size turf soccer fields		As part of the Lake Country Soccer venues, this indoor venue acts as an office space for the operating club and provides two indoor soccer turf fields for play and ODP. The venue also has operation areas that supports the outdoor fields during tournaments. The indoor and outdoor options provide a stable area for soccer development and play. Local and regional competition is held at this complex. Its proximity to the Cooper Sports Complex fields provides an impressive amount of soccer fields for all levels of competition.	
Meador Park & Meador Sports Complex	Multi-sport venue that offers baseball, softball, swimming and tennis		Softball and youth baseball venue that adds to the already large number of sport fields for those sports. The pinwheel looks in good shape to host the level of baseball and softball events already programmed for the complex. Stadium field and the baseball/softball fields could use an update. Parking is adequate but with the mall parking close by, tournament play can use that area as overflow when needed.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Missouri State University	JQH Arena, Hammons Student Center, Hammons Student Center Pool, Betty & Bobby Allison South (Track & Field), Betty & Bobby Allison North (Field Hockey & Lacrosse), Betty & Bobby Allison Sand Volleyball Complex, Plaster Stadium		The facilities at Missouri State are in line with some NCAA DI and most all DII venue specifications. They are generally do not have large seating capacity for the bigger DI national level events. While they are an asset to the community, getting access to the them to host competitions might be challenging. The universities would have to be on board with the events that could take place at these venues while making a minimum impact of the student base that support these venues. Some of the venues are shared with local high schools for tournament play (JQH Arena and Hammons Student Center specifically). This just increases the diligence needed to use these venues for select but highly impactful sporting events that would not only be great for the city but also bring potential athletes to the schools for an unofficial site visit.	
Ozark Empire Fairgrounds and Events Center (“EPlex”)	Indoor & outdoor fairground complex with two 40k indoor exhibit spaces and an 8k seat outdoor grandstand for motor sports		The Fairgrounds could host multiple sports related events such as bike rallies, endurance events, Tough Mudder, Color Run, etc. Once again, getting available dates would seem to be the key issue. Garnering dates at the Fairgrounds would likely mean displacing existing business that might be local in focus but generates rental revenue to the complex. Having a conversation on replacing business that is not only good for the Fairgrounds but also that would generate a tax base would be recommended. Several areas of the Fairgrounds could be improved with a capital fund if one was created.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Spokes BMX	Outdoor BMX dirt track located on an out of way sport complex		As a venue that supports BMX & Baseball, this complex hasn't been cared for in a way to sustain hosting national level events although it has hosted some in the past (example: BMX Nationals). Specifically, the fences are rusted and in disrepair and the grass maintenance was visibly lacking. The facility was built on a landfill which is the likely cause of the grounds becoming uneven. While a great use of limited option green space, the landfill base has affected the quality of the fields. If the community wants to pursue another BMX Gold Cup and/or National race, it is recommended the track be rebuilt. It would be recommended that a new track, if possible, reside in a location in town closer to needed amenities such as hotels and restaurants. The current location isolates the potential for regional and national level events and locally sustained membership growth in the future.	
The Clubhouse Volleyball Center	Indoor venue for basketball and volleyball		The Clubhouse, while very industrial looking, offers five courts for volleyball and three for basketball and a large dining area/restaurant for participants. It is a home for a local volleyball club and offers play options for that sport and also basketball.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
Springfield Expo Center	The defacto convention center space with the largest space measuring at 100k square feet, with 45k of that in open free span space. Pillared space is attached off lobby area.		Upon entering from back of house via the loading dock, the wear of the building is visible. The complex has a musty or moldy smell that is present in the large expo space. While it does look in need of some improvements, the 45,000 square feet of contiguous free span space is ideal for most indoor sporting events. The high ceilings allow most indoor based sports to take place. The connected low ceiling breakout space is large and the support pillars can act as natural breaks for booth or warm up areas. The lobby is bright and large enough to hold spectators waiting to enter the event space. Parking is a challenge as it is across the street from the main entry points of the facility. This could be used as a primary sporting venue if a new convention facility were to come online. Today, date availability is an issue. There are also storage and catering issues with the space as the hotel across the street has to run equipment and F&B across the street to service events in the facility.	

**Appendix E – Springfield
Venue Needs Summary (Continued)**

Facility		CQ	Comments	PFQ
The Fieldhouse Sports Center	Indoor venue for basketball and volleyball		The Fieldhouse is newer than the Clubhouse venue and has two separate court areas and high end waiting areas. This newer venue offers food, gift shop and play options for families waiting on participants. The venue also offers a gymnastics program further expanding its potential. It was noted that there is the potential to add two more indoor courts in the future which would bring the total count for basketball to six (6).	
US Baseball Park	Dedicated baseball stadium with artificial turf		This baseball only venue is another stadium that already adds to the impressive baseball venues in the Springfield Metro area. The stadium can host all levels of baseball with all the amenities of similar area stadiums. It is understood that the daily programming of league play adds to the ability to host other regional level play. The turf provides flexibility when weather is an issue and the turf allows for baseball competition and special event development as well. It is located off a major highway in the southern metro area. The potential to add more supporting fields on site would make this a more tournament friendly destination. The facility is also completing an indoor hitting cage venue. There is opportunity at this site to develop additional pinwheels that would support the main stadium in hosting larger tournaments.	

Appendix F – Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Organization Benchmarking Operational Budget Size

While several of the destinations outlined below are larger in size than Springfield, the sports tourism organizations in these communities are widely recognized as best in class across the industry. Note for comparison, the current SSC sports operations budget is \$296,500 with additional access to CVB incentive funds when necessary to attract marquee events.

Definitions for the three most commonly structured sports tourism organizations include:

- “Stand Alone” Sports Commissions (SA) – These sports organizations are completely autonomous from any other organization. They are not part of (nor managed by) the local CVB, the city, county, chamber of commerce, or any other entity.
- “Dotted Line” Sports Commissions (DL) – These sports organizations operate autonomously, however the local DMO/CVB is a large funder and has major strategic influence on the organization.
- “Fully Blended” Sports Commissions (Blended) – These sports organizations are completely owned and managed by the DMO/CVB or sit within a government agency, who provide the organization funding and oversight.

Benchmarking by Operational Budget Size*					
Market (FT Staff)	Structure	Operational Budget	Additional Funding Sources	Total Access to Funds	Notes
San Antonio (20)	SA	\$3,000,000	\$ -	\$3,000,000	San Antonio raises all of their funds privately.
Detroit (6)	DL	\$2,100,000	\$ -	\$2,100,000	Completely funded by the CVB. Recently created the industry's first permanent Local Organizing Committee (LOC) to help attract major events.
Tulsa (7)	Blended	\$2,100,000	\$ -	\$2,100,000	The Tulsa Sports Commission also has access to a TID, Vision Tulsa funding (similar to MAPS), and two annual corporate fundraising efforts.



**Appendix F – Springfield Sports Commission
Sports Tourism Organization Benchmarking
Operational Budget Size (Continued)**

Benchmarking by Operational Budget Size*					
Market (FT Staff)	Structure	Operational Budget	Additional Funding Sources	Total Access to Funds	Notes
St. Louis (10)	SA	\$2,000,000	\$ -	\$2,000,000	St. Louis raises all of their funds privately.
Louisville (8)	SA	\$1,800,000	\$ -	\$1,800,000	Louisville is the 2018 National Sports Commission of the Year, an award they have won multiple times. They pointed out that beyond their staff and budget, the CVB there also supports their efforts with four (4) full-time sports sales and services staff members and the CVB also supplies funding for additional marketing in the sports vertical (approximately \$200,000 per year).
Birmingham (3)	Blended	\$1,662,000	\$ -	\$1,662,000	Staffing and overhead is fully covered by the CVB in Birmingham . The sports market drove over 180,000 room nights to the destination in the last fiscal year.



**Appendix F – Springfield Sports Commission
Sports Tourism Organization Benchmarking
Operational Budget Size (Continued)**

Benchmarking by Operational Budget Size*					
Market (FT Staff)	Structure	Operational Budget	Additional Funding Sources	Total Access to Funds	Notes
Fort Worth (3)	Blended	\$900,000	\$ -	\$900,000	Fort Worth has access to a significant amount of additional funds for event bids, including the Texas Sports “Superfund”, a TBID, funding from a regional Sports Authority, and a \$3 per room night incentive program for each room that is contracted and then realized (this is above and beyond any commissions or rebates that the rights holder negotiates with their host hotels).
Durham (3)	DL	\$845,000	\$ -	\$845,000	Durham's funding comes from the City of Durham and the County through economic development contracts.
Denver (2)	Blended	\$700,000	\$ -	\$700,000	Denver's numbers do not include two additional staff that are housed and paid for by Visit Denver.



**Appendix F – Springfield Sports Commission
Sports Tourism Organization Benchmarking
Operational Budget Size (Continued)**

Benchmarking by Operational Budget Size*					
Market (FT Staff)	Structure	Operational Budget	Additional Funding Sources	Total Access to Funds	Notes
Bryan/College Station (3)	Blended	\$567,000	\$500,000	\$1,067,000	Bryan/College Station has access to north of \$500,000 in additional grant and inventive funds for sports on top of their operating budget. In addition to their three full-time sports staff, their CVB President has an extensive sports background and is a past Chair of NASC.
Oklahoma City (2)	Blended	\$507,800	\$500,000	\$1,007,800	In addition to the CVB’s sports marketing budget outlined above, the City has a separate event grant fund that is available for both sports and conventions. These funds are disbursed by the City in a post-event reimbursement model. While a large amount of the funds granted go towards sporting events (nearly \$500,000 in YE 2018), these funds are not within the control of the CVB and do not hit the CVB’s budget or pass through the bureau’s bank accounts.

***Tampa** is one of the top sports commissions in the country that hosts many of the mega events our country has to offer (College Football Playoff, WrestleMania, Superbowl, Final Four, Frozen Four, NHL All-Star Game, etc.). They have seven (7) employees, however they declined to offer budgetary numbers.



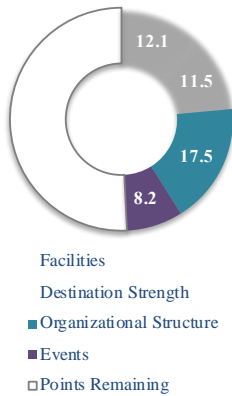
Appendix G – Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Index Results

Springfield (MO) Sports Commission

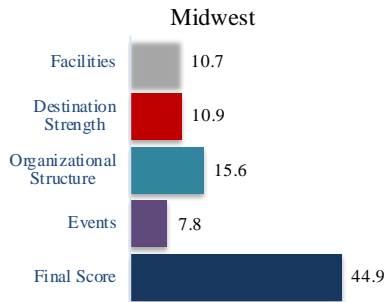


Final Score	SPORTS TOURISM INDEX REPORT Market Size: Mid-Market Organization Type: Blended sports commission Geographic Region: Midwest Sports Budget: 200,001-400,000
49.22	
Tier 2	

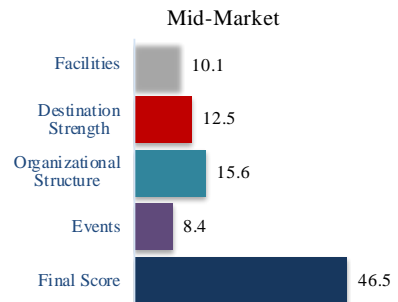
Score Breakdown



Average Scores by Region



Average Scores by Market Size



Recommendations

Facilities

Your destination likely has a good inventory of participant focused facilities that meet or exceed the standards necessary to host top tier events and a moderately effective supply of spectator focused venues. Future focus should be on working with community leader to enhance your venue “tool kit” and to develop new facilities in concert with your local stakeholders such as parks and recreation, cities, counties, and academic institutions.

Destination Strength

Your destination has some access challenges that are likely tied to limited air service and/or a small population within a days drive. It is likely that a focus on hotel product development would support the sports tourism market in the future.

Organizational Structure

Your organization has a good number of dedicated staff and a budget that is adequate for attracting and hosting select events. Sports tourism organizations at this level generally have some community support through their boards, advisory groups, and community stakeholders at large. Most often this community support comes through a select few individuals. Growing the organization’s influence in the community will depend on expanding the number and reach of its stakeholders over time.

Events

Your organization hosts an average number of bid-in events, may create and/or owns a handful of its own championships, and services some events at a basic level. Organizations that score in this area likely have the ability to work with their local promoters to create new tourism driving events and/or grow their current properties year over year. There is likely an opportunity for organizations in this category to enhance their efforts in serving events in order to strengthen renewal rates in the future.



Springfield (MO) Sports Commission
INDUSTRY AVERAGES REPORT

Overall Scores □

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Facilities	12.07	10.01	2.06
Destination Strength	11.47	10.90	0.56
Organizational Structure	17.53	15.28	2.25
Events	8.15	7.46	0.69
Total	49.22	43.65	5.57

Facilities Breakdown*

Participant-Based	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Tennis	4.50	3.18	1.33
Diamonds	2.80	2.75	0.05
Flat Fields	3.90	2.97	0.93
BMX	3.65	3.94	-0.29
Indoor Courts	3.13	3.32	-0.19
Convention Center	2.20	2.85	-0.65

Spectator-Based	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Baseball Stadium	3.20	2.96	0.24
Arena	3.75	3.33	0.42
Arena	3.30	3.33	-0.03
Football Stadium	1.75	2.92	-1.17
Baseball Stadium	1.40	2.96	-1.56

Destination Strength

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Tourism Drivers^	3	3.50	-0.50
Hotels*	2.10	2.12	-0.02
Travel Accessibility^	6.37	5.08	1.28

Organizational Structure*

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Sports Staff	2.00	3.10	-1.10
Grant Program	4.25	3.20	1.05
Board & Committees	2.78	1.74	1.04

Sporting Events

Number on an annual basis	Your Answer	Average Answer	Difference
Local Events	20	25	-5
Bid-In Events Hosted	11	11	0
Events Serviced	22	37	-15

* Max score of 5
^ Max score of 10
□ Max score of 25

Springfield (MO) Sports Commission

FACILITY PROFILES

Mid-Market	Midwest
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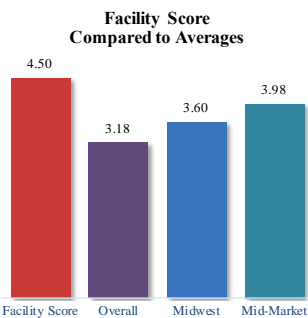
Participant Facility 1

Category: Tennis
 Facility Name: Cooper Tennis Complex
 Ability to Book: Definitely Yes

Facility Score	4.50
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Average Scores for Category

Overall 3.18
 Midwest 3.60
 Mid-Market 3.98



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Outdoor courts	17	18	16	24
Outdoor courts with lights	17	13	8	12
Indoor courts	12	3	7	6
Stadium court (% Yes)	Yes	50%	67%	100%

Tennis Industry Standards

Anchor Facility

A minimum of 12 courts is required to be an anchor facility that can host major national and regional events. It is important to maintain a quality playing surface for the courts. A scoreboard for each court, lights for outdoor courts, locker rooms, and benches for each court are required. A stadium court, seating capacity of 1,500+, permanent wifi, and ample auxiliary rooms are preferred but not required.

Tournament Friendly

A minimum of 6 courts is required to be a tournament friendly facility that can host smaller regional and local events. Lights for outdoor courts and benches for each court are required. A scoreboard for each court, locker rooms, permanent wifi, and auxiliary rooms are preferred.

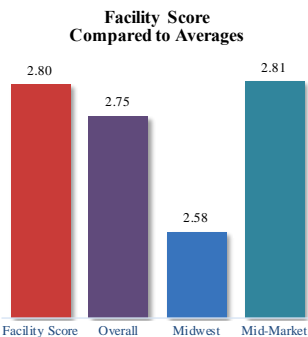
Participant Facility 2

Category: Diamonds
 Facility Name: Killian Sports Complex
 Ability to Book: Probably yes

Facility Score	2.80
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Average Scores for Category

Overall 2.75
 Midwest 2.58
 Mid-Market 2.81



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Diamonds	6	9	6	7
Diamonds with lights	6	7	6	5
Artificial turf diamonds	0	1	1	1

Diamonds Industry Standards

Anchor Facility

A minimum of 12 diamonds is required to be an anchor facility that can host major national and regional events. Well-maintained grass is the preferred playing surface. However, artificial turf extends the playing season and provides options for weather delays. Lights allow tournament directors options in scheduling and extensions of the playing day for weather delays. Covered benches and permanent concessions are a necessity. Permanent wifi and auxiliary rooms are preferred but not required.

Tournament Friendly

A facility capable of hosting smaller regional and local events requires 8-11 diamonds. Tournament-friendly facilities can be used as satellite facilities for larger events. Covered benches and permanent concessions are a necessity. Lights are preferred. A stadium field, permanent wifi, and auxiliary rooms are not required.

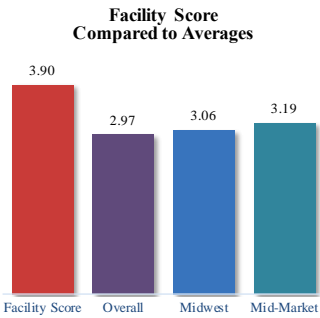
Participant Facility 3

Category: Flat Fields
Facility Name: Lake Country Soccer Complex
Ability to Book: Definitely yes

Facility Score 3.90

Average Scores for Category

Overall 2.97
Midwest 3.06
Mid-Market 3.19



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Full-sized soccer fields	17	12	12	12
Fields with lights	8	7	3	8
Artificial turf fields	1	2	2	3
Fields with portable goals	15	10	11	12

Flat Fields Industry Standards

Anchor Facility

A minimum of 16 fields is required to be an anchor facility that can host major national and regional events. Well-maintained grass is the preferred playing surface. However, artificial turf extends the playing season and provides options for weather delays. Lights allow tournament directors options in scheduling and extensions of the playing day for weather delays. A stadium field, permanent wifi, and auxiliary rooms are preferred but not required.

Tournament Friendly

A facility capable of hosting smaller regional and local events requires 8-15 fields. Tournament-friendly facilities can be used as satellite facilities for larger events. Having fields with portable goals provide opportunities for the facility to host events for a variety of sports. Lights, a stadium field, permanent wifi, and auxiliary rooms are not required.

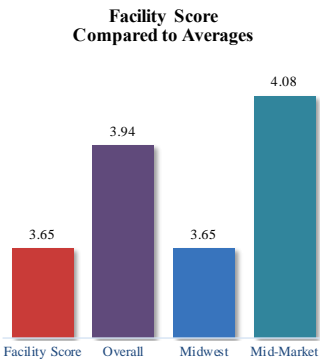
Participant Facility 4

Category: BMX
Facility Name: Spokes BMX
Ability to Book: Definitely yes

Facility Score 3.65

Average Scores for Category

Overall 3.94
Midwest 3.65
Mid-Market 4.08



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Sanctioned by USA BMX (% Yes)	Yes	100%	100%	100%
Paved turns (% Yes)	No	50%	0%	50%
Professional drop gate (% Yes)	Yes	100%	100%	100%
Lights (% Yes)	Yes	100%	100%	100%

BMX Industry Standards

Anchor Facility

A USA BMX sanctioned track with paved turns, a professional drop gate, and lights are required to be an anchor facility that can host major national and regional events. Seating capacity of 1,500+ allows the facility to host the larger events. A public announcement system and ample parking are required. Permanent concessions and ample auxiliary rooms are preferred but not required.

Tournament Friendly

A USA BMX sanctioned track with a professional drop gate is required to be a tournament friendly facility that can host local, state, and regional events. A public announcement system and ample parking are required. Seating capacity of 500+, lights, paved turns, concessions, and auxiliary rooms are preferred.



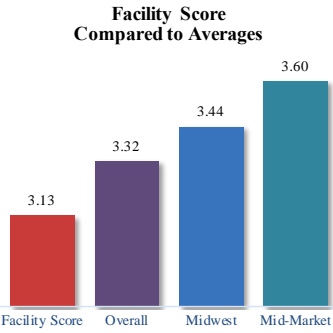
Participant Facility 5

Category: Indoor Courts
Facility Name: The Field House
Ability to Book: Probably yes

Facility Score	3.13
----------------	------

Average Scores for Category

Overall	3.32
Midwest	3.44
Mid-Market	3.60



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Basketball courts	4	8	8	10
Volleyball courts	8	13	13	15
Court surface (% Hardwood)	Hardwood	50%	60%	67%
Scoreboard per court (% Yes)	Yes	88%	100%	83%

Indoor Courts Industry Standards

Anchor Facility

A minimum of 8 basketball/16 volleyball courts is required to be an anchor facility that can host major national and regional events. Hardwood surface is preferred over sport court. Scoreboards, auxiliary rooms, and ample space for seating are preferred but not required.

Tournament Friendly

A facility capable of hosting smaller regional and local events requires 4 basketball/8 volleyball courts. Tournament-friendly facilities can be used as satellite facilities for larger events. Hardwood surface is preferred over sport court.

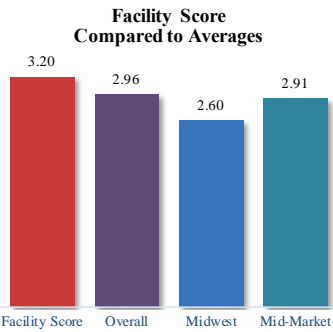
Spectator Facility 1

Category: Baseball Stadium
Facility Name: Hammons Field
Ability to Book: Probably yes

Facility Score	3.20
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Average Scores for Category

Overall	2.96
Midwest	2.60
Mid-Market	2.91



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Seating capacity (% 10,000+)	7,001-10,000	24%	14%	13%
Premium seating (% Yes)	7,001-10,000	82%	57%	88%
Artificial turf (% Yes)	No	24%	29%	25%
Retractable roof (% Yes)	No	6%	0%	0%
Roof (% Yes)	No	0%	0%	0%

Top Facilities Overall

- Chase Field**
Southwest
4.95
- Suplizio Field**
West
3.85
- TD Ameritrade Park**
Midwest
3.70

Midwest

- TD Ameritrade Park**
3.70
- Fox Cities Stadium**
3.35
- Hammons Field**
3.20

Mid-Market

- TD Ameritrade Park**
3.70
- Fox Cities Stadium**
3.35
- Hammons Field**
3.20



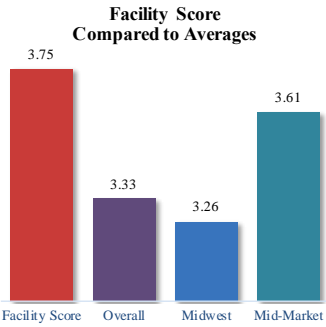
Spectator Facility 2

Category: Arena
 Facility Name: JQH Arena
 Ability to Book: Definitely yes

Facility Score 3.75

Average Scores for Category

Overall 3.33
 Midwest 3.26
 Mid-Market 3.61



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Seating capacity (% 7,000+)	10,001-15,000	67%	67%	73%
Seating capacity (% 15,000+)	Yes	10%	11%	18%
Auxiliary meeting rooms	5	8	5	7
Premium seating (% Yes)	Yes	86%	78%	91%
Center-hung video board (% Yes)	Yes	62%	67%	73%

Top Facilities

	Midwest	Mid-Market
1 Talking Stick Resort Arena Southwest 4.40	CHI Health Center 4.35	CHI Health Center 4.35
2 CHI Health Center Midwest 4.35	Baxter Arena 4.00	Spokane Veterans 4.15
3 Spokane Veterans Arena West 4.15	Ralston Arena 3.85	Coleman Coliseum 4.05

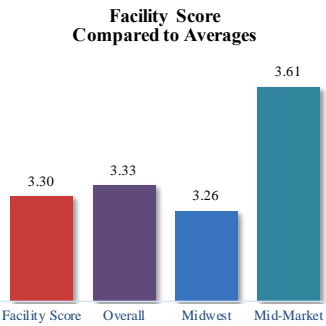
Spectator Facility 3

Category: Arena
 Facility Name: O'Reilly Family Event Center
 Ability to Book: Definitely yes

Facility Score 3.30

Average Scores for Category

Overall 3.33
 Midwest 3.26
 Mid-Market 3.61



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Seating capacity (% 7,000+)	3,001-5,000	67%	67%	73%
Seating capacity (% 15,000+)	Yes	10%	11%	18%
Auxiliary meeting rooms	1	8	5	7
Premium seating (% Yes)	Yes	86%	78%	91%
Center-hung video board (% Yes)	Yes	62%	67%	73%

Top Facilities

	Midwest	Mid-Market
1 Talking Stick Resort Arena Southwest 4.40	CHI Health Center 4.35	CHI Health Center 4.35
2 CHI Health Center Midwest 4.35	Baxter Arena 4.00	Spokane Veterans 4.15
3 Spokane Veterans Arena West 4.15	Ralston Arena 3.85	Coleman Coliseum 4.05



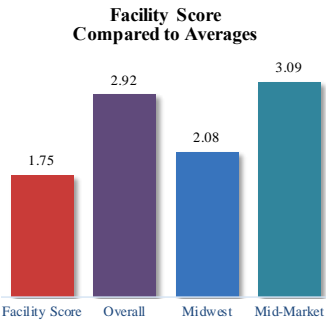
Spectator Facility 4

Category: Football Stadium
 Facility Name: Plaster Stadium
 Ability to Book: Definitely yes

Facility Score: 1.75

Average Scores for Category

Overall: 2.92
 Midwest: 2.08
 Mid-Market: 3.09



Key Facility Attributes

Attribute	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Seating capacity (% 60,000+)	15,001-20,000	31%	0%	40%
Seating capacity (% 100,000+)	15,001-20,000	15%	0%	40%
Premium seating (% Yes)	Yes	77%	60%	100%
Artificial turf (% Yes)	Yes	54%	100%	60%
Retractable roof (% Yes)	No	8%	0%	0%
Roof (% Yes)	No	0%	0%	0%

Top Facilities

Rank	Facility Name	Region	Score
1	Bryant Denny Stadium	Midwest	4.55
2	State Farm Stadium	Midwest	4.45
3	Kyle Field	Midwest	4.35

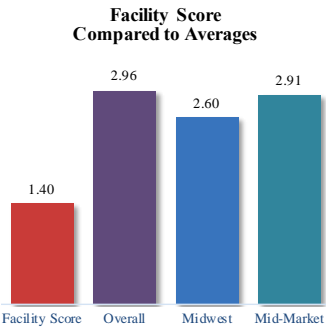
Spectator Facility 5

Category: Baseball Stadium
 Facility Name: US Baseball Park
 Ability to Book: Definitely yes

Facility Score: 1.40

Average Scores for Category

Overall: 2.96
 Midwest: 2.60
 Mid-Market: 2.91



Key Facility Attributes

Attribute	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Seating capacity (% 10,000+)	3,001-5,000	24%	14%	13%
Premium seating (% Yes)	No	82%	57%	88%
Artificial turf (% Yes)	Yes	24%	29%	25%
Retractable roof (% Yes)	No	6%	0%	0%
Roof (% Yes)	No	0%	0%	0%

Top Facilities

Rank	Facility Name	Region	Score
1	Chase Field	Midwest	3.70
2	Suplizio Field	Midwest	3.35
3	TD Ameritrade Park	Midwest	3.20



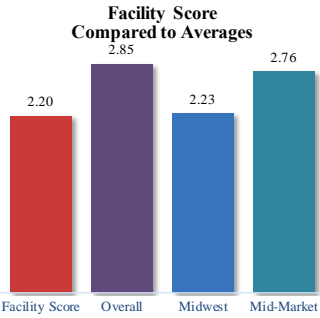
Convention Center

Category: Convention Center
Facility Name: Springfield Expo Center
Ability to Book: Probably yes

Facility Score	2.20
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Average Scores for Category

Overall	2.85
Midwest	2.23
Mid-Market	2.76



Key Facility Attributes

	Your Facility	Overall Average	Midwest	Mid-Market
Total sq. ft. (% 50,000+)	110,001-120,000	77%	60%	83%
Total sq. ft. (% 200,000+)	110,001-120,000	54%	20%	50%
Sq. ft. largest space (% 50,000+)	40,001-50,000	77%	60%	83%
Sq. ft. largest space (% 150,000+)	40,001-50,000	23%	20%	17%
Ceiling height of largest space	35	32	28	31
Auxiliary meeting rooms	0	19	7	17

Top Facilities

Overall	Midwest	Mid-Market
1 Spokane Convention Center West 3.90	CHI Health Center 2.90	Spokane Convention Center 3.90
2 Greater Richmond Convention Center Southeast 3.75	RiverCenter 2.45	Sheraton Four Seasons Convention Center 3.2
3 Palm Beach County Convention Center Southeast 3.45	Springfield Expo Center 2.20	CHI Health Center 2.90



Appendix H – Springfield Sports Commission Funding Source Summary

Identification of a sustainable funding source for facility development and to enhance the current marketing program of the SSC is essential for the long-term success of sports tourism in Springfield. Below and on the following pages is a list of potential funding sources that could be tapped to support this expanded effort.

Funding Source	Tax %	Projected Annual Amount Generated	Notes
New Hotel Tax	2.50%	\$3 million	Passing this tax would require state enabling legislation to increase the hotel tax above the current level of 5%. Legislation to allow for an increase of the hotel tax to up to 7.5% didn't get through the legislative session in 2019. Should the legislation be put in place and Springfield voters approved an increase of 2.5%, it would likely generate \$3 million the first year and grow by an average of at least \$150,000 (5%) per year into the future.
New Restaurant Tax	1.0%	\$5 million	Springfield currently does not have a prepared food or restaurant tax.
1/4 Cent Capital Improvements Sales Tax	0.25%	\$11 million	This tax was recently extended with 20-year sunset. A convention center and/or sports facility could receive funding from this source. City Council has the authority to determine which projects get funded.
2027 Hotel Tax	2.50%	\$3 million	The 2.5% hotel tax passed in 1998 will expire in 2027. This part of the hotel tax will be up for renewal and it could be used as a source for funding a "phase II" of any project(s).



**Appendix H – Springfield Sports Commission
Funding Source Summary (Continued)**

Funding Source	Tax %	Projected Annual Amount Generated	Notes
Existing Hotel Tax	0.50%	\$585,000	<p>In 1998 a 2.5% increase in the hotel tax was passed, of which 0.5% was dedicated to Wonders of Wildlife. In 2011 Wonders of Wildlife gave up the 0.5%. Since that time the City Council has redirected 40% of the 0.5% tax (approximately \$235,000 per year) to help with bond payments for Jordon Valley Park projects, and 60% of the 0.5% (approximately \$350,000 per year) to a committee that offers grants to nonprofits for tourism related capital improvement projects. Although grants helped with improvements at Lake Country Soccer as well as other facilities, the committee has banked the funds for the last couple of years due to the quality of applications not being up to expectations. The \$350,000 per year could be used for convention or sports facilities with only City Council approval as long as the use fit the original ballot language. The 40% the city keeps (\$235,000) could also be used for convention or sports facilities with City Council approval.</p>



**Appendix H – Springfield Sports Commission
Funding Source Summary (Continued)**

Funding Source	Tax %	Projected Annual Amount Generated	Notes
Model Similar to Branson's Proposed Use Tax	2.0%	\$492,178	A use tax is applied in lieu of a sales tax on purchases made with out-of-state vendors, including internet, catalogue and direct market sales.
Proposed ¼ Cent Greene County Parks Sales Tax	.25%	\$11,400,000	A proposed county-wide sales tax to fund improvements of parks and recreation facilities. Specifically, should this tax be put on a future ballot and passed by county voters, would go towards rehabilitating the parks & sports infrastructure throughout the parks system and also towards expansion of the Greenway Trail System.



**Appendix I – Springfield Sports Commission
Sports Tourism Market
5-Year Strategic Mission Pillars**

In the future, Springfield Sports Commission’s enhanced sports tourism effort should sharpen its focus on three (3) key mission areas, or “Pillars.” Each Pillar is driven by a different audience, all focused on increasing overnight stays and consumer spending in the Springfield area. This refined focus will help the SSC enhance its messaging and will deliver directly on the organization’s tourism mission, as well as positively impact the community’s sports groups. The recommended Pillars are below along with their driving audiences/factors.

Springfield Sports Commission Sports Tourism Market 5-Year Strategic Mission Pillars			
Pillar	Enhanced Structure Events: Bid/Created/Owned (Short-Term)	Venue Enhancement (Long-Term)	Community Engagement (Ongoing)
Audience	Tourism Economic Development Rights Holders/NGBs Local Promoters Colleges/Universities	Venue Managers Hospitality Leaders Elected Officials Economic Development Colleges/Universities Cities/Counties	Elected Officials C-Level Community Leaders Local Media Non-Profit Civic Groups Hospitality Community Colleges/Universities
Tactics	Strengthen Organization Expand Grant Program Grow Existing Events Incubate New Events Continue Bid-In Events	Venue Needs Master Plan Facilities Guide Venue Development Fund Funding Source(s) Defined Develop Indoor Space(s) Feasibility Study Field Trip	Staff = Outwardly Focused “6&6” Lunches “4 Touch” Program Economic Impact Releases

