

# SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN + FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

## LAFAYETTE TRAVEL



November 8, 2022

POWERED BY THE HUDDLE UP GROUP



November 8, 2022

Benjamin Berthelot  
President & CEO  
Lafayette Travel  
1100 Lafayette St.  
Lafayette, LA 70501

Dear Mr. Berthelot,

Thank you for your efforts on our recent work in the Lafayette area. You, your team, and your community stakeholders have been quite helpful throughout this process. The groundwork we have set with your local leadership will serve as a strong foundation for future sports tourism, venue, and event development efforts in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Enclosed is the report detailing our findings. This report includes a SWOT analysis, an overview and evaluation of the venue inventory in the Lafayette area, and recommendations to enhance your destination's sports tourism efforts in the future.

Please let me know if you have questions about the enclosed recommendations leading up to the roll out of the report and community presentation. We are looking forward to our final presentation and follow-up discussions.

Thank you again for all your support throughout this process!

Yours in Sport,

  
Jon Schmieder  
Founder + CEO  
Huddle Up Group, LLC

CITIZENS FOR A  
*New* Louisiana

**Lafayette Travel**  
**Strategic Plan, Facility Audit and Recommendations**  
**Executive Summary**

In the opinion of the Huddle Up Group (hereafter the “Consultant” or “Consultant Team”), there is an excellent opportunity for Lafayette Travel (“LT”) to strengthen its position among the top sports tourism destinations in the region through the implementation of a focused sports tourism development agenda.

This strategic planning and facility audit project was conducted with the input of two members from the Consultant Team and included among other focuses:

- A rating of LT and the Lafayette destination through the Sports Tourism Index™.
- Two (2) in-person meetings, 11 phone interviews, and 17 electronic survey responses with Lafayette area leaders.
- One (1) in-person town hall meeting with local stakeholders.
- Tours of 16 different sites that encapsulated 39 sports and event venues.
- Benchmarking against high performing destinations and venues both regionally and nationally.

The enclosed report offers a SWOT analysis and recommendations for an enhanced sports tourism marketing program and long-term facility development. This document offers depth on each recommendation along with back up research and benchmarks that support each of the suggestions made by the Consultant Team. In summary, there are four (4) primary and three (3) secondary recommendations, each of which is detailed in the full report:

**Primary Recommendations – Organizational Strategies (Shorter Term)**

1. Secure Additional Funding Source
2. External Focus/Community Alignment
3. Sports Brand
4. Dedicated Staff

**Secondary Recommendations – Facility “Tool Kit” (Longer Term)**

1. Develop a Parish-Wide Sports Tourism Facility Master Plan
2. Indoor Hardwood Court Venue (New)
3. Venue Enhancement Opportunities

The opportunity at hand is to put in place an enriched sports tourism support system, engaging all stakeholders throughout the Lafayette area to drive more economic development and improve opportunities for community user groups. Through a community-wide effort, LT can drive increased economic activity through sport in the form of additional overnight stays and visitor spending. This will result in more lodging and sales tax revenues being collected in the region year over year. Given the opportunities that exist and the numerous organizations that could play a key role, the Consultant Team believes LT is the ideal entity to lead the facility development and enhancement charge for Lafayette Parish.

## **Lafayette Travel**

### **Facility Audit and Recommendations**

#### **Synopsis**

The sports tourism industry has grown consistently over the past 20 years. A study by the Sports Tourism and Events Association – *State of the Industry Report 2021*, states that the participant driven portion of the domestic sports tourism sector is responsible for more than \$39.0 billion in direct spending as of the end of 2021. This direct spending generated a total economic impact of \$91.8 billion in the local economy, driving over 635,000 jobs and \$12.9 billion in taxes. Add to this industry growth the increased popularity of emerging sports such as pickleball, BMX, and esports, the opportunity for the continuing expansion of economic development through sports tourism is tangible.

Throughout the research process, it became apparent to the Consultant Team that there is an opportunity for LT to enhance its presence in the sports tourism market. The key moving forward is for community stakeholders to work together in developing tourism driving assets (sports venues) that can deliver upon the sports tourism mission of LT from one year to the next. Through the execution of a strategic and targeted game plan, LT can strengthen its position as a player in the sports tourism and events industry.

#### **Methodology**

The Consultant Team conducted an assessment on the current sports tourism work of LT and an analysis of the area's sports venues. The project was led by Huddle Up Group Founder + CEO, Jon Schmieder (Phoenix, AZ) and Director, Dean Polk (Martinsburg, WV), and followed a six (6) step process that included:

1. An evaluation of LT and the destination through the Sports Tourism Index™ (a proprietary benchmarking tool developed by the Huddle Up Group, summarized in Appendix E).
2. An organizational audit on the current sports tourism work of LT, including a review of previous relevant research and projects as well as input from two (2) in-person interviews, 11 phone interviews, and 17 survey responses from key community stakeholders. Individuals engaged included, among others, LT staff, elected officials, community leaders, venue managers, athletic administrators, event owners, hospitality industry executives, and local sports club leaders.
3. A multiple day market visit (August 29-31, 2022) that consisted of one (1) town hall meeting and a sports tourism facility audit that encapsulated tours of 16 existing or planned sports and entertainment sites totaling 39 venues.
4. The creation and delivery of a strategic “playbook” for an improved sports tourism program and venue “tool kit.”
5. An in-person delivery and presentation, to members of the LT staff and stakeholders, outlining the findings and recommendations of step 4.
6. A follow-up conversation with LT 30-days following the delivery of the playbook and presentation of the findings to discuss new developments and next steps.



The facilities visited in step 3 are listed below, and in Appendix D, along with a current and potential rating for each venue if enhancements/improvements are made to help attract more tourism driving events.

- Beaver Park
- Blackham Coliseum
- Bourgeois Hall - Courts
- Bourgeois Hall - Racquetball
- Broussard Sports Complex - Diamonds
- Broussard Sports Complex - Disc Golf
- Broussard Sports Complex - Flat Fields
- Broussard Sports Complex - Tennis
- Brown Memorial Park Diamonds
- Cajun BMX at Picard Park
- Cajun Courts
- Cajun Field
- Cajundome
- Cajundome Convention Center
- Carencro Park Diamonds
- Clark Field
- Earl K. Long Gymnasium
- Fabacher Field
- Foster Park
- Girard Park Disc Golf Course
- Heymann Park Diamond
- Heymann Park Disc Golf Course
- Heymann Park Football Field
- Leon Moncla IPF
- Moore Park - Diamonds
- Moore Park - Flat Fields
- Neyland Park
- Pelican Park
- The Wetlands
- Tigue Moore Field
- UL Intramural Sports Complex
- UL Soccer
- UL Student Aquatic Center
- UL Track
- Youngsville Sports Complex - Diamonds
- Youngsville Sports Complex - Flat Fields
- Youngsville Sports Complex - Sand Volleyball
- Youngsville Sports Complex - Tennis
- Yvette Girard Field

The scope of the project focused on five (5) key areas:

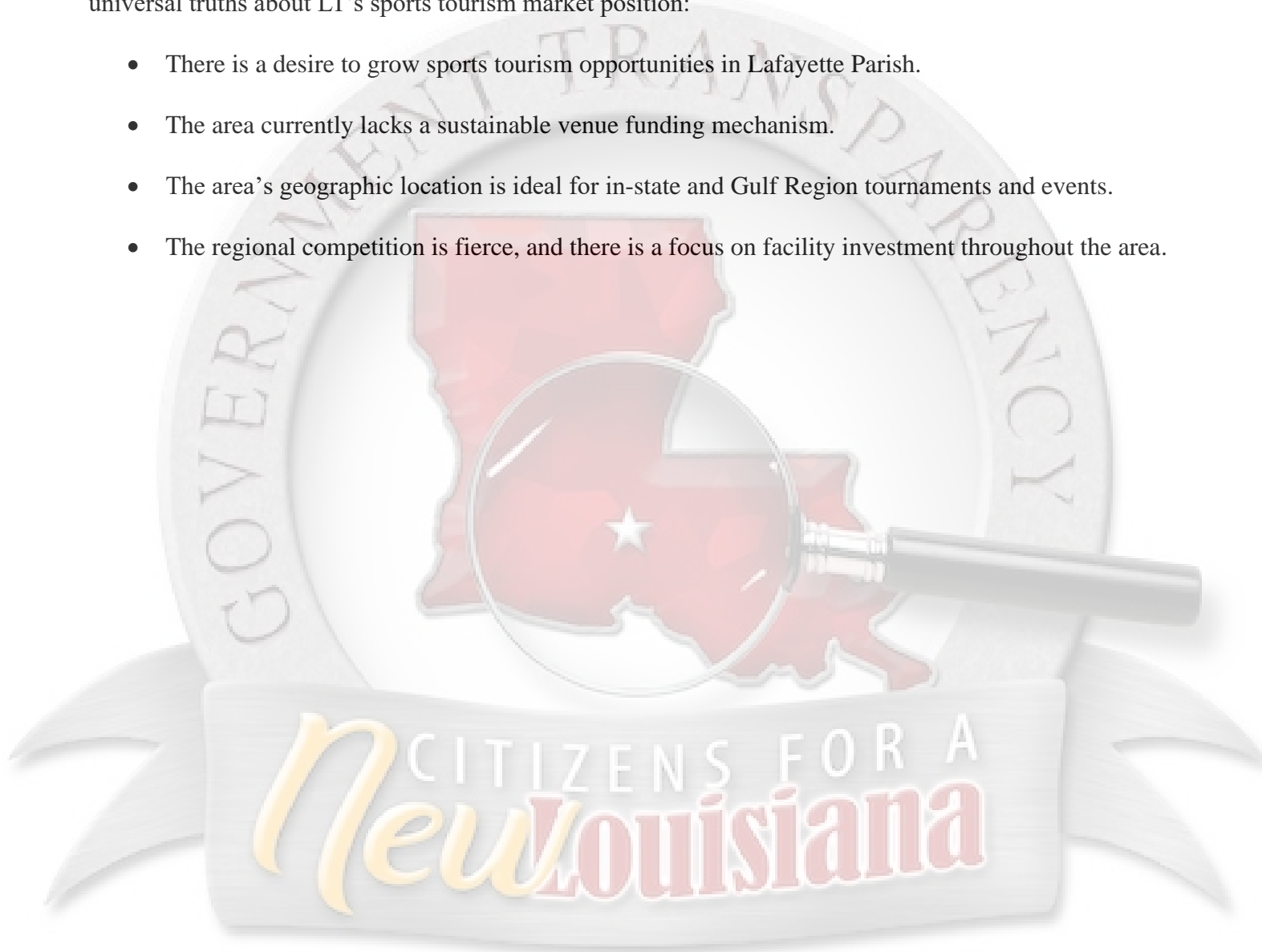
1. Evaluating the current sports tourism efforts of LT and comparing “Best in Class” sports tourism organizations in similar destinations to make recommendations for an improved sports marketing and sales strategy.
2. Assessing the current facility inventory in Lafayette Parish and benchmarking those facilities using the Sports Tourism Index™ as a scoring tool.
3. Providing a gap analysis and recommendations for new sports facility development or existing facility enhancements that would drive ancillary tourism to the market.
4. Identifying available venue funding mechanisms, management models, and public/private partnership opportunities.
5. Detailing an economic impact analysis of the top new facility development opportunity.

Discussions were held around national best practices in these theme areas and focus was given to applications for LT. The intent of this process was to create community support for an increased sports tourism and venue development effort in Lafayette Parish by giving local stakeholders a voice and fostering a teamwork mentality throughout the area.

The Consultant Team took the results from the stakeholder interviews, data from the Sports Tourism Index™, and the site visit to the Lafayette area, then overlaid national best practices from several event rights holders and “Best in Class” sports destinations to develop and deliver the enclosed recommendations. These recommendations are intended to spark a dialog within the community’s leadership hierarchy to build a framework for next steps on an expanded sports tourism marketing effort.

The recommendations presented here are based upon what the Consultant Team believes are four (4) universal truths about LT’s sports tourism market position:

- There is a desire to grow sports tourism opportunities in Lafayette Parish.
- The area currently lacks a sustainable venue funding mechanism.
- The area’s geographic location is ideal for in-state and Gulf Region tournaments and events.
- The regional competition is fierce, and there is a focus on facility investment throughout the area.



**Lafayette Travel**  
**Facility Audit and Recommendations**  
**SWOT Analysis**

It is the opinion of the Consultant Team that Lafayette Parish is in an excellent position to become a leader in the region within the sports tourism space. Through our extensive analysis and our knowledge of the national marketplace, we believe there is an opportunity for LT to deliver additional overnight stays to the destination through an enhanced sports tourism strategy. This expanded effort will lead to increased economic development and will positively impact the community over time.

In a market the size of the Lafayette area, with its numerous positive attributes, it is critical that grass roots sports tourism as well as special events continue to serve as economic drivers for the local economy. Keeping that in the forefront of LT's objectives and focusing on both an enhanced sports marketing program and long-term facility development, below is a SWOT analysis on the status of LT and Lafayette Parish as a sports tourism destination.

**Strengths**

1. Culture – Lafayette Parish offers a welcoming, family-friendly community. Known for its lively, festival-driven atmosphere, and abundance of quality restaurants, Lafayette sits in the heart of Cajun Country. Among its many accolades, the area has been named the “Happiest City in America” by the Wall Street Journal and the “Best Food City in the USA” by Rand McNally/USA Today. Paired with numerous museums, historical attractions, and outdoor experiences, Lafayette has something to offer event rights holders and visiting teams of all types, all year long.
2. Location – The area is ideal for both state and regional tournaments due to its central geographic position in Louisiana and the Gulf Coast Region. Positioned at the intersection of Interstates 10 and 49, and U.S. Route 90, the parish is easily accessible via ground transportation, and is within a short day's drive of numerous major metropolitan areas including New Orleans, Houston, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio.
3. Diamond Facilities – The baseball/softball complexes throughout the parish are not just among the best in the state and region, but nationally. Two facilities, the Youngsville Sports Complex and the Broussard Sports Complex are among the highest scoring diamond facilities on the Sports Tourism Index™, with both earning platinum designation (graded in the top 10% of all diamond facilities scored on the platform. N=735.) These facilities, along with others like Pelican Park, Tigie Moore Field, and Yvette Girard Field, provide ample opportunities for tourism-driving events and community programming. Interview and survey respondents often cited these facilities among the driving forces behind the area's continued strong participation rates and history of athletic success.
4. CVB Staff & Leadership – LT and its staff are very well respected both locally and nationally within the industry. Numerous survey respondents shared that they believed the LT staff was collaborative, responsive, and overall did an excellent job supporting events, even with limited resources. LT's stakeholders unilaterally support an increased emphasis on the recruitment of sports events that diversify and drive economic impact throughout the calendar year. Finally, there was an agreement on the role LT should play in that process.

## Weaknesses

1. Indoor Participant-Based Facilities – Over the course of this project, it became evident to the Consultant Team that there was a lack of tourism-driving indoor sports facilities in the Lafayette area. Many of the supporting factors driving sports tourism (hotels, attractions, CVB) are already in place. However, except for a few smaller facilities and those owned/operated by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette with limited availability, the area lacks the needed facilities to host major tourism-driving, traditionally indoor, sporting events.
2. No “Central Hub” – Many of the current facilities, hotels, restaurants, and attractions in the area are spread across the communities in the parish. Thus, there is a lack of any centralized location for sports and entertainment for the region. A centralized “HUB” of venues, lodging, restaurants, and attractions can help reduce travel, make event operations easier, and overall be more enticing to event owners and participants looking at Lafayette for their tournaments.
3. Traffic – One common theme among stakeholder interviews and surveys was the issue of traffic in the area. Among 11 other elements/themes/characteristics those surveyed were asked to rate in the Lafayette area, traffic finished tied for last with a 3.07 out of 5 average score. With no centralized location for many of the events in the area (as noted above), spending too much time commuting from one location to another can create a negative experience for visitors. Of note, during the Consultant Team’s site visit, they did not experience any major traffic issues. Additionally, the completion of the Route 90 connector project should help further alleviate any issues.
4. Lack of Full-Service and Convention Hotels – Despite the area receiving high marks for its overall hotel inventory, post-pandemic, there is currently only one full-service hotel in the Lafayette area. As it currently sits, there is also only one hotel within walking distance to the Cajundome, which serves as the parish’s main convention facility. With no full-service, and only one limited-service hotel nearby, the facility lacks a major requirement of many of today’s larger events rights holders. Adding hotel inventory, both full-service and family/competition-friendly properties, to the immediate area around the Cajundome will be crucial to opening more opportunities for LT to host events in this facility. It is the understanding of the Consultants that a hotel feasibility study focusing on this area has been conducted in the past, though no movement has yet been made.

## Opportunities

1. Facility Development - In today’s sports facility arms race “tournament friendly” and “anchor” facilities are needed to attract top tier participant focused championships and their related tourism dollars. An “anchor” facility is defined as a venue that has enough fields/courts/sheets on its own to host major regional or national events all in one location. In addition to the pure number of fields/courts/sheets, the top anchor facilities in the country also provide key amenities that event rights holders need to host high quality events. A “tournament friendly” facility is defined as a venue that has an adequate number of fields/courts/sheets to host local and regional events, however, would need to be cobbled together with additional locations to host larger national level events.



While the Lafayette area has numerous “tournament friendly” and even a few “anchor” facilities already in place, a majority of these are focused on traditional outdoor sports, are owned by the University, and have limited availability, or both.

If the vision of a new tourism driving facility can be realized, it should not be lost that Lafayette Parish’s youth will also have better places to participate in sports throughout the year. In addition, a new facility would save the local clubs and their participating families thousands of dollars a year that they currently spend on travel (and rent) to facilities in neighboring communities. Hosting more practices and tournaments in the Lafayette area will keep local dollars in the community rather than exporting them to other jurisdictions. Without added facility options, LT will be fighting an uphill battle against communities with newer and/or bigger venues (example: Hoover Met Complex).

Below is benchmarking information from a Huddle Up Group survey of over 300 event rights holders, outlining their ideal facility requirements for the most commonly used/constructed venues.

Facility Type	Anchor	Tournament Friendly
Flat Fields	Minimum 16 fields	8-15 fields
Pool	50m/8-10 lanes with diving well	25m with diving well
Diamonds	Minimum 12 fields	8-11 fields
Hardwood Courts	Minimum 8 Basketball/ 16 Volleyball	4 Basketball/8 Volleyball
Ice	3+ Sheets Hockey/ 6+ Sheets Curling	2 Sheets Hockey/ 4 Sheets Curling
Tennis	Minimum 12 courts	Minimum 6 courts
Pickleball	40-60 Courts (National)	8-16 Courts (Local) 24-32 Courts (Regional)
Indoor Track	200 meter/6 lanes/banked	200 meter/6 lanes

The following is a list a few of the top performing sports tourism driving facilities in the country which meet the “tournament friendly” or “anchor” facility benchmarks described above. Many of which do, or will, directly compete with LT.

National Best in Class: Aurora Sports Park (Aurora, CO), Champions Center (Appleton, WI), Crossplex (Birmingham, AL), Dick’s Sporting Goods Park (Commerce City, CO), ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex (Lake Buena Vista, FL), Grand Park (Westfield, IN), Great Park (Irvine, CA), Hoover Metplex (Hoover, AL), LakePoint Sports Complex (Cartersville, GA), Myrtle Beach Sports Center (Myrtle Beach, SC), National Sports Center (Blaine, MN), Spire Institute (Geneva, OH), Spooky Nook Sports Complex (Manheim, PA), Rocky Mount Events Center (Rocky Mount, NC), Virginia Beach Sports Center (Virginia Beach, VA).

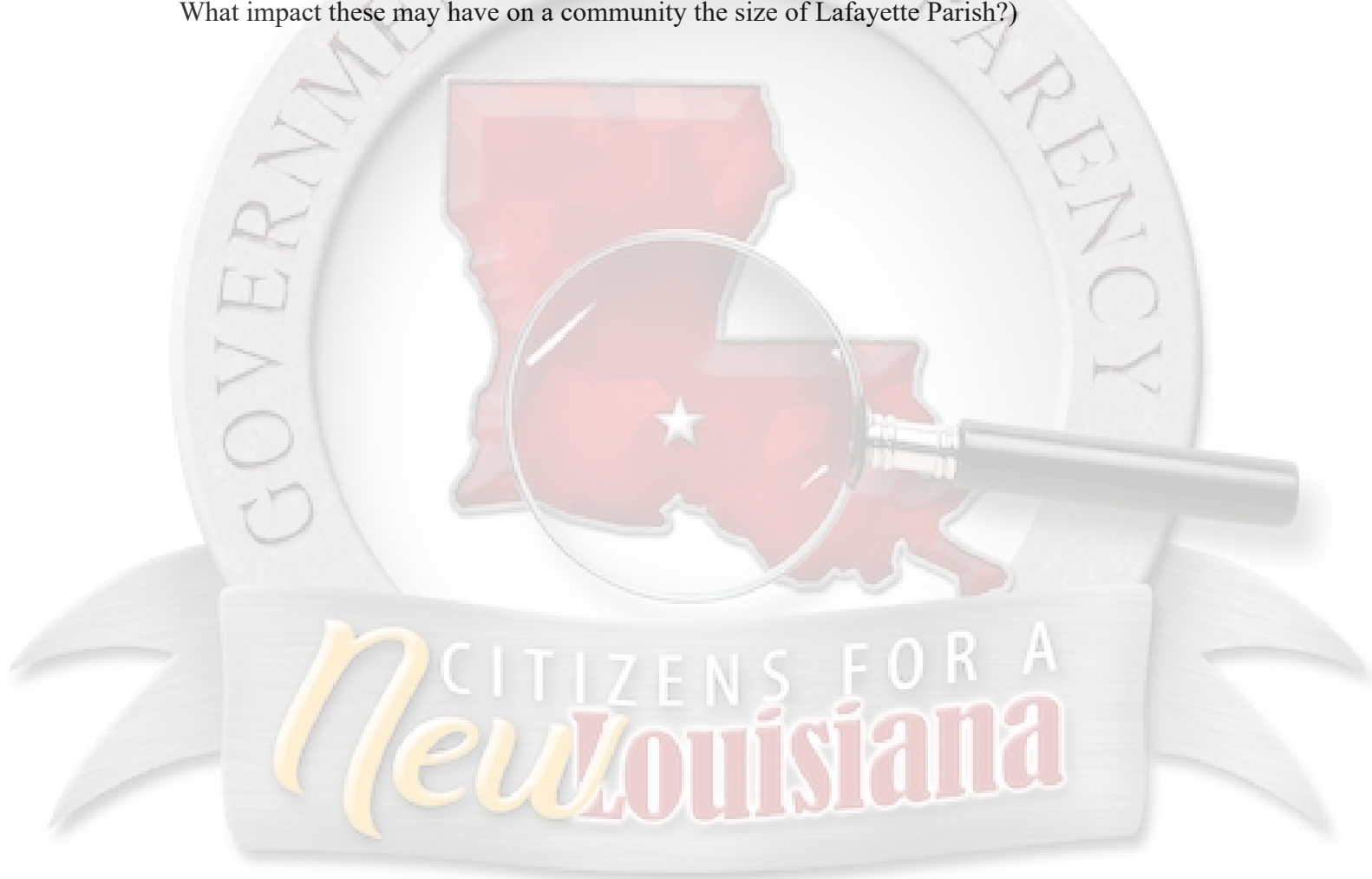
2. Created and Owned Events – As LT’s sports tourism efforts become more defined, additional opportunities to drive room nights and increase economic impact for Lafayette Parish likely exist by cultivating locally owned and operated sports and special events. By working with local clubs, promoters, and facility operators, LT can build long-term partnerships that drive business to the area year over year without the threat of being moved to another destination. In many destinations there are often clear on-peak and off-peak tourist seasons. Created (or locally “incubated”) events not only allow the promoter to take advantage of the profits from a successful event, but it will also allow them to control where they fall on the calendar making them especially impactful for destinations. Owning and operating events will be a massive undertaking and will likely require additional staffing by LT.
3. Partnerships – No matter which organizational and facility pathway(s) are chosen, there are significant partnership opportunities that can be tied to each option. Numerous entities that currently exist in the Lafayette area could be long-term partners for hosting and creating events and developing facilities (examples: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Cajun Rush Soccer, various community governments and local facilities.) There are also potential partnerships to be had with entities that do not currently have a significant presence in Lafayette Parish but would likely want to, given the opportunity (examples: NCAA, Sun Belt Conference, Louisiana High School Athletic Association, USSSA, Perfect Game, AAU.) To maximize the impact sports tourism has on the community, it is essential that these partners have, or provide, increased access to facilities for the purposes of hosting tourism-driving events and tournaments.

### Threats

1. Regional Competition – There are multiple competitors throughout Louisiana that are well established in the national sports tourism space (see Appendix B). The level of established competition from in-state destinations is only the beginning as there are also numerous communities throughout the Southeast and Gulf Region that are currently expanding their sports tourism efforts. This growing competition makes it more difficult each day for LT to establish a foothold locally, regionally, and nationally. While Lafayette may not want to be “like” some of these communities, their presence in the sports tourism space will require LT to pick its proverbial spots and be smart about what its focus areas become with the limited resources it has available to work with today.
2. Political and Community Silos – As is common in many markets, throughout the parish there are numerous government and private entities that service the sports and events space. As many of the individual communities in the parish have their own mayors, Councils, budgets, plans, and procedures, the opportunity exists for the entities to act independently without communication. This lack of a cohesive plan can result in redundant programming, facilities, and projects.
3. Funding & Facility Investment – Most of the hotels in the parish have only a 4% hotel occupancy tax collected on each sale. Despite this entire 4% going to LT to fund their annual budget, this in many aspects still puts LT behind its regional competitors regarding funds for basic tourism marketing/sales efforts. Furthermore, it also limits their ability to support local sports facility development or enhancement projects.

Additionally, while some of the individual municipalities throughout the parish have also separately enacted sale tax increases to fund facility projects, some of the parish's existing facilities in other areas are aging, not well-maintained, and in need of routine maintenance and upgrades. It is important that LT make all the area's elected officials aware of the value of sports tourism and the loss (in economic impact and tourism dollars) that could occur if investments aren't made in facility infrastructure, especially tournament friendly and/or anchor facilities oriented towards youth sports.

This is an area for deeper discussion with community and state leaders, local businesses, and charitable organizations that have an influence on, or access to, potential funding sources that could enrich sports tourism in the destination. (Examples of this this type of conversation could include: What increase to tourism development taxes, prepared food taxes, sales taxes, and/or access to a Tourism Improvement Districts might be available? What partnership and grant opportunities exist? What impact these may have on a community the size of Lafayette Parish?)



## Lafayette Travel

### Facility Audit and Recommendations

### Competitive Set Analysis

As part of the process for this project, the Consultant Team utilized the Sports Tourism Index™ to evaluate LT's current position in the sports tourism marketplace. This analysis included an overall rating as well as a breakdown into four major "buckets" or theme areas most important to events rights holders. LT's score can be found below, with a more in-depth analysis in Appendix E at the end of this report.

Bucket	Lafayette Travel	Overall Average	Southeast Average	Under 500k Average
Facilities	12.60	9.44	9.67	8.90
Destination Strength	12.40	12.09	11.34	10.86
Organization Structure	12.37	12.03	11.97	11.42
Events	14.05	7.91	8.14	7.69
Total	51.42	41.46	41.12	38.88

By using scores generated by the Sports Tourism Index™, the Consultant Team was able generate a competitive set of destinations within the sports market. Below is a list of organizations similar to LT in overall score and within each "bucket."

- **Overall:** Mobile Sports Authority, Visit Baton Rouge, Visit Mountaineer Country, Elizabethtown Tourism
- **Facilities:** Visit Macon, Visit Fresno County, Huntsville/Madison County CVB, Spokane Sports
- **Destination Strength:** Destination Irvine, Lubbock Sports, Newport News Tourism, Fox Cities CVB, Explore Springdale
- **Organization Structure:** Visit Sarasota County, Visit Stockton, Visit Hutch, Visit Billings
- **Events:** Mitchell CVB, Virginia Beach Sports Marketing, DuPage Sports Commission, Warren County Sports

As LT begins to undertake the steps outlined in the recommendations in the following sections, there are several high-performing sports tourism organizations, similar in size to Lafayette, Louisiana, that LT could look to for best-in-class examples. These include, but are not limited to:

- Warren County Sports (Warren County, OH)
- Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau (Appleton, WI)
- Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission (Shreveport-Bossier, LA)
- Spoke Sports (Spokane, WA)
- Visit Bentonville (Bentonville, AR)
- Augusta Sports Council (Augusta, GA)



**Lafayette Travel**  
**Facility Audit and Recommendations**  
**Primary Recommendations**

The enclosed primary recommendations include four (4) opportunities for an enhanced sports tourism marketing program. While the scope of work for this project had a focus on facility development opportunities, it is likely that an enhancement to the sports tourism marketing program would deliver returns much earlier than the development of an entirely new venue. The recommendations are listed in the following pages along with more detail on each concept.

**Primary Recommendations – Organizational Strategies (Shorter Term)**

1. Develop a Sustainable Funding Mechanism – In addition to the 4% hotel tax revenue LT receives, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and other types of grants or gifts that have been available, added long-term funding is often needed to support various development/ enhancement projects. Hotel tax increases, food & beverage taxes, sales taxes, and in recent years, tourism improvement districts (TIDs) have become increasingly popular among DMOs and sports commissions.

Specifically, TIDs are a customizable assessment on select businesses within the tourism industry. These funds are led and controlled by the district's businesses. They cannot be dipped into by the government and must be used on approved tourism activities. Common uses for TID dollars include increased marketing, incentive funds to attract new events to the community, and to support facility enhancement (upgrading current venues) or development (new tourism driving products and venues). Best practices for TID fund allocation are through a structured matching grant program.

To enact a TID, state enabling legislation is required before one can be implemented at a local level. In the case of Louisiana, this legislation has already been approved and it is estimated that each 1% on a TID would generate as much as \$1 million annually.

There are several national best practices for funding sustainable facility development programs described later in this report.

2. External Focus – As there are many municipalities and organizations in the parish who have a hand in sports and tourism, executing the recommendations in this report will take an intentional effort from the LT team to be externally focused with those community stakeholders. The Consultant Team calls this role serving as the “connective tissue.” This strategy requires an ongoing and consistent outreach program to the area's venue owners, clubs, high schools, colleges, elected officials, hospitality, and community leaders. By focusing more time on the larger regional conversation relating to sports tourism, LT can connect the dots between various community partners and uncover more collaboration opportunities in the future.

To help achieve this connectivity, the Consultant Team recommends the implementation of a sports specific advisory group, (best in class: North Platte Area Sports Commission). The top performing sports organizations in the country have created such a strong advisory group that very few sports related moves are made in the community without their consult. The end goal is to create an environment where the biggest sports decisions in the community happen at LT's advisory board's table. To accomplish this, the following attributes should be considered when building out the new sport's advisory group:

- The group's makeup should provide an environment for community leaders that touch sports tourism, events, economic development, and the business community to connect in one meaningful and intentional place.
- The group should consist of 7-15 members.
- Members should be decision makers for their respective organizations.
- The group should be diverse in several areas, including, but not limited to the following: race, sex, age, skill sets, industry, background, and political connectivity.
- If instilling terms, these are normally for three years with the option to renew for a second tenure before terming out.
- Members should serve on at least one committee.

A sports specific advisory group can be tasked with leading in the creation of a regional facility master plan (see Secondary Recommendation #1), helping build created events, supporting bids, fundraising, sourcing grant opportunities, and lending political capital to LT or other members of the group when needed.

Additionally, the “Four Touch Rule” (deliberate tracking of four individual meetings or conversations per year with each community stakeholder by a member of the LT staff) is a useful tool for keeping relationships strong and opening lines of communication for purposes of relationship building and awareness, and not simply for “favors” or “asks”. To compete with destinations playing in the top realm of sports tourism and events, LT may need to add human capital (staff) that are dedicated to this area. Some best practice examples of local communication and marketing strategies include:

- a. Value Proposition – Create an education campaign to roll out both internally and externally to support awareness and promotion of LT's sports efforts. This quarterly road show would be presented in a 60-minute workshop format. LT staff would present on the value of sports tourism to the region and the opportunities available to the Lafayette area in the sports and events marketplace. Presentations should be made to a widespread number of the leading community groups (examples: elected officials, chamber leadership, civic clubs, high school and collegiate athletic directors, hoteliers, restaurant association, sports venue managers, youth sports clubs, event owners, etc.). It is important to reiterate that LT staff utilize outside supporters (examples: LT board and sports advisory group members, event rights holders when in town) as partners in these meetings to give these presentations third party validation.

- b. Corporate/Hospitality “Forums” – Where the education campaign noted above is aimed at community groups, the LT staff should also develop a program to educate and engage the corporate and foundation communities throughout the parish. The Consultants recommend the creation of a quarterly or bi-annual “6&6 Lunch.” These lunches employ six existing stakeholders (example: LT board and sports advisory group members) to each invite one guest from the business community who has limited knowledge of LT and sports tourism (six stakeholders, six guests, = “6&6”). Each luncheon should serve as an informative event on the work of LT in the industry, the importance of sports tourism, and the opportunities for partnership involvement.
  - c. Trumpet Successes – In all cases where LT is involved in the production of an event, the organization should make it a priority to promote the community impact of the competition/tournament. This promotion should be sent out via traditional and social media outlets, to both media and non-media audiences. The information should include economic impact data and successes for Lafayette Parish. It is important that LT steer clear of the perception of taking credit for the event in total, and that the event rights holder/local promoter be included in the promotion process throughout. Further, any ROI should be calculated on the tourism spending for every marketing dollar spent by LT (most destination marketing organizations, or DMOs, aspire for a 9-to-1 or better return on each dollar invested in tourism development).
3. Staffing – To stand out in the highly competitive sports tourism industry, LT should consider dedicating staff solely to their effort in the sports market. According to data from the Sports Tourism Index™, 84% of destinations on the platform have at least one staff member dedicated to the sports market (n=341 CVBs). The primary responsibilities of these positions would include (1) business development, (2) serving as the “connective tissue” with community stakeholders, and (3) servicing events as they are held in the destination.

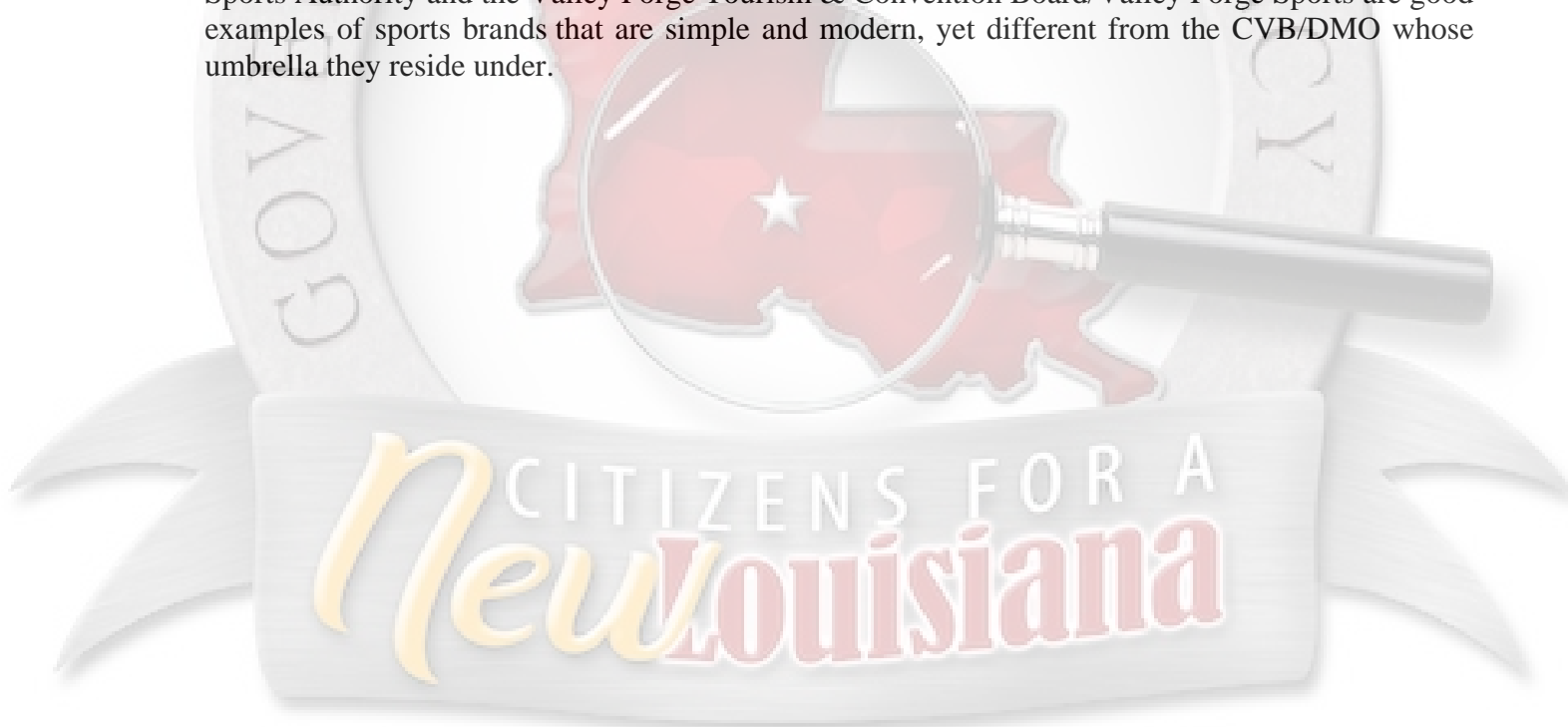
The highest performing sports tourism organizations spend considerable time and resources supporting their event partners before, during, and after their events take place. The Consultant Team calls the active support to the rights holder by the host destination “wearing backpacks.” Sports commissions, CVBs, or DMOs that can put on the “backpacks” and help the event organizer outside the field of play, free up that event owner to focus entirely on the proper execution of their championship. This added level of support leads to a higher renewal rate between the event owner and those “backpack” destinations, which sustains their sports tourism business year over year and allows the destination to be more selective when trying to fill out their annual event calendar.

If a second dedicated sports position can be added later down the road, it is most common that one staffer serves as the main sales arm and the other provides support services. Additional data from the Sports Tourism Index™ shows that 54% of destinations have staff assigned to servicing events.

4. Develop a Sports Brand – Sport event organizers prefer to work with experienced sports professionals that can help support their events. Destinations that are seen as leading solely with a “heads in beds” mentality are often bypassed during the selection process by these rights holders in favor of working with DMOs/sports commissions they deem as more “event friendly.” In the past, the term “sports commission” was generally reserved for those entities that were stand-alone organizations. In recent years, however, that term has been more loosely used among CVBs/DMOs to let sports organizers know they are putting a dedicated, intentional effort into the sports market.

Beyond putting in place the items discussed throughout these primary recommendations, it may benefit the new sports and events strategy at LT to have its own complementary brand apart from the convention, association, and leisure markets. Aside from their name, the top performing organizations also create separate logos, slogans, marketing campaigns, and dedicated collateral aimed specifically at the needs of sports and events rights holders and participants

National best practices for naming “sports commissions” point towards using a known destination point or a regional area. Examples of this would be Durham Sports Commission (a known destination nationally) or West Michigan Sports Commission (using a region where the actual city location may not be well known). Whatever name is used, it is recommended to develop a sports specific logo that is modern and simple to identify. Visit Hamilton County, IN/Hamilton County Sports Authority and the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board/Valley Forge Sports are good examples of sports brands that are simple and modern, yet different from the CVB/DMO whose umbrella they reside under.





**Lafayette Travel**  
**Facility Audit and Recommendations**  
**Secondary Recommendations**

Below are three (3) secondary recommendations that focus on opportunities for an improved sports tourism facility “tool kit”. The development and enhancement recommendations outlined below are listed in order based on what the sports tourism impact is likely to be for Lafayette should each of these recommendations come to fruition.

**Secondary Recommendations – Facility “Tool Kit” Opportunities (Longer Term)**

1. **Regional Sports Tourism Facility Master Plan** – It is the understanding of the Consultant Team that many of the stakeholders in the area (ULL, Cajun Rush Soccer Club, City of Lafayette, Youngsville, Broussard, and other municipalities) have previously completed or are currently developing their own master plans. However, there is currently no unified game plan for future facility development and/or enhancement for the entire destination. Pulling together the wants and needs of all area stakeholders to eliminate any redundancies in the future would be a valuable exercise for Lafayette Parish. LT is the perfect entity to lead such a project and to generate community-wide momentum relating to placemaking through sports. This process would also likely lead to better regional alignment and participation from the various partners that may not be engaged today. It is the belief of the Consultant Team that this should be the first process undertaken before any additional facility development projects are begun. The Rochester Sports Foundation (Rochester, MN) and Springfield Sports Commission (Springfield, MO) are two organizations who have begun this process and may be able to provide a template and roadmap to success.
2. **New Indoor Court Venue (Hardwood)** – The existing indoor court-sport focused facilities in Lafayette are limited, lack the number of courts that event owners demand, and have local user groups that currently control the event calendar and limit availability. During the venue audit, the Consultant Team visited only one “tournament friendly” and no “anchor” indoor hardwood court venues.

Using the Sports Tourism Index™ as a benchmarking tool, the chart below summarizes the key characteristics possessed by the top indoor court sports facilities in the country, and the current highest scoring indoor court facility in the Lafayette area. Note that in the “Difference” column, the darker the color of green, the larger the gap between the top 10 facilities and the average venues.

### Indoor Courts = 371 scored by the Sports Tourism Index™

	AVERAGES			Youngsville Rec Center
	Top 10	Overall	Difference	
# Bball Courts	14.7	3.6	11.1	2
# Vball Courts	25.6	4.7	20.9	2
Court Surface (Hardwood)	70%	77%	-7%	No
Scoreboard	90%	80%	10%	Yes
Scorer's Table	100%	90%	10%	Yes
Team Benches	60%	41%	19%	Yes
PA System	40%	55%	-15%	Yes
Locker Rooms	80%	70%	10%	No
Permanent concession stand(s)	100%	77%	23%	Yes
Permanent restrooms	100%	99%	1%	Yes
Permanent Wi-Fi	100%	87%	13%	Yes
Parking	100%	99%	1%	Yes
ADA Compliant	100%	99%	1%	Yes
Auxiliary meeting rooms	8.0	2.8	5.2	2
Ability to book (Definitely yes)	90%	48%	42%	Probably Yes
Score	4.10	2.78	1.32	2.70

The data presented here would indicate that it would benefit the region by developing a tourism focused facility that could serve the Lafayette Parish community and host state, regional, and some select national level tournaments. Given the national experience of the Consultant Team and its knowledge of the current landscape in the Lafayette area, the Consultant Team believes adding a “tournament friendly” indoor court facility to the region’s current venue mix would return the highest ROI to the community. The new venue would provide Lafayette Parish with a tournament ready facility that it doesn’t currently have in its inventory. Add to this, LT’s ability to secure regional and national events and the multitude of local partnerships that are available, the key elements are in place to support the buildout of a new facility. If built, a new indoor court focused facility in Lafayette should have (at a minimum) the following elements:

- 8-12 Courts for basketball that could then convert to 16-24 volleyball courts.
- A flexible championship court that could accommodate at least 1,000 spectators and the ability to expand total seating for larger championship events.
- Scoreboards, shot clocks, benches, PA systems, locker rooms, and a press table dedicated to each court.
- Ancillary meeting space for tournament operators and officials.
- Permanent restrooms, concession stands, and Wi-Fi throughout the facility.
- Parking that meets industry standards (at least 3.5 permanent spaces per 1,000 square feet).
- A common area to accommodate athletes and spectators.
- ADA compliant.
- Ability for LT to book the facility for tourism driving events (“Favored Nation Status”).

As part of the scope of work for this project, the Consultant Team was tasked with creating a top-line impact analysis of what the number one recommended venue development opportunity could generate for the community. Should LT and its partners find a pathway to develop a new 8-court multi-sport indoor venue, the facility would be able to host sizable events throughout the year in various sports. This would be especially true during shoulder and off-peak tourism seasons. Using a conservative 35% capture rate for proven events that could fill the facility's calendar, the Consultant Team believes the following new economic activity could reasonably be realized over a calendar year\*\*:

- 16 new state, regional, and national tournaments.
- Roughly 32,000 total attendees relating to tournaments/competitions.
- Over \$8.1 million in direct visitor spending.
- Nearly 26,000 hotel room nights.
- Hotel Occupancy Taxes (4%) of almost \$93,000.
- Sales Tax (8.45%) collections of approximately \$185,000.
- Total sports tourism related taxes of nearly \$278,000.

\*Notes: The detailed impact analysis can be found under different cover. Sales taxes are based on room revenues only and not overall impact.

National Best in Class: American Sports Center (Anaheim, CA), LakePoint Champions Center (Atlanta, GA), Virginia Beach Sports Center (Virginia Beach, VA), Champions Center (Grand Chute, WI), Community First Champions Center (Grand Chute, WI), Omaha Sports Academy (Omaha, NE), Grand Park (Westfield, IN), Myrtle Beach Sports Center (Myrtle Beach, SC), Hoover Rec Plex (Hoover, AL), Rocky Mount Events Center (Rocky Mount, NC), Rock Hill Sports Complex (Rock Hill, NC).

3. Venue Enhancement Opportunities – It is the belief of the Consultant Team that there are additional opportunities to provide a strong return on investment through added room night revenues, economic impact, and greater community opportunities by enhancing any already existing venues. A few opportunities that stuck out to the Consultant Team are described below.

a. Moore Park – During this project the Consultant Team was made aware of a proposed expansion to the Moore Park soccer facility. A top priority for LT should be ensuring these enhancements are done with a focus on hosting sports tourism-driving events. Citing the benchmarking chart provided earlier in this report, a minimum of 16 full-size fields would provide the Lafayette area with a flat field “anchor” facility that would be among the best in the region. In addition to pure field count, amenities should include:

- A “stadium” field with locker rooms and seating that could accommodate at least 1,000 spectators with the ability to expand total seating for larger championship events.
- Portable goals, scoreboards, team benches, PA systems, and a scorer's table dedicated to each field.
- Ancillary meeting space for tournament operators and officials.
- Permanent restrooms, concession stands, and Wi-Fi throughout the facility.

- Parking that meets industry standards (at least 60 permanent spaces per field).
- A common area to accommodate athletes and spectators.
- ADA compliant.
- Industry best practices recommend turf for at least 25% of all fields at a site.

A facility of this nature would be capable of hosting state, regional and national level tournaments, providing significant economic impact to the area.

- b. Diamond Facilities – The existing Youngsville (3.5 out of 5) and Broussard (3.45 out of 5) facilities are two of the highest scoring facilities in the region as scored by the Sports Tourism Index™ and both have a history of serving as major tourism drivers for the region. However, given the highly competitive marketplace for hosting top tier regional and national events, these facilities should consider an expansion in field counts in order to sustain that success and remain competitive into the future. At least 12 full-size fields in one location would make these complexes “anchor” facilities. These enhancements would not only help drive additional overnight stays to the destination by attracting new events but would also help them retain the events they currently have. Finally, due to the oft-limited availability of both facilities, completing the proposed enhancements at Graham Brown Memorial Park would give Lafayette Parish with a third ‘tournament friendly’ diamond facility and provide LT with more opportunities to host tournaments.

By again using the Sports Tourism Index™ as a benchmarking tool, the following chart summarizes the key characteristics possessed by the top diamond facilities in the country and the current highest scoring diamond facility in the Lafayette area. Note that in the “Difference” column, the darker the color of green, the larger the gap between the top 10 facilities and the average venues.

**Diamonds = 705 scored by the Sports Tourism Index™**

	AVERAGES			Youngsville Diamonds
	Top 10	Overall	Difference	
<b>Fields</b>	16.5	5.0	11.5	9
<b>Fields with lights</b>	15.0	4.1	10.9	9
<b>Artificial turf fields</b>	9.67	0.69	9.0	9*
<b>Auxiliary meeting rooms</b>	5.00	0.87	4.1	2
<b>Covered dugouts</b>	70%	74%	0.0	Yes
<b>Stadium field</b>	60%	29%	31%	No
<b>Permanent concession stand(s)</b>	100%	80%	20%	Yes
<b>Permanent restrooms</b>	100%	98%	2%	Yes
<b>Permanent Wi-Fi</b>	80%	40%	40%	Yes
<b>Adequate Parking (60 spaces per field)</b>	100%	96%	4%	Yes
<b>ADA Compliant</b>	100%	97%	3%	Yes
<b>Ability to book (Definitely yes)</b>	100%	54%	46%	Probably Yes
<b>Score</b>	3.91	2.29	1.62	3.50



National Best in Class: Champion Fields at Old Settlers Park (Round Rock, TX), Hoover Met Complex (Birmingham, AL), Grand Park Sports Complex (Westfield, IN), ESPN Wide World of Sports (Lake Buena Vista, FL), North Softball Complex (Fargo, ND), Gulfport Sportsplex (Gulfport, MS), Louisville Slugger Sports Complex (Peoria, IL), Ballpark of the Palm Beaches (West Palm Beach, FL), Champions Park (Gainesville, FL), Bentley Park Sports Complex (Tulsa, OK), mTrade Park (Oxford, MS), USSSA Space Coast Complex (Melbourne, FL)

- c. Pickleball Facilities – When asked about the most popular sports in the area, one of the most common responses from those interviewed and surveyed, was pickleball. However, during the Consultant’s site visit, the team did not come across any dedicated or pickleball-focused venues. Not surprisingly, when those same stakeholders were asked to list some of the most underserved sports for the community, pickleball was again among the most popular answers. As one of the fastest growing sports in the country, many destinations are making it a priority to build dedicated indoor and/or outdoor pickleball facilities. Another alternative is to take an already built tennis court complex and repurpose it into a pickleball driven venue. One option that stuck out to the Consultant Team were the tennis courts at the Broussard Sports Complex which, due to their design, are not capable of hosting tourism-driving tennis tournaments. By taking the already constructed eight tennis courts, and potentially using additional available space nearby, the Broussard Sports Complex has the ability to create a 16+ court pickleball facility much easier than if they were starting from scratch.

Facility Type	Anchor	Tournament Friendly
Pickleball	40-60 Courts (National)	8-16 Courts (Local) 24-32 Courts (Regional)
Required Amenities: Lights, benches, and scoreboards at all courts. Additional Preferred Amenities: Locker rooms, Wi-Fi, Auxiliary Rooms, “Stadium” Court		

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**Lafayette Travel**  
**Facility Audit and Recommendations**  
**Typical Funding Models**

In order to enrich the destination as a desirable sports tourism market, LT and its partners need to identify a sustainable funding source to enhance, develop, and maintain tourism driving assets. Numerous markets across the country have implemented a dedicated tourism-based revenue source (a tax) to enhance their sports marketing programs and sports facilities. These revenue streams most often come in the form of a hotel occupancy tax, TID, or a food and beverage tax that is dedicated to the singular purpose of increasing overnight stays through hosting sporting events. A sample list of destinations that have gone down these funding pathways can be found in Appendix C. Should such a tax or another funding source be identified, the Consultant Team has outlined below how such a funding model could work for LT and its sports tourism program:

- Sports Development Fund – Identifying a dedicated funding source to enrich Lafayette Parish’s sports program and venue inventory is critical for LT and its partners to grow the community’s sports tourism impact into the future. The national best practice for the activation of these newly identified funds would be to use them as a catalyst for a “challenge grant” style program. That is, there would be a formal grant request process for LT’s partners to apply for funds in a dollar-for-dollar match on capital projects that would drive overnight stays to the Lafayette area. For every dollar the partner invests, they would be eligible for a dollar from LT’s Sports Development Fund. Employing this type of a matching program ensures that all parties have a vested interest in the positive outcome of each project, and that LT’s investments are well protected. In addition, effective use of these funds to drive more overnight stays would subsequently increase the impact of tax collections by these additional visitors. Ideally, LT should tie all grants to the concept of “Favored Nation Status” noted earlier in this report.
- As major point of note, numerous cities are increasing their bed tax rate, using a food and beverage tax, and/or TIDs to put towards the funding of construction and/or operation of new and enhanced sports facilities. In nearly all these cases, the taxes generated to enhance/build these facilities are used to drive incremental overnight stays for the destination. As an example, not necessarily a recommendation, the most common funding mechanisms the Consultant Team has seen implemented nationally include (in order):
  - Tourism Improvement Districts (TIDs)
  - Hotel/bed taxes
  - Prepared food (restaurant) taxes
  - Sales taxes
- Beyond these traditional funding mechanisms, Lafayette Parish and many of the area’s corporate leaders have a vested interest in the sports market and how it can positively impact the area’s youth. A discussion with the area’s leaders should be had around what resources could be brought to the table for new sports facility and local program development.

## **Lafayette Travel**

### **Facility Audit and Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

For Lafayette Parish to be relevant in this market, LT and its stakeholders must continue to build bridges with key players locally and pave the way for facility enhancement over the long term.

The addition of an improved sports tourism marketing strategy and venue mix will empower LT and local event operators to create home-grown participant driven events, develop new event and venue products, and host more bid-in regional/national championships. To achieve these lofty aspirations, LT has a heavy lift ahead, but by forging this path, the area will be better positioned regionally and nationally as a strong player in the sports tourism industry. To raise the bar in Lafayette, and to positively impact the community, LT's leadership should focus its efforts on three (3) overarching objectives:

1. Create a culture of sports and events development. Develop human capital (staff). Develop relationships (local stakeholders and regional/national event owners). Develop a vehicle to push the tourism agenda through sports (funding). And, finally, develop physical products (new venues).
2. Partner with local promoters to build created events that will call the Lafayette area home long into the future and that will not be subject to an RFP process with LT's competitors. There is a major trend in the industry around the created events concept, inclusive of a focus on the regional drive market. This is an area that LT should work on with its local event owners and venue managers to evolve in the future.
3. Make the improvement of the destination's venue "tool kit" a priority by adding new venue assets and enhancing the existing assets where necessary. The top multi-sport facilities in the country have spurred private investment in and around them, which is something that needs to be top of mind for Lafayette Parish leadership throughout this process.

As with any new project, there are numerous variables that need to be considered when evaluating the ROI and risk in developing new sports facilities. In the experience of the Consultant Team, destinations who consider the overall impact on their community and citizens will have more success, and see a higher level of collaboration, than those that measure purely by room nights or bed tax collections. This community-wide effort will help LT connect the tourism and business communities in an ongoing and proactive manner into the future.

In the eyes of the Consultant Team, the puzzle pieces exist for Lafayette Travel to expand economic development for the region through sports tourism. The Consultant Team believes it is within the power of the LT team to capture more opportunities in the sports tourism and events market while also enriching the lives of its citizens.

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## Appendix A – SportsETA Membership

Even through the COVID-19 pandemic, the sports tourism industry has grown exponentially over the past two decades. The nature of the industry is that it is relatively “immune” to market factors such as troubled economies, war, high unemployment, or similar factors. Projections indicate that the grass roots sports tourism industry (exclusive of mega events like the Superbowl, Final Fours, etc.) is growing at a pace of 12-14% per year, with more growth anticipated in the coming decade.

Today, there are more events, with more participants competing in those events, than ever before. As a result, there are also more organizations placing an intentional effort into attracting these events to their destination than ever before. Below is a chart outlining the growth of membership organizations within SportsETA, which is a direct correlation to the growth of the sports tourism industry as a whole.



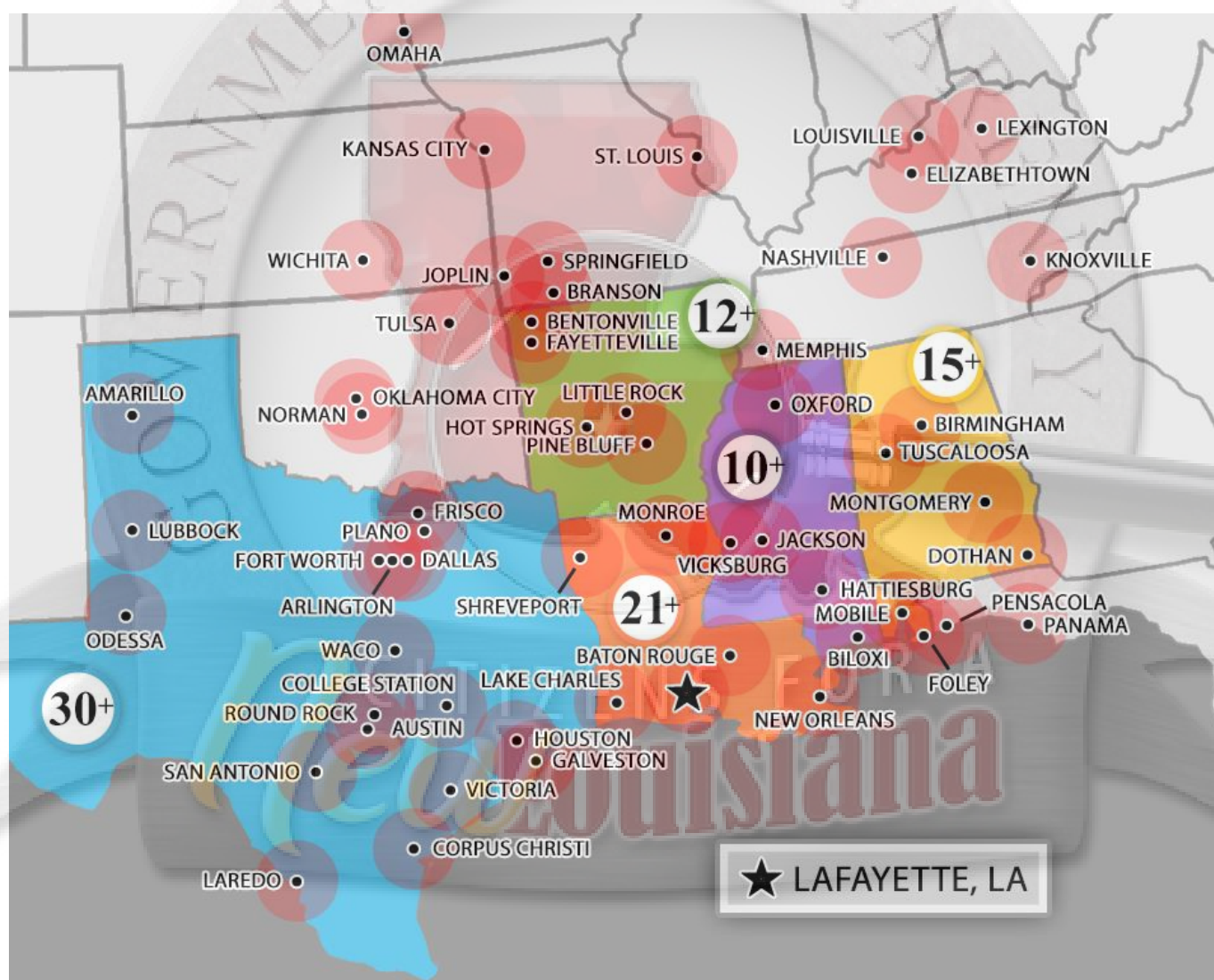
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## Appendix B – Lafayette Travel Competition Map

The sports tourism and events industry is as competitive today as it has ever been. Numerous destinations market themselves in this niche industry in the form of a sports commission, DMO, convention & visitors bureau, city, or through an alternative organization.

Below is a visual representation of the various entities in the LT's geographic region that are active in the sports tourism and events space. Tournaments often attract teams from as far away as a full day's drive. This graphic shows the significant level of competition in this industry and the high-level geographic overlap amongst these communities. The numbers in the graphic represent the number of sports commissions/CVBs in each state that are active in the sports tourism space.



## Appendix C – Trends in Sports Facility Funding

The most common funding source for new facilities is a general fund allocation from the city/county where the facility is located as well as a land contribution for the venue to be constructed (again donated by the city or county). Although the level of success is yet to be determined, several communities around the country have already, or are in the process of, raising their bed tax collection rate to fund sports-related facility development, including:

- Rockford (IL) having already finished a significant expansion of its outdoor sports venues, used bed tax dollars to bond \$10 million towards a new indoor facility. The Downtown Sports Complex carried a price tag of \$24 million and opened in late 2016.
- Evansville (IN) opened a \$15 million multi-use outdoor sports complex that is entirely funded by bed tax dollars. The future management of this facility will also be funded by bed tax dollars, and it is run by the DMO itself.
- Spokane (WA) bonded \$25 million against future bed tax collections to construct a new athletic field house (The Podium) which opened in December 2021.
- Shreveport (LA) passed a bed tax increase for the expansion of their Convention & Visitor Bureau's national marketing program. This new tax also supports the Independence Bowl (venue enhancements and improved matchups) and the Shreveport Regional Airport (incentives for new airline routes). This combined effort between three of Shreveport's leading agencies shows the economic development impact that sports tourism can have on a mid- or small-size market.
- Fox Cities (Appleton, WI) raised their bed tax rate from 6% to 10% to build a convention center, a new large (hardwood and ice) indoor sports complex, and to renovate three existing sports facilities used to attract regional and national tournaments. The new facility opened in October of 2019 and due to its early success, further expansions are already being discussed.
- Placer Valley (CA) allocated funds from an increased bed tax to develop and open a new indoor hardwood complex in 2018.
- Pasco (FL), in partnership with the Florida Sports Foundation, developed a new sports complex on 120 acres of county-owned property. Pasco County is investing \$11 million to the project, including \$8.5 million in tourist tax funds and \$2.5 million in unrestricted bond proceeds.
- In January 2016, Warren County (OH) raised the lodging tax one (1) percent to finance a \$10 million, 20 field sports complex. The rate hike increased the county hotel occupancy tax from 3% to 4%. The tax will be used over 20 years to pay off debt the Warren County Convention & Visitors Bureau will take on to pay for the complex.

## Appendix C (cont'd) – Trends in Sports Facility Funding

In addition to the hotel tax examples noted on the previous page, several communities have implemented a food and beverage tax for the purpose of developing or enhancing sports facilities.

- Elizabethtown (KY) passed a 2% food and beverage tax in 2012 to fund the development and management of the Elizabethtown Sports Park. In the first five years of operations, the “mega complex” generated nearly \$100 million in direct visitor spending to the community (according to studies commissioned with SportsImpacts, one of the top economic impact agencies in the country). Etown as it is known, is currently looking at facility expansion opportunities to capture even more sports tourism activity.
- For the past 30 years, Fort Wayne (IN) has implemented a 1% food and beverage tax that is used for capital projects. This program has funded several new buildings at the site of the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum arena, including a 100,000-square foot expo center and 5,000-seat baseball stadium. These funds have also been used to renovate the arena’s ice floor, to add 2,500 seats and meeting rooms to the arena. The fund generates \$7.5 million per year and is currently being considered to help finance a new arena downtown.
- Ashland (OR) employs a 5% food and beverage tax which garners nearly \$4.5 million a year. Twenty percent of these funds are allocated to the acquisition and preservation of open spaces for parks and recreation, with 80% of the funds used to retire debt for a recently completed community-wide waterway enhancement.
- Historically, King County (WA) has used intermittent funding from food and beverage taxes to build stadiums such as the King Dome. While this program is not active today, it has been a tool the Greater Seattle area has used in the past for venue development to entice professional sports teams to the area. Similarly, the State of Florida has a professional league stadium venue development program that is also funded by temporary food and beverage taxes, when needed. Finally, Milwaukee used a food and beverage tax to build Miller Park, home of Major League Baseball’s Milwaukee Brewers.
- In 2007, the State of New Jersey created the “Sports and Entertainment District Urban Revitalization Act.” Under this legislation, the community of Millville levied a 2% local food and beverage tax to fund a sports and entertainment district including a 500-acre motorsports park that hosts numerous events including NASCAR racing.

It should be noted that different states have different regulations regarding the use of funds generated by bed and/or food and beverage taxes. The cases outlined above are not exhaustive and should be viewed only as examples for further discussion.



## Appendix D – Lafayette Travel Venue Summary & Notes

Overall, the Consultant Team found multiple “Tournament Friendly” facilities and three current “Anchor” facilities in Lafayette Parish. Below is a list of all venues (sorted alphabetically) that were evaluated by the Consultant Team. Using the Sports Tourism Index<sup>®</sup>, the Consultant Team rated each facility on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being superior) at its current quality (CQ). The Consultant Team also predicted what the potential future quality (PQ) likely could be if upgrades were made to each venue. (DNV indicates the Consultant Team did not visit the facility during its site tours.) The rating system used the following color codes:

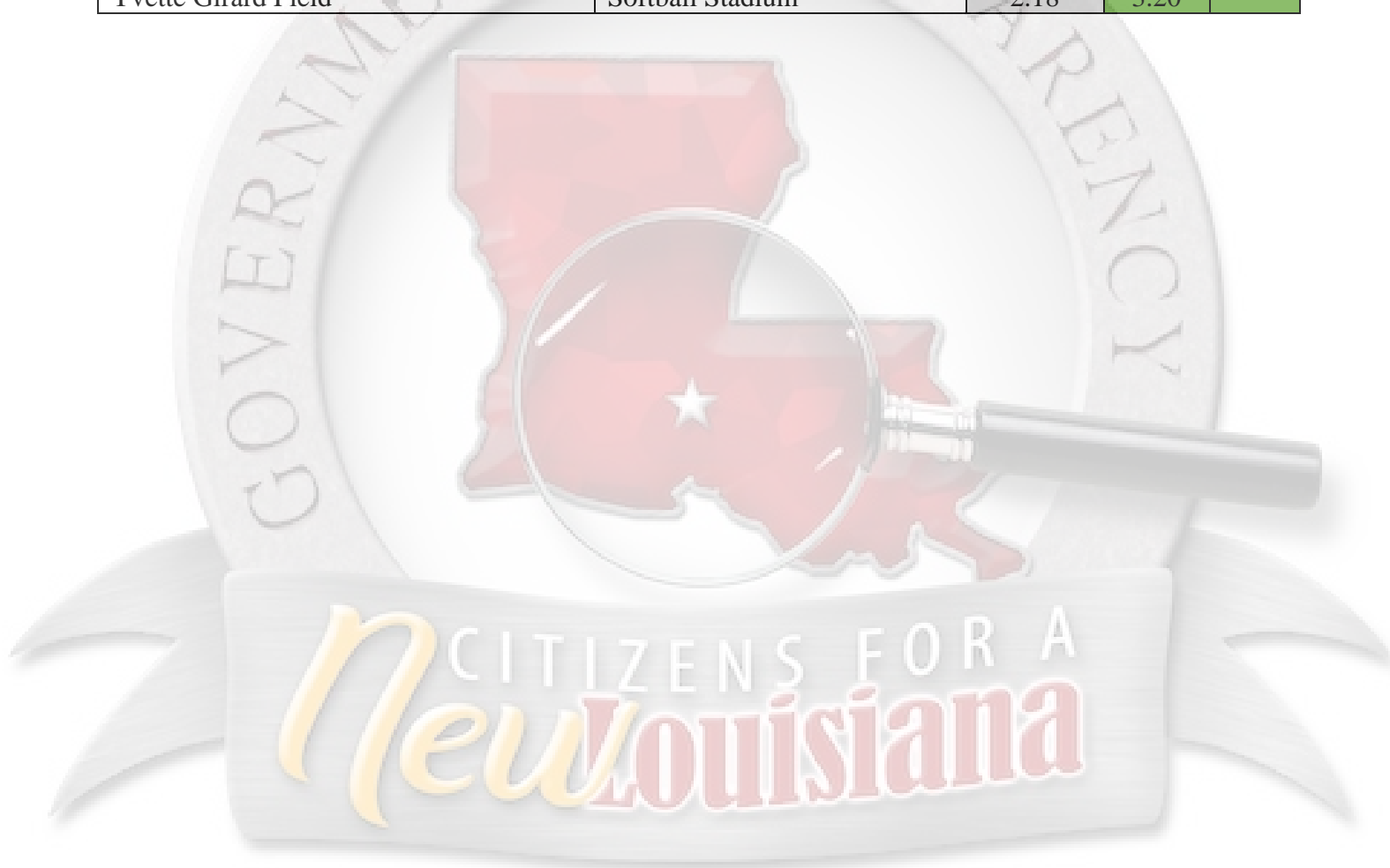
Anchor Facility
Tournament Friendly
Not of Tournament Quality

Facility Name	Facility Type	National Average	Index Score & CQ	PQ
Acadiana Park	Tennis (Indoor or Outdoor)	2.40	1.90	DNV
Beaver Park	Tennis (Indoor or Outdoor)	2.40	2.10	
Blackham Coliseum - Arena	Arena	2.86	2.35	
Bourgeois Hall - Courts	Indoor Courts (Basketball/Volleyball)	2.77	2.13	
Broussard Sports Complex - Diamonds	Diamonds	2.29	3.45	
Broussard Sports Complex - Disc Golf	Disc Golf Course	3.39	3.80	
Broussard Sports Complex - Flat Fields	Flat Fields	2.34	2.70	
Brown Memorial Park Diamonds	Diamonds	2.29	2.35	
Cajun BMX at Picard Park	BMX	3.14	3.70	
Cajun Courts	Tennis (Indoor or Outdoor)	2.40	2.80	
Cajun Field	Football Stadium	2.45	3.50	
Cajundome	Arena	2.86	4.15	
Cajundome Convention Center	Convention Center	2.21	1.70	
Cajundome Convention Center - Arena	Arena	2.86	2.90	
Carencro Park Diamonds	Diamonds	2.29	2.05	
Carencro Sports Complex	Other	2.78	4.50	DNV
Clark Field	Football Stadium	2.45	1.40	
Earl K. Long Gymnasium	Arena	2.86	2.30	
Fabacher Field	Diamonds	2.29	2.60	
Girard Park Disc Golf Course	Disc Golf Course	3.39	2.05	
Hebert Municipal	Golf Course	3.50	3.20	DNV
Heymann Park Disc Golf Course	Disc Golf Course	3.39	3.15	
Les Vieux Chenes	Golf Course	3.50	3.95	DNV
Moore Park	Flat Fields	2.34	3.95	
Neyland Park	Diamonds	2.29	2.35	
Pelican Park	Diamonds	2.29	2.65	
The Wetlands	Golf Course	3.50	4.00	



## Appendix D (cont'd) – Lafayette Travel Venue Summary & Notes

Tigue Moore Field	Baseball Stadium	2.50	3.05	
UL Soccer	Soccer Stadium	3.36	3.25	
UL Track	Outdoor Track	3.19	3.20	
Youngsville Sports Complex - Courts	Indoor Courts (Basketball/Volleyball)	2.77	2.70	DNV
Youngsville Sports Complex - Diamonds	Diamonds	2.29	3.50	
Youngsville Sports Complex - Flat Fields	Flat Fields	2.34	2.65	
Youngsville Sports Complex - Sand Volleyball	Other	2.78	3.60	
Youngsville Sports Complex - Tennis	Tennis (Indoor or Outdoor)	2.40	2.60	
Yvette Girard Field	Softball Stadium	2.18	3.20	



## Appendix D (cont'd) – Lafayette Travel Venue Summary & Notes

Acadiana Park
<b>Did Not Visit</b>
Beaver Park
Bowles Tennis Center. 8 Clay and 5 hardcourts. All Lit. Small "clubhouse". Benches but no spectator seating.
Blackham Coliseum
Old arena on campus. Owned/operated by ULL. Not many amenities. A few small locker rooms. 8,000 seats. 22,000 sf concrete floor. Horse stalls outside. Talks of renovating. Would need AC updates
Bourgeois Hall
ULL Student Rec Building. 4-court hardwood facility. Locker rooms. Student Aquatic Center - 25-yard, 8-lane competition pool. No starting blocks. 3.5' deep. Right beside a leisure pool. 9 Racquetball courts. 2 with small viewing areas.
Broussard Sports Complex
132-acre park. RV hookups. Disc Golf with concrete pads and multiple baskets. 8-hard court tennis courts. Nice but built too small for tournaments (Pickleball?) Diamonds - very nice! Two pods. One with 4 field clover + 3 small fields. Another across the parking lot with 5 baseball diamonds. (2) 230', (2) 250', (1) 350'. Covered seating. All amenities. Splash pad. Covered batting cages. Flat Fields - 6 full-size fields. 1 turf. One of only 2 full-size, fully turfed FIFA certified fields in the state. Field runoffs too low/close and built with concrete. Need built up. Limited seating. Land around for expansion.
Brown Memorial Park Diamonds
5 diamonds. All grass and lit. Older and not currently in great shape. Land for expansion. Slated to receive \$25m over 5 years for improvements. Plans to add more fields and turf.
Cajun BMX at Picard Park
Overgrown, but city looking to build a new track in place of one of three nearby diamonds. Currently dirt turns and no seating.
Cajun Courts
18 total courts. "Stadium" court with some seating. Lights. Scoreboards.
Cajun Field
ULL Football Stadium. Horseshoe design. Older. 41,000 seats. Older stadium. Turf
Cajundome
Publicly owned but ULL has first rights. Seats around 12,500 for basketball. Telescopic seating. Suites. Can lay ice. Center hung scoreboard. Connected to the convention center. Major renovations 5-6 years ago.
Cajundome Convention Center
Connected to the Arena. Very nice. 70,000+ total sf. Biggest space is 37,00 sf with 30' ceilings. One wall divider. Own the stage and everything needed for cheer events.
Carencro Park
8 diamonds of various sizes. \$ lit. City owned and managed. Not the most well maintained. Near Pelican Park Complex with 4 more diamonds.

## Appendix D (cont'd) – Lafayette Travel Venue Summary & Notes

Carencro Sports Complex
Did Not Visit
Clark Field
Football/Soccer Stadium. Turf. Limited seating. Used by many of the schools that don't have a stadium. Limited parking and amenities.
Earl K. Long Gymnasium
Small, very old but recently renovated gym. Home to ULL volleyball team. New floor. 1100 seats.
Fabacher Field
Older Legion Field. Stand alone. Decent seating. Some covered.
Foster Park
Nearby Youngsville Park. (Looking to connect the two.) Two lit diamonds that are also used as flat fields.
Girard Park Disc Golf
Community park on the edge of campus. Has 9-hole disc golf course. Small rec center with a few courts and an outdoor swimming pool. (Drove-by. Did not go in the park to see extensively.)
Hebert Municipal
Did Not Visit
Heymann Park
18-hole disc golf course with concrete tee pads. 1 baseball field and 1 football field. Neither in great shape. Close to Beaver Park (discussions of connecting the two via walking path).
Les Vieux Chenes
Did Not Visit
Moore Park
Flat field complex with 27 fields (17 full-size). All grass. Only 8 fields with lights. Home of the Cajun Rush Soccer Club. Somewhat spread out and limited parking on one end of the facility. Park also includes a go kart track, 4 lit diamonds. (Only one well maintained and used by the nearby high school.) Some undeveloped land nearby for expansion. Slated for \$25m over 5 years for capital improvements. Plans to light and turf more fields.
Neyland Park
Community Park. Small rec center with 1 court and swimming pool. 5 diamonds (1 small). All grass. Not well maintained, but all lit.
Pelican Park
4 field diamond clover. 300' fences. Turf infields. All lit. Center building with bar/restaurant upstairs. Originally built for adult slow pitch softball. A few more fields nearby in Carencro Park. Nice complex.
The Wetlands
Municipal Course. Nice. Clubhouse with grille. Locker rooms. Driving range, practice green. Hosts the high school state championships. Has hosted and LPGA futures event in the past.
Tigue Moore Field
Very nice baseball stadium. 6,000+ seats (some covered). Large, open concourse. Suites. Full turf field. Video board. Full amenities.

## Appendix D (cont'd) – Lafayette Travel Venue Summary & Notes

<b>UL Soccer/Track Facility</b>
Grass soccer field with T&F complex around it. 5,000 seat stadium (uncovered). Locker rooms. One concession stand. Has hosted state HS soccer tournaments. Some throwing cages outside the stadium, across the street.
<b>ULL Intramural Sports Complex</b>
6-10 flat fields based on size. Some with lights. Adding some turf.
<b>Youngsville Sports Complex</b>
Very nice sports complex with multiple facilities. Tennis - 10 hard courts. Lit. Small covered viewing area. Locker rooms. Beach Volleyball - 9 sand courts. Seating. Concessions. Very nice. 5-diamond pinwheel with turf infields. Smaller clover has 4 fields with turf infields. Cages. 6, grass flat fields. Lit. Just purchased 46 acres to put in 4 college baseball fields, amphitheater, pickleball and cornhole.
<b>Yvette Girard Field</b>
Very nice softball stadium. 2,700 + seats (some covered). Suites. Big screen video board. Turf outfield/dirt infield. Indoor batting cages.





## Appendix E – Lafayette Travel Sports Tourism Index™ Results

### Lafayette Travel



#### FINAL SCORE

**51.42**

#### SPORTS TOURISM INDEX REPORT

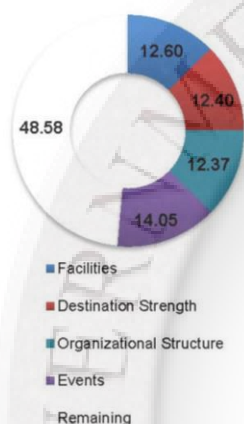
Market Size: Under 500k

Organization Type: DMO (CVB/Sports Commission)

Geographic Region: Southeast

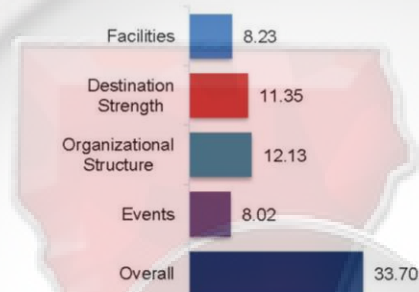
Sports Budget: 200,001-300,000

#### SCORE BREAKDOWN



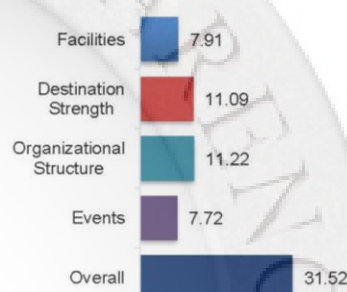
#### AVERAGE SCORES

##### Southeast



#### AVERAGE SCORES

##### Under 500k



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Facilities

Your destination likely has an average inventory of participant focused facilities with some meeting the standards necessary to host local and regional events and a moderately effective supply of spectator focused venues. Future focus should be on working with community leaders to enhance your venue "tool kit" and to develop new facilities in concert with your local stakeholders such as parks and recreation, cities, counties, and academic institutions.

##### Destination Strength

Your destination has some access challenges that are likely tied to limited air service and/or a small population within a days drive. It is likely that a focus on hotel product development would support the sports tourism market in the future.

##### Organizational Structure

Your organization has limited staff and budget dedicated to the sports market. It is most often the case at this level that the staff member responsible for sports also has other sales verticals which can hinder their ability to consistently build relationships in the sports market. Community wide support for organizations at this level is often a significant challenge. This would commonly include elected officials and corporate leaders in the community.

##### Events

Your organization hosts an average number of bid-in events, may create and/or owns a handful of its own championships, and services some events at a basic level. Organizations that score well in this area likely have the ability to work with their local promoters to create new tourism driving events and/or grow their current properties year over year. There is likely an opportunity for organizations in this category to enhance their efforts in servicing events in order to strengthen renewal rates in the future.

## Appendix E – Lafayette Travel Sports Tourism Index™ Results

### Lafayette Travel

#### INDUSTRY AVERAGES REPORT



#### Overall Scores ▲

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Facilities	12.60	8.42	4.18
Destination Strength	12.40	12.05	0.35
Organizational Structure	12.37	11.68	0.69
Events	14.05	7.92	6.13
Overall	51.42	33.80	17.62

#### Facilities Breakdown\*

Participant-Based	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Golf Course	4.00	3.51	0.49
Flat Fields	3.95	2.34	1.61
Disc Golf Course	3.80	3.39	0.41
BMX	3.70	3.14	0.56
Diamonds	3.50	2.29	1.21
Convention Center	1.70	2.21	-0.51

Spectator-Based	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Arena	4.15	2.86	1.29
Football Stadium	3.50	2.46	1.04
Soccer Stadium	3.25	3.36	-0.11
Softball Stadium	3.20	2.18	1.02
Baseball Stadium	3.05	2.50	0.55

#### Destination Strength

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Tourism Drivers^	5	3.07	1.93
Hotels*	2.70	1.10	1.60
Destination Accessibility*	2.30	2.07	0.23

#### Organizational Structure\*

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Sports Staff	0.50	2.00	-1.50
Grant Program	3.87	2.02	1.85
Board & Advisory	0.00	0.50	-0.50

#### Sporting Events

Number on an annual basis	Your Answer	Average Answer	Difference
Local Events	49	25	24
Bid-In Events Hosted	5	8	-3
Events Serviced	53	28	25

\* Max score of 5

^ Max score of 10

▲ Max score of 25

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## Appendix F – Lafayette Travel Sports Tourism Market: 5 -Year Strategic Mission Pillars

In the future, LT’s enhanced sports tourism efforts should sharpen its focus on three (3) key mission areas, or “Pillars.” Each Pillar is driven by a different audience, all focused on increasing overnight stays and consumer spending, as well as enhancing relationships with local community stakeholders in Lafayette Parish. This refined focus will help LT enhance its messaging and will deliver directly on the organization’s tourism mission, as well as positively impact the community’s sports groups. The recommended Pillars are described below along with their driving audiences/factors.

<b>Lafayette Travel Sports Tourism Market 5-Year Strategic Mission Pillars</b>			
<b>Pillar</b>	Enhanced Structure Events: Bid/Created/Owned (Short-Term)	Venue Enhancement (Long-Term)	Community Engagement (Ongoing)
<b>Audience</b>	Tourism Economic Development Rights Holders/NGBs Local Promoters High Schools/Colleges	Venue Managers Hospitality Leaders Elected Officials Economic Development Parks and Rec/Colleges Cities/Counties	Elected Officials C-Level Community Leaders Local Media Non-Profit Civic Groups Hospitality Community
<b>Tactics</b>	Strengthen Organization Grow Existing Events Create/Incubate New Events Continue Bid-In Events	Venue Needs Master Plan Venue Development Fund Funding Source(s) Defined Develop Indoor Space(s) Enhance Existing Venues Field Trip	Staff = Outwardly Focused “6&6” Lunches “4 Touch” Program Advisory Group Assign Group to Electeds Economic Impact Releases