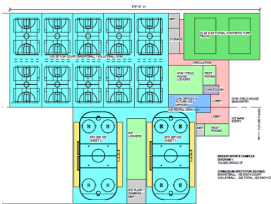


Williamson County is almost perfect for sports tournaments

Melanie Balakit, USA TODAY NETWORK - Tennessee Published 12:11 a.m. CT June 30, 2017 | Updated 11:30 a.m. CT June 30, 2017



(Photo: Hunden Strategic Partners and SinkCombsDethlefs)

Williamson County is poised to host youth sports tournaments with its centralized location, thriving hospitality industry and favorable climate, according to a [report \(http://williamsoncounty-tn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16713\)](http://williamsoncounty-tn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16713) released Thursday.

There's just one thing missing — a large, high-quality sports facility.

Williamson County needs to build more facilities to meet the growth of local youth sports.

But should it also consider building a premier sports complex to host tournaments and in turn help drive economic development to the county?

Groups want to bring tournaments to Williamson County

Williamson County is an ideal location for youth sports tournaments for several reasons, according to the report.

The county already has the necessary hotels and businesses to accommodate traveling families and has warmer weather longer than northern locations. It's also close to Nashville and centrally located, both in Tennessee and the South.

"There are some places that are not ideal for this kind of thing," said [Robin Hunden, president of Hunden Strategic Partners](#). "Here, it's the opposite."

[Hunden Strategic Partners and SinkCombsDethlefs](#) conducted the [report on the market, feasibility and impact of a sports complex \(http://williamsoncounty-tn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16713\)](#) in Williamson County.

State and national soccer associations, the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association and local and regional baseball and softball clubs have expressed interest in hosting tournaments in the county, the report states.

Even niche sports have expressed an interest in Williamson County.

The Tennessee Rugby Association is interested in building a 120-acre, U.S. Olympic certified complex in Middle Tennessee, the report states. And the association is interested in talking to Williamson County.

The complex's multi-purpose fields would be programmed for all foot sports.

Premier sports facilities bring high costs

Sport complexes large enough to meet the needs of regional or even national tournaments require millions of dollars.

It would cost about \$65.59 million to build an indoor sports facility with 10 basketball courts, 20 volleyball courts, two ice sheets, two indoor turf fields, 1,200 parking spaces and locker rooms and concessions, the report states.

For an outdoor sports facility, it would cost about \$65.96 million with 24 multi-purpose fields, 12 baseball diamonds, five concession areas and restrooms and about 3,600 parking spaces.

However, neither facility is projected to bring in a lot of revenue, the report states.

How the county could benefit from hosting more tournaments

Despite the large start-up costs, the county could still benefit from having large sports complexes, the report states.

Sports tournaments bring in visitors, who in turn spend money on local hotels, restaurants and other businesses.

In a 20-year time frame, an outdoor sports facility and indoor sports facility could result in more than 2 million hotel nights booked and about \$36.85 million in collected county taxes.

It's unknown if A-Game will reopen

The A-Game Sportsplex in Franklin, previously a major hub for ice hockey, volleyball and basketball, is still up for sale, said Ellie Chin, president and CEO of Visit Franklin.

The sports facility closed in 2016, resulting in displaced sports tournaments and less booked hotel rooms, according to the report.

It's unknown if there are interested buyers, Chin said.

Volleyball and basketball groups have a lease for A-Game's courts through 2018, Chin said.

View the full sports facility report [on the county's website \(http://www.williamsoncounty-tn.gov/\)](http://www.williamsoncounty-tn.gov/)

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About the sports authority

The Williamson County commission authorized a sports authority last year.

Once formed, the sports authority will be responsible for leading efforts to establish a sports complex to attract regional tournaments.

[WilliamsonCounty SportsComplex | Hotel | Sports](https://www.scribd.com/document/352614797/WilliamsonCounty-SportsComplex)
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