

COMMUNITY INPUT REPORT: BRUNSWICK SPORTS COMPLEX



The Brunswick Sports Complex stands as a testament to the City's commitment to fostering an active and engaged community. Financed through City funding and dedicated grants, this complex is poised to offer a diverse array of sports and recreational activities tailored to enrich the community's lifestyle. The heart of this endeavor lies in the invaluable community input. This collaborative approach is pivotal in sculpting a complex that resonates with the community's pulse, ensuring that every court, field, and space is a mirror of our collective vision.

MAY 2024

SUMMARY

This document details community input for the Brunswick Sports Complex, a City facility that aims to provide various amenities for sports and recreation. The report summarizes the feedback from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities – Community Action Plan, the Parks & Recreation Community Needs Assessment Survey and direct input from local outdoor recreation and sports organizations, highlighting the demand for multiuse sports fields, action sports, an inclusive playground, trail connections, pickle ball courts and other features.

The report also outlines the project budget, phasing, and timeline, explaining that the project will be implemented in stages, starting with essential infrastructure and then adding amenities based on community priorities and funding availability. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for the design and development of the Sports Complex amenities, emphasizing the potential benefits of creating a vibrant recreational hub that enhances the quality of life for residents and makes the city an attractive destination.

PROJECT BUDGET

The total budget for the Brunswick Sports Complex project is **\$1,668,806**, excluding any work on the radio station side of the property. This project is grant-funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Land and Water Conservation Fund, which requires a 50% match from the City of Brunswick.

GRANT FUNDING: \$834,403

CITY MATCH: \$834,403

TOTAL: \$1,668,806

The grant only permits work on the sports complex side of the property. The City will need to secure additional funding and grants to begin construction on the radio station side of the property.

PROJECT PHASING

Phasing

Given the budget and the need to make the park usable, the project will be implemented in phases. The initial phase will prioritize essential infrastructure:

- Loop Road
- Parking
- Stormwater facilities
- Water and sewer infrastructure
- Sidewalks

Once the park is usable, subsequent phases will focus on adding amenities, such as sports fields, playground, concessions, and walking trails. The specific phasing of amenities will be determined based on community priorities, available funds, and grant opportunities.

The City will need to explore additional funding sources and grants to support the phasing of work on the radio station side of the property.

PROJECT STATUS

Status

The City has engaged with Contour Construction to provide a turnkey project for the Sports Complex, including engineering, project management, and construction. Contour will deliver a complete project from design to completion.

Concept Site Plan: The initial concept site plan is complete, outlining the overall layout and general features of the proposed Sports Complex.

Geotechnical Studies: Contour is currently conducting geotechnical studies to understand the site's underlying conditions. These studies will inform the final design and construction approach.

Public Restroom Design: Design work is underway for a public restroom facility within the complex. This amenity will be crucial for supporting users of the sports fields and trails.

Construction-Level Designs: Contour is in the process of developing construction-level designs for the project. Once complete, these detailed designs will be used to provide the City with accurate construction costs.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Timeline

The design phase is estimated to take 30-36 weeks, placing completion towards the end of fall or early winter. Following design completion and the necessary permit reviews, construction will begin in a phased approach. This will allow the City to manage the project effectively while progressing towards the goal of a completed Sports Complex.

INFORMATION GATHERING PROCESS

Recreation Economy for Rural Communities - Community Action Plan

In 2022, Brunswick, Maryland, was one of 25 towns across the nation selected to receive planning assistance through the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program. Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, the Northern Border Regional Commission, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, the program assisted the Brunswick Community in developing an action plan to strengthen the outdoor recreation sectors and revitalize our downtown.

Parks & Recreation - Community Needs Assessment Survey

An online survey was conducted to seek input from the Brunswick community about our parks and recreation facilities. This survey received feedback from 180 community members, providing valuable insights into the community's overall needs and priorities for the Sports Complex.

Direct Feedback from Outdoor Recreation & Sports Community

In addition to the survey, direct feedback was gathered from groups within the outdoor recreation and sports community. The groups provided detailed insights into their specific needs and how the Sports Complex could best support their activities.

RECREATION ECONOMY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES – COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The City of Brunswick participated in the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program, which resulted in a Community Action Plan outlining goals, community visions, and action steps to support outdoor recreation and community development. This plan provides valuable insights for the Sports Complex project.

Workshop Goals: The plan highlights goals established during the workshop, including improving outdoor recreation amenities, enhancing physical connections, and promoting Brunswick as a tourism destination. These goals will guide the design and development of the Sports Complex.

Ideal Community Visions: The plan features visions from the Local Steering Committee emphasizing outdoor recreation opportunities like trails, kayaking, canoeing, and fishing. These visions will inform the selection of amenities and features at the Sports Complex.

Action Planning: The plan outlines specific actions to advance the workshop goals, such as developing recreational facilities, offering skill clinics, and creating gear rental programs. These actions will be considered when determining the programming and services for the Sports Complex.

RECREATION ECONOMY FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES – COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Importance of Downtown and Existing Assets: The plan underscores the importance of Brunswick's historic downtown and its proximity to the Potomac River, C&O Canal Towpath, and Appalachian Trail. The Sports Complex will be designed to complement these existing assets and enhance connections between them.

Community Engagement: The plan emphasizes the involvement of the Local Steering Committee and the broader community in the planning process. This community-centric approach will be continued throughout the Sports Complex project.

Online Engagement: The plan recommends using social media and online platforms for public engagement. These tools will be utilized to gather feedback and keep the community informed throughout the Sports Complex project.

The Recreation Economy for Rural Communities - Community Action Plan provides a strong foundation for the Sports Complex project. The goals, visions, and actions outlined in the plan will guide the design and development of the complex, ensuring it becomes a valuable asset for outdoor recreation and community development in Brunswick.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Playground Equipment and Features

- Community Input: Inclusive playgrounds with diverse equipment for various ages and abilities.
- Consideration: Install playground equipment catering to different age groups, ensure accessibility features, and consider safety surfacing like rubber mats. Explore adding a splash pad or water feature for warm-weather fun.

Sporting Facilities

- Community Input: Demand for various sport-specific facilities and outdoor fitness options.
- Consideration: Develop dedicated spaces for pickleball, tennis, basketball, frisbee golf, and skateboarding. Consider outdoor exercise equipment stations. Explore partnerships to offer programs and classes in these sports.

Seating and Shading

- Community Input: Importance of ample seating and shade provisions.
- Consideration: Strategically placed benches, picnic tables, and shaded structures throughout the park. Plant trees in seating areas for natural shade. Consider adding gazebos or pergolas for defined shade spaces.

Walking and Biking

- Community Input: Emphasis on extensive, well-maintained trails and walkability.
- Consideration: Design a network of sidewalks, paths, and trails for walking and biking. Ensure connectivity to nearby neighborhoods and existing trail networks like Rivers Edge Trail.

Restrooms and Hydration

- Community Input: Necessity of clean, readily available restrooms and water access.
- Consideration: Provide well-maintained restrooms and water fountains throughout the park. Ensure restrooms are accessible and consider adding family/all-gender options.

INPUT FROM THE OUTDOOR RECREATION & SPORTS COMMUNITY

The outdoor recreation and sports community seeks to enhance the trail network, including a formal trailhead and new trail connections to the Sports Complex. To maintain the trails' peaceful ambiance, protective measures like fencing are recommended. Additionally, there's a strong desire for versatile sports fields. Notably, a lit, enclosed turf field is proposed, along with a dedicated equipment storage area. Additionally, recognizing the surge in cricket's popularity in Brunswick, it was suggested to explore the feasibility of a cricket field at the Sports Complex, aiming to centralize sports activities, support local businesses, and potentially boost tax revenues while encouraging youth participation in sports.

Input:

- There is a high demand for soccer fields due to population growth and the sport's popularity.
- Explore maximizing field space and formalizing a reservation system for community use.
- Slightly increasing the width of multiuse fields would be beneficial and a high net system to capture stray balls is recommended.
- PVYA has sports shed they use for equipment storage. Allocate a dedicated spot for this shed in the complex.
- Consider building a small, lit, enclosed turf field similar to the one at BHS. This would be particularly useful for young children and for adult use in the evenings during winter.
- There is interest in reviving the skate park, which is a community asset. Explore upgrading the skatepark as part of the complex.
- A formal, advertised trailhead entrance to Rivers Edge Trail is encouraged and explore creating a defined entrance near the existing informal access path.
- Explore opportunities for new trail connections that could enhance the overall recreational experience and support events, potentially near PVYA's shed and the city's current rock/stone pile. This would require careful planning to ensure minimal disruption to other amenities.
- There is interest in enhancing trail connections through the Sports Complex to better host foot and bike races and work with Rivers Edge Trail to identify the most feasible and beneficial locations for these connections.

INPUT FROM THE OUTDOOR RECREATION & SPORTS COMMUNITY

Considerations:

- Work with PVYA to understand their specific needs and how to maximize field space and explore options for enclosed turf fields and dedicated storage for sports organizations.
- Consider the potential for revitalizing the skatepark.
- Collaborate with Rivers Edge Trail to design a well-connected trailhead and explore additional trail routes.
- It's crucial to protect trails from motorized vehicles. Implement fencing and signage to ensure safe, non-motorized use of trails.
- Collaborate with Rivers Edge Trail to design a well-connected trailhead and explore additional trail routes.
- Consider the potential for upgrading the skatepark once the current grant ends. Engage the community through surveys or workshops to understand their vision for this space.
- Explore opportunities for new trail connections that could enhance the overall recreational experience and support events. Work with Rivers Edge Trail to identify the most feasible and beneficial locations for these connections.
- Explore the feasibility of a dedicated cricket field at the Sports Complex. Work with the Brunswick Cricket Club to understand their specific needs and how a cricket field could be accommodated in the design and consider the potential for the field to also support other sports, maximizing usage.

INPUT FROM THE OUTDOOR RECREATION & SPORTS COMMUNITY

Recommendations:

1. **Multiuse Sports Fields:** Prioritize the development of multiuse sports fields that can accommodate various sports. Explore options for maximizing field space, such as the use of higher nets to capture stray balls. Ensure adequate lighting for evening use.
2. **Action Sports Park:** Revitalize the skate park area with modern action sports features that appeal to a wider range of users. Consider adding a separate, fenced area for younger kids. The existing skatepark's grant period ends soon, opening up opportunities for upgrades and potentially new recreational features. Consider establishing a committee to ensure that the community's needs are adequately addressed.
3. **Inclusive Playground:** Design a playground that is inclusive and accessible for all ages and abilities. Consider a fenced, shaded area with modern, safe equipment.
4. **Pickle Ball Courts:** Adding dedicated pickleball courts to the Sports Complex to meet the growing demand for this popular sport.
5. **Trail Connections:** Develop a formal trailhead entrance to the Rivers Edge Trail network, enhancing access and visibility. Explore opportunities to create additional trail connections to the Sports Complex, promoting walkability and bikeability.
6. **Concessions and Storage:** Provide a concession stand and dedicated storage facilities for sports organizations to support events and programs.
7. **Restrooms and Hydration:** Ensure the availability of clean, well-maintained, and accessible restrooms at the complex. Install water fountains and bottle-filling stations to encourage hydration.
8. **Lighting and Safety:** Implement adequate lighting strategies for safety and extended use of the complex in the evenings. Consider energy-efficient options that minimize light pollution.
9. **Fencing and Buffering:** Implement fencing and buffering solutions to protect trails and fields from motorized vehicles and define different areas of the complex.
10. **Engage with Residents Living on 13th Avenue:** It is recommended to actively engage with residents living on 13th Avenue to understand their concerns and gather input about the park during construction and address any parking issues that may arise.

CONCLUSION

The Brunswick Sports Complex has the potential to become a vibrant recreational hub that enhances the quality of life for residents and makes the city an attractive destination. By incorporating the community-suggested amenities outlined in the recommendations, the complex will provide inclusive spaces for various activities, promote healthy lifestyles, and foster a sense of community. The City of Brunswick has a unique opportunity to model community-driven design and create a facility that is a source of pride for years to come.

The community input, gathered through various methods such as the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities – Community Action Plan, the Parks & Recreation Community Needs Assessment Survey and direct feedback from outdoor recreation and sports community, is crucial in shaping the design and development of the complex. The feedback highlights the demand for multiuse sports fields, action type sports, an inclusive playground, trail connections, and other features. Community input will be used to prioritize the development of amenities and ensure that the complex meets the needs of the community. The project will be implemented in phases, starting with essential infrastructure and then adding amenities based on community priorities and funding availability.

Let's work together to bring this vision to life!



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