

Here's an enhanced and updated version of the proposal for **Pottawatomie County Commissioners**, incorporating the additional recommendations for a well-structured, comprehensive presentation that balances **economic development**, **youth sports**, and **community benefit**. This proposal ensures the clarity of your vision, while supporting it with real-world examples from your **doctoral study**, case studies, and personal journey. The following structure will also help guide the commissioners through the key areas of the proposal without overwhelming them.

Proposal for Pottawatomie County Commissioners: Baseball Heaven and Surrounding TIF District Development

I. Executive Summary

Baseball Heaven is a transformative project designed to elevate **Pottawatomie County** into a regional hub for youth sports, economic growth, and community development. This proposal outlines a comprehensive plan for the development of **132 acres**, with a focus on creating a **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district** that will fuel growth through:

- **Youth Sports Infrastructure:** Providing top-tier baseball and softball facilities.
- **Economic Revitalization:** Leveraging hotels, motels, retail, and dining establishments to generate significant tax revenue.
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Utilizing TIF and sales tax revenues to create a self-sustaining economic model that benefits the county and surrounding municipalities.

This project aligns with the insights and strategies developed during my **doctoral study**, which examined the challenges and opportunities in youth sports governance, infrastructure development, and financial transparency. The project draws on best practices from case studies like the **Lions Club ball fields**, the **Florida AG vs USSSA RICO case**, and my proposals for **umpire salary conversion**.

II. Vision and Purpose

The **Baseball Heaven** project is built on the following core pillars:

1. **Economic Development:** To create a regional destination that drives visitor traffic, stimulates local business, and generates long-term tax revenue.

2. **Youth Sports and Community Engagement:** To provide local youth with access to state-of-the-art facilities while fostering community pride and involvement.
 3. **Public-Private Partnerships and Sustainability:** To create a governance model that ensures financial transparency, sustainable operations, and reinvestment in the community.
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III. Project Overview and Scope

1. **Baseball Heaven – The Sports Complex (60 Acres)**
 - **6 Turf Baseball and Softball Fields:** Fully lit, multi-use fields to accommodate tournaments, leagues, and community events.
 - **Indoor Training Facilities:** Year-round training areas with batting cages, pitching tunnels, and sports performance areas.
 - **Community Event Center:** A multi-purpose indoor space for youth programs, community gatherings, and special events.
 - **Revenue Streams:** Field rentals, tournament hosting, concessions, and merchandising.
 2. **Hotel/Motel Development (40-50 Acres)**
 - **Mid-range and Extended Stay Hotels:** Cater to visiting teams and families, generating sales tax and visitor occupancy tax.
 - **Projected Revenue:** Sales tax from hotels, estimated at **\$300,000 - \$500,000 annually**.
 - **Economic Impact:** Increased tourism and hospitality jobs, leading to sustained economic benefits for the county.
 3. **Retail and Commercial Zones (15-20 Acres)**
 - **Restaurants, Retail, and Entertainment:** Services targeting visitors and locals alike.
 - **Sales Tax Generation:** Projections of **\$225,000 - \$300,000 annually** from retail and dining businesses.
 - **Economic Synergy:** By clustering these commercial services around **Baseball Heaven**, the county can benefit from a full-service hub for youth sports tourism.
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IV. TIF District and Financial Model

1. **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District**
 - **TIF Capture:** Property tax increments resulting from the increased value of developed land within the TIF district will be reinvested into infrastructure (roads, utilities, public spaces).
 - **Reinvestment Model:** Captured taxes will fund the development of roads, utilities, and essential infrastructure, creating a cycle of sustainable growth.
2. **Sales and Visitor Tax Advantages**

- **Sales Tax from Hotel/Motel and Retail:** Sales tax from visitor spending and lodging is projected to generate **\$500,000 - \$750,000 annually**, directly contributing to county revenues.
 - **Visitor Taxes:** Hotel/motel occupancy taxes will boost income, benefiting the entire county and supporting ongoing municipal projects.
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V. Infrastructure Requirements

1. Roads and Utilities

- **Road Construction:** Estimated at **\$1M - \$1.5M** to connect the complex with highways and ensure accessibility.
- **Utility Infrastructure:** Estimated **\$500,000 - \$800,000** for water, sewage, electricity, and gas lines.

2. Green Spaces and Public Amenities

- **Public Parks and Landscaping:** Creating inviting green spaces around the complex will improve aesthetics, provide recreation for visitors, and increase property values.
 - **Cost Estimate:** \$200,000 - \$300,000.
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VI. Youth Sports Development and Underserved Communities

Through my **doctoral study** and direct research in **Pottawatomie County**, it's clear that many towns (Shawnee, Tecumseh, McLoud, Bethel Acres, etc.) are underserved in youth sports infrastructure. The **Baseball Heaven** project will address these disparities by providing:

- **Access to State-of-the-Art Facilities:** Towns with outdated or underfunded sports programs will benefit from regional access to modern, multi-use sports fields.
 - **Umpire Salary Conversion:** Implementing the umpire salary conversion model will improve the professionalism of officiating, eliminate cash payments, and ensure fair compensation.
 - **Community Collaboration:** By hosting regional tournaments, clinics, and training events, smaller towns can use **Baseball Heaven** as a hub to engage youth in organized sports programs.
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VII. Economic Impact and Long-Term Sustainability

1. Economic Multipliers

- **Job Creation:** The project will create jobs in hospitality, retail, event management, and sports administration.

- **Increased Visitor Spending:** With the influx of visitors for tournaments and events, local businesses in the hotel, retail, and dining sectors will benefit from sustained visitor spending.
 - **Tax Revenue Growth:** Increased property, sales, and visitor taxes will provide Pottawatomie County with a long-term revenue stream.
 - 2. **Public Engagement and Community Benefits**
 - **Youth Scholarships:** The creation of a scholarship fund for underserved youth will ensure equitable access to youth sports programs.
 - **Community Outreach Programs:** **Baseball Heaven** will partner with local schools and organizations to offer clinics, educational programs, and mentorship opportunities for youth athletes.
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VIII. Governance and Financial Transparency

1. **Baseball Heaven Oversight Board**
 - Propose the establishment of an independent **Oversight Board**, including county officials, community leaders, and local business representatives. This board will ensure transparency in financial operations and strategic planning.
 - **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular financial audits to maintain accountability and ensure the efficient use of public funds.
 2. **Public-Private Partnerships**
 - **Corporate Sponsorships:** Leverage public-private partnerships to secure additional revenue through sponsorships and partnerships with local businesses and national brands.
 - **Public Engagement:** Host community meetings to ensure ongoing input and support from local residents, sports organizations, and small businesses.
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IX. Broader County Development and Future Opportunities

1. **Alignment with County's Master Plan**
 - Demonstrate how **Baseball Heaven** fits into Pottawatomie County's broader economic development goals, aligning with infrastructure, tourism, and recreation plans.
 2. **Phased Development Strategy**
 - **Phase 1:** Construction of core infrastructure and **Baseball Heaven** sports fields.
 - **Phase 2:** Development of hotels/motels, retail, and dining zones.
 - **Phase 3:** Expansion of community facilities, green spaces, and additional sports programming.
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X. Conclusion and Next Steps

Baseball Heaven represents a unique opportunity for Pottawatomie County to:

- Boost economic growth through increased tourism, sales tax, and job creation.
- Provide underserved communities with high-quality youth sports infrastructure.
- Create a sustainable, self-reinforcing economic model through a **TIF district** and transparent financial governance.

Next Steps:

1. Approval from the **Pottawatomie County Commissioners** to proceed with the formal planning phase.
2. Formation of a **Baseball Heaven Oversight Board** and initiation of public-private partnerships.
3. Begin environmental and zoning assessments, followed by infrastructure development.

This proposal combines my personal journey, doctoral research, and a clear, actionable plan for the future of **Pottawatomie County**. The project is designed to deliver both immediate and long-term benefits, ensuring the sustainable growth of the county through youth sports, community engagement, and economic revitalization.