

SHAWNEE REGIONAL SPORTS PARK

Promise vs. Actual Outcome

An In-Depth Retrospective Doctoral Case Study of Municipal Recreation Policy, Oklahoma State University's 2011 Economic-Impact Model, Lions Club Ballfields, and the Oklahoma Youth-Sports Tournament Market, 2000-2026

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Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game

Integrity of the Game vs. Economic Impact (Politics): The Oklahoma Business Plan

Core research question: What institutional, facility, governance, public-finance, and market conditions determine whether projected sports-tourism demand is converted into sustained activity at the public facility for which the projection was originally made?

Expanded question: How did Shawnee balance maintenance and improvement of existing community youth-sports infrastructure - particularly Lions Club Ballfields - against a multi-year effort to develop a new Regional Sports Park justified partly through regional tournament tourism and economic impact?

Dataset note: Shawnee minutes research file: 36,388 rows. Hidden Valley comparison uses AIUSSSA - HVI0G 9-10-2026.csv.

Abstract

This case study reconstructs more than two decades of Shawnee municipal decision-making concerning youth-sports facilities and the proposed Regional Sports Park. It integrates a 36,388-row municipal-minutes research dataset, archived City video, City/Jacobs planning materials, Oklahoma State University's December 2011 economic-impact analysis, Open Records Request 26-99, and the September 10, 2026 Hidden Valley USSSA dataset. The minutes materially change the interpretation: the Regional Park did not move linearly from concept to construction. The record shows repeated site changes, advisory committees, grants, lease negotiations, scaled designs, dedicated financing, public hearings, competing capital priorities, a 160-acre purchase, and by 2016 a discussion of whether to sell all, sell part, or retain the land. Meanwhile, Lions Club Ballfields remained an operating community asset requiring improvements, volunteer/user-group participation, and later renewed public concern.

1. Methodology and Evidence Architecture

The Shawnee minutes dataset contains 36,388 research rows. Targeted retrieval identified 66 rows containing 'regional park,' 20 containing 'regional sports,' 31 containing 'sports complex,' and 13 containing 'Lions Club.' These are retrieval counts rather than unique meetings. The study uses a prospective-retrospective design: preserve the 2011 OSU model as a fixed historical benchmark, then compare later municipal records and Hidden Valley event data without rewriting the original model with hindsight. The minutes CSV is a research index rather than a substitute for every original record; USSSA is only one sanctioning ecosystem; municipality fields are not economic catchment areas; and calculated team-entry fees are analytical measures, not proof of actual collections, profit, municipal revenue, or disposition of funds.

2. Discovery Pathway and Institutional Memory

The OSU component was discovered through municipal archival work: Shawnee minutes -> archived livestream -> discovery of the OSU study -> public-records request -> City's no-responsive-records determination -> independent recovery of the OSU publication -> Hidden Valley retrospective comparison. This pathway demonstrates the value of triangulation and institutional-memory research.

3. Lions Club Ballfields: Existing Community Infrastructure

The minutes establish a community-facility baseline before the Regional Park became a major policy project. On February 22, 2000, the Commission received a \$55,780 bid for the Lions Club West Softball Field lighting project. Later entries show volunteer maintenance, user-group proposals, City permission for outside organizations to prepare fields, community cleanup and restoration, and continuing concern about adequacy. This trajectory provides the essential comparison with the proposed regional sports-tourism complex. Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game | In-Depth Doctoral Case Study | September 2026 Page 3

4. Emergence of the Regional Park Concept: 2000-2003

On September 5, 2000, the Commission discussed a long-range regional park with ballparks, soccer fields, a pavilion, and a water park and ordered a preliminary study. In December 2000 the park became one of four major capital projects. A Regional Park Oversight Committee was in place by July 2001. Hornbeek Larsson Architects proposed site selection/master planning/design services for \$30,000 in September 2001. Four sites were presented in December. The long-range need for 10-12 soccer fields was discussed in January 2002. The North Airport master plan was deferred in June; an architect's rendering was presented in September amid remoteness concerns. On July 7, 2003, the airport property at Kickapoo and Hazel Dell was approved as the park/sports-complex site, but the site search later reopened.

5. Financing and the Big Four Context

On December 17, 2001, the Shawnee Municipal Authority authorized a \$5.35 million Sales Tax Revenue Note. The research record associates the financing package with the capital program that included the regional park/sports complex. The September 2009 City Report later described the park as one of the earlier 'big four' projects and said money had been set aside through the original financing for Regional Park purposes. By April 2007, staff told the Commission that third-penny sales-tax money earmarked for the park had to be spent on a regional park project.

6. Site Migration, Grants, and Advisory Governance: 2004-2007

In July 2004, the mayor favored a visible I-40 site for economic benefits and negotiations north of I-40 were authorized. By September, a 160-acre State School Land Commission site was under consideration. In December 2004, staff proposed a Land and Water Fund grant to acquire or lease about 200 acres at Kickapoo and Westech, with estimated land cost of about \$500,000 and a City share of \$225,000. In February 2005, the Commission changed 'forming' to 'reforming' the Regional Sports Complex Advisory Committee. By November 2005, staff was authorized to negotiate an annual lease on 30 acres for Phase I. A \$22,750 landscape architectural proposal followed. The February 2006 master plan described a 10-15 year project beginning with soccer and adding baseball/softball later. In September 2007, a citizen asked the City not to renege on its promise to build sports fields and referenced about \$1 million in appropriation.

7. 2008: Existing Parks vs. Regional Ambition

The February 4, 2008 minutes bring the two facility models together: Regional Park fund flexibility, Lions Club Park needs, girls softball fields, pool repairs, soccer land/lease constraints, and capital-versus-maintenance priorities were discussed together. On April 14, a proposal was made to rename the budget line from 'Regional Park' to 'Parks and Recreation Projects.' On April 21, staff was directed to appraise a 76-acre Kickapoo Street property and meet with user groups. On September 2, a citizen described volunteer maintenance of T-ball fields at Lions Club Park. On October 6, SYAA proposed Lions Club ballfield improvements and SYAA/YMCA was allowed to prepare the fields pending a formal contract. At the same meeting, staff reviewed a North Airport Sports Complex infrastructure plan. Community-field stewardship and regional sports-tourism development were therefore being considered simultaneously. Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game | In-Depth Doctoral Case Study | September 2026 Page 4

8. Late 2008-2009: Scaled Designs and the 160-Acre Purchase

On October 20, 2008, citizens debated whether the North Airport site was too remote and whether the park should instead be visible from I-40 or Highway 177. Staff presented original and scaled-down North Airport plans to align costs with available funding. On November 17, the Commission formed a sports-park committee to investigate alternative locations. The 2009 minutes document appraisals, lease calculations, multiple executive sessions concerning real-property acquisition, and the closing process. The September 10, 2009 City Report described the 160-acre

9. Jacobs Engineering and the \$19.5 Million Vision: 2010-2011

On February 16, 2010, the Commission approved a professional-services agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group for a Regional Park Master Plan. Public meetings followed. On March 21, 2011, the Master Plan was presented with baseball, softball, soccer fields, and trails; the minutes research identifies a total estimated cost of \$19,535,167 and Phase I at approximately \$12-\$14 million. By August 2011, the Regional Park was competing with an Aquatics Center, Expo Center upgrades, economic-development investments, and a public-safety center. A dedicated public hearing occurred August 29.

10. December 19, 2011: OSU Model Becomes a Municipal Decision

Tool Agenda Item 6 concerned the economic-impact study for the proposed Regional Sports Complex. City staff distributed the full study, described as about 30-31 pages, and a separate one-page summary. Staff stated that the OSU economist was unavailable but could attend later, and said the City had contracted with Oklahoma State University Extension Service to prepare the analysis. Staff also said the study would be posted online and questions could be routed to the OSU researcher. This was the City of Shawnee presentation and discussion of the completed OSU study, not an in-person OSU presentation.

11. OSU Model vs. Municipal Expectations

OSU's annual scenario used 17 baseball tournaments and 2 soccer tournaments. The baseball peer sample averaged about 13 tournaments per year, 35 teams per tournament, and 16.62 out-of-town teams per tournament. During the municipal discussion, one speaker suggested Shawnee might host not only 17 tournaments but potentially 30 and referenced comparison fields reportedly used as many as 42 weekends. Staff said OSU's role was to collect/analyze data, while marketing the park and getting fields used would become the City's responsibility. The longitudinal sequence is OSU model -> municipal expectation -> observed outcome.

12. What OSU Actually Modeled

The December 2011 report by OSU Extension economist Dave Shideler and Pottawatomie County Extension Director Joe Benton used City/Jacobs assumptions, peer-community participation information, Oklahoma tourism data, federal travel reimbursement rates, and IMPLAN multipliers. The capital plan was about \$19.5 million in 2010 dollars. The written report used about \$311,984 in annual operations and maintenance; the City presentation rounded the Jacobs figure to about \$340,000. OSU estimated roughly \$51,317-\$116,224 in direct visitor spending per baseball tournament. The 17-baseball/2-soccer schedule produced about \$1.79 million-\$4.05 million in total annual output impact. OSU expressly said the analysis was not a feasibility study and was not a

13. February 2012: Economic Impact vs. Fiscal Feasibility

On February 6, 2012, a citizen challenged assumptions in the Regional Sports Complex study, including bond interest, debt-service term, out-of-town team counts, and overnight stays. The citizen stated that a spreadsheet showed a large annual cash deficit and asked where the shortfall would be funded. The exchange demonstrates a central distinction: economic output is not the same as municipal revenue, and economic impact is not the same as project feasibility.

14. Open Records Request 26-99 and the Missing Administrative

Record The February 22, 2026 request sought the complete study, appendices, modeling inputs, one-page summary, drafts, contract/scope/payment records, City-OSU communications, comparative-facility documents, visitor-spending support, tax projections, Jacobs O&M; material, web-posting records, questions/responses, and later records relying on the study. On April 14, 2026, the City stated that an extensive review found no responsive documents. The 2011 audiovisual record nevertheless establishes that the City possessed the study and one-page summary, described a contract with OSU Extension, intended to post the report online, and offered to route questions to the researcher. This establishes a documentary disconnect, not the reason for it. Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game | In-Depth Doctoral Case Study | September 2026 Page 7

15. 2016: From Development Vision to Sell/Retain Decision

The March 25, 2016 special-call discussion is a major outcome checkpoint. The minutes identify the Regional Park property as 160 acres purchased for \$800,000 and describe barriers involving access, utilities, and improvement costs. Commissioners discussed three broad options: sell all, sell part, or retain all. Some supported selling the property and investing proceeds in existing parks; another supported retaining it for possibilities including soccer fields and wind-energy generation. Five years after Jacobs and OSU, the municipal conversation had shifted from how to build the Regional Sports Park to whether the City should continue holding the land.

16. Lions Club After the Regional Park Debate

Lions Club Park continued as an actual community recreation asset. In 2013, the City considered partnering with the YMCA on a KABOOM community-built playground and later recognized Lions Club Park cleanup and restoration efforts. In July 2022, a citizen again addressed the Commission about the condition of the Lions Club baseball fields and lack of proper facilities. On July 18, 2022, administrative reports included an overview of the Lions Club Park Ball Fields agreement with the YMCA. The long-term comparison is striking: while Shawnee spent years pursuing a new regional tournament destination, its preexisting community ballfields continued to depend on incremental improvements and operating relationships and remained the subject of facility-adequacy concerns.

17. Hidden Valley Retrospective: OSU Peer Communities

Using 2011-forward USSSA baseball records: Ardmore documented 47 events across 16 active years, 2.9 per active year, 2,456 teams, 52.3 teams/event, and \$881,100 calculated entry fees. Bixby documented 260 events across 13 active years, 20.0 per active year, 11,612 teams, 44.7 teams/event, and \$2,575,327. Broken Arrow documented 229 events across 15 active years, 15.3 per active year, 9,003 teams, 39.3 teams/event, and \$2,030,951. Chickasha documented 39 events across 9 active years, 4.3 per active year, 1,148 teams, 29.4 teams/event, and \$300,458. Muskogee documented 30 events across 5 active years, 6.0 per active year, 722 teams, 24.1 teams/event, and \$137,648. This is not a replication of OSU's survey, but OSU's 35-team average lies within the later peer range, while its 13-tournament benchmark was exceeded by two peers and not reached by three. Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game | In-Depth Doctoral Case Study | September 2026 Page 8

18. Shawnee, Lions Club, and FireLake: Observed Facility

Outcomes The September 10, 2026 Hidden Valley dataset contains 39 distinct Shawnee baseball Event URLs across all years, but those records occur from 2002 through 2008; the 2011-forward Shawnee municipality count is zero. This is a bounded USSSA-dataset finding, not proof that no other tournaments occurred. Lions Club Ballfields supplies an earlier baseline of 41 Event URLs, 869 team entries, \$98,842 in calculated team-entry fees, 1,943 minimum games, and 3,479 minimum umpire assignments. Direct FireLake records contain 182 Event URLs, 4,588 teams, \$1,432,005 in calculated entry fees, 14,851 minimum games, and 28,971 minimum umpire assignments. All records containing FireLake total 202 Event URLs, 6,117 teams, \$2,357,590 in calculated entry fees, 20,049 minimum games, and 39,284 minimum umpire assignments.

19. Promise vs. Actual Outcome: Integrated Findings

The general premise of a meaningful Oklahoma tournament market is supported by later peer and FireLake activity. OSU's 13-tournament peer average was plausible as a scenario benchmark but not a uniform later outcome. OSU's 35-team average lies within the later observed peer range. The City's discussion of potentially 30 tournaments exceeded OSU's modeled 17 and should be treated as municipal expectation rather than academic prediction. Municipal Shawnee does not show a comparable post-2010 USSSA baseball footprint, while FireLake documents substantial regional market capture. The minutes reveal a continuing policy tension between investment in existing community facilities and pursuit of a new regional economic-development asset. The 2016 sell/retain debate indicates that implementation barriers, not merely market demand, became central to the actual outcome.

20. Doctoral Significance, Limitations, and Next Research Phase

The case connects recreation administration, sports economics, public finance, capital planning, facility governance, sports tourism, institutional theory, and public-choice questions in one bounded municipal setting. A potential doctoral contribution is methodological: use historical prospective economic-impact studies as fixed pre-analysis benchmarks; separate academic models from municipal expectations; then test subsequent facility and tournament outcomes with longitudinal event-level data and public-administration records. Next research should trace the 160-acre parcel through deeds/GIS and later minutes; assemble post-2011 capital and operating records; seek OSU archival files including the one-page summary, working spreadsheets, peer survey responses and correspondence; add other sanctioning bodies where possible; reconstruct lodging and sales-tax conditions; and build a formal OSU-to-Hidden-Valley variable crosswalk. Hidden Valley - Integrity of the Game | In-Depth Doctoral Case Study | September 2026 Page 9

Conclusion

The 2011 OSU report did not promise that a Shawnee Regional Sports Park would succeed. It modeled what economic effects could follow if a suitable complex attracted tournament visitors. The minutes now show that Shawnee's policy story began more than a decade earlier, repeatedly changed sites and implementation strategies, and existed alongside continuing needs at Lions Club Ballfields. Fifteen years after OSU, Hidden Valley indicates that the tournament market was real but uneven. Municipal Shawnee does not show a comparable post-2010 USSSA baseball footprint, while FireLake demonstrates substantial activity in the surrounding regional network. The academically useful question is what conditions convert projected sports-tourism demand into sustained facility-level outcomes, and how municipalities choose between maintaining existing community recreation assets and pursuing new economic-development infrastructure. Primary source framework: Shawnee municipal minutes research dataset; December 19, 2011 City Commission livestream; September 10, 2009 City Report; April 2011 City/Jacobs presentation; Shideler & Benton, Economic Impact of a Regional Sports Complex in Shawnee, Oklahoma (OSU, 2011); Open Records Request 26-99; September 10, 2026 Hidden Valley dataset; and September 2026 doctoral-program correspondence. Audiovisual primary source: City Commission Meeting 12/19/2011 - <https://youtu.be/Esc97iIsyS0?si=-bUvwmbMjttfvHew>