
DRAFT

BUILDING A HEALTHY TOMORROW
A TWENTY-YEAR SPORTS FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DRAFT



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MISSION STATEMENT

The San Antonio Sports Foundation is creating sports opportunities for our community and its youth. Since its inception, the Sports Foundation has dedicated its resources to three main objectives:

- Targeting sports as a growth industry in San Antonio by soliciting sporting events that have a positive effect on the economy while creating national and international exposure;
- Acting as a catalyst in the development of sports and fitness programs for all ages, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged neighborhood youth;
- Supporting the development and maintenance of safe, high quality athletic facilities.

HISTORY

In 1984, a small group of sports enthusiasts who recognized that amateur sports could transform a community set about creating an independent nonprofit to do just that. Spurred by then-Mayor Henry Cisneros and supported in part by the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, they set about creating an independent nonprofit sports commission to bid on premier amateur athletic events.

The 1989 AAU Junior Olympics was the Sports Foundation's first major event, followed by the 1993 U.S. Olympic Festival, the 1995 National Senior Olympics and the 1998 NCAA Final Four. Since then, the list of successful events kept growing.

Along the way, the Sports Foundation created *Dreams for Youth* to provide training in six Olympic sports for primarily disadvantaged children. Its youth initiatives have grown over the years to include the *Community Olympic Development Program* and the *Valero Go!Kids Challenge*[™] and other event-related youth programs.

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A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR

July 12, 2007



Dear Municipal and County Leaders:

It is with great pleasure that I now present to you *Building a Healthy Tomorrow: A Twenty-Year Community Sports Facility Development Plan* from the San Antonio Sports Foundation. This plan is a direct result of the efforts of representatives from the City of San Antonio and Bexar County working alongside members of our own Facilities Task Force. Their mission was to critically assess the current athletic facilities in our community and to bring forth recommendations that will: 1.) positively benefit the physical health of our families, 2.) meet the demand for athletic facilities commensurate with our growth and, 3.) capitalize on the sports industry by developing competitive quality facilities in order to attract sporting events that will have a positive effect on the local economy.

As a result of this charge, the Task Force recommends the development of three types or tiers of facilities. The first tier should have the ability to host national and international events, the second to host regional tournaments, and the third to develop centers for neighborhood fitness and youth sports.

The ability to build, maintain, program and operate these facilities will require a new model of collaboration and partnership between the public, private and non-profit sectors. No one sector can be expected to accomplish this alone. Accomplishing this, however, will require a dramatic change in community mindset.

In order for these partnerships to come together there must be a shared vision and plan. *Building A Healthy Tomorrow* is meant to serve us in that capacity.

The following should be looked upon by policy makers and philanthropists alike as a guide. Although we lay out a 20-year implementation timeline we also would encourage the periodic review of that timeline; making adjustments as opportunities occur and needs arise. By remaining flexible - yet committed - we will build a healthier San Antonio; both physically and fiscally.

I thank you for your time and dedication as stewards of our community. The San Antonio Sports Foundation, as always, is committed to working with you now and in the future.

In Service,

Dr. Susan Blackwood
Executive Director
San Antonio Sports Foundation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Antonio Sports Foundation has been asked by the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor and the County Judge to create a twenty-year plan for the development of community sports facilities. The goal is to establish an inventory that will enable us to: 1.) attract major Olympic sporting events, 2.) capitalize on the amateur sports tournament market place, and 3.) impact the overall health of the community.

The Foundation then took this charge and conducted outreach with potential stakeholders. As a result, the Foundation arrived at four underlying assumptions. The first is that San Antonio is so deficient in its number of athletic facilities that no one sector (public, private, or nonprofit) can be expected to successfully remedy this problem on their own. This calls for a major shift in community mindset and policy in support of collaborative partnerships.

The second is that local governmental entities have historically been excellent at building, but poor at maintaining athletic facilities. Typically these needs are overlooked during the budgetary cycle as funds are allocated towards those services which are seen as having a higher priority. Then, without the routine maintenance, the facility needs begin to accrue to the point where they are no longer manageable through the annual budget cycle. The only feasible funding option then becomes school, municipal or county bond elections. Bonds that should be used to increase our capacity have been historically used for deferred maintenance. Therefore, the Foundation calls for the development of non-municipal operations and maintenance models for community sports facilities developed under this plan.

A third conclusion is that the plan should not look to simply meet the current needs, but should anticipate the continued growth of our community. San Antonio, as the seventh-largest city in the country, is also ranked the third fattest. Our community suffers epidemics of ailments for which the prescription is regular exercise. Without adequate athletic facilities, our community is being denied the quality of life that it rightfully deserves. We can go from America's fattest city to America's fittest city.

Finally, it is necessary to involve all local government entities. Each one has an ability or asset that when appropriately applied can be instrumental in the success of any one project. It is important to keep in mind that participation levels should be appropriate to the type of facility that is being constructed. For instance, a project that is seeking to use the Hotel Occupancy Tax as a funding source for construction should be one that is guaranteed to return monies to that fund. Likewise, a project that seeks to utilize school district property for the benefit of community health should include an operational model that does not take money out of the classrooms.

As such, the Sports Foundation is putting forth the following plan that meets the identified goals, while keeping the four underlying assumptions in mind. It calls for the construction of three tiers of facilities. They are the national/international facilities, regional outdoor complexes and neighborhood practice and fitness facilities. The foundation tier, neighborhood practice and fitness facilities, is the level where we can make the most significant impact on our community's quality of life.

In this draft, we have prepared recommendations in the first two tiers. There are three (3) National/International Facilities that have demonstrated the ability to meet demonstrated local needs, as well as capitalize on significant economic opportunities. They are:

1. UT Sports Science Institute / UTSA Athletic Complex
2. National Swim Center
3. Velodrome and Cycling Center.

We are also recommending the funding of three (3) types of Regional Outdoor Complexes.

1. 4 multi-field soccer complexes,
2. 2 baseball complexes, and
3. a Little League complex.

All of these projects will provide expanded opportunities for participation in amateur sports and will position our community to attract tournament sporting events that will significantly impact the local hospitality and tourism industries.

By taking these steps that strengthen our local economy, we will be building our capacity to make significant improvements at the neighborhood fitness level – the level that matters most to our individual qualities of life.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Sports Facility Development Plan is broken down into four (4) facility types or tiers. They are:

1. National / International Facilities,
2. Regional Outdoor Complexes,
3. Regional Indoor Complexes, and
4. Neighborhood Fitness and Practice Facilities.

Each one serves a specific niche while, at the same time, complementing the others. For instance, the neighborhood practice facilities serve local teams that may later meet at a regional complex for city championships or even host a state or national championship.

In this section we will provide an outline of the entire plan, along with a synopsis of the first two tiers and the recommended facilities within each of them.

20 Year Plan: Community Sports & Fitness Facilities

National/International Facilities

UT Sports Science Institute
UTSA Athletic and Recreation Facilities
National Swim Center
Velodrome and Cycling Park

Regional Outdoor Complexes

Multi-Field Soccer Complexes (20 fields each)

Northeast at Longhorn Quarry

Northwest at Culebra Creek

Southeast at Brooks City Base

Southwest (Site to be determined)

Baseball Complexes (4 to 8 fields each)

Southeast at 410 & IH-10

Northwest (Site to be determined)

4-Field Little League Complex

Southeast (Site to be determined)

Regional Indoor Complexes

School Sports

Basketball

Volleyball

Wrestling

Non-school Olympic Sports

Fencing

Judo

Air Pistol

Indoor Soccer

In-Line Hockey

Neighborhood Fitness & Practice Facilities

Linear Parks

Hike-Bike-Jogging Paths & Fitness Courses

Soccer, Baseball, Softball Practice Fields

Frisbee Golf

CPS Easements

Hike & Bike Trails

School Partnerships

Indoor/Outdoor Multi-Sport (secured)

SAHA Partnerships

Springview

Mirasol

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL FACILITIES

These facilities must be designed and built to be capable of hosting large national and international events. All aspects of the competition area, as well as the amenities, will meet the quality and regulatory standards for international athletics. Funding for these facility types will require significant public investments and, therefore, must return significant tourist dollars and taxes back to the local economy.

UT Sports Science Institute

During the 78th Regular Session of the State Legislature, the Sports Science Institute was established to provide a state-mandated coaching education program for the interscholastic coaches in Texas. The Institute will emphasize coaching techniques, sport physiology, sport psychology and sport management along with training on other relevant subjects and skills. It will also serve as a research center in sport and exercise sciences. In conjunction with the UT Health Science Center, it will provide a facility for diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of sports injuries. The Institute will establish San Antonio as the center of fitness and human performance research in the State of Texas.

The development of this facility will positively impact our local economy by providing high-paying higher education research and teaching positions. It will also mean a continuous stream of coaches from throughout the state seeking to be certified or to obtain continuing education credits in the sports industry. This translates into out-of-town dollars being brought in to the local hospitality and retail industries year-round.

Integrating the Institute as the academic centerpiece of the UTSA Athletic Complex will provide significant leverage to both projects.

UTSA Athletic Complex

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) has been one of the state's fastest growing public universities over the last decade. Founded in June of 1969, the university now serves an enrollment of 28,520; making it the second largest university in the state system. There are 124 undergraduate and graduate degree programs available. The university has the goal of becoming a doctoral/research intensive institution (at least 20 degrees a year in at least three disciplines) and a doctoral/research extensive institution (at least 50 degrees a year in 15 disciplines) by 2015. Over the next four years, UTSA plans to spend \$265 million in construction projects.

Along with the growth of its academic programs, UTSA must also consider enhancing its athletics department. In doing so, the University will increase the value of the institution's diploma as academic credibility is often associated with the success of the athletics program. An increase in a university's recognition

and reputation is known to translate into “diploma equity” for the holder of that degree.

This is not only beneficial to alumni of the institution, but to the overall job market locally. In an article from the San Antonio Business Journal, it was reported that the local economic development efforts of the City of San Antonio and Bexar County exceeded the creation of jobs in Austin and Travis County. But despite the higher number of jobs created here, the wages lagged behind those of Austin. This was attributed to the existence of the University of Texas at Austin by economists interviewed for the article. **Its high-profile athletics program along with the equally credible academics program has the effect of elevating the wages earned locally.**

Currently, UTSA is a Division I-AAA (non-football) institution. It has completed a feasibility study from Carr Sports Associates to thoroughly evaluate all aspects of its athletic program. Specifically, it looked at developing an NCAA Division IA or AA football program. Regardless of its football specific focus or whether the University chooses to develop a football program at all, the Sports Foundation strongly advocates for the development of the athletic complex.

The benefits to the University in developing an athletic complex are profound, but the impact on the community of San Antonio is even more impressive. The UTSA Athletics Complex will meet many of the major-events facility needs of San Antonio. It will provide international specifications track, soccer, and softball stadiums; a tennis facility and mid-sized arena. Adding these facilities to our inventory will significantly expand our opportunities to host large events.

Beyond the NCAA facilities themselves, the new UTSA Athletics Complex, combined with the new UTSA Intramural Facilities, creates a multi-facility complex with a “footprint” almost identical to the Disney Wide World of Sports! Leveraging these facilities, with the tourist amenities in NW San Antonio (Fiesta Texas, Sea World, La Cantera, The Rim, etc) can give San Antonio the same economic opportunities every summer weekend that Orlando sees all year.

National Swim Center

The Northside Independent School District has recently constructed the first pool of an eventual three-pool swimming complex at Loop 1604 and Bamberger Trail. This facility will serve as a USA Swimming National Training and Events Center. In an agreement with USA Swimming, the facility will be guaranteed to host a major domestic or international event and a significant regional event at least once a year. These events will stimulate a significant number of local events annually.

Additionally, the Training Center will be guaranteed to host a major clinic once a year featuring National Team athletes and coaches.

The Swim Center will serve the NISD high school teams during the school year with the National Team and USA Swimming events taking priority during the summer months. Community access to the pool for recreation and fitness will be available year round.

The Northside Independent School District has spent \$12 million for acquisition of the land, construction of the first natatorium (an indoor 50 meter by 25 yard pool with seating for 1000) and shared parking with Farris Stadium. The school district plans to spend approximately \$2 million on the second outdoor pool (25 yard by 25 meter). The 3500-seat National Swim Stadium will be the focal point of this complex.

The Northside ISD will assume long-term operations, utilities and maintenance of this facility.

Velodrome and Cycling Park

A velodrome is an oval-shaped bicycle racing track. Although the lengths may vary, the standard competition length is 250 meters. Velodromes can be constructed of wood, concrete or asphalt. In addition to bicycle track racing, velodromes can also accommodate rollerblading, skateboarding, walking or running.

Competitive track racing is a major attraction of the Summer Olympic Games and is gaining popularity in the United States. At the present time, there are only twenty-two velodrome tracks in the country with three of them in Texas (Houston, Frisco, Austin). Constructing one in San Antonio will create an opportunity to host regional, state and national cycling events and competitions.

The Southside Lions Park is the preferred site for the construction of this facility. Its location at the end of the Salado Creek Greenway makes it a perfect destination or trailhead starting point. By placing a sport venue on the south side of San Antonio, we will be bringing an economic opportunity not historically available on the south side, while offering a safe venue for bicycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, walking and running.

REGIONAL OUTDOOR COMPLEXES

A regional outdoor complex is one that has the ability to host a large to moderate-sized tournament, featuring teams from across the city, state, nation or even internationally. It should feature multiple playing fields meeting international regulatory standards for the sport for which they are designed. Amenities should be adequate for projected participant and spectator needs, and readily accessible. In order to be efficient, these amenities should be centralized in the complex.

The benefit of these multi-field complexes is that it will enable our existing sports leagues to organize frequent tournaments. These events attract large numbers of amateur teams and have a positive impact on the local hospitality and retail industries.

In general, the ideal partnership model for these facilities might involve city or county governments, school districts, non-profit sports leagues, and foundations or other donors. For example, the acquisition of land and the construction of infrastructure might be handled by the local municipal or county government. The operations and programming of the facility might be run by a qualified nonprofit sports organization. For long-term maintenance and operations of the facility, it is suggested that private investors or a community non-profit assume that role.

Municipal and county budgets are all too often stretched very thin just trying to deliver the basic services to the community. Regular maintenance of recreation and athletic facilities are usually among the lowest of priorities when a policymaker is faced with having to make cuts. As a result, facilities are left to decay into a state where they are no longer competitive or desirable. Allowing this to happen not only diminishes the amateur sport enthusiast's ability to play but it also adversely affects the ability to host economically beneficial tournaments.

Twenty-Field Soccer Complexes

San Antonio, as one of the larger cities in Texas, has over 12,000 registered youth soccer players. It is a sport that has grown significantly in the United States and now exceeds football, basketball and baseball youth programs. However, when compared to Austin, Dallas and Houston, we have the fewest soccer complexes for public use. Currently we have 88 fields that can host tournament play compared to Austin's 162, Dallas' 362, and Houston's 376! The majority of those 88 facilities are presently worn down and in need of repair.

The San Antonio Sports Foundation proposes the construction of four soccer complexes with twenty-fields each. They should be developed in all four quadrants of the city: northeast at Longhorn Quarry, northwest at Culebra Creek, southeast at Brooks City Base, and southwest at a yet to be determined site.

Baseball Complexes

San Antonio currently has twenty fields for 15-and-older baseball. Most of them are poor in quality and in need of repair. None are in a tournament complex configuration. Because of this, many 15-and-older leagues find it difficult to organize tournaments; a lucrative industry that has Texas teams traveling to Louisiana, Arizona, California and Mexico each weekend. The development of two baseball complexes with four to eight playing fields will provide an opportunity for 15-and-older leagues to capitalize on profitable regional tournaments.

A location in the southeast quadrant of the City has been identified near Loop 410 and IH-10. A second location in the northwest quadrant is recommended.

Four-Field Little League Complex

The need for a four-field Little League complex has been identified for the southeast quadrant of San Antonio. Although fields do exist there, they have frequently been the target of vandalism. Consequentially, the leagues have had to spend their dollars and volunteer resources to simply maintain the current inventory instead of building the needed additional capacity.

Unlike the 15-and-older leagues the region and state already has a number of Little League sized tournament complexes. Because of this there is a question about the ability of a Little League complex to generate significant tournament revenue. As such, a proposal for the long-term operations and maintenance funding models is being developed.

REGIONAL INDOOR COMPLEXES

A regional indoor complex is one that has the ability to host a large to moderate-sized tournament, featuring teams from across the city, state, nation or even internationally. It should meet international regulatory standards for the sport for which they are designed. Amenities should be adequate for projected participant and spectator needs, and readily accessible. In order to be efficient, these amenities should be centralized in the complex.

The indoor complex will host sports that schools commonly participate in, such as basketball, volleyball and wrestling. It will also host Olympic sports not traditionally found in schools, such as: fencing, judo, air pistol, indoor soccer, and in-line hockey.

A recommendation about the construction of these facilities is forthcoming in a future draft of this development plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD FITNESS & PRACTICE FACILITIES

The establishment of neighborhood practice and fitness facilities is where we are going to have a most profound impact on our quality of life. By providing accessible venues for families to exercise and participate in team athletics we will make great strides towards becoming one of America's fittest cities.

This category includes paths for walking, jogging and biking; practice fields for soccer, baseball, and softball; and multi-sport indoor and outdoor facilities. These venues can be located in linear parks and utility easements, as well as on public housing or school property.

A recommendation about the construction of these facilities is forthcoming in a future draft of this development plan.

SUMMARY

San Antonio is a community that has a negative distinction of being one of the fattest cities in the United States. Our current inventory of athletic facilities is evidence of our failed commitment to an active and healthy lifestyle. As the number one tourist destination in the State of Texas, we are missing out on the economic benefits of being a major and amateur sports destination.

This sports facility development plan, *Building A Healthy Tomorrow*, is meant to serve as a blueprint for our leaders today and beyond. If heeded to, it will transform us into a fit community. It is unique in that it can simultaneously improve our city's health profile and economic development.

The draft of the plan you see today is a work in progress. It is not to be considered a conclusive recommendation. Some of the facilities put forward here are already in an early development stage but are noted because they require continued support if they are to be completed. Others are mentioned that need to be researched and studied further before a final recommendation can be made.

Once completed, this plan will present projects and operational models that will thoroughly benefit San Antonio. Ideally, through a collaborative effort, we will create neighborhood fitness centers at the local elementary schools. Through our regional sports facilities we will become an amateur sports destination. Our reputation as a host to Olympic and NCAA sporting events will be solidified because of our national and international level competitive facilities.

These facilities will not be built until we make a major community-wide commitment to health and fitness. We must embrace this vision and dedicate ourselves to it. We must find the will to do it and the fortitude to see it through.