

FOUNDATIONS OF YOUTH SPORT COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT:
COMMONLY IDENTIFIED CRITICAL COMPONENTS FOR
SUCCESSFUL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Indianapolis created a whole new city identity using sports development and sports tourism as the primary drivers of change in the 1960's and 1970's. Since then, other cities have adopted the philosophy of using sport as a catalyst to improve the economic conditions of the city. This same philosophy has seemingly trickled down to small cities across the United States in the form of youth travel sport complex development. The size of the youth travel sport segment has reportedly reached \$7 billion by the National Association of Sports Commissions, resulting in the rapid development of youth sports complexes in small cities and towns. The size and scope of these facilities entering the segment range from 50 acres to as many as 400 contiguous acres costing millions of dollars. Additionally, the perceived economic impact accompanying the development of such facilities are often overinflated due to the diversity of methods used in market analyses, feasibility studies, economic impact analyses, cost-benefit analyses, and Turco's triple-bottom-line analysis. A more systematic process is needed to assign key performance indicators and identify the critical components that will assist in the decision to enter the segment and at what capacity. This study is designed to identify the necessary critical components to reach the desired economic impacts associated with youth sport complex development. Qualitative constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized in identifying commonly

identified critical components (CICC) believed to contribute to the success and sustainability of a youth sports complex.

KEY WORDS: (Youth Sports, Public-Private Partnerships, Sports Tourism, Sports Facilities, Economic Development, Facility Financing)

James M. Gladden, PhD.- Chair

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DEFINITIONS

- Multiplier - Estimated economic effect to capture indirect and induced economic activities (Michigan State University , 2015).
- Public - Sports facility owned and operated by a government entity or agency (Yescombe, 2007).
- Public/Public - Sports facility owned by a governmental entity and operated by a second governmental entity or nonprofit receiving financial support from the government (Crompton, Financing Sport, 2004).
- Public/Private - Sports facility owned by a government entity and operated by a private entity in the form of a for-profit business or as a nonprofit organization not receiving financial support from the government (Savas, 2000; Yescombe, 2007).
- Private - Sports facility owned and operated by a private entity in the form of a for-profit business or as a nonprofit organization not receiving financial support from the government (Savas, 2000; Yescombe, 2007).
- Sports travel - Any sport related travel as the primary purpose away from the home area with at least one overnight hotel stay, but less than one year (Miller & Washington, 2014; Moisa, 2010).

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The number of communities engaging in the development of youth sports complexes is growing exponentially throughout the United States. The primary driver behind this growth is the perceived community economic windfall that accompanies youth sports travel teams and sports tournaments. But, do all communities have the necessary components to generate these expected economic impacts?

The city of Westfield in Indiana opened a mega youth sport facility, Grand Park, in March 2014 spanning 400 contiguous acres and consisting of 31 multi-purpose fields, 26 outdoor diamonds, over 10 miles of paved trails. Two indoor facilities are slated to be built in 2015 in hopes of furthering Westfield as the “Family Sports Capital of the U.S.” During an interview of a prominent leading Westfield city official, information was obtained about the planning and decisions leading up to the creation of this facility which are presented in the following paragraph.

Westfield city officials were looking to increase the city’s commercial tax base without building manufacturing facilities and the “smoke stacks” that accompany these types of facilities (Cook, 2014). The city was also looking to create an identity that would attract tourism, new housing, and new tax-payers (Cook, 2014). The existing citizens had expressed their concerns about the lack of sports facilities and the conditions of the existing sports facilities. City officials reached out to community leaders with a simple question, “Is there a single industry that solves all of these issues (Cook, 2014)?” Community leaders reported youth travel sports and tournaments would be an industry

that would not only solve the needs of the city, but also would receive support from current citizens.

With that, city officials reconvened community leaders to create the basic design of the facility. This was an important step in the process because city officials would need consensus before moving toward a request for proposals (RFP). Community leaders reported the facility would need to be at least 400 acres containing both natural grass fields and synthetic fields. The city issued a RFP and entered into a public-private partnership with a local developer to acquire land and build the estimated \$45 million facility. The city paid the developer for the services to maintain ownership of the property, but the developer exercised the clause in the contract to maintain operations once the facility was open. Complicating the organizational structure was the addition of two private nonprofit organizations responsible for acquiring and hosting sports tournaments as well as performing field maintenance in lieu of field rental. The facility has multiple stakeholders with different objectives and expectations on the return on investment (ROI) or return on objective (ROO). In light of the complex organizational structure and competing stakeholders, it is important for a facility such as the one in Westfield to determine the critical components needed for success. In doing so, additional questions become apparent: (1) How are the critical components being measured and compared to the desired successful outcomes; (2) Can these components and measurements be duplicated in other locations; and (3) How are multiple stakeholders with competing objectives achieving a ROI/ROO? The perceived economic growth resulting from youth travel sports including economic impacts associated with tourism have created an intersection that has gone under-studied.

Tourism and sports have been separated into two spheres for years, but with some overlap. The challenge for tourism is establishing the primary motivation for travel (Glyptis & Cooper, 1991). Does being an active participant in sport a requirement for sports tourism? Academics and scholars have debated the classification of the sports spectator for decades. Sports spectating is a leisure activity in the minds of some whereas others consider spectators as active participants in sport (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). Sports tourism has only recently begun to be recognized as a single tourism segment (Weed & Bull, 2012). To this point, most studies regarding sports tourism has been focused on adults and large scale events such as a National Football League (NFL) (Baade & Matheson, 2000; Babiak & Wolfe, 2006), National Basketball Association (NBA) (Crompton, Economic impact analysis of sports facilities and events: Eleven sources of misapplication, 1995), or Major League Baseball (MLB) (Braunstein, Zhang, Trail, & Gibson, 2005) game and mega events such as the Olympics (Gibson, 1998; Turco, 2012) or World Cup Soccer (Gibson, 1998; Turco, 2012). However, few studies have focused on youth travel sports segment, which is one of the fastest growing economic segments.

The demand for youth travel sports has grown into an estimated \$7 billion¹ according to one industry leader (Sports Facility Advisory, 2013), but no one really knows for sure the true size of this economic segment. Differing definitions, economic multiplier effects, reporting methods used by various stakeholders, and lack of research all contribute to the confusion. Douglas Turco (2012) described a “triple-bottom line” (TBL) as a method for measuring sports development as an economic, environmental and

¹ The source claiming this \$7 billion could not be verified, but is listed on the Sports Facility Advisory website.

social benefits through four criteria: “must retain resident income, stimulate direct spending by visitors, drive local investments and development, and leads to hosting subsequent sports events” (p. 59). Meanwhile, some destinations entering the youth travel sports complex segment are only concerned with the economic impact that sports development can bring to the destination.

An economic impact analysis (EIA) is based on input-output modeling using a multiplier effect (Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Greene, & Martyn, 2011). Other destinations are more concerned with social needs and provide youth sports facilities as a means of fulfilling those social needs. These destinations engage in Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) studies which looks both financial costs and opportunity costs and the inherent community benefits (Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Greene, & Martyn, 2011). The literature review section will provide additional detail between EIA and CBA studies.

The research on sports as an economic driver is well documented (Gibson, 1998; Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2006; Turco, 2012). However, the focus of most research has been centered around professional sports and large or mega events like the NFL Super Bowl (Baade & Matheson, 2000; Babiak & Wolfe, 2006), Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup (Gibson, 1998; Turco, 2012), or the Olympics (Gibson, 1998; Turco, 2012). The youth travel sports segment potentially has different needs than professional sports destinations, yet little research has been completed in this segment.

In 1990, The National Sports Center (NSC) located in Blaine, Minnesota opened the largest sport facility of its kind in the U.S. Today, the NSC sport facility is a “600-acre multi-sport facility with an eight-sheet Schwan Super (Ice) Rink; an 8,500-seat

stadium; the Schwan Center meeting and events building; a multi-faceted family golf center; the National Youth Golf Center, which features the 18-hole Victory Links course; an indoor Sports Hall with a FieldTurf field; 250-meter all wood cycling velodrome, 150-bed residence hall and 52 athletic fields” (National Sports Center, 2014). More recently, communities have accelerated the development of youth sports complexes as economic growth drivers. Overland Park, Kansas opened a 96 acre soccer complex (The Soccer Complex) in 2010 with 12 lighted synthetic fields with scoreboards and nearly 1,100 square feet of meeting space suitable for captains or volunteer meetings and event check-ins. Soon after, The Soccer Complex was named the top soccer facility in the United States by Livability.com in 2012 (Overland Park Kansas Parks and Recreation, 2014). In April 2014, Rocky Top Sports World, an 80 acre state-of-the-art sports campus in the heart of the Smoky Mountains located in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, also opened (Rocky Top Sports World, 2014). In addition to these facilities, feasibility studies were completed for Branson, Missouri; Round Rock, Texas; Traverse City, Michigan; Brandon, Mississippi; and Parkville, Missouri for the purpose of developing additional youth sports complexes. While such substantial investments are now dotting the landscape, very little is known about the key performance indicators or success factors of such facilities and whether these facilities can or will deliver on the expected potential economic growth and community benefits.

The decision making process for businesses and communities often includes a market and feasibility study (Crompton, Economic impact analysis of sports facilities and events: Eleven sources of misapplication, 1995; Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Brent, 2007; Hinch & Higham, 2011). Market and feasibility studies are quite frequently used

interchangeably, but actually measure two different outcomes at two different times during the development process (Novak, 1996). Market assessments look at supply and demand thresholds whereas feasibility studies assess the potential political, physical, social, and fiscal factors resulting from the undertaking of a project (Young, 1982; Stynes, 1997; Crompton, *Financing Sport*, 2004). Choosing what is included in a market or feasibility study is decided by those actually performing the study (Young, 1982; Crompton, *Economic impact analysis of sports facilities and events: Eleven sources of misapplication*, 1995). These studies are used by a variety of decision makers in a variety of different fields (Young, 1982; Novak, 1996; Loomis & Walsh, 1997). And, as presented previously, different criteria and reporting methods lead to different outcomes and different interpretations (Crompton, *Economic impact analysis of sports facilities and events: Eleven sources of misapplication*, 1995).

Diversity of definitions existing in sport, tourism, and sport tourism complicate the development and understanding of market, feasibility, EIA, CBA and TBL studies thus creating inconsistencies among decision makers. Sport from the participant perspective has at least two separate but equal points of view; first as the participant, then as a tourist. Gibson (1998) described these points of view as, “active and event (passive)” sports participation (p. 45). Youth travel sports are unique in that these events appear to provide simultaneous consumption of both. The challenge for tourism and sport professionals is establishing the primary motivation for travel (Glyptis & Cooper, 1991) which is increasingly more challenging as is the case of youth travel sports. Sports spectating is a leisure activity in the minds of some and an active participant in the minds of others (Gibson, 1998; Gammon & Robinson, 2003). If the sports spectator is

considered to be engaging in a leisure activity, then it's possible the sports spectator is engaged in tourism and not sport (Turco, 2012). Tourism and sports have been separated into two spheres for years, but with some overlap (Loomis & Walsh, 1997). Sports tourism has only recently begun to be recognized as a single tourism segment (Weed & Bull, 2012). To this point, youth sports studies have primarily focused on behavior and motivation (Cannon & Ford, 2002; Mizoguchi, Balbim, & Vieira, 2013), but no significant research on youth travel sports as an economic driver could be obtained.

A qualitative constant comparative method of data analysis was used in this thesis to identify the critical components believed necessary for success in the development or expansion of youth sport complexes. The findings resulted in emerging themes that support some of the theories existing between sports and tourism that have largely gone under-studied at the youth sports level. Additional results find significant gaps that exist in research thus requiring additional research specifically focused on youth sports. Youth sports participants and spectators are presumably linked to tourism and economic development, but do consulting firms agree on the critical components that most influence ROI or ROO? And, are the agreed upon critical components being consistently measured among the firms?

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

The lack of research on youth sports in general has yielded little in terms of verifiable data. One of the challenges facing researchers today is the varied definition of terms used in travel, sports, government, economics, and accounting (Tyrrell & Johnston, 2006). Another challenge facing researchers is the lack of differentiation among different types of revenue. Hritz and Ross (2010) state, “Tourism impacts has tended to focus exclusively on tourism as a whole and does not differentiate among the different types of tourism that may be present in a destination” (p. 119). Identifying consistent measurements of success and/or key performance indicators specifically for sports and youth sports would be beneficial to decision makers.

Measurements of Success

Key performance indicators (KPI) are critical components for stakeholders in assessing capital renewal, operating and efficiency costs, and comparing results against the mission and/or vision statement (Lavy, Garcia, & Dixit, 2014). However, the identification of any study presenting potential youth sport complex KPI’s and measurement of those KPI’s could not be found for the youth sports industry. It appears, the segmentation of specific youth sports KPI’s has not yet occurred. What are the KPI’s of youth sport complexes? Do the KPI’s vary by size or location of the facility? Used in motivation for development? Organizational structure? And, what are the management structures existing in youth sport complex destinations? However, identifying common reporting methods and components needed for successful economic youth sports

development found in economic impact studies should serve as a foundation to identifying KPI's.

Economic impact analysis (EIA) is one of the most researched components of development and public policy, but a consensus has not been reached on the most proper method, resulting in misinterpretations, over-inflated projections, and misapplications (Crompton, *Economic impact analysis of sports facilities and events: Eleven sources of misapplication*, 1995; Hudson, 2001; Santo, 2005). EIA in its simplest form follows economic changes resulting from an activity or stimulus (Stynes, 1997). The public (government) sector has identified the EIA as a key indicator (KPI) in choosing which community initiatives to invest (Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012). EIA studies are also used to gain support from citizens and local businesses (Williams & Riley, 2003). The importance of the EIA study cannot be overestimated in terms of the civic leader and corporate decision making process.

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) makes a broad-based welfare economics examination of the total costs, including opportunity costs, and the total benefit to the community including social benefits (Brent, 2007; Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Greene, & Martyn, 2011). The difficulties in using a CBA are obtaining the depth of information needed to be an effective representation and placing value on social benefits such as community pride. Opportunity costs can also be difficult to evaluate often requiring subjective assessments (Loomis & Walsh, 1997).

Turco (2012) described triple-bottom line (TBL) as a method for measuring sports development as providing economic, environmental, and social benefits through four criteria: “must retain resident income, stimulate direct spending by visitors, drive local

investments and development, and leads to hosting subsequent sports events” (p. 59).

TBL methodology is a recent theory thus making it difficult to identify empirical studies introduced into the market place. EIA and CBA studies are the most commonly used by industry professionals (Turco, 2012).

Motivations for Development

Motivations for sport complex development can be very complicated and have many perceived community benefits. The number of professional sports arenas built in the 20 years since in 1990 is 104 which is nearly as many as were built in the 90 years previous (Coates & Humphreys, 2011). Swindell, Rosentraub, and Tsvetkova (2008) stated, “Political decision makers often argue that such facilities have sizeable economic impacts and lead to economic growth through jobs and new spending. Numerous economists and policy analysts have questioned the veracity of such claims” (p. 134). Each community may have different motivations for wanting to develop sport facilities including social capacity, improved economic conditions, and increased community or civic pride (Crompton, Financing Sport, 2004). The development of youth sport facilities is believed to produce many of the same benefits, but information is not readily available or has yet to be studied.

Civic leaders motivated to invest in public development projects look beyond direct spending and economic impacts to other sources of economic development including new business development, entrepreneurship, and improved reputation (Ratten, 2011). Permit fees from new businesses and increased taxes on land improvements are examples of perceived secondary revenues generated by public development projects. However, other entrepreneurship records may not be so easily obtained such as

information on the home-based business. EIA studies often ignore home-based entrepreneurship due to reliability issues (Carree & Thurik, 2010). Furthermore, improved reputation is not typically a part of the EIA, but would be typical of the CBA (Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Greene, & Martyn, 2011).

Sport and Tourism

Sports has historical significance in relation to the development of the American culture as we know it today. Sport was first organized leading to commercialization in America in the late 1800's (Adelman, 1990). Commercialization of sport was the result of urbanization and the growth of metropolitan cities (Sage, 1998) capitalizing on increased populations, increased discretionary income, and desire for leisure activities. Sport was originally fulfilling a societal and cultural need in the late 1800's and throughout most of the 1900's, but sport is now thought of as a community economic driver (Adelman, 1990). Smaller communities are using sports to attract larger populations as presented in the introduction. The change in role has led to some controversies among researchers which are presented in the upcoming paragraph.

Glyptis (1991) stated, "Sport and tourism have been treated by academics and practitioners alike as separate spheres of activity" (p. 165). More recently, sports management researchers have begun linking the two spheres (Weed & Bull, 2012). A number of definitions exist, thus creating the opportunity for researchers to take a broad approach in tourism research (Hinch & Higham, 2011). The question originates with the decision to travel. What sparked the decision to travel to a specific destination? Sport? Leisure? Culture? Philanthropy? And, if sport sparked the decision to travel, was the traveler an active sports participant? Or, was the traveler engaging in sport as a spectator?

Engaging in sport as a spectator could be deemed a leisure activity (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). The presence of multiple stakeholders further complicates the issue of intent. If a person is participating in a sports event for charity, is that person participating in sports tourism or philanthropic tourism? If the participant is included in both, the possibility exists for over-inflated economic impacts, inefficient use of investment dollars and ineffective marketing strategies in the future. A general consensus among researchers has not been reached and varies based on application.

The United Nations World Travel Organization has consistently stated, “Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people (tourists) to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes” (UNWTO, 2014). As the definition would suggest, the motive for travel is as significant as the distance traveled. In this case, sports tourism is known to attract first-time visitors (Williams & Riley, 2003); therefore, determining the motives that exist in youth sports travel would seem to be relevant information for economic development strategies. The desire to create economic development specifically for youth travel sport tourism is a recent phenomenon. Tourism destinations focus on visitor expenditures such as nightly hotel stays, shopping, and dining (Filo, Chen, King, & Funk, 2011). But, there is a recognizable gap that exists in understanding youth travel sport motivations and those of a traditional tourist.

Organizational Structures

An overview of the organizational structures that exist in sports reveals there are four basic types of ownership with separate sub-categories contained within: public, private, public nonprofit and private nonprofit (Yescombe, 2007). For the purpose of this

study, focusing on the basic types of ownership will provide a foundation of understanding. Public facilities are owned and operated by a single agency within government. Private facilities are owned and operated by an organization that operates outside the government. The nonprofit segment can also be separated into public and private organizations through assessing financial flow. Nonprofit organizations receiving public funding would be considered a public nonprofit. Nonprofit organizations operating without governmental financial assistance would be considered a private nonprofit. The possibility also exists for any of these basic types of structures to form partnerships within its own segment or with any other segment. The most common partnership existing in infrastructure development is public-private (Chowdury, Chen, & Tiong, 2011; Czernek & Niezgodna, 2012). The organizational structure begins to take shape during the conceptualization process of the development and included in the request for proposals (RFP). The single largest determinant in choosing an organizational structure is financial flow (Kwak, Chih, & Ibs, 2009), but other determinants may also contribute to the type of organizational structure chosen such as organizational strengths, weaknesses, or personnel (Yescombe, 2007).

Most government agencies and departments do not have properly trained or qualified personnel to effectively operate or manage a sports facility (Howard & Crompton, 2004). The lack of qualified personnel is another reason why the need for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) became important to the development of sustainable sports complexes. Other reasons for PPP's are improved marketing systems, improved purchasing power, improved cost controls including labor costs, and the ability to remain more current on existing trends in the industry (Howard & Crompton, 2004; Yescombe,

2007). Sport facility management has become a specialized collection of a variety of operations experts including marketing, field/turf management, volunteer management, sponsorship acquisition, public and/or community relations, budget and finance, and customer service management (Mull, Beggs, & Renneisen, 2009).

Additionally, assuming the purpose of marketing is to create a customer and establish ROI (Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer, & Reibstein, 2006), then identifying the party or parties within the organizational structure responsible for developing a cohesive marketing plan would be vital to the success of any facility or event (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). Sports is a perishable good for all stakeholders including business owners located near the facility or event, participants, spectators, sponsors, media, teams and facility operators (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). As presented earlier in the sport tourism section, youth sports possess the simultaneous consumption of both the participant and passive aspects of sport and tourism (Gibson, 1998). Each of the stakeholders listed is also a potential customer which has different needs and expectations (Stotlar, 2009). In other words, the value proposition for engaging in sports developments and events varies among stakeholders. A value proposition is set of benefits created to satisfy the needs and expectations of each stakeholder independently (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). The value proposition of sport is focused on the experience due to its perishable nature and intangibility (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007).

The evolution of public partnerships with other public agencies or with private businesses heavily influences the rapid development of sports facilities and enterprises (Jefferies, 2006). However, these partnerships do not come without risk for long term sustainability (Jefferies, 2006; Czernek & Niezgodna, 2012). Tourism as a consumer

product relies on both the public and private sectors, but tourism literature has not fully explored the problems that exist when the two sectors engage in partnership (Czernek & Niezgoda, 2012).

Summary

The youth sport destination complex segment has emerged as a viable activity to stimulate economic growth and societal impacts, yet the literature review revealed that no specific research has been completed in youth sports complex development. A general understanding of motivation, market/feasibility analysis, sport and tourism, organizational structure, management structure, finance, and measurements of KPI's in each category and as a whole are the foundations to understanding how youth sports differs from professional sport destinations.

Furthermore, a simple Google search revealed the total number of youth participating in travel sports has not been calculated. Open Access Journal of Sports Medicine reported in 2013 found 45 million youth participate in sports in the U.S. and 60 percent participate in sports outside their school (Merkel, 2013). This report is commonly cited in youth sports research. However, the report does not segment out youth travel sports participation.

The purpose of this document is to explore youth travel sport complex development and provide a foundation of understanding the commonly identified critical components (CICC) existing in the development of youth sport complexes as a tourism destinations. How are the CICC's being measured? And, can the CICC's be replicated in other locations and yield similar results? An analysis of the data will provide decision makers with information not previously researched with the expectation of practical

information leading to better-informed decisions regarding the use of youth sport complexes as economic drivers and the critical components necessary for the overall success and sustainability of the complex.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGIES

The constant comparative method (CCM) of qualitative data analysis was used to derive conceptual elements of theory leading up to grounded theory hypotheses which are subjective at best requiring additional research (Merriam, 2002). CCM is best used to categorize data obtained from qualitative research methods such as interviews or cross-case analysis (Patton, 1990). Categorization of data provides clarity to research questions not previously studied or when the data is fragmented (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

A lack of empirical data led to a cross-case analysis of ten publicly available feasibility studies to identify and categorize emerging themes and constants that exist within the studies. The ten feasibility studies were analyzed to identify emerging themes and constants to answer the following three questions: (1) what are the commonly identified critical components (CICC) for the successful development and sustainability of a youth sports complex? (2) how are these CICC's being measured? and, (3) can these CICC's be implemented in various complexes that will yield similar results? All ten feasibility studies were completed by ten different firms utilizing economic impact analysis (EIA) methodologies for reporting the findings and recommendations. Youth sports complex development was broadly defined as any community seeking to invest in youth sports fields and facilities for the purpose of driving community economic development. Interest in a broadly defined phenomenon, or theme, may lead to a study of a population of cases to better understand all the complexities that exist (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) as is the situation in this study. Emerging theme identification can occur before, during, and after data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 780). The analysis

of current youth sports complexes seeking expansion or renovation and communities seeking new youth sports complex development was used to provide clarity to an otherwise ambiguous subject matter.

Feasibility studies provide the foundational materials and recommendations decision-makers use in determining to invest in or not invest in a proposed youth sports complex development. EIA studies are assumed to be post-development measuring return on investment (ROI). However, in some cases, EIA studies are used as market analysis studies which are easily identified by the “projected” measurements. EIA studies are thought to be a tool decision makers utilize in determining the success or lack of success (Kaplanidou, Kerwin, & Karadakis, Understanding sport event success: exploring perceptions of sport event consumers and event providers, 2013) experienced from a youth sports complex development. The EIA studies were used to assist in identifying consistent economic measurements, methods, and multipliers being utilized among the consulting firms. Other emerging themes may also be identified during and post-analysis as suggested Denzin and Lincoln.

Three separate comparison analyses were completed of the ten feasibility studies. The first comparative analysis would reveal any consistent themes emerging from the various organizations producing feasibility studies. The second comparative analysis would identify any consistent critical components and measurement of those components leading to completed complexes or the dissolution of the proposal. Lastly, a comparison of the projected CICC's to the realized CICC's (EIA studies) would reveal those KPI's that were either over- or under-estimated in the feasibility studies. Omitting any of the three analyses could result in misinterpretations and bias.

Privately owned youth sport facilities, school facilities, and feasibility studies that did not result into a youth sport complex development were rejected from the sample. These are limitations to the study. Delimitations to the study are the feasibility studies and economic impact studies of youth sports complexes made available to the general public. Without a more broadly defined sample, this analysis provides a basic understanding and should not be generalized to all sports facilities.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of ten feasibility studies was conducted to answer the following questions: (1) what are the commonly identified critical components (CICC) for the successful development and sustainability of a youth sports complex? (2) how are these CICC's being measured? and, (3) can these CICC's be implemented in various complexes that will yield similar results? The analysis of potential youth sports complex studies revealed a combination of twenty CICC's or ingredients needed for successful and sustainable economic development. Further analysis revealed inconsistencies in which combination of CICC's are best predictors and whether the CICC's impact other components of successful economic development such as organizational structure, facility financing, return on investment (ROI), return on objective (ROO) and perceived community value.

General observations, CICC's and the implications resulting from the findings are discussed in the following paragraphs. The measurements and tools utilized in determining those measurements are provided when such information was available as a matter of public record. Measurements and tools not disclosed should be considered proprietary and limitations to this analysis.

The analysis revealed there are too many inconsistencies existing among feasibility studies to accurately identify those CICC's that truly predict the success or failure of proposed youth sports complex. The inconsistencies existing in the identified CICC's yielded little confidence that those CICC's could be duplicated and reasonably predict results in different locations. The assumption of *ceteris paribus* (all things being

equal) is not readily apparent in the analyses. The comparative data presented in the feasibility studies were obtained from previous or current clients existing within the firm and under the same calculations and processes. Therefore, comparison data provided consistent measures, but very little understanding of potential impacts resulting from the development of youth sports complexes unless under the specific and proprietary guidelines set forth by the consulting firm. Generalizations cannot be applied or compared to any other feasibility study performed by other firms.

Figure 1 (pg. 22) provides an overview of the CICC's and which firms indicate the critical component as necessary for success. A more thorough discussion of the CICC's is provided in subsequent pages beginning with general observations.

Figure 1. Commonly Identified Critical Components (CICC) by Firm

COMMONLY IDENTIFIED CRITICAL COMPONENTS BY FIRM										
	Applied Economics	Avenue ISR	C.H. Johnson	Cender & Cender	Conventions, Sports & Leisure	H2R Consulting	Market & Feasibility Advisory	National Association of Sports Commissions	Ripken Designs	Sports Facilities Advisory
Local Demand		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Indoor / Outdoor Fields	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
High Quality Fields	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Pedestrian Access to Lodging	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Multiple / Variety of Community		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Pedestrian Access to Retail Shopping	X			X		X	X	X	X	
Locker Rooms / Team Meeting Space	X		X			X		X	X	X
Easy Access to Restrooms / Concessions					X	X	X	X	X	X
Less Significant Ingredients										
Easy Logistical Access		X	X				X	X	X	
Ample Parking			X				X	X	X	X
Multiple / Variety of In-Complex Activities			X				X	X	X	
Available Land for Expansion				X		X	X			X
Strong Management Team			X			X		X	X	
Multiple Hotel Choices	X	X				X			X	
Ample Spectator Seating									X	X
Welcoming Community		X				X				
Multiple Information Outlets		X		X						
Proximal Employee Housing	X									
Medical / Life Science Facility	X									
Variety of Usage Fees / Public Access			X							

General Observations

All ten feasibility studies contained the following phrase or similar iteration and recognized as a limitation to the study, “All information contained in this report is based on estimates, assumptions and other information...” This is an expected key finding, but worthy of noting. Economic Impact Studies (EIA) use tools such as multipliers to estimate the total economic impact of specific activities. Youth sport complex feasibility studies also use multipliers to predict future economic impacts, returns on investments, attendance and facility usage. Multipliers are used to capture indirect and induced effects created from a primary activity (Michigan State University , 2015). Impact analysis for planning (IMPLAN) is the most commonly used source for calculations where an existing IMPLAN multiplier exists. Recreation and tourism multipliers have been disputed for years and recent studies show calculations using IMPLAN multipliers for tourism and recreation have been significantly over-exaggerated (Michigan State University , 2015). The implications resulting from such estimates become easily recognized in the feasibility studies and manifested in the size, types and number of fields, buildings and then in the organizational structure and financing of a youth sports complex.

Financing options were not commonly identified critical components (CICC) and believed to fall outside the scope of the feasibility studies. However, components of the CICC’s, such as the number of travelers escorting sports participants and the economic impacts of those individuals, directly impact the organizational structures and financing options for youth sports complex development. Public developments have different finance restrictions and opportunities than private or public-private partnership

developments. The finance options available were dependent upon the type of organizational structure including to but not limited to bond issue, tax increment financing (TIF), corporate financing and commercial lending (Yescombe, 2007). Potential revenues and economic impacts were prepared as part of the feasibility studies in an effort to project a complex's 'ability to pay' or provide a ROI over a given time span. Certain types of finance plans limit community accessibility (Applied Economics, 2012; Yescombe, 2007) which could exist in cases where private organizations lease publicly owned spaces (Yescombe, 2007).

The feasibility studies did not identify visitor experience as a CICC due to its position as a lag measure, but several lead measure CICC's, such as the quality of the fields and facilities, access to lodging, variety of activities within the community and the number and accessibility to amenities within the sports complex directly impact visitor experience. Visitor experience is most reflective in return and multiple visits thus impacting estimated attendance and economic impacts (Delpy & Li, 1998). Subsequent sections will focus on lead measure CICC's with the understanding that lag measures are also impacted.

Commonly Identified Critical Components (CICC) in Order of Frequency

Local Demand

Nine of the ten firms completing a feasibility study for the development of a youth sports complex identified local demand as a CICC for successful economic development (Avenue ISR, 2012; CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013; Cender & Company, 2010; Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports

Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013). Demand is typically found in product development and marketing studies described as the public's willingness to pay for a solution to a perceived need (Fontela, 2002). Furthermore, a generally accepted definition of local demand in terms of who is included as 'local' is in question and each firm uses a proprietary formula for establishing local demand. The lack of access to proprietary information is a limitation to this study. None of the feasibility studies available for analysis provided a clear definition of local demand.

The nine firms identifying local demand as a necessary ingredient relates directly to the size and scope of the complex including the number of diamonds, multi-use fields and other infrastructure needed to meet local community need. Most firms suggest local demand is determined using the following measurement tools: public survey, overall current participation in each sport, current field usage (over or under-used) and the number of fields available in the community compared to the overall population. Interestingly though, there were no standard guidelines or details concerning the use of those captured measurements and how these measurements impacted the firms' recommendations. Firms' analysis of current conditions and critical factors such as the types of fields (grass or synthetic turf), intended use and length of season were used to determine over or under-use of current fields in the community, but offered no relevant data as to their determinations.

The implications resulting from variances existing among firms creates difficulty in understanding local demand and manifested in overall cost to develop (not including land acquisition), financing options, local access to facilities including usage fees and opportunity costs. The firms' identifying local demand as a CICC would also suggest

that development and sustainability of youth sports complexes is more closely associated with local community need. And, tourism associated with youth travel sports would enhance the long term sustainability of a complex. In some cases, community officials were seeking opportunities that would renovate publicly owned land while other communities were seeking new sports opportunities as part of a public-private partnership or total private investment organizational structure. Regardless whether a community was seeking renovations or new sports development opportunities, local demand was perceived to be of critical importance.

The only firm not concerned with local demand was Applied Economics in its study of a potential new publicly developed facility. The study identified two private organizations as primary tenants and funding source of the public development that may replace the need for local demand. Certain types of finance plans limit community accessibility (Applied Economics, 2012; Yescombe, 2007) which could exist in cases where public developed complexes engage in private lease agreements (Yescombe, 2007). For example, local demand seemingly would not be satisfied in complexes adopting this type of finance strategy leaving the possibility for opportunity costs to surface.

Opportunity costs are potential benefits a community could be receiving in lieu of existing benefits resulting from sports developments (Howard & Crompton, 2004). CS&L identified specific opportunity costs and offered a secondary proposal as part of its feasibility recommendations. The remaining studies offered no recommendations as to the potential opportunity costs that could arise from investing in a youth sports complex. Additional analysis of the Applied Economics study revealed the two private

organizations potentially engaged in the lease are involved in youth travel baseball and soccer. This might suggest that tourism may be considered as a primary revenue driver. Tourism projections tend to be over exaggerated (Michigan State University , 2015) which could lead to other community impacts such as high opportunity costs, underperforming economic growth, limited community access, the use of public financing mechanisms and overall community support.

Local demand is overwhelmingly mentioned as a CICC, but local demand determination factors vary from one feasibility study to another. It is unclear if publicly developed youth sports complexes created beyond the scope of local demand can achieve long term sustainability. Local demand utilized as a CICC would suggest community usage fees are the primary revenue source and tourism generated by youth travel sports appears to enhance economic viability of youth sports complexes rather than as a primary economic driver. Additional research is needed in this area as to the determination of local demand and the impact of local revenue has on long-term sustainability.

Combination of Indoor and Outdoor Fields

Eight of ten firms identified a combination of indoor fields and outdoor fields as necessary for successful youth sport complexes (Applied Economics, 2012; Avenue ISR, 2012; Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013). Indoor fields are described as rectangular multi-purpose fields capable of being used for many different

activities. Other indoor facilities might include hardwood and synthetic courts for basketball and volleyball, aquatic facilities, and tennis.

Communities enlisting the guidance of a consulting firm often provide a conceptual description of the proposed development with the expectation that the consulting firm will provide research and expertise. The consulting firm then has the option to support the proposal “as is” or make recommendations that will assist the community in realizing the overall goal or objective. However, a potential weakness of this approach occurs when communities are seeking approval rather than recommendations. Communities not satisfied with one firm’s recommendations may seek additional recommendations thus increasing the overall costs due to the differences existing between firms and the lack of standard CICC’s utilized in all youth sports complex feasibility studies.

The addition of indoor fields increase the costs associated with development as well as operating costs, but also increases revenues generated from year-round usage fees and potentially from sponsorship (e.g. naming rights, visible wall space, etc.). Other potential outcomes may include but are not limited to additional community meeting space, improved community health (provided the facilities are available for community use), additional in-complex attractions and/or services such as training or fitness, improved reputation in external markets (Jurowoski, Combrink, & Cothran, 2007), fewer weather-related cancelations and provides additional shelter in weather emergencies thus reducing the risk of weather-related accidents (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014). While it would seem logical that indoor fields would not be made available for play during outdoor tournaments as those fields would serve as backups in

the event of a weather delay, only one of the feasibility studies made mention of this (Avenue ISR, 2012).

Feasibility studies recommend the number of indoor fields based on the predicted hours of use (Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013), number of local players (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014), community population and demand (CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013), comparative data (Avenue ISR, 2012; CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013; Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014), or using a method not disclosed in the reports (Applied Economics, 2012; Cender & Company, 2010; H2R Market Research, 2012; Ripken Design, 2011; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013). The determination of number of outdoor fields to indoor fields is not considered in any of the studies. The fact that not all feasibility studies agree on the combination of indoor and outdoor fields nor provide a standard ratio of indoor fields to outdoor fields appears to create different recommendations among firms.

Connecting local demand to the number of fields varies as well, thus over- or under-development of outdoor and indoor facilities in a youth sports complex may result in budgetary concerns, community dissatisfaction, inadequate visitor safety, ROI and long term sustainability. Additional research is needed to possibly identify a ratio of indoor fields to outdoor fields regardless of geographic location that would satisfy budgetary and safety concerns.

High Quality Fields and Facilities

High quality fields and facilities speak directly to player and visitor experience, but very little information could be obtained as to make-up of a high quality field. Many

studies mention terms such as “playability” and “player satisfaction,” yet do not provide any quantitative or qualitative data that defines these terms. Therefore, the assumed definition of a high quality field is left up to each individual. The implications resulting from this assumption are manifested in development costs, maintenance costs and ROI.

Eight of ten feasibility studies mention high quality fields are critical for success (Applied Economics, 2012; CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013; Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013). High quality fields are described as well-groomed grass fields (Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013), synthetic turf (Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013), “extensive field conditions” (Avenue ISR, 2012), capable of hosting multiple games per day (CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013), good drainage and proper irrigation (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014), free of over-use (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014), or superior to the existing fields in the community (Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013). However, a consistent description of a quality field is not easily discerned within the publication nor in the other feasibility studies.

According to the eight studies, high quality fields increase local participation in sports clubs, create new or additional opportunities to host tournaments and improve the quality of play. However, the descriptors used in these studies provide little understanding of how quality fields are achieved or what constitutes a “quality field.” The NASC identifies over-use as a contributing factor to the quality of fields, but offers

no insights on what constitutes over-use in the feasibility study. CH Johnson Consulting Incorporated suggests quality fields are capable of hosting multiple games per day, but offers no recommendations as to the number of games that could be played per day to maximize revenues while avoiding over-use. Furthermore, North Carolina State University in partnership the North Carolina A&T University published a guide for maintaining quality athletic fields in an effort to assist sports complexes from facing legal proceedings resulting from injuries associated with a poorly designed or maintained facility (NC State University; North Carolina A&T University, 2011). Yet, even this guide offers no standard definition of a quality field. There are many critical factors to consider in achieving and maintaining high quality field conditions including weather, geographic locations, types of grass, length of season, types of usage and complex management rules for playing on fields in adverse weather conditions and field maintenance (Sawyer, 2009).

The lack of complete and full description of high quality fields and facilities may be resulting in over or under-development of fields. The resulting implications may be manifested in budgetary matters, field maintenance and usage, ROI and visitor satisfaction. Youth travel sports participants cite field conditions and playability as one of the critical factors impacting the decision to return to a tournament (Avenue ISR, 2012; H2R Market Research, 2012). The decision to return directly impacts future revenues generated from youth travel sports tourism. High quality fields and facilities seem to be a standard requirement for the success of a youth sports complex; however, further research needs to be completed to ascertain some specific items that make up high quality fields particularly in the minds of complex participants.

Pedestrian Access to Lodging

Eight of ten feasibility studies recognize the need for hotel accommodations within walking distance or inside of the sports complex (Applied Economics, 2012; Avenue ISR, 2012; Cender & Company, 2010; Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011) as an ingredient for success. Many of the feasibility studies discuss the number of available hotel rooms and the potential economic impact of those rooms. According to Hamilton County Tourism, Inc., overnight visitors spend \$91 more per day on average than a “day tripper” (Applied Economics, 2012). In 2011, the NASC conducted a study in coordination with the University of Arizona of 35 events in 31 communities finding visitors, people leaving money behind in a new market (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014), spend an average of \$208 per person per day including a nightly hotel stay. Avenue ISR reported 83 percent of participants pay for some form of accommodations while H2R reported 77.3 percent and Applied Economics reported 73 percent. Establishing “stay to play” tournaments aid in creating hotel demand (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014) capturing additional visitor spending. CSL estimates youth sports complexes account for 10 percent of the overall demand needed to support a hotel dependent on the number, size, and length of tournaments (Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014).

The estimated number of travelers accompanying young athletes vary between firms and directly impacts the estimated nightly hotel room need. Analysis of the eight

studies found that the multiplier ranged from 1.5 (Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014) to 2.33 (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014). The average party size is said to be 5 (H2R Market Research, 2012) which could mean a ratio of 4 to 1, and much higher than the multipliers reported by other firms. In addition to variations existing in the number of travelers, the number of nightly stays varies as well ranging from 1.0 (Applied Economics, 2012) to 3.4 (H2R Market Research, 2012) and is dependent on the type of sporting event. Soccer clinics create an estimated 4.5 nightly stays while baseball clinics create an estimated 1.5 nightly stays (Applied Economics, 2012). Baseball tournaments create an estimated 2.5 (Applied Economics, 2012) to 3.4 (H2R Market Research, 2012) nightly stays while soccer tournaments create an estimated 2.0 (Applied Economics, 2012) to 3.0 (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014) nightly stays.

Multipliers used to determine number of attendees and the number of hotel rooms needed appears to be within an acceptable range to the general public, but the variances existing in these multipliers could result in thousands to tens of thousands of dollars in attendance and generated revenues depending on the number of events and the number of 'non-local' visitors. As indicated in the local demand section, nine of ten firms speculate sports complex size and offerings are more connected to local demand than to tourism for sustainability. Hotels might need to rely on multiple forms of tourism attractions within the community for sustainability. Youth travel sports accounts for approximately ten percent of the revenue needed to sustain a hotel (Avenue ISR, 2012), but is dependent on the number and size of the sports tournaments hosted in a given community (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014).

There are several implications resulting from this observation. If local demand is in fact a critical component to the economic success of a youth sports complex, then the number of nightly stays required by locals would seemingly be minimal thus requiring hotels to depend on tournament travelers as a revenue driver. The variances existing between firms as to the number of travelers in a party or group and the number of nightly stays generated by various sporting events has a potentially large impact on the estimated total number of rooms needed to host the various events existing at a youth sports complex. Only one study made any attempt to quantify the percentage of nights generated by youth sports to the total nights needed to sustain a hotel. Furthermore, none of the eight studies provided differentiations among those hotels within walking distance or in-park and those hotels in the area. Additional research is needed to identify an acceptable range of multipliers to better estimate the number of travelers and number of hotel rooms needed given that a hotel is not sustainable on travel sports tourism alone. A qualitative analysis is also needed as to the distance visitors are willing walk to be considered “pedestrian accessible.”

Multiple Activities / Variety of Attractions Available in the Host Community

The availability of multiple activities inside the complex and spectator seating speaks to those individuals accompanying participants and their experience. Avenue ISR reported that 50 percent of youth sports participants have at least one sibling attending the event (Avenue ISR, 2012). Using a basic formula for calculating averages (see the chart below), the studies collectively suggest participants represent approximately 39.7 percent of the total number of visitors attending a youth sports facility. Avenue ISR estimates

that 95 percent of the total number of visitors is comprised of sports participants, siblings, parents and grandparents with the remaining five percent dedicated to other relatives or friends (does not include employees). This is an important finding that impacts several CICC's including the need for spectator seating and multiple activities within the host community as well as the sports complex.

Figure 2. Indicates the firms' estimate percentage of participating visitors

Percentage of Participants Attending a Youth Sports Complex	
Firm	Estimated % Participants of Total Visitors
Ave ISR	31.9
CH Johnson	45.7
H2R	43.8
NASC	37.5
Avg. Percent	39.7

Communities having multiple activities and a variety of attractions are believed to not only enhance the youth sport complex visitor experience, but also provide additional revenue generating opportunities for the host community including additional hotel visits beyond youth travel sports (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014).

Interestingly though, it is unclear how multiple activities and variety of attractions is impacted by local demand which is thought to be the most important CICC. Multiple activities and variety of attractions were CICC's associated with youth travel sports and the number of non-local visitors attending these events.

Seven of the ten feasibility studies indicate the availability of multiple activities or variety of attractions in the community are key ingredients supporting a sports complex (Avenue ISR, 2012; CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013; Cender & Company, 2010; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011). Avenue ISR analysis of two tournaments in Traverse City, Michigan suggests 85 percent of families attending the tournaments spent an additional \$546 on ancillary community activities (Avenue ISR, 2012). H2R's analysis of youth sports impact on Branson, Missouri in 2012 suggests families attending a youth sporting event spend \$422 less than a family traveling to the community for non-sport related activities; however, youth sports visitors spent \$767 during a 3-day tournament (H2R Market Research, 2012). Furthermore, retail shopping was identified as the preferred ancillary youth sports activity by eight firms (Applied Economics, 2012; Avenue ISR, 2012; CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013; Cender & Company, 2010; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011), but only four firms specifically identified retail shopping as a critical component for success (Avenue ISR, 2012; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014). These four studies specifically identified pedestrian accessible retail shopping as the most preferred activity by tournament attendees.

Entertainment was also identified as a highly preferred activity, but a general definition of entertainment was not readily apparent in most of the studies. Avenue ISR's analysis of two tournaments in Traverse City, Michigan indicated only 17 percent of

youth sports attendees paid for entertainment such as movies, miniature golf, and bowling (Avenue ISR, 2012) whereas H2R's analysis of Branson, Missouri indicated 34.4 percent of youth sports attendees paid to see a live show (H2R Market Research, 2012). This might suggest that a community's reputation or identity plays a significant role in youth sport attendees willingness to pay for and participate in local activities beyond retail shopping.

Three feasibility studies analyzed existing youth sporting tournaments in the markets where a youth sports complex was being proposed. Analysis of the other proposals did not yield any indication of the presence of existing youth sports tournaments which may suggest a completely new venture into the youth sports tournament market. However, it is unclear if these locations have existing youth sports tournaments and is a limitation of this analysis. Additional research is needed in understanding how multiple activities and variety of attractions impact local demand and the other identified CICC's.

Locker Room and Team Meeting Space

Locker rooms and team meeting spaces are considered secondary or ancillary spaces in a youth sports complex. Secondary or ancillary spaces are defined as any spaces that support the primary activity such as sports fields, hardwood courts, fitness facilities or aquatics (Sawyer, 2009). However, the locker room is the most complex of the secondary spaces providing safety, privacy, personal grooming, and social interactions and/or instruction (Sawyer, 2009). Also, many studies refer to locker rooms

and team meeting spaces as one space. Others studies separate the two spaces into two specific areas with differing purposes.

Six of the ten feasibility studies indicate locker room and team meeting space as a necessary key ingredient for success (Applied Economics, 2012; CH Johnson Consulting, Inc., 2013; H2R Market Research, 2012; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013). Of the six studies identifying locker rooms and team meeting space as a CICC, only Sports Facility Advisory (SFA) made specific recommendations on the number of locker rooms and the size of those locker rooms for each type of facility. SFA also separated team meeting space from locker room facilities. It is unclear if locker room recommendations fell within the scope of the other feasibility studies thus a limiting factor of this analysis.

Locker room facilities and team meeting spaces represent 35 to 60 percent of the ancillary space in a sports facility playing an important role in the participants' experiences (Sawyer, 2009). The seven feasibility studies citing locker room and team meeting space as a key ingredient would support this claim. Locker room and/or team meeting space financial estimates are not separated from the total build cost of an indoor facility in any of the seven feasibility studies. The importance of these types of spaces within a sports complex would seemingly warrant a number of fields to locker room square feet ratio, but none were obtained from the feasibility studies. However, the facility planning and design handbook does provide some guidelines. For example, gymnasium occupancy levels are estimated to be 12 people actively engaged in hardcourt activities such as basketball or volleyball per game court (Sawyer, 2009). The recommended space allowance for each locker is 15 square feet (Sawyer, 2009). The

total space is divided equally between male and female to comply with Title IX regulations where applicable (Sawyer, 2009).

Analysis of the six feasibility studies identify locker rooms and team meeting spaces as critical factors in perceived quality and aid in attracting youth travel sports tournaments such as soccer and baseball. However, little information could be obtained as to the size or number of these spaces in relation to outdoor fields. The facility planning and design handbook makes specific recommendations on the size of a locker room in relation to the number of courts and types of activities. Only one feasibility study made recommendations as to the number and size of locker rooms needed for a potential sports complex. It is unclear if the firms completing the feasibility studies are responsible for specific facility recommendations. Six firms make specific mention as to the need for these spaces would logically indicate the studies would include some details as to the number and size of spaces needed for the project, but information is sparse and not easily recognized.

Easy Access to Restroom and Concession Facilities

Six of ten feasibility indicate multiple restroom and concession facilities easily accessible by attendees are key ingredients for potential success (Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014; H2R Market Research, 2012; Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014; Ripken Design, 2011; Sports Facilities Advisory, 2013). Ripken Design specifically indicates these facilities should be convenient and in proximity to the playing fields. A ratio of the number of fields/people to restroom/concession facility is not present in any of the feasibility studies nor a

definition of proximity to the fields. This may be due to differences in local building codes of the proposed sites and is a limitation to this analysis. Furthermore, it is unclear if the firms completing the feasibility studies are responsible for determining the number of restroom/concession facilities for a given complex.

Restroom/concession facilities are related to overall costs and visitor experience inside the sports complex. Restroom facilities are required and have specific local building codes that directly impact the building and maintenance costs. Women's restrooms would be approximately double the number of men's restrooms and all restroom facilities would provide baby changing stations (Sawyer, 2009). The American Restroom Association (ARA) provides some clarification as to the definition of proximal along with Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) specific requirements for "Special Events" such as sports tournaments as well (American Restroom Association, 2015). The number of restrooms to people as recommended by the ARA is 300 people to 1 restroom unless alcoholic beverages are being served and the ratio drops to 240 to 1 at a distance no greater than 500 meters (approximately 1600 feet). FEMA has additional requirements and assumes a 50/50 split of men's restrooms to women's.

The feasibility studies provided no clarification on this issue, but included the costs for these facilities in the building costs. Closely estimating the number of visitors would be of critical importance as to meeting local building codes, FEMA requirements and providing quality cost data. Visitor estimation variances among the firms may cause significant cost differences and impact the visitor experience. Visitor experience is a lag measure collected post-event and the number of restroom facilities available during the

event directly impacts future attendance (H2R Market Research, 2012; National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014).

Concessions is often included with restroom facilities in an effort to keep building costs down and make efficient use of the space while providing centralized services to visitors/patrons (Sawyer, 2009). Concession areas may or may not be required by local building codes, but are considered necessary for visitor and community gatherings. Concession areas provide a revenue generating amenity in an area that is required and non-revenue generating which is the case of restroom facilities (National Association of Sports Commissions, 2014). No recommendations were made as to the types of offerings (e.g. food, candy, drinks, etc.) or the size of the concession area.

If concession accessibility is a CICC, then it would naturally seem that concession revenue would also be a CICC. However, only two of the six firms specifically separate concession revenue from total revenue. Two firms not mentioning concession accessibility as a CICC also provide concession revenue separate from total revenue. The four firms present concession revenue in three different ways; first as a total projected revenue, second as average spend per visitor per day and third as an average spend per family per event. For comparison purposes and understanding, concession revenue was formatted to average visitor spend per visit. M&FA projected 445,000 annual visitors generating an estimated \$310,000 in concession revenue (Market & Feasibility Advisors, 2013) which results in \$1.44 per visitor per visit. CS&L projected 500,000 annual visitors based on attendance at facilities of comparable size (Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014). The concession revenue was projected to be \$156,000 (Conventions Sports & Leisure International, 2014) resulting in \$0.31 spend per visitor

per visit. Applied Economics estimated concession revenue of \$615,000 based on 500,000 visitors (Applied Economics, 2012). This results in \$1.23 per visitor per visit. Finally, Avenue ISR presented the most complex of all concession information which was obtained from attendees during two separate 3-day events (6 days total). The report determined that 3,400 non-local families spent an average of \$41 per event on concessions and the average family size was determined to be 3.14 (Avenue ISR, 2012). Assuming one day equals one visit, simple calculations revealed the average non-local visitor spent \$2.18 per day ($\$41/6 \text{ days} = 6.83/3.14 = \2.18) during the two events. Local attendee concession expenditures and total concession revenue was not provided in the study. Therefore, the concession revenue presented by Avenue ISR is ambiguous and misleading in comparison to the other studies. The estimated concession revenues vary among firms as well as the projected attendance estimates which could change concession revenue greatly and should not be a surprise by this point.

The combination of restroom and concession facilities appear to be connected and provides a fiscally responsible means for meeting building codes and requirements. These facilities also appear to significantly impact the overall visitor experience. However, only six of the ten feasibility studies identified these required facilities as critical for success. Assuming the size and number of these facilities would come from a different design firm, the ten feasibility firms may possibly reporting on building costs that do not meet building requirements. As stated previously in this section, determining projected costs, estimating concession revenue and offering clear consistent recommendations appear to be undefined and a limitation to this analysis.

Other CICC's

The remaining ingredients mentioned (number of firms agreeing) are easy logistical accessibility (5), ample parking (5), multiple activities within the complex (4), available land for expansion (4), strong management team (4), multiple hotel choices (4), spectator seating (2), welcoming community (2), multiple information outlets (2), proximal employee housing (1), medical facilities (1), and variety of access and user fees (1) complete the twenty CICC's. These remaining CICC's did not receive further analysis due to the level of significance and overall lax point of view within the studies.

Twelve CICC's were mentioned in 50 percent or less of the feasibility sample. However, a few of these CICC's appear to be critical in meeting perceived visitor experience needs regardless of local visitors or travel sports visitors such as easy logistical accessibility, ample parking, multiple activities within the sports complex, spectator seating and multiple information outlets.

The visitor experience begins with logistical accessibility (Sawyer, 2009). In other words, sports complexes that are easily accessible with detailed signage, good traffic patterns possessing multiple entrances and exits are more likely to produce a positive visitor experience than those complexes that are difficult to find (Avenue ISR, 2012). Three firms coupled ample parking with easy logistical accessibility and two additional firms mentioned ample parking as a separate CICC. Both accessibility and parking would seemingly impact visitor experience, but more information is needed.

Multiple information resource outlets was only identified in two studies as a CICC, but directly impacts visitor experience particularly in youth sports complexes hosting tournaments. Avenue ISR's study of two tournaments indicated participants had

difficulty in receiving information regarding tournament schedules and field assignments.

While a study of two tournaments is not representative of the industry as a whole, additional research may be warranted as part of visitor experience study.

Chapter Five

FUTURE RESEARCH

The gaps existing among the ten feasibility studies create several opportunities for future research. The suggested recommendations for future and additional research are listed below.

1. The most identified critical component in the feasibility studies suggests local demand plays an important role in the success of youth sport complexes. However, research is needed in determining who is considered local and how local demand is best calculated to prevent over-building and over-spending in communities seeking to develop a youth sports complex.
2. The combination of indoor and outdoor fields seemingly provides a variety of benefits to a youth sports complex and to the host community. However, additional research is needed in understanding if an optimal ratio of outdoor to indoor fields exists possibly under the premise of the law of diminishing return.
3. The feasibility studies suggest pedestrian access to hotels and a variety of activities are critical to the success of youth sport complexes. The studies also suggest that shopping is the preferred activity among youth sport visitors. However, additional research is warranted in clarifying the most desirable activities desired by youth sport visitors. Additionally, researching the preferred 'walking distance' would be very beneficial to city planners.
4. In my opinion, the most important research that is truly needed is identifying a consistent number of travelers accompanying a youth sports participant. This is such an important number to a variety of businesses associated with youth

sports tourism including but not limited to hotel needs, parking, concessions and secondary facility needs, but a general consensus has not been achieved.

Empirical research would provide some measurable consistency to an otherwise ambiguous multiplier.

5. The number of commonly identified critical components impacting visitor experience is significant, but is understated in the feasibility studies.

Empirical research is needed in identifying those components that most impact the visitor experience. Additionally, understanding when the visitor experience begins and ends would be beneficial in marketing and obtaining return visits.

6. Visitor spending inside a youth sports complex and within community varies significantly among feasibility studies. Empirical research may provide some insights into spending habits in the home area compared to the spending habits when traveling for youth sporting events. This is essential information for professionals in the convention and visitor bureau profession as well as municipal economic planning and chamber of commerce activities.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

Commonly Identified Critical Components (CICC) vary among firms and not all firms completely agree on which CICC's are truly important when completing a feasibility study. Nearly all agree that local demand is a CICC directly impacting the sustainability of a youth sports facility; however, the empirical calculation of local demand differs greatly. The Grand Park development was the catalyst for this analysis and highlighted in the introduction. Privatization of the publicly funded Grand Park facility contracted two private nonprofit organizations as long term tenants which has severely limited public use of the facility. The private nonprofit organizations have responsibilities to their stakeholders which may or may not coincide with community stakeholders. Therefore, as tenants, the organizations have restricted community access to presumably to reduce maintenance costs, wear and tear on the fields, the number or employees needed during non-tournament times thus maximizing profits and sustainability of the organization. Furthermore, the feasibility study completed by Applied Economics for the city of Westfield, Indiana and Grand Park was the only firm that did not identify local demand as a CICC. The intended goal of Grand Park is to become the premier youth sports *tourism* destination, but also comes with some significant risks to the community taxpayers. It is uncertain if this is a viable strategy after analyzing nine other studies indicating sustainability of youth sports complexes is more related to local demand than to tourism.

The number of publicly available feasibility studies was extremely limited at the time of this analysis. However, significant findings were revealed particularly in the number of inconsistencies and differences existing between firms with little or no

apparent accountability. In my opinion, the feasibility study is intended to provide an assessment and viability of an idea using data that can be replicated and understood by a variety of audiences. Many of the firms included in this study utilized proprietary information or hid calculations within other calculations making it impossible to ascertain the true economic effects. Differences in theory and calculations existing between firms often yield different results. This is why some communities seek additional studies if the first study does not yield the desired results.

The explosion in the development of large youth sports complexes across the United States is riddled with future unseen consequences. Market saturation is a real concern in the development of youth sports complexes utilized as economic drivers. The number of firms performing feasibility studies with little or no understanding of youth sports as economic drivers could be perpetuating market saturation.

In final summation, the lack of consensus among feasibility studies on which CICC's are true predictors of successful youth sports development and the many differences that exist in how the CICC's are measured leaves no opportunity for communities to duplicate the results. Additional research is needed in so many areas concerning youth sports and discerning the CICC's that are true predictors of success and sustainability. This analysis should serve as a caution to communities wanting to invest in youth sports developments and seeking a feasibility study. The research, expertise and recommendations provided by the consulting firm is only one portion of the decision to develop a youth sports complex. Communities seeking simple project approval are doing a disservice to community citizens and to the consulting firm. Therefore, creating a

system of standards and accountability is important to the future of youth sport complex development and protects the community as well as the consulting firm.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Larry E. Jinkins

EDUCATION

Masters of Science, Department of Event Tourism
Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana (IUPUI) May 2015

Bachelors of Science with High Distinction, Department of Kinesiology
Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana (IUPUI) May 2013

Certificate of Business, Kelley School of Business
Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana (IUPUI) December 2012

Certificate of Accounting, Department of Business
International Business College, Indianapolis, Indiana December 1992

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

August 2013 – May 2015 Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Tourism,
Conventions, and Event Management, School of Physical
Education and Tourism Management, Indiana University-
Purdue University, Indianapolis, Indiana.

- Strategic partnership identification
- Community engagement
- Special projects

January 2012 – May 2015 Teaching Assistant, Dean of Physical Education and Tourism
Management, Department of Kinesiology, School of Physical
Education and Tourism, P432 - Sports Management
Consulting

OTHER APPOINTMENTS AND CONSULTANTSHIPS

May 2014 – Present Chris Hacker Motorsports, LLC

- Fundraising, Marketing and Sponsorship Consultant
- Design and implement a charity strategy
- Create multiple fundraising events
- Write and distribute press releases
- Generate media awareness utilizing multiple media outlets
- Resulted in sending 24 kids with disabilities to summer camp and raising approximately \$5000 in just 45 days.

May 2013 – August 2013 Whiting, Indiana – Mayor Joe Stahura

- Tourism Strategy Consultant
- Review and assess municipal tourism strategies
- Review and assess community relations strategies
- Present findings and make appropriate strategic recommendations
- Resulted in marketing changes and the addition of key business development

January 2012 – May 2012 Indiana Department of Tourism - Pete Dye Golf Trail

- Student Marketing and Business Development Team
- Review and assess strategic positioning
- Create unique marketing program representative of the seven golf courses
- Recommend potential sponsors and propose activation strategies

RESEARCH PRESENTATION

1. Jinkins, L. & Cecil, A. (July 2014). A Model of Community Engagement through Events. Global Events Congress, Adelaide, Australia.

PROFESSIONAL/STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

2011 – Present North American Society for Sport Management
2011 – 2013 IUPUI Organization of Kinesiology
2009 – 2013 National Society of Leadership and Success

HONORS AND AWARDS

2013

- Selected Commencement Speaker
- Dean's List Recognition
- IUPUI Top 100 Students Nomination

2012

- Dean's List Recognition
- IUPUI Top 100 Students Nomination

2011

- Dean's List Recognition

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

October 2012 – Present

American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)

- Serve on the advisory committee for Novus Sport
- Establish a new entity within ACSM to aid in the development of sport and fitness innovation.
- Provide insights and revenue generation models.

May 2012 – November 2012

Special Olympics Indiana

- Business Development and Event Coordinator Intern
- Led Charity Golf Classic generating over \$80,000
- Event host for The International Law Enforcement Torch Run
 - 1,000 international officers generating approximately \$5,000 in revenue
- Coordinated food, beverage, and activities in Banker's Life Fieldhouse for 2,000 guests.

January 2011 – March 2011 Zionsville High School

- Developed a physical conditioning program for the ladies' tennis team utilizing new cardio and fitness programs instituted at colleges and universities. The program is still being utilized today by Coach Moore.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

March 2008 – December 2008 Auto Outfitters, Noblesville, Indiana

- Outside sales manager / B2B Sales Strategist
- Resulted in a 440% increase in B2B revenue

August 2004 – November 2007 Bill Estes Automotive, Indianapolis & Brownsburg, Indiana

- Automotive Sales
- Sales Trainer
- Quality Control Board - Member
- Salesperson of the Year – 2005
- Pete Estes Professionalism Award – 2005
- GM Top 100 Sales Ring Award Winner – 2005

May 1995 – July 2004 Entrepreneur

- Management, sales and service strategies consultant for a variety of companies throughout the United States specializing in failing business recovery.
- Developed and presented a new customer service program to international franchisees of the Rubber Polymer Corporation
- Responsible for turning multiple failing Arthur Murray Dance Schools into profitable and successful schools

August 1987 – May 1995 Arthur Murray Dance Schools

- Ballroom Dance Instructor
- Generated \$250k in sales in 1988 earning top honors for small markets