

# Pottawatomie County's Transformative Sports and Economic Hub: Briefing Document

10-26-2023

Briefing Document: Baseball Heaven and Pottawatomie County TIF District Development

**Date: October 26, 2023**

**Subject:** Review of the "Proposal for Pottawatomie County Commissioners: Baseball Heaven and Surrounding TIF District Development"

*This briefing document summarizes the key themes, important ideas, and facts presented in the proposal for the "Baseball Heaven" project in Pottawatomie County. The proposal outlines a comprehensive plan for a 132-acre development centered around youth sports, economic growth, and community engagement, leveraging a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.*

## **I. Executive Summary and Core Vision**

The Baseball Heaven project is presented as a "transformative project designed to elevate Pottawatomie County into a regional hub for youth sports, economic growth, and community development." The core pillars of this vision are:

**Economic Development:** To create a regional destination driving visitor traffic, stimulating local business, and generating long-term tax revenue.

**Youth Sports and Community Engagement:** To provide local youth with access to state-of-the-art facilities and foster community pride.

**Public-Private Partnerships and Sustainability:** To establish a governance model ensuring financial transparency, sustainable operations, and community reinvestment.

*The proposal emphasizes the project's alignment with "insights and strategies developed during my doctoral study, which examined the challenges and opportunities in youth sports governance, infrastructure development, and financial transparency." It 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."*

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**Disclaimer:** This lecture reflects the author's independent research and scholarly analysis. It is not intended as legal advice. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, readers are encouraged to consult primary legal sources and qualified counsel before relying on any opinions expressed herein.

## **II. Project Components and Scope**

The 132-acre development is broken down into three primary zones:

**Baseball Heaven** – The Sports Complex (60 Acres):

**Facilities:** Six fully lit, multi-use turf baseball and softball fields, indoor training facilities (batting cages, pitching tunnels, sports performance areas), and a multi-purpose Community Event Center.

**Revenue Streams:** Field rentals, tournament hosting, concessions, and merchandising.  
Hotel/Motel Development (40-50 Acres):

**Purpose:** To cater to visiting teams and families.

Projected Revenue: "Sales tax from hotels, estimated at \$300,000 - \$500,000 annually," along with visitor occupancy tax.

**Economic Impact:** Increased tourism and hospitality jobs.

Retail and Commercial Zones (15-20 Acres):

**Purpose:** To provide restaurants, retail, and entertainment services for visitors and locals.

**Projected Revenue:** "Projections of \$225,000 - \$300,000 annually from retail and dining businesses."

**Economic Synergy:** Clustering these services around Baseball Heaven creates a "full-service hub for youth sports tourism."

### **III. Financial Model and Revenue Generation**

The proposal heavily relies on a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and various tax advantages:

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)." This creates a "cycle of sustainable growth."

Sales and Visitor Tax Advantages: Sales Tax: "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 are expected to "boost income, benefiting the entire county and supporting ongoing municipal projects."

### **IV. Infrastructure Requirements**

Significant upfront investment in infrastructure is identified:

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."

Green Spaces and Public Amenities: "Cost Estimate: \$200,000 - \$300,000" for public parks and landscaping.

### **V. Youth Sports Development and Underserved Communities**

A key component of the proposal is addressing existing disparities in youth sports infrastructure within Pottawatomie County:

**Addressing Disparities:** The project aims to provide "Access to State-of-the-Art Facilities" for towns like Shawnee, Tecumseh, McCloud, and Bethel Acres, which are currently "underserved in youth sports infrastructure."

**Umpire Salary Conversion:** The proposal includes "Implementing the umpire salary conversion model [to] improve the professionalism of officiating, eliminate cash payments, and ensure fair compensation."

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**Community Collaboration:** The complex will serve as a hub for regional tournaments, clinics, and training events, allowing "smaller towns [to] use Baseball Heaven as a hub to engage youth in organized sports programs."

### **VI. Economic Impact and Long-Term Sustainability**

#### **The proposal projects substantial economic benefits:**

**Job Creation:** Jobs in hospitality, retail, event management, and sports administration.

**Increased Visitor Spending:** Local businesses will benefit from "sustained visitor spending" due to the influx of visitors for tournaments and events.

**Tax Revenue Growth:** "Increased property, sales, and visitor taxes will provide Pottawatomie County with a long-term revenue stream."

**Community Benefits:** Includes "Youth Scholarships" for underserved youth and "Community Outreach Programs" partnering with local schools for clinics and mentorship.

### **VII. Governance and Financial Transparency**

#### **To ensure accountability, the proposal recommends:**

**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:** To "maintain accountability and ensure the efficient use of public funds."

**Public-Private Partnerships:** To "secure additional revenue through sponsorships" and "Host community meetings to ensure ongoing input and support."

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### **VIII. Broader County Development and Future Opportunities**

The project is presented as aligning with the county's broader master plan, with a proposed phased development strategy:

**Phase 1:** Construction of core infrastructure and sports fields.

**Phase 2:** Development of hotels/motels, retail, and dining zones.

**Phase 3:** Expansion of community facilities, green spaces, and additional sports programming.

### **IX. Conclusion and Next Steps**

The proposal concludes that Baseball Heaven offers a unique opportunity for Pottawatomie County to "Boost economic growth," "Provide underserved communities with high-quality youth sports infrastructure," and "Create a sustainable, self-reinforcing economic model through a TIF district and transparent financial governance."

#### **The immediate next steps requested are:**

**Approval** from the Pottawatomie County Commissioners to proceed with the formal planning phase.

**Formation** of a Baseball Heaven Oversight Board and initiation of public-private partnerships.

**Begin** environmental and zoning assessments, followed by infrastructure development.