SPORTS TOURISM PROJECT SUMMARY

Columbia County Regional Park

A 500-acre, 16-field turf destination for Lake City / Columbia County, FL

Prepared for the Columbia County Tourist Development Council (Visit Lake City) | November 2026

Synergy Sports | Columbia County, FL

OVERVIEW

A county-owned site built for sports tourism

500±

acres owned by Columbia County Tourist Development

16

all-turf, multi-sport fields in the field plan

~$30M

estimated development cost

3 mi

to I-75 / US-90; under 5 mi to I-10

Location NW Bascom Norris Drive and US Highway 41, Lake City, FL

Purpose Acquired Feb. 2020 to expand the county's flat-field inventory and compete for tournaments

Setting Ravine and stream on the north side, mature live oaks, high-and-dry land with wetland clusters

Planning 20-year master plan by TBG Partners and Biohabitats, shaped by community input



PUBLIC RECORD

From land purchase to first build-out

Feb 2020	Oct 2021	May-Jun 2024	Sep 2024	Aug 2025	Late 2025- 2026
507± acres acquired by Tourist Development for a multipurpose field complex	Community engagement meeting for the 20-year master plan	TDC hears Synergy Sports proposal; public-private partnership seen as viable	Regional Park Feasibility Assessment presented to the Tourism Board	TDC moves $275,000 from reserves to start first build-out	Phase 1 survey and wetland marking; Next steps conversation

Where it stands: Phase 1 fields are the next milestone. Construction timing depends on funding and completed engineering; legislative appropriations have been discussed.

FEASIBILITY

The 2024 assessment: a phased, cash-flow-positive park

1

Positive cash flow

Positive cash flow operation: the current model shows $1.8M of net cash flow in Year 1, before the lease.

2

Enough demand

Local, sub-regional and regional population is sufficient to support the development.

3

Phase to limit risk

Development should be phased in to minimize risk.

4

Fields first

Build the master-plan fields first; indoor facility and other high-cost items come later.

PHASING

Phase 1

Turf fields from the Regional Parks Master Plan

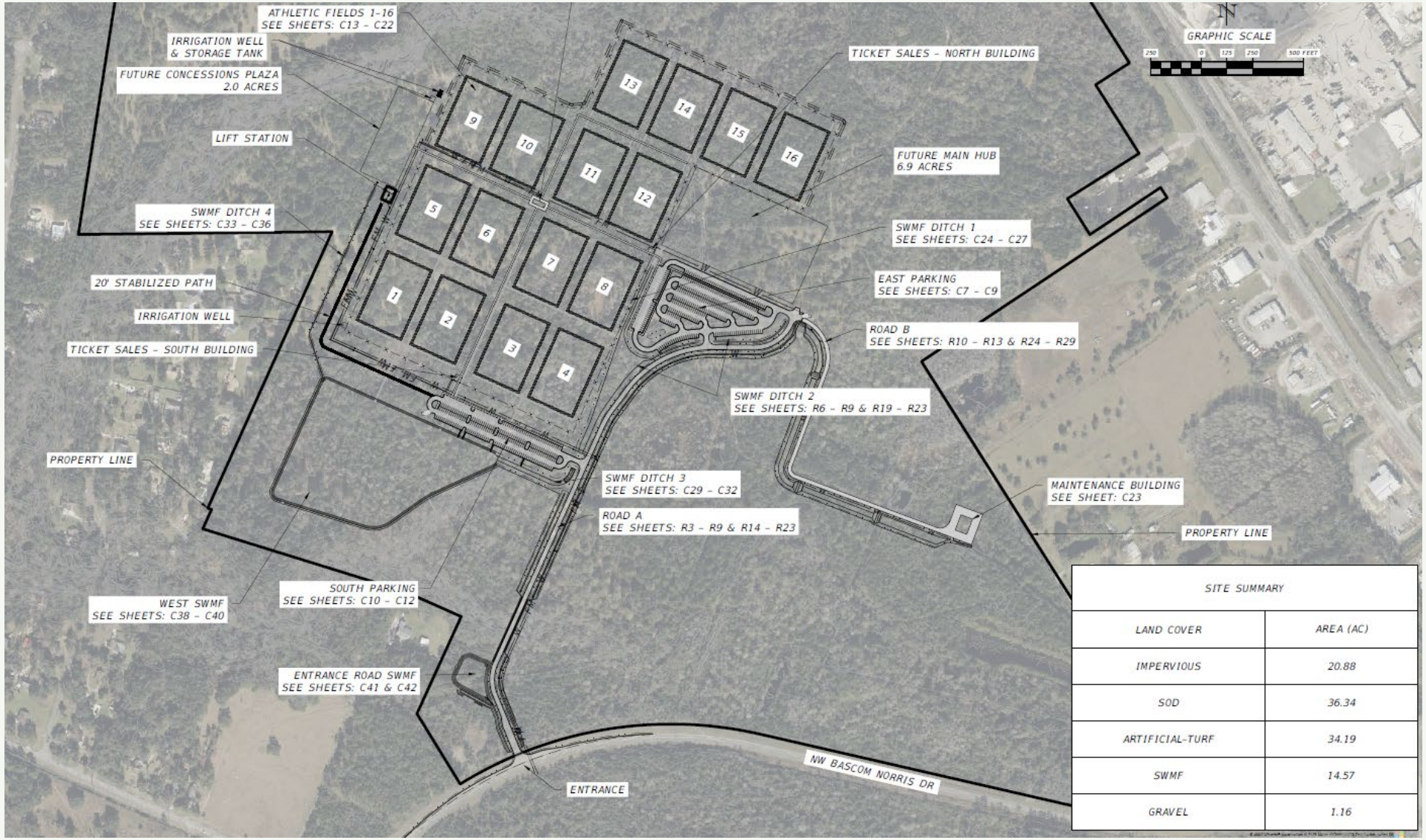
Later phases

Indoor facility and other high-cost components

Estimated total cost: $30M

ENGINEERING SITE PLAN

The engineering site plan behind the concept



FIELD PLAN

16 all-turf fields, flexible for every flat-field sport



Plan view 1: field cluster



Plan view 2: fields with on-site parking

16

all-turf fields

Soccer, lacrosse

field hockey and more by re-lining

Tournament-ready

fields grouped for easy movement between games

LARGE-COMPLEX COMPETITION

Five large complexes already sit within 5 hours

Rank	Complex	Location	Soccer / Rectangular Fields	Approx. Drive Time
1	Premier Sports Campus at Lakewood Ranch	Lakewood Ranch, FL	23 (FIFA regulation)	~3 hr 30 min
2	ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex	Kissimmee, FL	17 (configurable)	~2 hr 35 min
3	Arthur M. Blank U.S. Soccer National Training Center	Fayetteville, GA	17 (13 grass, 2 turf + specialty)	~4 hr 18 min
4	IMG Academy Multi-Sport Complex	Bradenton, FL	16 (20+ multi-sport campus-wide)	~3 hr 15 min
5	Tournament SportsPlex of Tampa Bay	Tampa, FL	15 (all lighted)	~2 hr 35 min

A crowded market

Top five complexes with 15–23 fields each, all within 2.5–4.5 hours of Lake City.

Scale is a losing bet

Competing on size in a market that is less of a destination than these may not be wise.

Smaller, all-turf wins

A visitor-friendly complex with top-tier amenities is a stronger draw for Lake City.

FIELD PLAN: SUGGESTED REVISIONS

Fewer fields, more amenities: a true destination



Revised plan view 1: 12 fields with parking at the entry



Revised plan view 2: playground, pavilion and parking

Phase II indoor facility moves

Removed from this layout and relocated to another part of the overall site, to be developed at a later date.

Keeping indoor and outdoor facilities separate alleviates traffic congestion.

16 → 12 fields

Frees room for parking and amenities

Parking + site amenities

Playground, pavilion, concession building and restrooms, shade structures and bleachers

Built for demand

A better visitor experience draws more families than fields alone

FIELD PLAN: BEFORE AND AFTER (VIEW 1)

Plan view 1: from fields only to a full complex



Original: 16 fields



Revised: 12 fields, parking and amenities

16 → 12

fields, with room freed for the visitor experience

Parking added

on-site parking at the entry for easier arrival

More than fields

amenities give families reasons to stay longer

FIELD PLAN: BEFORE AND AFTER (VIEW 2)

Plan view 2: adding the amenities visitors expect



Original: 16 fields



Revised: playground, pavilion and parking

Playground

a family draw beyond game days

Pavilion + concessions

gathering space, food and restrooms on site

Shade + bleachers

more comfortable for spectators and teams

SMALLER COMPLEX CONCEPT

A smaller, all-turf complex built for visitors

Site Plan Concept

1. Multipurpose Turf Fields (12)
2. Main Entry Plaza
3. Central Building
4. Restroom/Concession Building
5. Playground
6. Picnic Pavilion
7. Shade Structures Throughout
8. Ticket Booths
9. Parking



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

38 tournaments a year: 18 major plus 20 local events

Event	Events / yr	Teams	Participation
Florida Prep Lacrosse	6	50	7,560
USA Lacrosse	2	25	1,310
UFFL Flag Football	2	50	2,560
NIRSA	1	25	685
5v5 Soccer	1	30	810
Snap Soccer	1	30	810
Elite Tournaments Lacrosse	1	30	810
Spikeball	1	50	1,310
USA Ultimate Frisbee	2	100	3,248
Australian Rules Football	1	10	310
Local/ Sub-Regional Tournaments	20	20	11,112
Total	**38**	**420**	**30,525**

38 tournament events per year

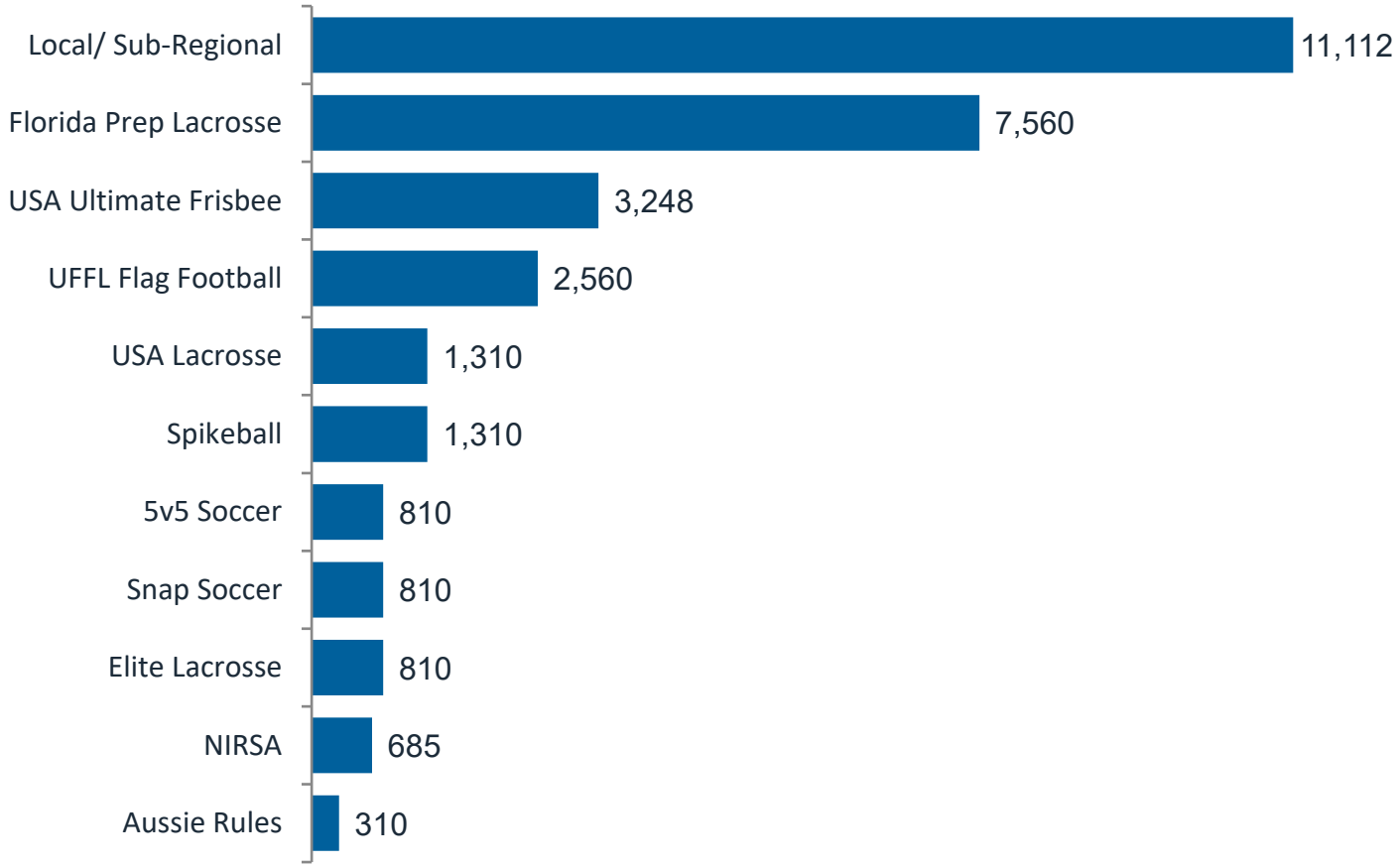
420 teams competing annually

30,525 players and spectators at tournaments

6,930 local, sub-regional and club-rental participation

EVENT MIX

Lacrosse anchors the calendar; every sport adds demand



~32%

of tournament participation comes from lacrosse: 9 events and 9,680 people

10 sports

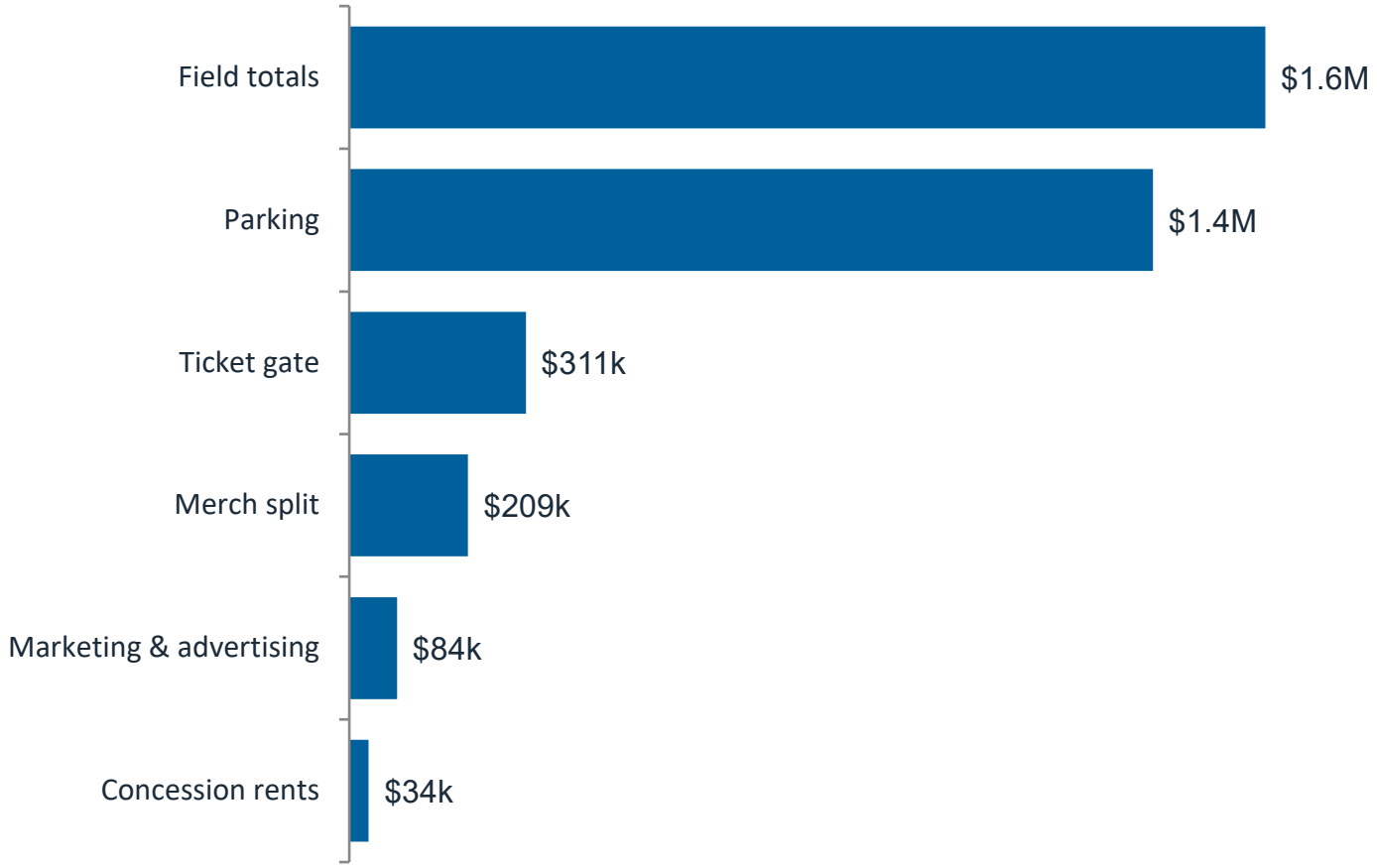
plus 20 local tournaments a year, so one turf plan serves many calendars

3,810

added by 6 local and sub-regional events each year

OPERATING REVENUE

Diverse revenue streams protect cash flow



44%

of Year 10 gross income comes from field revenue ($1.61M)

39%

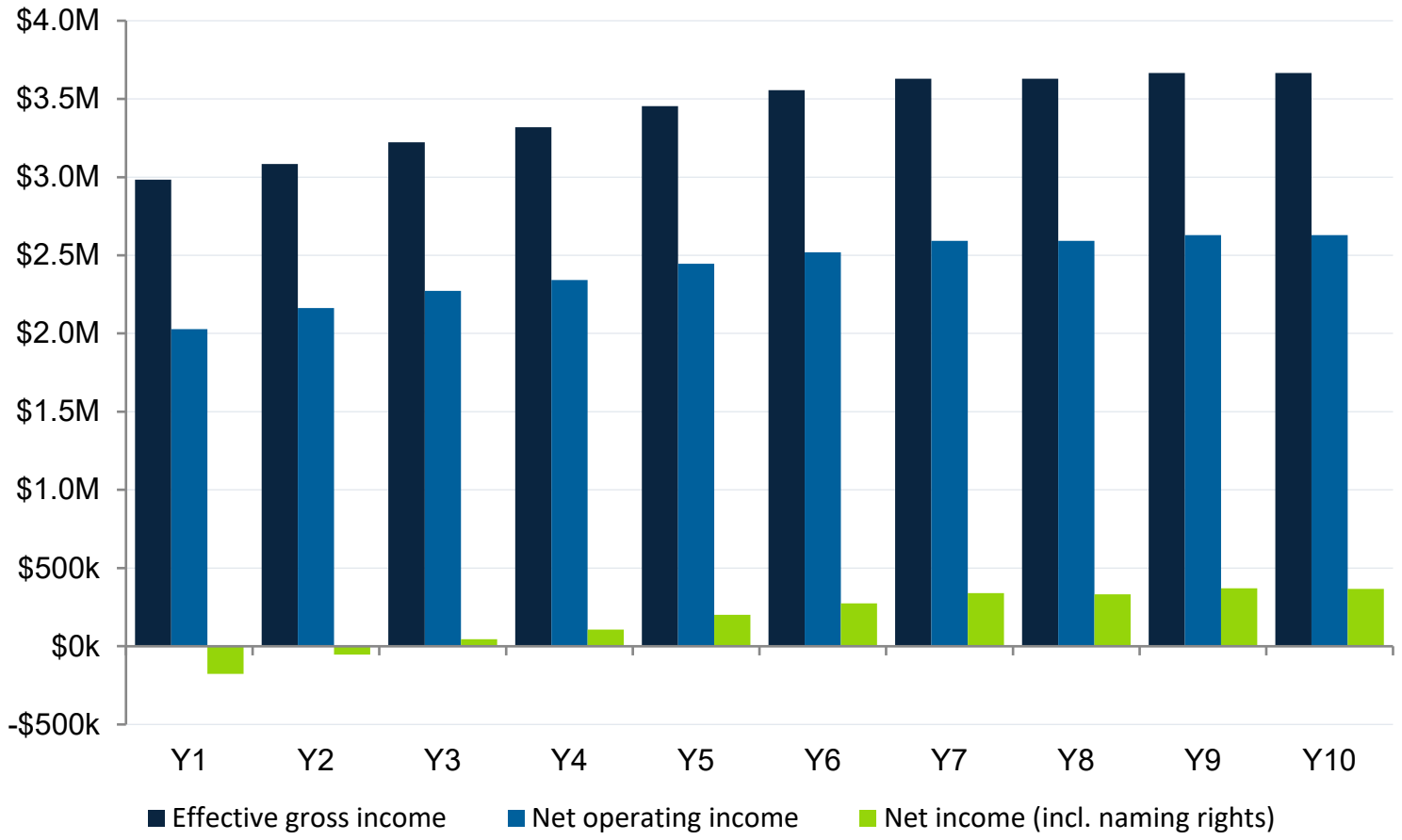
from parking ($1.42M), the second-largest line and a reason to add on-site parking

$3.67M

gross potential income by Year 10, up from $3.14M in Year 1

OPERATING P&L

Net operating income grows from $2.0M to $2.6M a year



$2.98M → $3.67M

effective gross income, Year 1 to Year 10

$2.03M → $2.63M

net operating income, Year 1 to Year 10

$1.81M

10-year net income after lease inclusive of naming rights

OPERATING P&L SUMMARY

Operations cover the $2.25M master lease from Year 6

US dollars	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10	10-yr total
Effective gross income	$2,983,342	$3,453,496	$3,666,294	$34,209,798
Operating expenses	($956,229)	($1,007,102)	($1,037,266)	($9,997,696)
Net operating income	**$2,027,113**	**$2,446,394**	**$2,629,028**	**$24,212,102**
Reserves (10% of NOI)	($202,711)	($244,639)	($262,903)	($2,421,210)
Net cash flow	**$1,824,402**	**$2,201,755**	**$2,366,125**	**$21,809,156**
Master lease	($2,250,000)	($2,250,000)	($2,250,000)	($22,500,000)
EBITDA after lease	**($425,598)**	**($48,245)**	**$116,125**	**($690,844)**
Naming rights (est.)	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$2,500,000
Net income incl. naming rights	**($175,598)**	**$201,755**	**$366,125**	**$1,809,156**

$24.2M 10-year net operating income

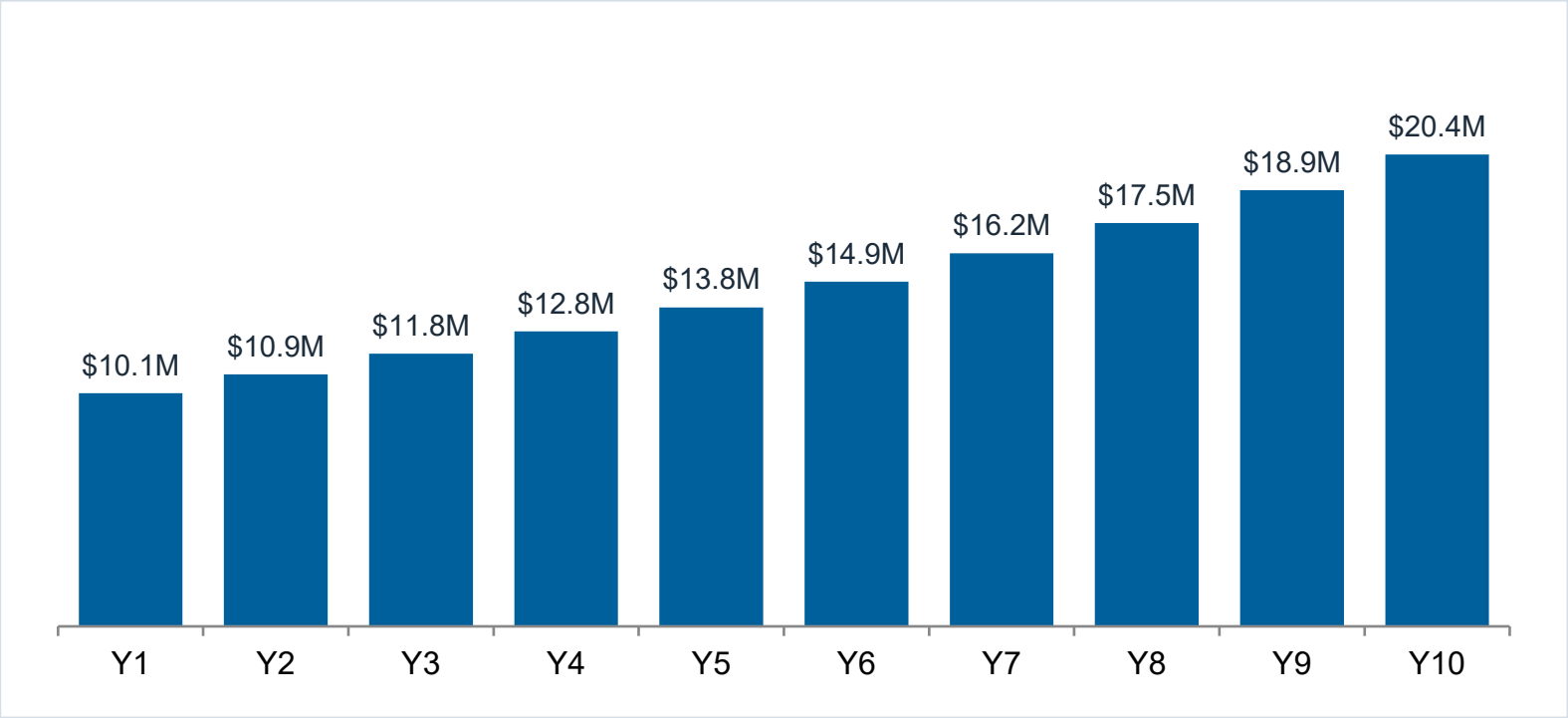
$21.8M 10-year net cash flow after 10% reserves

$22.5M master lease paid over 10 years ($2.25M a year)

$1.81M 10-year net income after lease, with naming rights

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic impact grows from $10M to $20M a year



$147.2M

cumulative economic impact over 10 years

176,895

non-local visitor days in Year 1, rising to 274,422

$90.3M

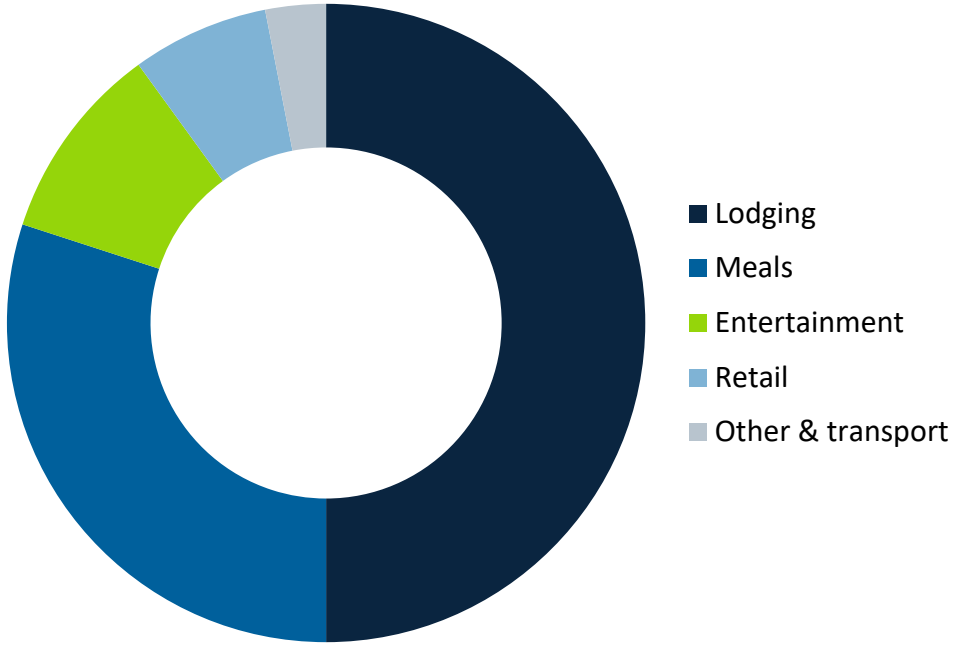
cumulative direct visitor spending

Key assumptions: ~70,800 visitors (45,000 scaled to the added local tournaments), 2.5 days each, $35 per day (+3% a year, to $45.67); 50% lodging, 30% meals; indirect and induced spending adds 63%.

FISCAL IMPACT

Where visitor dollars land and what returns to the county

Year 1 direct spending by category



Annual	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10
Tourist Development Tax	$185,740	$254,104	$254,104
County sales tax	$150,449	$205,824	$304,529
Total fiscal impact to county	**$670k**	**$1.26M**	**$1.54M**

$12.2M

cumulative fiscal impact to the county over 10 years

$8.8M

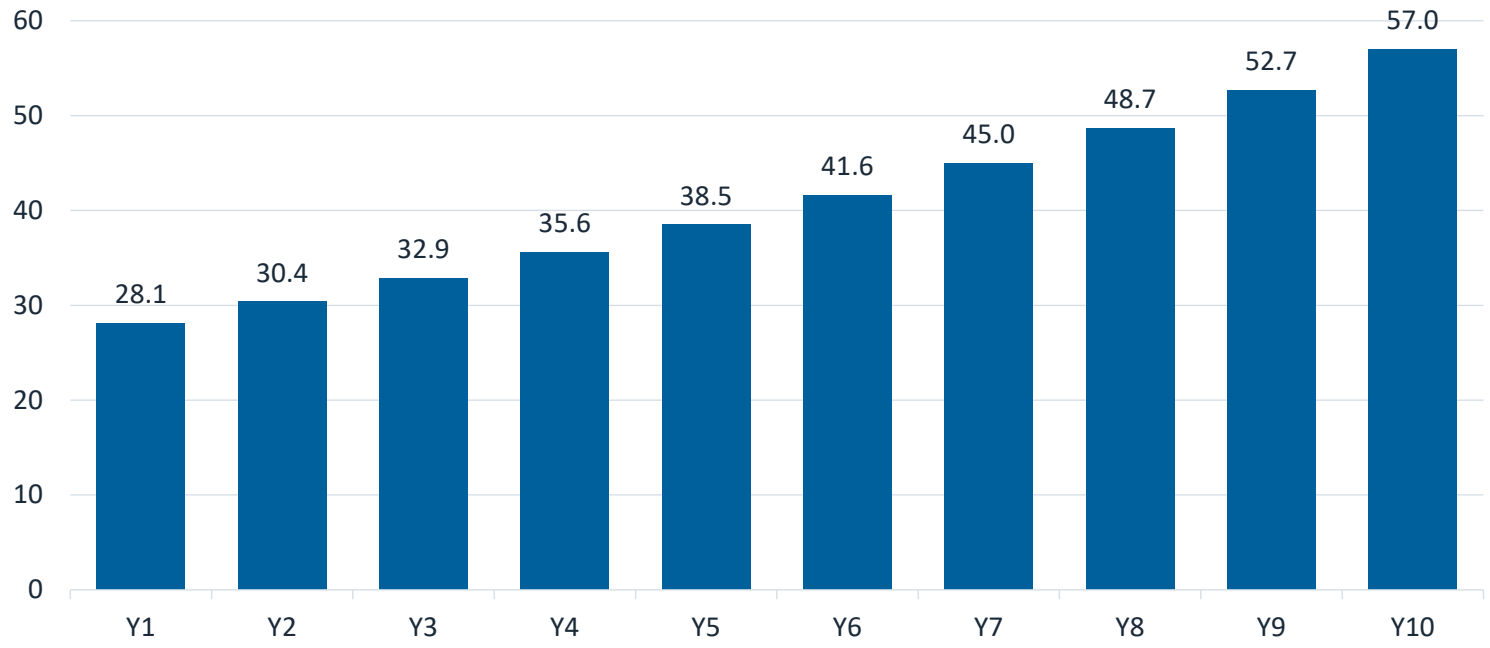
cumulative state sales tax generated

Tourist Development Tax is the 6% lodging tax modeled on hotel spending; TDT growth flattens after Year 5 as modeled.

VISITOR IMPACT

Visitors fill ~28,000 hotel room nights in Year 1

Estimated hotel room nights per year (thousands)



28K → 57K

room nights a year, Year 1 to Year 10

0.41M

cumulative room nights over 10 years

$3.1M → $6.3M

annual lodging spend modeled

How it is derived: each non-local visitor day carries $17.50 of lodging spend, about 16% of a room night at $110. Treat as a planning estimate; validate against Lake City hotel inventory and tournament party sizes.

Hotel and sales tax: $340k in Year 1, $560k by Year 10

Annual	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10
Modeled lodging spend	$3.10M	$4.24M	$6.27M
Hotel room nights (est.)	28,142	38,501	56,964
Tourist Development Tax	$185,740	$254,104	$254,104
County sales tax	$150,449	$205,824	$304,529
TDT + sales tax	$336,189	$459,928	$558,632
Total fiscal impact (all taxes)	$670k	$1.26M	$1.54M

Why it matters: both taxes are non-ad valorem, so they do not depend on property values or on the millage the County can levy.

$185,740

Year 1 TDT: 6% of $3.10M lodging spend

+$120k

a year of upside by Year 10 if TDT tracked lodging (6% × $6.27M ≈ $380k) rather than staying flat after Year 5

TDT use is statutory: s. 125.0104 allows proceeds to finance and operate publicly owned sports facilities, which is what lets TDT carry a lease.

AMENDMENT 3

Amendment 3 would cut the property-tax base

What the amendment does (as written)

- **Larger homestead exemption:** $150k in 2027, rising to $250k in 2028, for non-school taxes.
- **Non-homestead cap:** limits annual growth in assessed value to 5%.
- **Spending lock:** limits ad valorem proceeds to seven listed categories of use.
- **No replacement revenue:** about $12B a year statewide in lost local revenue once fully phased in.

What it does not touch

Tourist Development Tax and sales tax are not ad valorem. Visitor-funded revenue keeps flowing whatever happens to homestead values or millage.

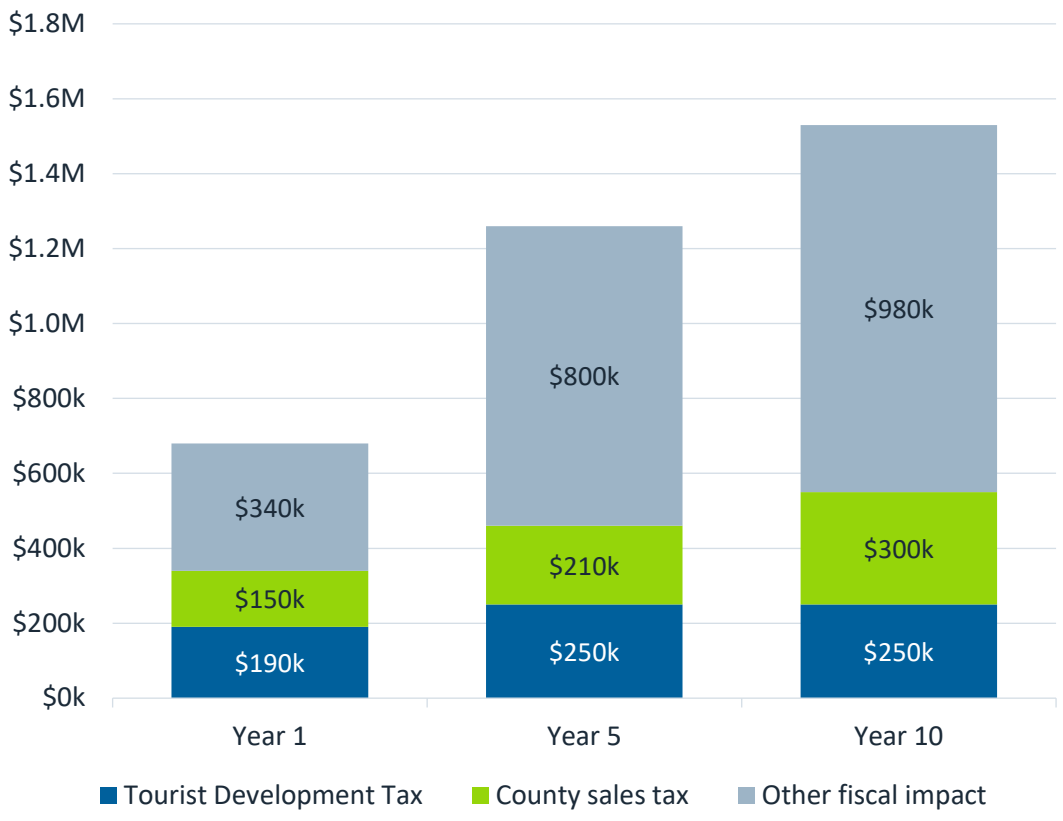
THE EXPOSURE FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY

Rural counties lean heavily on property tax for the general fund, roads and public safety. Less ad valorem revenue means less room to fund new capital, and a G.O. bond repaid from property tax becomes harder to justify.

AMENDMENT 3 OFFSET

Visitor-funded revenue that Amendment 3 does not touch

Annual fiscal impact to the County



1 New non-ad valorem revenue

$300k to $600k a year of TDT and sales tax; $700k to $1.5M including other taxes.

2 Capital stays off the property tax

A TDT-backed lease needs no millage, no G.O. bond and no referendum.

3 A broader economic base

$10M to $20M a year of visitor-driven economic impact supports jobs and sales tax.

Offsets, not replaces: TDT is restricted to tourism uses, so it carries the facility rather than filling the property-tax gap.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

P3 structure: private capital, County lease, TDC backstop

1

Private developer

Provides upfront capital (about $30M est.) and delivers the complex as a private project.

2

Comprehensive agreement

Fixed-price design and build under s. 255.065, with performance and operating standards.

3

Long-term County lease

Master lease of $2.25M a year ($30M est. at 6% over 30 years), subject to annual appropriation.

4

TDC revenue backstop

Tourist Development Tax is budgeted first to the lease payment.

PRIVATE PARTNER CARRIES

Construction cost and schedule risk, financing and interest-rate risk, and delivery to the agreed standard.

COUNTY KEEPS

Ownership of the land and facility, public-use protections, and an annual appropriation decision. No G.O. debt.

TDC PROVIDES

The revenue pledge that gives the developer and its lender confidence in the lease, and event-recruitment support.

The statutes that govern a P3 in Florida

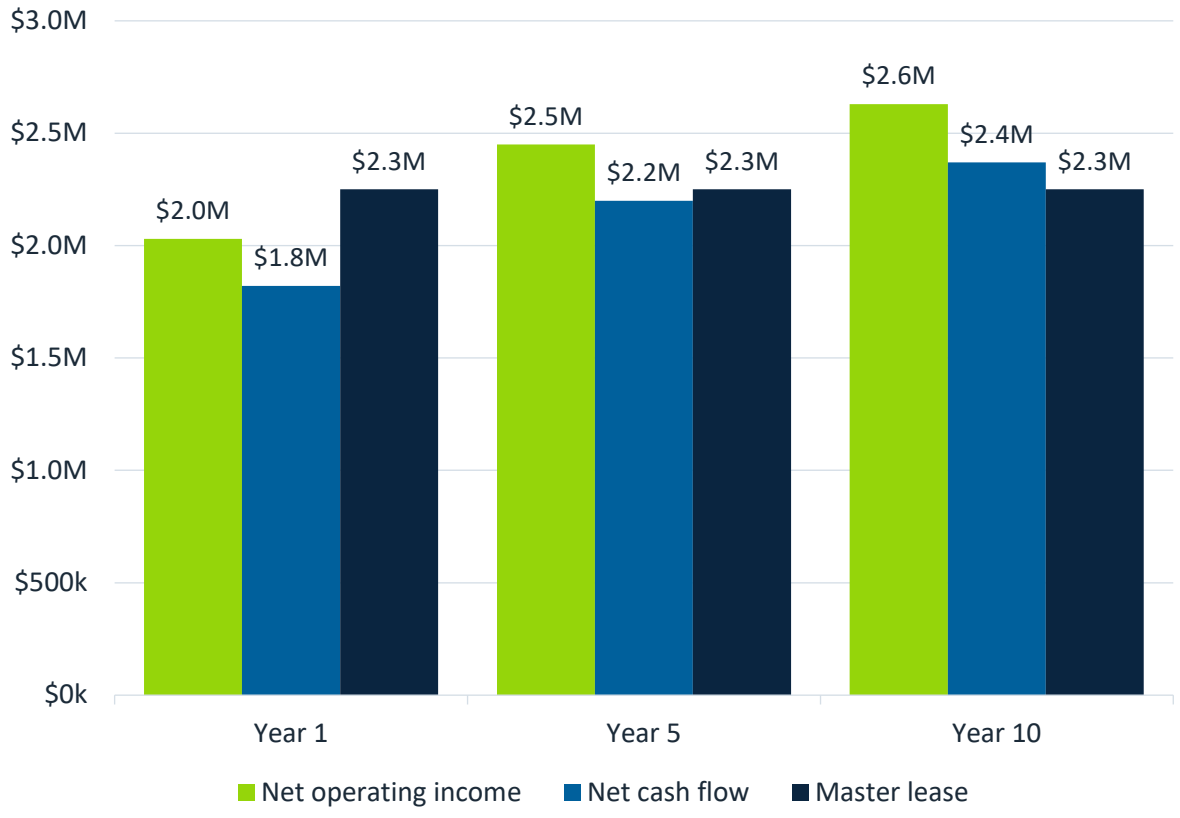
Authority	What it provides	How it applies here
s. 255.065, F.S. **Public-Private Partnerships**	Lets a public entity partner with a private entity on qualifying projects, including recreational and sporting facilities. Allows solicited or unsolicited proposals, public notice and competing proposals, a public-interest finding, and a comprehensive agreement covering lease payments.	The procurement path for the complex. Highlands County is pursuing the same route.
s. 125.0104, F.S. **Tourist Development Tax**	Authorizes TDT proceeds to build, operate and maintain publicly owned sports facilities, and to secure bonds and other obligations.	Makes TDT the lawful backstop for the lease. Facility must be publicly owned and operated.
Art. VII, s. 12, Fla. Const. **Local bonds**	Bonds payable from ad valorem taxes for more than 12 months need voter approval; revenue-based obligations do not.	An annual-appropriation lease backed by TDT avoids a referendum.

Next legal step: counsel confirms ownership, appropriation language and TDT eligibility before a proposal is accepted.

LEASE SIZING

Sizing the lease: $2.25M a year on about $30M

Operating cash flow vs. annual master lease



Coverage	NOI ÷ lease	Cash flow ÷ lease
Year 1	0.90x	0.81x
Year 5	1.09x	0.98x
Year 10	1.17x	1.05x

Cash flow covers the lease from Year 6. Years 1–5 fall short by $1.1M in total while revenue ramps.

BRIDGING THE EARLY YEARS

Naming rights ($250k a year) lift net income positive from Year 3. Other tools: capitalized interest, a ramped lease, a stabilization reserve, and existing TDT collections.

FUNDING MODELS COMPARED

How a P3 compares with other funding models

Funding model	How it would work	Shortfall
General obligation bonds	Voter-approved debt repaid from property tax	Needs a referendum; leans on the ad valorem base that Amendment 3 shrinks; County keeps construction risk.
TDT revenue bonds	Pledge TDT to repay County-issued bonds	Modeled TDT supports only ~$2M–$3M of debt, a small fraction of the cost; County carries ramp-up risk.
Cash / capital budget	Pay from reserves and annual capital funds	~$30M exceeds capacity and competes with roads and public safety; forces slow phasing.
Grants and philanthropy	State appropriations, FCT, sponsors, donors	Competitive and uncertain in timing; rarely a large enough share to be the base case.
County lease-purchase / COPs	County finances and builds the project itself	Same annual-appropriation backstop, but cost overruns and delivery risk stay with the County.
P3 (recommended)	Developer funds, builds and leases to County	TDC backstop covers the shortfall; no County construction risk, financial risk, or delivery risk

PUBLIC USE

Balancing community access and sports tourism

LOCAL PRIORITY

Monday-Thursday

- Local leagues, youth programs, and clubs
- Team rentals, practices, camps, and clinics
- Reduced-rate or no-cost access for the community
- Builds consistent baseline utilization

TOURNAMENT WINDOWS

Friday-Sunday

- Tournaments, showcases, and destination events
- Strongest field revenue, concessions, and parking activity
- Drives hotel room nights and tax collections
- Unprogrammed weekends return to community use

Why it works for Lake City: 12 all-turf fields can serve both calendars. Weekday league play builds a steady base, while 38 modeled tournaments a year fill weekends with visitors and hotel nights. 16 fields is likely overbuilt- additional fields can be added in a later Phase

SUSTAINABILITY

Pricing, fee waivers, and bridging the early years

Market-based pricing

- Broad fee waivers are not sustainable: the facility still incurs utilities, maintenance, staffing, and field preparation costs
- Rates should reflect market standards, demand, event type, day and time, and whether use is local recreation or sports tourism
- Waivers stay available, but limited, clearly defined, and approved by policy rather than by default
- TDC event grants can reimburse rental fees for qualifying events while the complex still collects earned revenue

Tools to manage early-year losses

- A limited, declining County stabilization appropriation tied to performance milestones
- A dedicated reserve funded by incremental sales tax, TDT, sponsorship, or naming-rights revenue
- CRA or tax increment financing tools, if the project area meets statutory requirements
- State, federal, and philanthropic grants; sponsorships and naming rights (modeled at $250k a year); interlocal participation
- Performance-based agreements tied to events hosted, room nights, and public-use hours

Link to the lease: after the $2.25M master lease, Net Income is negative in Years 1 and 2, turning positive by Year 3.

DECISION PATHWAY

Next steps for the Columbia County TDC

Two pathways can move the park from analysis to implementation. A P3 under s. 255.065, F.S. is the recommended route: it shifts construction and financing risk to a private partner while preserving County ownership, public oversight, and community access.

1 Unsolicited P3 proposal

- A private entity submits a proposal for a qualifying public-purpose project under s. 255.065, F.S.
- The County gives public notice, accepts competing proposals, and ranks responses
- Negotiate a comprehensive agreement if it is in the public interest

2 County-led RFP

- County defines project objectives, facility program, operating expectations, and financing preferences
- Solicits comparable proposals from multiple qualified respondents
- More control over scope and evaluation, with more procurement work for the County

WHY THE P3 PATHWAY

Construction risk: fixed-price delivery shifts overruns and delays to the partner

Finance risk: private capital and appropriation-based lease payments avoid voter-approved G.O. debt

Delivery: operator expertise and a faster schedule, with County ownership kept

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Synergy to confirm the preferred procurement route with County administration, the County Attorney, bond counsel, financial advisors, and the TDC, and set policy positions on ownership, annual appropriation, operator duties, public use, pricing, and maintenance.

PATH FORWARD

Next steps

PROCESS

1. TDC confirms support for the project's direction
2. BOCC presentation (Nov 19)
3. BOCC consensus support to move the project forward; additional due diligence required
4. Synergy to work with Staff and TDC to finalize the design, site plan, and amenities
5. Synergy to return to BOCC with a more detailed cost estimate, detailed finance proposal, and legal pathway forward
6. BOCC to approve the project structure and authorize Staff/Legal Counsel to negotiate and execute a Pre-Development Agreement
7. Upon completion of Pre-Development (~3 months), Synergy to return to BOCC for final approval of the project. BOCC to authorize Staff/Legal Counsel to negotiate and execute a Development Agreement and Funding Agreement.

Improving lives, bringing families and communities together, through sports

Questions and discussion

Jason Boudrie | Jason@SynergySportsCenter.com

Synergy Sports | Columbia County, FL