



Sports Complex to see changes !

By Rusty Bradshaw



PEORIA, Ariz., - Nov. 7, 2012 -- **Peoria** is moving forward with plans to improve the **Sports Complex** and change the character of its adjoining parking lot.

The Council approved agreements with Peoria Sports Park LLC and Mortenson Construction for the work, which is expected to begin in 2013. The agreements complete year-long efforts to plan and design renovations to the Peoria Sports Complex in two stages.

Improvements to the clubhouses at the stadium will see design work completed by January and renovations will begin April 15, 2013, after spring training is finished in March, according to Andrew Granger, Peoria engineering director.

"The design of the clubhouse improvements is concurrently under way under an accelerated schedule in order to obtain building permits and procure long-lead construction equipment and materials prior to spring training," he said. Other improvements to the stadium will be conducted between spring training 2014 and spring training 2015.

The cost for the entire Sports Complex improvement project will not exceed \$36.4 million. That amount will surpass the city's available capital funding, according to Mr. Granger. The Seattle Mariners and San Diego Padres, the facility's spring training occupants, agreed to fund the excess, which will amount to about \$1 million per team, Mr. Granger added. Ed Striffler, Peoria engineer, said collaboration has been the key to design of new clubhouses for the Padres and Mariners. He explained city staff maximized the use of technology to work on it across the country swiftly and effectively.

"In terms of energy usage, these buildings will perform 30 percent better than most," he explained. "They are equal to Talking Stick (the new Arizona Diamondbacks baseball facilities in Scottsdale) in terms of green efficiency." The designs call for the Mariners' clubhouse to grow to 56,000 square feet, letting the team expand its operations year-round, Mr. Strickler said. The Padres' clubhouse will be more than 60,000 square feet, he added.



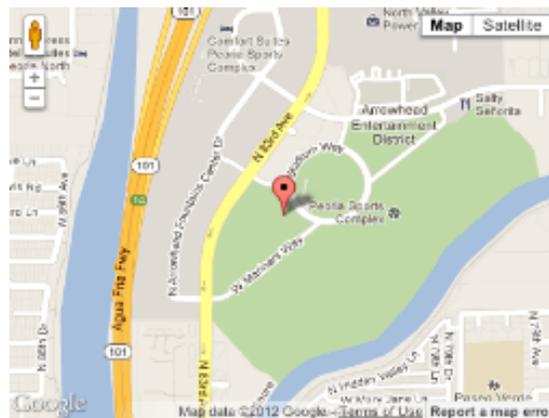


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"The Padres started with a larger building because they've already done some expansion," Mr. Striffler said. The parking-lot redevelopment, while a well-defined council goal, remains in the study phase. However, the memorandum of understanding with Peoria Sports Park provides guiding principles for more detailed negotiations that will lead to packages of agreements to move forward, said Scott Whyte, Peoria economic-development services director. Those potential agreements could include ground lease, development, master signage and parking-garage use and development, he added.

"We've taken the exclusive negotiating agreement and whittled it down to more specifics," Mr. Whyte said. "This is the second step in the train ride."
The parking lot redevelopment will transform the lot into a general entertainment district with a variety of shops and other venues. The parking displaced by the redevelopment will go into two envisioned multi-story parking structures, one on an area of the existing parking lot and the other near the Harkins theater across 83rd Avenue to the west.
The redevelopment has been referred to as the P83 District.
"We have had conversations with the Mariners about placement of the parking garage (nearest the stadium)," Mr. Whyte said.

Officials from both teams are concerned about its placement to make ingress and egress most efficient for baseball fans before and after spring training games, according to Carl Swenson, Peoria city manager. Funding and tenant commitments are prerequisites to moving forward with the project, according to Mr. Whyte.



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"PSP will be required to meet certain obligations, including tenant and financial commitments, as well as supplying the city with project-related financial documentation for economic analysis, and legal and financial analysis," he said. Mr. Whyte further explained the city would not construct the parking garages unless the developer had lease commitments for 80 percent of the retail space within the development. That would go down to 60 percent if there was a 100 percent commitment for the hotel element of the project, Mr. Whyte added.

"The hotel and anchor tenants would have to be part of that 60 percent," he said. City officials hope to open the district for business prior to the 2014 holiday season to take advantage of Super Bowl XLIX, to be played at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale in February 2015.



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