

Morgantown Community Recreation Center and Ice-Plex Feasibility Study and Business Plan

BrickStreet Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
West Virginia University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Morgantown Recreation Center and Ice-Plex is a new non-profit facility that is proposed to be built in Morgantown, West Virginia. After studying the feasibility of the center for six months, the BrickStreet Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship completed two plans. One plan was completed for the Morgantown Aquatics Center and one plan was completed for the Morgantown Community Recreation Center and Ice-Plex. The Morgantown Aquatics Center final report has been turned over to West Virginia University and will begin implementation this summer. The Morgantown Recreation Center will be operated and managed by BOPARC. The Morgantown Recreation Center will be located at White Park, off Green Bag Road (County Route 857), Morgantown, WV. The recreation center will consist of two brand new hockey rinks, and 20,000 square feet of recreation space to be determined at later date. In addition, the existing ice rink will be converted into a center for all sports when the two rinks are complete. This center can be rented or leased to other local businesses, making the center a one stop shop for all things sports, recreation, and wellness. In order for this business to sustain itself and to be successful, it is going to require community support, along with competitive strategies and marketing plans.

Leaders of the initiative have already recruited several businesses to rent space inside of the Morgantown Recreation Center and Ice-Plex. These businesses include Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) of West Virginia University. OLLI specializes in education for the senior population. The Children's Museum, which specializes in programs and activities for children, has also expressed an interest in renting space.

BACKGROUND

The recognition of a need for improving health and wellness in the Morgantown metropolitan area prompted the formation of the Recreation Center Initiative board tasked with managing the process for the construction of facilities. This included an aquatics center, a recreation center, and an upgraded ice arena. The board was formed from stakeholders in the community including the WVU Athletic Director, BOPARC Executive Director, and Morgantown County and City officials. The BrickStreet Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship was commissioned by the board to carry out feasibility studies and to form a business plan for the facilities geared to address the health and wellness needs of the community. As a result of the engagement of two faculty-led student-based teams, through the auspices of the Experiential Learning division of the BrickStreet Center, two similar business plans were drawn and presented to the Recreation Center Initiative in the winter of 2014. The plans covered detailed feasibility studies of the industry trend, competitors, SWOT analysis, along with other factors that influence the health and wellness industry, particularly in Morgantown. The plans were drawn with consideration for surveys of health, wellness, and recreation concerns of the community and stakeholders. As a result, three distinct facilities were identified: a recreation center, an aquatics center, and an upgraded ice arena; two possible locations were also selected: White Park and Mylan Park.

Renewed engagement with the BrickStreet Center in the spring of 2015 yielded the finalization of the Experiential Learning Division's analysis of the aquatics center's attributes and its proposed location at Mylan Park. The realization of the aquatics center project will be guided by the WVU Athletic Division in conjunction with the Mylan Park Board. In clarifying the attributes of the ice arena, the Ice Castle arena in Castle Shannon was benchmarked.

ICE CASTLE BENCHMARK

The Ice Castle Arena in Castle Shannon, PA was established in 2000 to cater to the competitive and recreational ice needs of the local and regional community around Pittsburgh, PA. The arena was incorporated in Pennsylvania as a 501(c) (3) organization and as such, is not required to pay federal taxes. The 74,000 square foot premier ice arena has two NHL-size ice indoor rinks that are open year-round (Fig. 1).

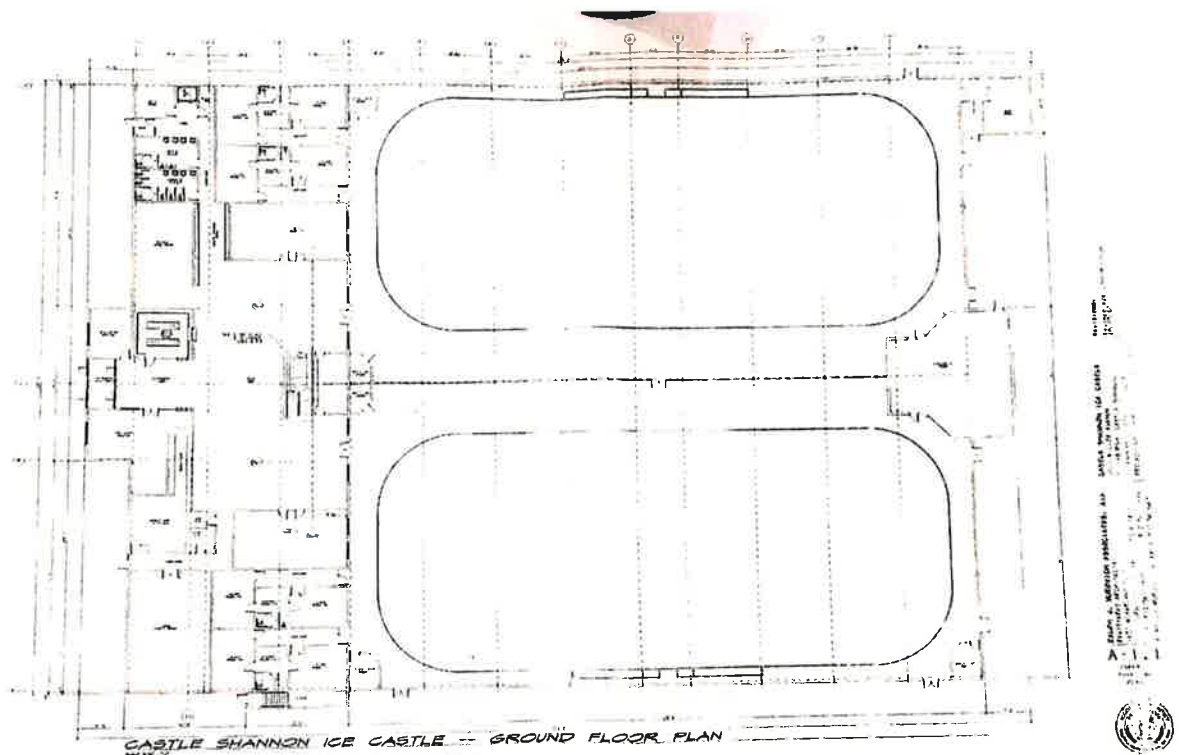


Figure 1: Castle Shannon Ice Castle Ground Floor Plan (used with permission)

In addition to the rink, the arena houses a pro shop, gymnasium, arcade room, snack bar, and general reception area. While the arena incurs labor costs of \$600,000 per year, the yearly revenue for 2014 was about \$4.5 million. Most of this revenue is generated in the rental space and general lobby area. The two rinks generate about \$800 per hour while the rental space

generates about \$3000 per hour. The Ice Castle is home to the Pittsburgh Predators Amateur Hockey Club as well as many high school teams, such as Allderdice, Baldwin, Canevin, Carrick, South Park, and Upper St. Clair. Adult Hockey leagues, tournaments, birthday parties, skating lessons, and hockey development camps are also hosted at the Ice Castle.

ICE RINKS

The arena has two premium NHL regulation size (220 ft x 90 ft) rinks that provide plenty of room for solo or group skating. There is seating and standing room for about a thousand spectators around each sheet of ice. The rinks feature “jet ice”, bright lighting, sizable score boards, and clear sound systems and are used all year round. The rinks are kept at about 55°C year-round. In order to maintain this temperature, the compressors draw heat from the area of the ice sheets and feed it back to the general sitting area, thus greatly reducing the need for heating. Overnight, the ice sheets are kept at the appropriate temperature without extra heating.

LOCKERS/OFFICES

Alongside the two ice sheets are eight locker rooms with adjoining showers for competitive use. There are also locker rooms for coaches and storage rooms.

GYMNASIUM

The arena also has an integrated gymnasium for fitness training with stationary bikes that add value to the arena.

PRO SHOP (Ty-M-Up Hockey Supply Store)

The 1500 square foot Ty-M-Up Hockey Supplies (Pro Shop) in the lobby area of the arena carries a premium selection of hockey equipment, accessories and apparel. The shop also features a variety of services performed by a highly trained staff. These include skate sharpening, skate and

equipment repair, custom team orders, jerseys, socks, wind/track suits, hockey bags, custom-designed apparel, and special ordering among others.

PARTY/BANQUET ROOMS

The arena features two party/banquet rooms where special events can be facilitated. The 43 ft x 38 ft Private Banquet Room can accommodate up to 80 guests, while the more casual 42 ft x 21 ft. Private Party Room can accommodate up to 50 guests.

SNACK BAR AND BAR/LOUNGE

The 800 square foot bar/lounge facilitates comfortable socializing while catering to family values. The lounge offers a full service menu and wide variety of adult beverages and is equipped with two in-house TV's and one more specifically for the big game

ARCADE AREA

The arcade area of the arena which is in the general lobby area offers a variety of games. This area offers a strong appeal to kids and young adults and can generate sizeable revenues especially during tournaments and league competitions.

PROGRAMS

They offer both adult and youth ice hockey programs and leagues while also providing time for public skating. There are also opportunities for lessons for basic learners to more advanced skaters. As part of a discount program, the arena offers discount skating passes to frequent visitors where they get two skating sessions free after buying ten sessions.

OPTIONS FOR THE MORGANTOWN ICE ARENA AND RECREATION CENTER

Given the current structure and facilities of the Morgantown Ice Arena, two options were identified for the arena:

Option 1:

Add a symmetrical half of the facilities of the Ice castle arena to the existing Morgantown Ice arena and link it to the existing with a walkway. This addition will feature a sheet of ice (220 ft x 90 ft) tailored to NHL standards with thirty-five dedicated lockers and twelve showers each for Division I and Division II. It will also feature thirty-five lockers for away teams with twelve showers for Division I hockey teams, restrooms for six to eight users and laundry facilities. The existing facilities at the Morgantown Ice arena will also be upgraded to accommodate better energy use and seating arrangements while also expanding the concession stand and Pro shop.



Figure 2: Aerial View of White Park and surrounding streets (Google Maps)

The new sheet will be designed to be kept year-long while the old sheet can be kept only seasonally. This option will require capital costs between \$5.5 million to \$6 million for adding the upgrades to the current facilities and the NHL-regulation ice rink. This option will also feature a stand-alone state of the art recreation center which will be built right beside the ice arena.

Community participation is still required for defining the specific attributes and features of the recreation center. As a result of these constructions, the current ball fields close to Mississippi Street will have to be moved across the road on the other side of Hite Street (Fig. 1). While this option provides the unique benefit of a one-stop shop for major recreation needs and raise property value of the residential properties in the area, the impact of the constructions on green space reduction and the noise and traffic footprint may make this option less appealing.

Option 2:

Recreate the Ice castle model at the Morgantown Ice Arena, albeit on a smaller scale. This will involve adding two sheets of ice (220 ft x 90 ft), tailored to NHL standards with thirty-five dedicated lockers and twelve showers each for Division I and Division II. It will also feature thirty-five lockers for away teams with twelve showers for Division I hockey teams, restrooms for six to eight users and laundry facilities. The proposed recreation center will then be built on the upper floors of the ice arena such that the necessary attributes defined by the community and rental space for local organizations and interested businesses will be available (Fig. 3).

Since the current facilities of the Morgantown Ice arena hold sentimental and historical value for the community, the ice sheet can be torn up permanently and the building converted for indoor games such as basketball that can be played year-round. The capital costs for executing this option will average around \$7 million.



Figure 3: Proposed plan for Morgantown Recreation Center and Ice-Plex (light blue) with reconfigured ball fields (yellow) and redirected traffic (blue line) (Google Maps)

UPGRADES TO EXISTING FACILITIES

During the course of discussions, another component of the health, wellness and, recreation needs of the community was considered in order to develop a holistic approach to meeting the community's needs. The current BOPARC facilities that cater to the health and wellness needs of the community are aging and require much-needed upgrades. Furthermore, upgrades of these facilities and parks will facilitate easier access for most Morgantown metropolitan area residents to make use of Morgantown recreation and wellness facilities. This will then necessarily increase revenue for the community. The following estimates were provided by the BOPARC Executive Director, Melissa Burch for upgrades based on current market prices.

- **Marilla Park:**
 - Pool, pool house and concession area upgrades: \$2.0 million
 - Water slides demolition and rebuilding: \$900,000
 - Other upgrades: \$500,000
 - Shirt factory space recon into outdoor programming space
 - Trail repair and legitimizing
 - Tennis courts, top ball field and pavilion renovations and upgrade
 - Costs associated with administrative offices move to White Park
 - **Marilla Park Total: \$3.4 million**
- **Krepps Park**
 - Pool and buildings partial demo, fencing, new pool house, concession area, landscaping and picnic sunbathing: \$2.0 million
 - Upgrade aquatics play area to Spray Ground: \$250,000
 - Playground upgrades: \$200,000
 - Other upgrades: \$500,000
 - Repairs and Upgrades: Trail fencing, pavilion, dog park, tennis courts
 - Erosion management and trail drainage issues
 - **Krepps Park Total: \$2.7 million**
- **Other Parks**
- **Whitmore Park: \$300,000**
 - New picnic area and removal of playground equipment,
 - Walkway and wall repair; lighting and security camera system installed, small pavilion added.

- Dorsey's Knob Park: \$700,000
 - Road improvements and electricity to interpretive cabins
 - Addition of a dark park, outdoor learning park and interpretive animal husbandry area
 - Upgrades to trails, pond area and parking lot, repairs to existing retaining walls and "slip"

- Paul Preserve: \$200,000
 - Completion of plan for that park including walking trail, pavilion, additional playground, restroom, etc.

- Hazel Ruby McQuain Park: Lighting under bridges, possible cover for a portion of the seating cost. ***Scope and cost of HRM Park upgrades is undefined at this time and not included in estimate of Total Park Upgrades at this time**

- Stanley's Spot: \$500,000
 - Various trail improvements, plow trucks and other equipment, additional program vehicle

- **Other Parks Total: \$1.7 million ***
- **Administration and Contingency: 1.2 million**

These estimates bring the total for renovations and upgrades to \$9.0 million, excluding Hazel Ruby McQuain Park, which final scope and cost is undefined at this time.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We have concluded that the most feasible recommendation would be to completely renovate the existing ice rink and turn it into a multi-sports & recreation center. In addition, we recommend that the new recreation center houses two brand new ice rinks, and 20,000 square foot of recreation area and rental space. We also believe that it is extremely important to get community buy in from the White Park area since many changes will be made to White Park. BOPARC needs to continue with community town hall meetings and surveys to determine the best needs of the residents. In addition, fundraising efforts should begin so that the community can take a sense of ownership for this life changing facility.

The costs for the recreation center and ice-plex, along with renovations are listed below.

- **White Park Total: \$13 million**
 - New Rec Center: \$7 million
 - Ice castle with 2 sheets of ice (all-year)
 - First floor: commercial space
 - Second floor: 20,000 square feet of gym and revenue activities
 - Operator needed for second floor revenue space
 - Reconfiguration of existing ice arena: \$3 million
 - Operator needed for second floor revenue space
 - Year-round non-ice facility
 - Courts, batting cages, multipurpose
 - Reconfiguration of existing ice arena: \$3 million
 - Reorientation and renovation of baseball fields: \$2 million
 - Engineering & Administration: \$1 million

Therefore we estimate that capital costs of pursuing this plan is \$22 million

- **White Park Total: \$13 million**
- **Renovations/Upgrades: \$9 million**