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Maryland Stadium Authority Releases Worcester County Sports Complex Study

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The Maryland Stadium Authority has released an economic and market study to determine the feasibility of a multi-purpose sports complex in Worcester County. Originally intended to study the possibility of an arena/ice rink to accommodate a minor league hockey team, the request was expanded to consider an adjacent outdoor sports field complex to accommodate the region's growing youth and amateur tournaments market.

This Phase 1 study focused on a number of factors, including the market demand for each component and the economic impact it may have on the county and competing nearby facilities. The study evaluated industry trends, demographics, hotel and visitor industry statistics and other local attractions. Each component was evaluated individually.

The study concluded there is a limited market demand for an arena/ice rink. Drawbacks include market size and a limited corporate base for franchise support. Another concern identified is the direct competition with nearby venues such as the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center and Ocean City Convention Center that already provide some of the amenities the arena would provide.

However, there is a demand for the sports field complex that would contribute to the critical mass already existing in Wicomico County and Ocean City. Such a complex would enable the Mid-Atlantic Amateur Sports Alliance, whose mission is to link the region's sports facilities to attract and retain youth and amateur sports tournaments, to grow the region's economic impact and establish a national reputation for large competitions while also contributing to recreation league opportunities.

Pending approval by the Worcester County Commissioners, the Maryland Stadium Authority, Worcester County, and Maryland Department of Commerce

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will proceed with Phase 2 for the outdoor sports field complex. Phase 2 will estimate the potential economic and fiscal impact of the complex.

“We thank the Maryland Stadium Authority and the Maryland Department of Commerce for their partnership on this project, and we are pleased with the outcome of the research the professionals leading this study have presented,” noted Worcester Economic Development Director Merry Mears.

Stadium Authority Chairman Thomas Kelso added his thoughts.

“MSA was happy to undertake this initial study to provide Worcester County with analysis that will allow them to determine how they wish to proceed,” he said. “We look forward to working with our partners to gather additional insight on the sports field complex so they can decide where they’d like to go with this project.”

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