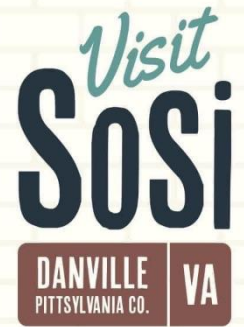


SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN + FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

VISIT SOSI



July 17, 2024

POWERED BY THE HUDDLE UP GROUP



July 17, 2024

Lisa Meriwether
Tourism Manager
Visit SoSi
427 Patton St.
Danville, VA 24541

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for your efforts on our recent work in your community. Your team and your 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 Danville-Pittsylvania County.

Enclosed is the report (which we call the “playbook”) detailing our findings. The playbook includes a SWOT analysis of your organization and destination as it relates to sports tourism, an overview and evaluation of the venue inventory in the area, benchmarking of your organization’s sports tourism efforts, and recommendations to enhance your destination’s sports tourism “tool kit” moving forward. Both the SWOT analysis and the recommendations are built on a “powers of three” foundation. That is, in most cases, no more than three focus areas for each section.

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,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon Schmieder', is positioned below the text 'Yours in Sport,'.

Jon Schmieder
Founder + CEO
Huddle Up Group, LLC

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
Executive Summary

In the opinion of the Huddle Up Group (hereafter the “Consultant” or “Consultant Team”), there is an opportunity for Visit SoSi to improve its position among sports tourism destinations in the region. This can be achieved through the implementation of a focused and intentional sports tourism development agenda. Throughout this process, Visit SoSi’s community leaders showed a desire to grow sports tourism in the region and for Visit SoSi to become more engaged with the area’s stakeholders. Both characteristics are positive signs the region is ready to grow its sports tourism impact.

This strategic planning and facility audit project was conducted with the input of two (2) members from the Consultant Team and included the following:

- A rating of Visit SoSi and the destination through the Sports Tourism Index™.
- Eleven (11) phone interviews, and receipt of fourteen (14) electronic survey responses.
- One (1) in-person town hall meeting with local stakeholders.
- Tours of twelve (12) different sites that encapsulated twenty-seven (27) sports and event venues.
- Benchmarking against high performing destinations and venues both regionally and nationally.

The full report (the “playbook”) detailed in the following pages, offers a SWOT analysis, recommendations for an enhanced sports tourism marketing program (near-term), and suggestions for facility development/enhancement (long-term). The playbook offers depth on each recommendation along with backup research and benchmarking that support the suggestions made by the Consultant Team. In summary, there are three (3) primary and three (3) secondary recommendations, each of which is detailed in the full playbook:

Primary Recommendations – Organizational Strategies (Shorter Term)

1. Advisory Board
2. Sports Grant Process
3. Third Party Resources

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

1. New Indoor Facility
2. Enhance Existing Sports Venues
3. Sustainable Funding Mechanism

The opportunity at hand is to put in place an enriched sports tourism support system, engaging all stakeholders throughout the region to drive more economic development while also improving opportunities for community user groups. Through a community-wide effort, Visit SoSi can drive increased economic activity through sport in the form of additional overnight stays and visitor spending. This effort 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 Visit SoSi is the ideal entity to lead the community’s sports tourism charge in the region.

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility 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 was 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 to local economies, 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 and ever-expanding.

Throughout the research process, it became apparent to the Consultant Team that there is an opportunity for Visit SoSi to enhance its presence in the sports tourism marketplace. The key moving forward will be for community stakeholders to work together in developing tourism driving assets (sports venues) that can deliver upon the sports tourism mission of Visit SoSi from one year to the next. Through the execution of a strategic and targeted game plan, Visit SoSi 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 Visit SoSi and an analysis of the area’s sports venues. The project was led by Huddle Up Group Founder + CEO Jon Schmieder (Phoenix, AZ) and Data and Communications Manager Kevin de Lange (Wilmington, NC). The project followed a six (6) step process that included:

1. An evaluation of Visit SoSi 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 Visit SoSi, including a review of previously conducted relevant research, as well as input from the eleven (11) phone interviews and fourteen (14) electronic survey responses from key community stakeholders. Individuals engaged included, among others, Visit SoSi 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 (November 14-16, 2023) that consisted of one (1) town hall meeting and a sports tourism facility audit. The audit included tours of 12 existing or planned sports and entertainment sites that totaled 27 venues.
4. The creation and delivery of a strategic plan (the “playbook”) for an improved sports tourism program and an enriched venue “tool kit.”
5. An in-person delivery and presentation to members of the Visit SoSi staff and community stakeholders outlining the findings and recommendations outlined in the playbook.
6. A follow-up conversation with Visit SoSi staff 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 three (3) are listed below and in Appendix D. The Appendix includes a current and potential rating for each venue should tourism-focused enhancements be made.

- Anglers park - Flat Fields
- Averett University - Diamonds
- Averett University - Flat Fields
- Averett University - Football Stadium
- Averett University - Indoor Gym
- Averett University - Tennis Courts
- Averett University - Theatre
- Ballou Park - Diamonds
- Ballou Park - Disc Golf
- Ballou Park - Pickleball Courts
- Ballou Park - Tennis Courts
- Chatham Hall - Indoor gym plan
- Dan Daniel Park - Baseball Stadium
- Dan Daniel Park - Diamonds
- Dan Daniel Park - Flat Fields
- George Washington High School - Diamond
- George Washington High School - Football Stadium
- George Washington High School - Outdoor Track
- George Washington High School - Tennis Courts
- Hargrave Military Academy - Diamonds
- Hargrave Military Academy - Flat Field
- Institute of Learning and Research - Conference Center
- Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex
- Smith River Sports Complex - Driving Range
- Smith River Sports Complex - Flat Fields
- Virginia International Raceway

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

1. Evaluating the current sports tourism efforts of Visit SoSi and comparing “Best in Class” sports tourism organizations in similar destinations to offer recommendations for an improved sports marketing and business development strategy.
2. Assessing the current facility inventory in the region and benchmarking those facilities using the Sports Tourism Index™ as a scoring tool.
3. Providing a gap analysis and recommendations for new sports facility developments and existing facility enhancements that would drive the largest ROI to the community through sports tourism.
4. Identifying available organization and venue funding mechanisms, management models, and public/private partnership opportunities.

5. Detailing an economic impact analysis for the top new facility development opportunity recommended by the Consultant Team.

Discussions were held around national best practices in these theme areas and focus was given to applications for Visit SoSi. The intent of this process was to create community support for an increased sports tourism and venue development effort in the region 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 region, 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 six (6) universal truths about Visit SoSi’s sports tourism market position:

- Sports Tourism is important to tourism and economic development in the area.
- The community is supportive of Visit SoSi’s sports tourism efforts.
- The regional competition is strong.
- There are opportunities for Visit SoSi to enhance or develop facilities.
- There are utilization challenges for Visit SoSi with their existing facilities.
- There are gaps in the variety of existing facilities for Visit SoSi.

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
SWOT Analysis

It is the opinion of the Consultant Team that there is an opportunity to grow sports tourism in Danville-Pittsylvania County. Through our extensive analysis and our knowledge of the national marketplace, we believe there is an opportunity for Visit SoSi 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 Danville-Pittsylvania County area, with its numerous positive attributes, it is critical that grassroots sports tourism, as well as special events, continue to serve as economic drivers for the local economy. Keeping these objectives in the forefront while focusing on both an enhanced sports marketing program and long-term facility development, below is a SWOT analysis on the current position of Visit SoSi and the area as a sports tourism destination. This analysis was derived from a combination of the before mentioned surveys, interviews, site visit, and data collected through the Sports Tourism Index™.

Strengths

1. Stakeholder and Community Engagement – The insights gathered from stakeholder interviews in Danville-Pittsylvania County underscore the vital importance of community and stakeholder engagement. The region boasts a robust and dedicated community, with a strong group of stakeholders actively involved in Visit SoSi’s shared goals.
2. Tourism Tied to Economic Development – The development of the Caesars casino and hotel shows that the Danville-Pittsylvania County puts importance on the development of new tourism driving assets.
3. Location – Danville and Pittsylvania County are located within driving distance of multiple major cities (Lynchburg, Raleigh, Cary, Durham), making the destination geographically well-positioned to host regional competitions.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of Facilities – The existing infrastructure falls short in meeting the needs of the community's essential programs and activities, making it difficult to accommodate both local youth and tourism driving events as well.
2. Hotel Inventory – With the relatively small footprint of Danville-Pittsylvania County, there are currently only a handful of hotel properties available. Furthermore, not all of those properties would be considered “team” or “family friendly.” The lack of available hotel inventory in the county often forces visitors to stay at hotels in surrounding jurisdictions, which although nearby, do not provide a tax benefit to Danville-Pittsylvania County and Visit SoSi. This limited inventory can also drive prices higher through compression during high occupancy weekends.

To combat this lack of hotel inventory, Visit SoSi and its partners should be intentional about the types and timing of events it hosts, spreading them into shoulder seasons and across the calendar

year. Visit SoSi should lead the charge in making sure all of its event partners are aware and considerate of events in the area that may overlap, and it will need to help those partners realize the benefits (especially the impact on visitors) of working together to remove/reduce conflicts.

3. Staffing – Staffing challenges are apparent in Danville-Pittsylvania County, and this issue extends across various county departments. Parks and Recreation and Visit SoSi are particularly affected. With only two (2) full-time staff members available, the County faces a considerable imbalance in relation to its extensive number of parks and program offerings in comparison to neighboring counties. To address this shortage, Danville-Pittsylvania County sometimes relies on volunteers, and part-timers, for assistance in maintaining and cleaning the fields and parks, highlighting the ongoing staffing concerns.

Opportunities

1. Leverage Existing Assets – Visit SoSi possesses a valuable opportunity to optimize its existing assets, particularly the racetracks and the Olde Dominion Agriculture Complex. By strategically utilizing the Olde Dominion Agriculture Complex for BMX races, Visit SoSi can tap into the growing popularity of BMX events. This initiative not only diversifies the range of sports offerings but also positions the region as a versatile and dynamic sports destination. The existing racetracks provide a unique opportunity to attract and organize thrilling car races. By strategically leveraging these facilities, Visit SoSi can tap into the enthusiasm for motorsports, drawing both participants and spectators. This initiative not only diversifies the sports portfolio but also contributes to the region's identity as a hub for automotive events. Maximizing the potential of the racetracks aligns with Visit SoSi's goal of enhancing the overall sports and entertainment offerings in the community, fostering economic growth and community engagement.
2. Facility Development – In today's sports facility arms race, venues classified as “tournament friendly” and “anchor” are needed to attract top-tier participant focused championships and their related tourism dollars. 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 competitions. An “anchor” facility is defined as a venue that has enough fields/courts/diamonds/sheets on its own to host major regional or national events **all in one location**. In addition to the pure number of fields/courts/diamonds/sheets, the top anchor facilities in the country also provide key amenities that event rights holders need to host high quality events.

Without added facility options, Visit SoSi will be fighting an uphill battle against communities with newer and/or larger venues. 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 venues.

Facility Type	Anchor	Tournament Friendly	Tournament Friendly Parking
Flat Fields	Minimum 16 fields	8-15 fields	60 spaces per field
Pool	50m/8-10 lanes with diving well	25m with diving well	1 space per 4 spectator seats
Diamonds	Minimum 12 fields	8-11 fields	60 spaces per field
Hardwood Courts	Minimum 8 Basketball/ 16 Volleyball	4 Basketball/8 Volleyball	3.5 spaces per 1000 sq ft
Ice	3+ Sheets Hockey/ 6+ Sheets Curling	2 Sheets Hockey/ 4 Sheets Curling	3.5 spaces per 1000 sq ft
Tennis	Minimum 12 courts	Minimum 6 courts	12 spaces per court
Pickleball	40-60 Courts (National)	8-16 Courts (Local) 24-32 Courts (Regional)	12 spaces per court
Indoor Track	200 meter/6 lanes/banked	200 meter/6 lanes	1 space per 4 spectator seats

The following is a list of 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 Visit SoSi.

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 Met Complex (Hoover, AL), LakePoint Sports Complex (Cartersville, VA), 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).

Finally, if the vision of a new tourism driving facility (or facilities) can be realized, it should not be lost that the region’s youth will also have better places to participate at throughout the year. Hosting more practices and tournaments in the area will keep local dollars in the community rather than exporting them to bordering cities and states. As such, any new facility would likely help local clubs, and their participating families, save thousands of dollars a year that they currently spend on travel (and venue rentals) to/from facilities in neighboring communities.

3. Community Partnerships – Visit SoSi has a significant opportunity to strengthen its position in the sports tourism industry by fostering and enhancing community partnerships, particularly with key entities like the YMCA and the River Soccer Complex. Collaborating with the YMCA can open avenues for shared resources, expanded programming, and increased community engagement. Additionally, forming a strategic alliance with the River Soccer Complex presents an opportunity to tap into a dedicated sports facility, potentially hosting more sports tourism events and expanding the reach of Visit SoSi's programs. By prioritizing and maximizing these community partnerships, Visit SoSi can bolster its impact, broaden its offerings, and establish itself as an integral part of the local sports and recreational landscape.

Threats

1. Regional Competition – Beyond its neighbors to the north and south, there are many destinations throughout West-Virginia and North-Carolina that are well established in the national sports tourism space (see Appendix B). The level of reputable competition from nearby destinations is only the beginning as there are numerous communities throughout the Southeast that are well-established and currently expanding their sports tourism efforts. This growing competition makes it more difficult each day for Visit SoSi to establish a foothold locally, regionally, and nationally. The presence of these competitive players in the sports tourism space will require Visit SoSi to pick its proverbial spots and be intentional about what its focus areas become with the limited resources it has available to work with today.
2. Regional Airport – A notable threat facing Danville-Pittsylvania County lies in the absence of a regional airport. Athletes participating in tournaments often face the inconvenience of having to fly into airports such as Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro or Lynchburg, and then endure additional travel time to reach Danville. This logistical challenge may impact the overall appeal of the county as a sports destination, potentially deterring athletes and event organizers. As accessibility is a critical factor in sports tourism, the absence of a nearby airport poses a significant threat to Danville-Pittsylvania County's competitiveness in attracting and hosting sports events.
3. Branding – The new Visit SoSi brand could face challenges based on geography. Most destinations include the largest city as part of the brand so travelers are clear on the location of the CVB, DMO, or sports commission. While the Visit SoSi brand is in its infancy, we merely note this potential challenge here. An additional note on branding, most destinations that pursue the sports tourism and events market have a separate sports moniker for the destination. A few examples include:
 - Virginia's Blue Ridge Sports (aka VBR Sports)
 - Virginia Beach Sports Marketing
 - Durham Sports Commission
 - Sports Quad Cities

Ideally, Visit SoSi would have a sports specific brand that designates the location of the destination, so event owners know what geographic location they are considering to host their events. Since Danville and Pittsylvania County are relatively small markets and the tourism effort is relatively new, the Consultant Team proposes a separate branding for the sports arm of Visit SoSi. One potential name for this sports arm could be "Southern Virginia Sports." This adjustment aims to better communicate the specific location, creating a stronger and more memorable connection with potential visitors and stakeholders.

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
Competitive Set Analysis

As part of the analysis, the Consultant Team utilized the Sports Tourism Index™ to evaluate Visit SoSi’s current position within the sports tourism marketplace, benchmark the organization against its competitors, and provide a baseline to measure future growth. As the sole proprietor of this platform, the Consultants have exclusive use of the trademarked tool to determine the destination’s strengths, competitive set, and areas of opportunity. This analysis produced a score and ranking based on the organization’s answers to questions addressing four major theme areas or “buckets.” The questions and scoring method were derived from responses by leading event rights holders across the country when asked for their most important criteria in placing events in a particular destination. Benchmarking and rankings are generated from responses by 370+ destinations and over 6,000 facilities across the country. The four buckets, each with a maximum score of 25, are represented as follows:



Bucket	Visit SoSi	Overall Average	Southeast Average	Under 500k Pop. Avg.
Facilities	11.97 ¹	9.58	9.50	9.14
Destination Strength	12.90	11.83	10.97	10.70
Organization Structure	7.75	11.79	11.77	11.37
Events	3.95	8.06	8.19	7.86
Overall	36.57*	41.27	40.44	39.07

*Each bucket has a maximum score of 25, for a total of 100 points overall.
 For a further breakdown of Visit SoSi’s scores, and their meaning, refer to Appendix E.

Using the scores generated by the Sports Tourism Index™, the Consultant Team was able generate a competitive set of destinations within the sports tourism market. Below is a list of organizations with similar scores to Visit SoSi.

- **Overall:** Athens (GA) CVB, Columbia County (FL) Sports Commission, Dalton (GA) CVB, Elkhart County (IN) CVB, Explore Newnan-Coweta (GA), Visit Dothan (AL).
- **Facilities:** Experience Columbia (SC) Sports, Gainesville (GA) CVB, Savannah (GA) Sports Council, Stafford County (VA) Tourism, Virginia Beach (VA) Sports Marketing, Visit Macon (GA).
- **Destination Strength:** Asheville Buncombe (NC) Regional Sports Commission, Charleston (WV) CVB, Elizabethtown (KY) Tourism, Newport (VA) News Tourism, Prince William (VA) Sports, Visit Mountaineer Country (WV) CVB.

¹ Visit SoSi’s facility score is skewed on the Sports Tourism Index™ because of the presence of the various racing tracks and golf courses as their highest scoring facilities.

- **Organization Structure:** Auburn-Opelika (AL) Tourism, Discover Greenwood (SC), Durham (NC) Sports Commission, Elkhart County (IN) CVB, Florida's (FL) Historic Coast, Richmond (VA) Region Tourism, Ridgeland (MS) Tourism Commission.
- **Events:** Charlottesville Albemarle (VA) CVB, Greater Gadsden Area (AL) Tourism, Kentucky Lake (KY) CVB, Little Rock (AR) CVB, Prince William (VA) Sports.

Finally, as Visit SoSi begins to undertake the steps outlined in the recommendations in the following sections, there are several high-performing sports tourism organizations, similar in size and makeup to the Danville-Pittsylvania County region and Visit SoSi's structure. These organizations and destinations should be looked upon as best-in-class examples that Visit SoSi should strive to become in the future. These include, but are not limited to (in alphabetical order):

- Durham Sports Commission (Durham, NC)
- Experience DeKalb County (DeKalb, IL)
- Foley Sports Commission (Foley, AL)
- Gwinnett Sports Commission (Gwinnet, GA)
- Huntsville/Madison County CVB (Huntsville, AL)
- Stafford County Tourism (Stafford, VA)
- Visit Macon (Macon, GA)

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
Primary Recommendations

The enclosed primary recommendations include three (3) opportunities for an enhanced sports tourism marketing program. While the scope of work for this project also 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 or enhancing existing venues. The recommendations are listed on the following pages along with more detail for each concept.

Primary Recommendations – Organizational Strategies (Shorter Term)

1. Advisory Board – The Consultant Team recommends the implementation of a sports specific advisory group, (best in class: West Michigan 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 consultation. The end goal is to create an environment where the biggest sports decisions in the community happen at Visit SoSi’s advisory group’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 (committee examples: executive, finance, nominating, events, grants).
 - Members should be willing to commit their “time, talent, and/or treasure.” (Financial, volunteer time, fundraising, networking, etc.).

A sports specific advisory group can be tasked with leading in the creation of a regional sports tourism facility master plan, helping build created events, supporting bids, fundraising, sourcing grant opportunities, prioritizing opportunities, and lending political capital to Visit SoSi and other members of the group when needed.

2. Sports Grant Process – Moving forward, Visit SoSi would be wise to consider creating a separate sports specific grant program to develop a more structured sports specific process where mission, eligibility, application, and evaluation is well defined. Nearly every destination the Consultant Team has worked with has a dedicated sports and/or special events grant program that is not related to meetings and conventions (regional examples: Lynchburg, Durham, Richmond, Virginia Beach, Asheville). The Consultant Team recommends the following best practices be considered in a newly created sports specific grant program:
- Conditions of Funding – Any grant program needs to have a specific list of attributes that the applicant must meet to even be considered for funding. At a minimum, qualification should include the following:
 - At least half the teams/participants will contribute to overnight stays in the host destination.
 - A minimum benchmark of the number of room nights the event must drive to the destination.
 - Grants should be for new events only (not to subsidize existing/long-running events).
 - Grants should be for no more than three (3) years.
 - The grantee must promote the grantor as a partner in the event, including relevant marketing recognition for the funding agency.
 - A post-event report must be filed to receive all or some of the awarded funds (usually 50% of the funds are disbursed at contract signing and the remaining 50% after an after-action report is submitted, see below).
 - Evaluation – All events are not created equal. Visit SoSi should implement some form of ranking system that considers the elements of an event that are important to the organization. That may be room nights, media/TV exposure, time of year (shoulder or off-peak season is a plus), volunteer engagement opportunities, or any number of other criteria. Put those items on a list and award points to an event that meets the criteria. The best scorecard the Consultant Team has come across is from Visit Eau Claire (WI).
 - Accountability – The best grant programs we have seen do not give out all the funding on the front end. While grant funds can be distributed in a myriad of ways, the most common method is where the granting entity awards 50% of the funds on the front end, and the remaining 50% after the event concludes and the rights holder has filed the appropriate follow-up paperwork. By holding back a portion of the funds, the grantor can hold the event rights holder accountable to follow through on the after-action report that are required by the CVB or sports commission. No report, no money.
 - Business Development – Grant programs are best used for closing deals when new opportunities present themselves. This is true for both traditional bid-in events and also for newly created events. For created events, the grant should allow for a multi-year commitment; however, the allocation of funds should gradually decrease after the initial year. As an example, if your local soccer club applied for a \$5,000 grant to get a newly created tournament started, and the event meets your scorecard criteria, the best practice would be to award them \$5,000 in year one, \$2,500 in year two, \$1,250 in year three, then nothing in subsequent years. After three years the event should be able to stand on its own

and you should be able to allocate those funds to the next opportunity rather than continue to subsidize events for a long period of time.

- Capital Project Grants – Finally, when it comes to facility development, Visit SoSi could consider using a Tourism Product Development Fund (TPD fund) as a catalyst for a “challenge grant” style program. That is, there would be a formal grant request process for Visit SoSi’s partners to apply for funds in a dollar-for-dollar match on capital projects that would drive overnight stays to the area. For every dollar the partner invests, they would be eligible for a dollar from Visit SoSi’s “Sports Development Fund.” Employing this type of matching program ensures that all parties have a personal stake in the positive outcome of each project, and that Visit SoSi’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, Visit SoSi should tie all capital project grants to the concept of “Favored Nation Status.” That is, an MOU outlining booking priority, fixed rental costs (if any), and/or numbers of dates available each year.
3. Third Party Resources – The Consultant Team believes that Visit SoSi could enhance their sports tourism initiatives within Danville-Pittsylvania County by using third party resources. At the moment, Visit SoSi lacks a dedicated business development role within its team, which is essential for driving sports tourism events to the area. The Consultant Team strongly recommends Visit SoSi to explore the possibility of partnering with a third party (example: Airstream Ventures) to fulfill this critical role, at least in the sports tourism market. Airstream Ventures focuses on communities and building their sports profile with the event rights holder relationships that Airstream Ventures currently maintains. In just over four years, Airstream Ventures has led 95 events, with 20 being televised nationally and they have created an economic impact of over \$55 million in seven different counties. The Consultant Team believes that Airstream Ventures could attract a handful of events per year to Danville-Pittsylvania County. By hiring an external partner, Visit SoSi can capitalize on the existing expertise and resources required to boost its sports tourism endeavors and further develop the region as a premier destination for sporting events.

Though the Consultant Team’s best practices recommend a staff member solely dedicated to the sports market, which is often not feasible in the near term. In this case, and often even in addition to a dedicated staff member, the use of an online event matchmaking tool, such as the Sports Tourism Index™ and Scout platform would serve as a cost-efficient resource to identify events that could be held in Danville-Pittsylvania County. These tools can help offset the inability for a limited staff to attend the traditional trade show opportunities that many CVBs and sports commissions use to network and drive business to their communities.

Beyond using this tool for business development purposes, the Sports Tourism Index™ and Scout platform also features an Estimated Spending Calculator. Using this tool, or other similar economic impact calculators, can be a great resource and a crucial step in spreading the word about the value tourism driving sports, events, and Visit SoSi bring to the community.

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
Secondary Recommendations

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

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

1. **New Indoor Facility** – Based on the results of the facility audit, the national experience of the Huddle Up Group in the sports tourism industry, and their knowledge of the current landscape in Danville-Pittsylvania County, it is the belief of the Consultant Team that a significant economic and community impact on the region could be made from the development of a new indoor complex. Before doing any construction, the Consultant Team advises Visit SoSi to organize a familiarization (or FAM) tour where key community leaders and elected officials in the Danville-Pittsylvania County tour successful facilities across the region. This FAM tour could include trips to the Rocky Mount Event Center (NC), Virginia Beach Sports Center (VA), and the Rock Hill Sports Center (NC).

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

Indoor Courts = 474 scored by the Sport Tourism Index™

	AVERAGES		
	Top 10	Overall	Difference
# Basketball Courts	15	3	12
# Volleyball Courts	27	4	23
Court Surface (Hardwood)	80%	77%	3%
Scoreboard	90%	82%	8%
Scorers' Table	90%	90%	0%
Team Benches	60%	56%	4%
PA System	60%	58%	2%
Locker Rooms	70%	73%	-3%
Permanent concession stand(s)	100%	76%	24%
Permanent restrooms	100%	99%	1%
Permanent Wi-Fi	100%	88%	12%
Parking	100%	98%	2%
ADA Compliant	100%	99%	1%
Auxiliary meeting rooms	9	3	6
Ability to book (Definitely yes)	80%	49%	31%
Score	4.12	2.81	1.31

National Best in Class: American Sports Center (Anaheim, CA), Bell Bank Park (Mesa, AZ), Community First Champions Center (Grand Chute, WI), Hoover Met Complex (Hoover, AL), LakePoint Champions Center (Cartersville, VA), Myrtle Beach Sports Center (Myrtle Beach, SC), Omaha Sports Academy (Omaha, NE), Rock Hill Sports Complex (Rock Hill, NC), Rocky Mount Events Center (Rocky Mount, NC), Virginia Beach Sports Center (Virginia Beach, VA).

Citing the data presented above and the benchmarking chart provided earlier in this report, a minimum of 8 basketball courts (convertible to 16 volleyball courts) would provide the area with an “anchor” indoor court facility that would be among the best in the region. In addition to pure court count, amenities should include:

- An eight (8) basketball court facility that could convert to 16 volleyball courts or 24 pickleball 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, and a press table dedicated to each court.
- Locker rooms and ancillary meeting space for tournament operators and officials.
- Permanent restrooms, concessions, PA system, 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 Visit SoSi 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 Visit SoSi and its partners find a pathway to develop a new eight (8) court indoor venue, the facility would be able to host sizable events throughout the year in various sports. Using local tax rates, overnight and day trip spending numbers from SportsETA, and 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:

- 15 new state, regional, and national tournaments.
 - More than 23,000 total attendees relating to tournaments/competitions.
 - Over \$3.6 million in direct visitor spending.
 - Exceeding 9,200 hotel room nights.
 - Hotel Lodging Taxes close to \$95,000.
 - Sales Tax collections over \$232,000.
 - Total sports tourism related taxes close to \$327,000.
2. Enhance Existing Sports Venues – Danville-Pittsylvania County boasts several sports venues with the potential to be key assets in attracting sports tourism to the area. However, these facilities currently face challenges, lacking the amenities preferred by event rights holders. The Consultant Team strongly advises Visit SoSi to concentrate its efforts on enhancing Dan Daniel Park, and the Diamonds at Averett University and Smith River Sports Complex. Moreover, the Consultant Team

recommends Visit SoSi to strategically focus on the drive market, recognizing the local and regional audience as a primary target for maximizing event attendance and engagement.

For Dan Daniel Park, the Consultant Team strongly recommends a two-fold improvement plan. First, the implementation of lights at the flat fields will extend usability into evening hours, accommodating a broader range of activities and events. Second, the addition of covered dugouts to the diamond facilities ensures a more comfortable and versatile environment for players.

While the current Smith River Sports Complex is a high-quality facility, there are opportunities for improvement. Visit SoSi could enhance the facility by introducing modern LED lighting, improving visibility, and extending usability into the evening. Additionally, increasing seating capacity will enhance the overall spectator experience, adding to the allure of the facility.

For Averett University's two diamonds, the Consultant Team recommends the inclusion of lights. This enhancement not only provides greater scheduling flexibility but also transforms the facility into a more versatile and accessible space for both community usage and university events.

3. Sustainable Funding Mechanism – Industry-led funding mechanisms, like Tourism Improvement Districts (TIDs), are becoming more recognized as the future for destination marketing organizations as a secure and stable funding source. TIDs create a mechanism for a partnership between destination management organizations, hotels, lodging stakeholders, and the municipality to levy an assessment on room nights sold and collectively leverage funding for programs to increase additional demand for overnight visitation for the destination. TIDs create a platform for the industry to establish an “industry-led” revenue stream that bolsters a collaborative environment to raise all boats within a community. One potential source for funding could be the creation of one or more TIDs. Several states have recently opened the door for TIDs (example: Illinois) and several more are currently trying to enable legislation to allow them. The Consultant Team recommends that Visit SoSi reach out to a national expert on the creation of TIDs (such as John Lambeth of Civitas Advisors) to ascertain if a TID could be beneficial for Visit SoSi for additional examples, Appendix C list some success stories regarding TIDs across the United States.

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
Typical Funding Models

In order to enrich the destination as a desirable sports tourism market, Visit SoSi and its partners may want to identify an additional 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. As a major point of note, numerous cities are using these revenue streams to put towards the 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, the municipalities 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. As a result, 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.

Finally, should such a tax or another funding source be identified, the Consultant Team again recommends instilling a “Sports Grant Process” style program as described earlier in the playbook in Primary Recommendation #2.

Visit SoSi
Sports Tourism Strategic Plan + Facility Recommendations
Conclusion

For the area to be relevant in the sports market, Visit SoSi and its sports tourism stakeholders must continue to build bridges with key players locally and pave the way for asset development over the long term.

The addition of an improved sports tourism marketing strategy and the execution of the enclosed recommendations will empower Visit SoSi and local event operators to create home-grown participant driven events, develop new venues, and host more bid-in regional/national championships. To achieve these lofty aspirations, Visit SoSi has a heavy lift ahead, but by forging this path, the destination will be better positioned regionally and nationally as a strong player in the sports tourism industry **while also providing better opportunities for local youth through sports.**

To raise the bar in Danville-Pittsylvania County, and to positively impact the community, Visit SoSi'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 (venues).
2. Partner with local promoters to build created events that will call the area home long into the future and that will not be subject to an RFP process with Visit SoSi'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 Visit SoSi 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 regional 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 its 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 Visit SoSi connect the tourism and business communities in an ongoing and proactive manner into the future.

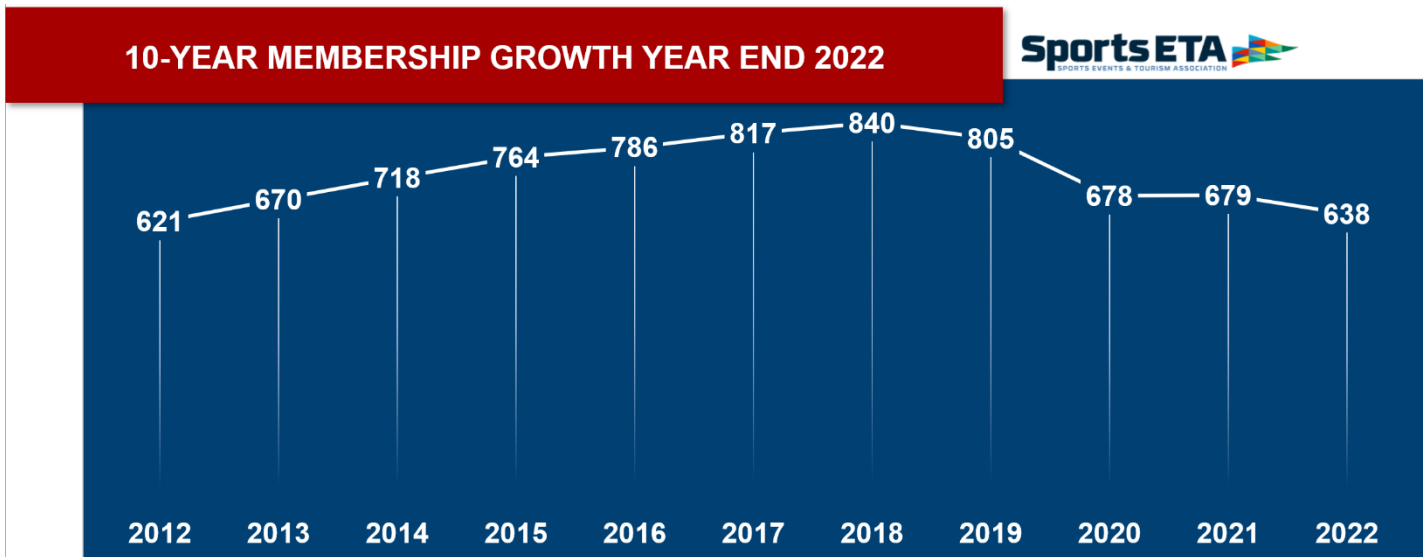
In the eyes of the Consultant Team, the puzzle pieces exist for Visit SoSi to expand economic development for the area through sports tourism. The Consultant Team believes it is within the power of the community's sports stakeholders to capture more opportunities in the sports tourism and events market while also enriching the lives of its citizens.

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Appendix A – SportsETA Membership

Despite the downtick in national membership figures that occurred during 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.

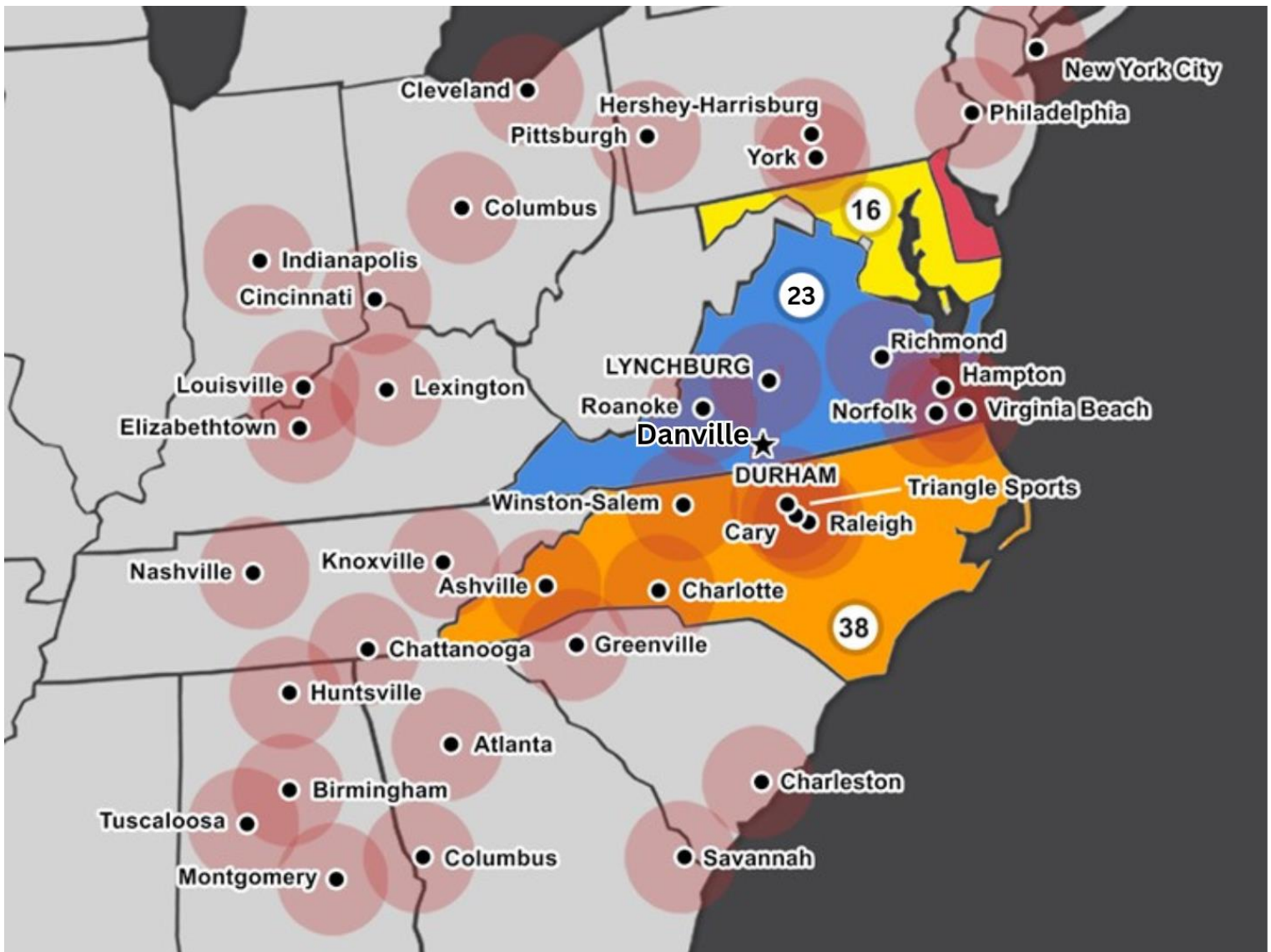
Today, there are more events, with more participants competing in those events, than ever before. As a result, there are also more organizations placing an intentional effort into attracting these events to their destination than ever before. Below is a chart outlining the growth of membership organizations within SportsETA, which is expected to rebound to pre-pandemic numbers in the near future and is a direct correlation to the growth of the sports tourism industry as a whole. Visit SoSi currently is a member of SportsETA and has been for the past couple of years.



Appendix B – Visit SoSi Competition Map

The sports and events tourism 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 Visit SoSi’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.



Appendix C – Trends in Sports Facility Funding

A funding source that has been growing rapidly in the past few years are tourism improvement districts (TID), they are not legal in every state yet, but the states and destinations that do utilize them see a tremendous economic impact from these districts. TIDs use a special benefit assessment to raise revenue to use for destination marketing and tourism promotion. Several of these success stories include:

- Memphis (TN) began their TID on January 1, 2016, assessing \$2.00 per occupied room per night to fund destination marketing programs. Prior to forming the TID, the Memphis bureau projected an annual budget of \$9.4 million in 2017, but with the TID funding, the projected 2017 budget increased to \$14.7 million.
- Sacramento (CA) approved the 10-year renewal of the Sacramento Tourism Marketing District (STMD) on July 1, 2017. The STMD is a variable assessment rate on hotel stays, with the percentage depending on the zone of the hotel. For fiscal year 2022-2023, the budgeted revenue from the STMD was \$6,860,000.
- Denver (CO) created their TID in 2016, with the intent to generate revenue for tourism-related services to increase overnight visitation, including funding capital improvement projects such as the Convention Center. Tourism Economics analyzed the effects of the TID in 2019 and found that Visit Denver's \$36 million budget generated \$73 million in local tax revenue.
- In a 2021 study, Tourism Economics examined a three-year period before and after a TID was implemented in 29 TID cities, and then compared these cities against their non-TID competitors. Tourism Economics found that on average, TIDs produce a 2.1% lift in hotel room demand and an average 4.5% lift in hotel room revenue for their destinations compared to destinations without TIDs. To put this in perspective, lift on hotel room demand and revenue represented an increase in 150,000 room nights and \$51 million, respectively, for the average destination in 2019.
- Lafayette (LA) created the Lafayette Tourism Improvement District (LTID) on September 20, 2023. This 2% self-imposed assessment paid by hotels and motels within Lafayette Parish will generate a staggering \$1,758,356 annually in additional funds. These funds will support the planning of a brand-new, state-of-the-art indoor sports facility, which will drive additional local and national tourism.
- Portland (ME) created Maine's first tourism improvement district called the Portland Tourism Development District (PTDD) in September 2023. The PTDD is not based on a flat percentage or dollar amount, instead it is based on the business activity related to each parcel within the district. This model leverages the average short-term room rental occupancy percentage and the Average Daily Rate as reported by STR, this value is then multiplied by 1.5%. The first full year budget projection of the PTDD is approximately \$2,953,968.
- According to Civitasadvisors.com, the nation's leading firm in TIDs, the 160 TIDs across the globe raise \$312 million each year for destination marketing. One study found that for every dollar raised by a TID, there is a \$70 return for the economy.

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

One of the most common funding sources 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 hotel/bed (transient) 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 – Visit SoSi Venue Summary & Notes

Overall, the Consultant Team toured several “Tournament Friendly” venues and three (3) current “Anchor” facilities in the area. Below is a list of all venues (sorted alphabetically) that were evaluated by the Consultant Team. Using the Sports Tourism Index™, 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. The rating system used the following color codes:

Anchor Facility
Tournament Friendly
Overflow or Small Tournament Facility
Not of Tournament Quality

Facility Name	Facility Type	National Average	Index Score & CQ	PQ
Anglers Park and Riverwalk Trail	Cross Country	3.29	2.75	
Averett University - Football Stadium	Football Stadium	2.37	2.75	
Averett University - Tennis Courts	Tennis Courts	2.41	1.20	
Ballou Park - Disc Golf	Disc Golf	3.45	2.10	
Dan Daniel Park - Baseball Stadium	Baseball Stadium	2.40	2.70	
Hargrave Military Academy - Diamonds	Diamonds	2.27	1.15	
Hargrave Military Academy - Flat Field	Flat Fields	2.30	1.95	
Institute of Learning and Research - Conference Center	Conference Center	2.09	2.10	
Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex	BMX	3.17	2.70	
Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex	Equestrian	2.90	3.23	
Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex	Other	2.91	3.20	
Smith River Sports Complex - Flat Fields	Flat Fields	2.30	2.15	
South Boston Speedway	Motor Sports Racing Track	2.24	2.43	
Virginia International Speedway	Motor Sports Racing Track	2.24	4.30	

**Appendix D (cont'd) – Visit SoSi
Venue Summary & Notes**

Anglers Park
2 Flat fields but not good quality. No dugouts, bleachers, or lights at the park. There are restrooms available but not enough room for parking.
Averett University – Stadium
Turf stadium lined for multiple sports. There are lights available and concessions. Multiple portable goals and locker rooms are available as well.
Averett University – Diamonds
No lights at the diamond fields. 2 Diamond fields with pretty good quality grass
Averett University - Flat Fields
2 Grass flat fields with pretty good quality grass and portable goals.
Averett University - Tennis Fields
6 Tennis fields with good quality ground but no lights.
Dan Daniels Park
Baseball Stadium with VIP areas and concessions. Restrooms available at the park. 3 flat fields and 2 diamonds, diamonds have covered dugouts, and 1 flat field has lights. All of the fields have bleachers.
George Washington High School Football Field, Outdoor Track and tennis courts
Stadium field with an 8 Lane track around it. There is good seating all around and there were portable goals available. 6 lighted tennis courts on the property. Baseball diamonds are in rough shape with no dugouts available.
Hargrave Military Academy
Diamond fields with good quality grass. Flat fields with permanent goals, covered bleachers and great quality grass. Indoor gym and pool (50M long, 25y wide) with a 16ft dive well.
Institute of Learning and Research Conference Room
No hotels nearby, well-sized conference room for presentation events.
Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex
3 Conference rooms on the property that can be opened to 1, with 430 people capacity standing. In the process of creating campground with hookups. 200 horse stalls, dimensions of the complex are 180 by 320/360.



**Appendix D (cont'd) – Visit SoSi
Venue Summary & Notes**

Smith River Sports Complex

Great soccer facility. 3 Good quality grass fields with lights and portable goals, 2 turf fields with lights and portable goals as well. Concessions stands and restrooms on the property. When talking to the managers of the complex, they noted a need for more parking, more seating opportunities, and to update the lights to LED. There is a waterway close by that would be good for canoe events.

Virginia International Raceway

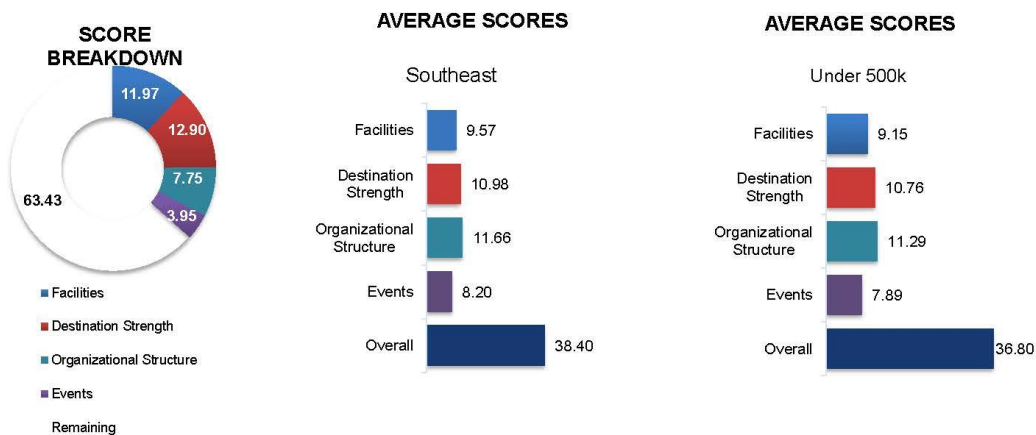
Great quality FIA certified raceway that is included in multiple video games. The speedway is rented 350 days a year and the racetrack can be broken up into multiple sections. Only a couple of bleachers on the side but doesn't seem enough. Skid pads available for wet car maneuvers, and multiple buildings on the property that can be rented out for events. 6-12 full power hookups available with plans to build a welcome center.

Appendix E – Visit SoSi Sports Tourism Index™ Results

Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism



FINAL SCORE	SPORTS TOURISM INDEX REPORT
36.57	Market Size: Under 500k Organization Type: DMO (CVB/Sports Commission) Geographic Region: Southeast Sports Budget: 0-100



RECOMMENDATIONS

Facilities

Your destination likely has a strong mix of both spectator based and/or participant focused facilities that meet or exceed the standards necessary to host top tier events. Focus should be on continuing to maintain and enhance existing venues and to look ahead and plan for the potential replacement of any aging facilities that will approach its natural shelf life in the next 3-5 years.

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.

1/4/2024

Appendix E (cont'd) – Visit SoSi Sports Tourism Index™ Results

Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism INDUSTRY AVERAGES REPORT



Overall Scores ▲

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Facilities	11.97	9.66	2.31
Destination Strength	12.90	11.85	1.05
Organizational Structure	7.75	11.82	-4.07
Events	3.95	8.10	-4.15
Overall	36.57	39.39	-2.82

Facilities Breakdown*

Participant-Based	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Flat Fields	2.15	2.30	-0.15
Flat Fields	2.35	2.30	0.05
Bowling	3.75	3.67	0.08
Tennis (Indoor or Outdoor)	1.20	2.41	-1.21
Disc Golf Course	2.10	3.45	-1.35

Convention Center - - -

Spectator-Based	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Baseball Stadium	2.70	2.40	0.30
Football Stadium	2.75	2.37	0.38
Arena	3.05	2.81	0.24
Motor Sports Racing Track	2.75	2.24	0.51
Theater	2.70	2.68	0.02

Destination Strength

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Tourism Drivers [▲]	4	3.08	0.92
Hotels [▲]	0.80	1.11	-0.31
Destination Accessibility [▲]	3.95	2.13	1.82

Organizational Structure*

	Your Score	Average Score	Difference
Sports Staff	0.00	1.95	-1.95
Grant Program	4.25	2.05	2.20
Board & Advisory	0.00	0.54	-0.54

Sporting Events

Number on an annual basis	Your Answer	Average Answer	Difference
Local Events	2	24	-22
Bid-In Events Hosted	0	7	-7
Events Serviced	2	27	-25

* Max score of 5

▲ Max score of 10

• Max score of 25