



# FRIENDS OF CIVIC STADIUM

Box 50622 Eugene OR 97405  
[FriendsOfCivicStadium.org](http://FriendsOfCivicStadium.org)

Dear Eugene City Councilors, Eugene Mayor and Eugene City Manager,

Thank you for being willing to look into the possibility of working with 4J to find a way to preserve the Civic Stadium legacy. Friends of Civic Stadium would like to help in any way we can. We have done a great deal of research on how Civic can once again become the welcoming, affordable place for the community's families to gather that it once was.

In this document you will find:

- A fact sheet on Civic Stadium
- Site maps
- A list of lessons learned from other cities about their stadiums
- A summary of the Vox report on the viability of soccer at Civic
- A summary of the Friends of Civic Stadium feasibility report on sustainable operations.
- Examples (both positive and negative) of stadiums in other communities from which we gleaned lessons that can help Eugene have a successful Civic Stadium.

We hope these materials might help you in your efforts. We stand ready to assist in any way possible to keep Civic Stadium as a community legacy, landmark and asset. Please call on us.

Thank you again for taking this on.

Sincerely,

Dennis Hebert, President; Joyce Berman; Nancy Classen; Brandon Grilc; Trey Imfeld;  
Christine Thompson; Jim Watson

Friends of Civic Stadium Board of Directors

## Fact Sheet for Civic Stadium

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1938	Eugene School District 4J	Wood (WPA)	Unused, at-risk

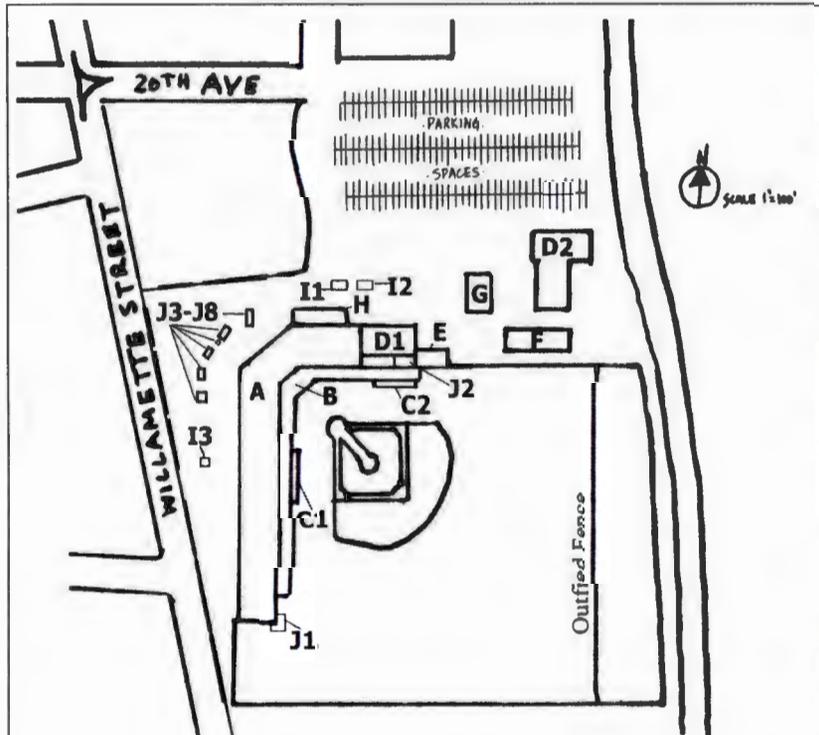
### Civic Stadium Notes:

- The total site is 10.02 acres. 3.75 National Register listed (grandstand and field). Remainder of site: 6.27 acres (including .69 acre north lots and 0.5 acre right of way).
- National Register Listing: October 6, 2008, NRIS Number: 08000183
- Zoning: PL (Public Land – 9.33 acres) and R-2 (Medium Density Residential – 0.69 acres - north lots only).
- Metro Plan Designation: Medium Density Residential (entire 10.02 acre site).

### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- Civic Stadium is one of the very few wooden ballparks still standing and one of only three built by the WPA. Its historic value is also enhanced by the massive old-growth timbers in the structure and the way the community came together in tough times to raise the money to get it built.
- Two feasibility studies have documented the sustainability of Civic Stadium as a sports and entertainment venue.
  - Vox Public Relations used focus groups to confirm a large and growing regional base (not just South Eugene) of support for soccer at Civic Stadium. (Appendix A.)
  - Friends of Civic Stadium documented the feasibility of a multi-event venue at Civic based on research of community needs and comparable operations in other communities. (Appendix B.)
- The City has indicated a willingness to creatively consider parking requirement options, public right-of-way delineation (size and location), and required zoning changes.
- Engineering reports indicate that, although repairs are required, the structure is “in remarkably good condition” (KPFF Consulting Engineers, 2010) largely due to the protection provided by the roof. A 2004 assessment by M. R. Richards Engineering, for example, estimated only \$25-30,000 in repairs necessary for safe operation. Historical Research Associates reported in 2010 that “overall, the condition of Eugene Civic Stadium appears to be good, with limited structural concerns. Most required repairs appear to be due to deferred maintenance. These can be easily mitigated and avoided in the future with a scheduled maintenance program.”
- Because of its proximity to eight field sports fields Civic Stadium in an ideal location to host the centerpiece games of soccer, rugby, lacrosse, field hockey and other tournaments bringing hundreds of out-of-town visitors to Eugene.

## Civic Stadium Site Maps



**Figure 2.2:** This site map depicts tax lot #1803(611 08505, and all structures located within the tax lot. They are A) Grandstand; B) Metal Riser Seating; C1&2) Dugouts; D1&2) Bus Barns (D2 is scheduled for demolition); E) Heating Plant; F) Maintenance Office; G) Garage and Living Quarters; H) Public Restrooms (added c. 1969); I1-3) Ticket Booths; J1-8) Concession stands. Prepared by Natalie Perrin, April, 2008. Not to scale.



Excerpt from Eugene Civic Stadium: History, Historic Structures Review, and Preservation Pitch By Natalie K. Perrin

## **Lessons Learned from Stadiums in Other Cities**

### **1. Location is important**

- Stadiums near downtown are worthwhile community assets
- City center locations benefit both stadiums and downtowns
- Stadiums on outskirts keep fans away from downtown
- Demolition of a city's historic stadium diminishes the city

### **2. Community ownership of venues is a big plus**

- Community control helps assure the use reflects community desires
- Community ownership in the stadium enhances attendance and interest
- Creative community solutions can solve site problems like parking

### **3. Viability depends on effective management and giving the community what they want**

- Grants and donations are available for projects like Civic, especially through City auspices
- Renovation can be affordable if properly scaled and phased in
- Effective professional management is key to successful operation
- Soccer has excellent potential, especially in the Northwest
- Venues that host multiple events are more sustainable
- Historic structures attract tourists no matter what the events

Please see Appendix C for details about some of the cities we learned these lessons from.

## Appendix A

# Summary of Vox Public Relations Report Soccer at Civic Stadium

Vox Public Relations was commissioned in 2012 to survey community members in order to test the assumption by *Friends of Civic Stadium* that the community would support soccer at Civic Stadium. The short answer by respondents was, "Yes, soccer would be a good use of Civic under certain conditions." The major findings:

- Professional soccer is a good fit for Eugene. Its popularity is fed by the growth of youth soccer and an immigrant population for whom soccer is the favorite sport.
- The electric atmosphere at Major League Soccer games in Portland and Seattle shows the Northwest to be fertile ground for the sport.
- Professional soccer would diversify the area's sports offerings.
- There would be financial benefits to the community though arguably not as great as Hayward Field's.
- A renovated Civic Stadium would be a community asset for the events to be held there as well as its historic significance.
- Sponsorships have benefit potential for local businesses.
- The use of Civic Stadium as a sports and entertainment venue is seen as being of greater benefit to the larger community than the other RFP submissions (the YMCA and Fred Meyer.)

### Conditions:

- The events at Civic should be family friendly and reasonably priced.
- A refurbished Civic Stadium should host a wide variety of sports and entertainment events.
- Professional soccer at Civic cannot succeed with just the support of south Eugene residents - outreach to all Eugene-Springfield area neighborhoods is needed.
- Healthy food options and a variety of transportation opportunities should be offered.
- A realistic and viable financial plan is essential. Tax dollars should not be necessary.

This is a summary of "Interviews & Focus Group Series Research Analysis", by Vox PRPA, January 26, 2012. The full report can be downloaded at [FriendsOfCivicStadium.org](http://FriendsOfCivicStadium.org).

**Appendix B**  
**Feasibility Report Summary for**  
**Civic Stadium, Eugene OR**  
**September, 2013**



Eugene's historic Civic Stadium is a gem worth saving. After years of neglect it is currently a gem in the rough but its real beauty is ready to be unveiled. Civic is one of the very few remaining wooden ballparks built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Our organization, Friends of Civic Stadium (FoCS), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation was founded in 2008, has the goal of saving the historic structure as a multi-sport, multi-event and entertainment venue and a gathering place for the community.

There are many reasons why Civic Stadium should be preserved and adapted for continued use by the public. With the rapidly rising popularity of soccer and other field sports like lacrosse, field hockey and rugby; with a proven location; with strong community support for preservation of this historic landmark; and given a clean bill of health surprising for a 75-year old, Civic stands ready to rise again as a great place for affordable family sports and entertainment.

In 1938, in the midst of the Great Depression, the community dug deep to come up with the financing. We can do the same to preserve it. Those of us who spent summer evenings watching the kids having a great time and the moon rising over the hills in the east know that people who come once are sure to return – whatever is happening on the field. But it isn't nostalgia that makes Civic Stadium worth a rebirth; it's just common sense. Cities spend millions building sports venues near downtown to provide a spark to renewal. We've got a historic stadium in a perfect location already. Why would we let that go?

Civic Stadium is owned by School District 4J but has been unused since 2009 and is listed as surplus property. There are those who would like to buy the site, tear down the stadium and build office or retail space or apartments. We will as vigorously oppose those efforts as we stand ready to lend our strong support to purchasers who see the potential of the site as the recreational and entertainment venue it has been since 4J received it for those purposes for one dollar in 1938.

The entity that steps forward to acquire Civic Stadium from 4J will have a willing and able partner in Friends of Civic Stadium. FoCS would love to play a part in doing what needs to be done to get the grandstands in great shape for the families who can hardly wait to sit in them. If FoCS were to take the lead in this capital improvement phase, we would raise the \$2.8 million required through grants, donations and memberships. We estimate it will take two years to raise the funds and complete preparation of the stadium for use. Our figures are based on estimates from Turner Construction, a highly regarded, experienced firm that, for example, repurposed Jeld-Wen Field in Portland for major league soccer and did a major upgrade to Lambeau Field in Green Bay, WI.

The Historic Preservation League of Oregon and Natalie Perrin of Historical Research Associates, Inc. have given invaluable assistance in assuring that the work we do is in compliance with US Department of the Interior historic preservation standards, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and state of the art fire suppression and energy conservation systems.

To assure ourselves of the viability of such a venue, FoCS has also done research into the local market and analyzed comparable venues including: Starfire Sports in Tukwilla, Washington, a non-profit soccer complex with a layout that is similar to the complex of fields around Civic Stadium; Corvallis Sports, an indoor soccer facility; Rickwood Field, an historic ballpark in Alabama; Olympic Stadium, a virtual twin of Civic owned by the city of Hoquiam, Washington; Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin; and Eugene's WOW Hall.

Based on data collected from those venues and other sources, we conclude that a revitalized Civic would be viable. In summary, our three-year financial projections anticipate costs of about \$190,000 and revenue of \$216,000 in 2015 rising to costs and revenue in 2017 of \$264,000 and \$274,000. Revenue would be derived from already formed premier soccer teams (Azul, Mundial, Lane United), youth and adult community sports, Northwest Christian University soccer and field sports, Lane and University of Oregon club sports, concerts, festivals and community gatherings and events.

The entity that steps up to acquire Civic will have the energy and gratitude of FoCS. Its members and supporters have their sleeves rolled up and are ready to pitch in to bring Civic Stadium back to its place as an important and historic community asset!

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The full report from which this summary was derived can be downloaded from the FoCS Links section at [FriendsOfCivicStadium.org](http://FriendsOfCivicStadium.org).

## Renderings of the Refurbished Civic Stadium



**HISTORIC CIVIC STADIUM ENTRANCE**

CAMERON  
McCARTHY



**HISTORIC CIVIC STADIUM**

CAMERON  
McCARTHY

## Appendix C – Cities with Lessons for Civic Stadium

### 1. Rickwood Field; Birmingham, Alabama

[website](#)

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1910	City of Birmingham	Concrete and steel	Amateur baseball venue

#### Rickwood Field Notes:

- Rickwood’s neighborhood struggles with poverty and blight and is four miles from the city center.
- Rickwood has managed to carry its baseball past into the present. Visitors feel they've gone back in time.
- They’ve generated enough revenue to keep the stadium maintained and to make progress in taking care of deferred maintenance.
- They book 200 baseball games a year and draw 20,000 visitors.
- Friends of Rickwood manages Rickwood with only one paid employee.
- The City of Birmingham includes a line item to assist in maintenance of Rickwood.
- The Birmingham Barons play one game a year at Rickwood as a fundraiser.
- Concrete and steel construction.
- It features a walkway under the grandstands.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- Rickwood’s survival is an inspiration to those who value places like Civic.
- Baseball is a blessing and a curse for Rickwood. While it attracts lots of “baseball pilgrims”, being locked in to baseball only limits the use of the stadium and requires continual promotion to keep the venue booked.
- The fact that it relies on the city for some revenue keeps Friends of Rickwood on tenderhooks.

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- A historic stadium can co-exist with a new venue that takes its minor league baseball team.
- Relying on baseball alone is insufficient for a self-sustaining ballpark with no team.
- It is advantageous that Civic is in an established neighborhood.
- Even though baseball may not be the main draw, paying attention to the minor league baseball history in its redevelopment would bring to the area “ballpark pilgrim” tourists.
- An Ems benefit game in some form at Civic would be an excellent fundraising opportunity.

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 2. Breese Stevens Field; Madison, Wisconsin

[website](#)

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1926	City of Madison	Concrete and steel	Multi-event venue

#### Breese Stevens Field Notes:

- Originally built for high school football (as was Civic Stadium), later used for minor league baseball (as was Civic), Breese Stevens is now without a baseball team (again like Civic).
- But, unlike Civic, since losing professional baseball, Breese Stevens has hosted a wide variety of events: circuses, midget car racing, ice skating, track and field, band competitions, concerts, and boxing and wrestling events.
- It is currently the home field for two soccer teams and has recently hosted state soccer tournaments even an exhibition match of Australian football.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- From the "Madison Parks" website: "As one of the most utilized athletic fields in Madison, Breese Stevens Athletic Field is also one of the city's most historic pieces of land. This premiere soccer facility, (a) 4,000 seat stadium, has served as the site for a number of Wisconsin state high school soccer tournaments."
- From Ballpark Reviews website: "While no longer used for baseball, it apparently still gets plenty of use as a soccer and football venue (and it is) nice to see that an old ballpark like Breese Stevens Field is being preserved. It is definitely worth a look if you're in the area."

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium

- Historic ballparks that once were home fields to professional baseball teams can be successfully repurposed as multi-event city park venues that are much loved and well used.
- The range of events that can be hosted in venues the size of Civic Stadium (also about 4000 seats) is limited only by the imagination.
- The appeal of Civic Stadium to tourists would likely be greater than that of Breese Stevens because of its connections to the timber industry, the WPA and a longer history of minor league baseball (40 years and 200+ future major league players).

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 3. Olympic Stadium; Hoquiam, Washington

website

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1938	City of Hoquiam	Wood (WPA)	In multi-event use

#### Olympic Stadium Notes:

- Olympic is a near twin of Civic; built the same year, by the same WPA, out of the same old growth fir.
- Though Hoquiam is less than a tenth the size of Eugene, the city considers the stadium important enough to the community to willingly own, maintain and manage it.
- Olympic is well-used by local sports teams as well as for festivals and events.
- Hoquiam does not actively promote rentals so it must supplement rental income with city funds.
- The stadium was renovated with a \$400,000 historic preservation grant in 2006.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- The value the community and city government places on Olympic seems to assure its continuation as a local landmark.
- Hoquiam is off the beaten track, keeping Olympic from being the tourist destination it deserves to be.
- Low population in the area makes usage inconsistent.

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- Hoquiam shows us how cities can honor historic community assets and keep them as legacies.
- We need a different business model because steady, consistent rental will be a requirement to sustainable operation of Civic. Therefore, professional management will be needed to recruit users and promote events.
- Self-sustaining operation should be much easier in Eugene than in Hoquiam because the population base is ten times as great.
- Grants can be obtained for historic preservation of structures like Civic Stadium

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 4. Jeld-Wen Field; Portland, Oregon

[website](#)

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1925	City of Portland	Concrete and steel	Major League Soccer Venue

#### Jeld-Wen Field Notes:

- Also called Civic Stadium (1966-2000), Jeld-Wen is without doubt the most successful baseball to soccer conversion ever.
- The Portland Timbers were still a minor league team when the renovated stadium opened as Jeld-Wen in 2011 but the huge and wildly enthusiastic fan base elevated them to major league in 2012.
- While owned by the city, Jeld-Wen is professionally managed by the organization that owns the Timbers.
- It will also be the home field of a new MLS women's team.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- The conversion to a soccer field displaced Portland's minor league baseball team, a move that alienated area baseball fans.
- The success of Portland, Seattle and Vancouver BC MLS franchises gives the Northwest a claim to being the center of US soccer.

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- Soccer is strong and growing in the region.
- In Eugene it was the Ems leaving and not Civic Stadium that alienated baseball fans. While Portland baseball fans stay away from Jeld-Wen, according to many in Eugene, they are anxious to come back to Civic for soccer and other events.
- The \$30 million expense of the conversion of Jeld-Wen was due to the need of major reconfiguration that will not be necessary at Civic Stadium, which was built for football and soccer. Civic can be repaired and improved for \$2-2.5 million (including replacing the field.)

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 5. AutoZone Park; Memphis, Tennessee

website

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
2000	Foundation	Concrete and steel	Minor league baseball venue

#### AutoZone Park Notes:

- This nearly new ballpark is located downtown close to the famous blues clubs on Beale Street.
- AutoZone replaced Tim McCarver Field as the home of the AAA Redbirds. McCarver was 5 miles from downtown.
- Cost to build: \$80 million.
- There is no parking at the stadium. Parking for fans who do not use public transportation is on the street or in private parking lots used for downtown business and shopping.
- Owned by the Memphis Redbird Foundation similar to the ownership structure of Green Bay's Lambeau Field,
- Fun fact: the architecture firm that designed the park is named Looney Ricks Kiss.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- The ideal location of AutoZone was made possible when the city waived parking requirements.
- AutoZone adds activity to downtown. Average attendance ranks in the top half of the 16-team Pacific Coast League (often 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>.)

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- Civic Stadium's location in relation to downtown is similar to that of AutoZone; a location that brings commercial activity to the city center.
- Parking and transportation are issues that can be handled without surrounding a downtown stadium with blacktop.

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 6. Lambeau Field; Green Bay, Wisconsin

[website](#)

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1957	City of Green Bay	Concrete and steel	NFL stadium

#### Lambeau Field Notes:

- While the city owns Lambeau, the NFL Packers take care of all costs, including the seven extensive renovations that have expanded the stadium.
- The Packers team is the only NFL franchise publicly owned. When they need money, they sell shares in the team.
- The city of Green Bay receives \$500,000 in rent annually from the Packers.
- Packer shares cost \$250 each but have no market value. It is pride of ownership rather than any promised return on investment that motivates their purchase.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- The people of Green Bay and, in fact, people throughout Wisconsin and the US, have a strong connection to Lambeau and the Packers because, as shareholders, they own the team.
- When shares are put on the market, they sell out almost immediately.
- Even in the Packers' bad years the fan base stays steady and strong.

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- A community ownership model has many benefits. Like farms that sell shares of their as-yet unharvested crops in CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture farms), community ownership spreads the obligations and provides a predictable revenue base.
- Loyalty to Civic Stadium makes an arrangement of member ownership possible.
- Lambeau Field draws fans from a wide region. It is important that a repurposed Civic Stadium be a regional not just a neighborhood attraction.

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 7. Cooper Stadium; Columbus, Ohio

[website](#)

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1931	Private developer	Concrete and steel	Undergoing renovation

#### Cooper Stadium Notes:

- Cooper hosted the AAA Clippers until 2008 when the minor league team moved downtown to Huntington Park the stadium was abandoned and demolition seemed likely.
- The new stadium cost \$70 million.
- Franklin County sold the stadium to SPARC Ohio, a controversial developer that will preserve the grandstands but turn the field into a NASCAR race track despite fierce opposition in the neighborhood.

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- The developer's revenue would appear to allow the historic grandstand to survive although it is not clear that its historic features will be retained.
- The sale to a private developer and county approval of the NASCAR track created much animosity for the developer and county commissioners in the community.

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- Columbus traded a desirable historic ballpark for a desirable location downtown. Eugene's desirable historic stadium is already in a great location blocks from downtown.
- Columbus's 2008 downtown park cost more than ten times what a restored Civic Stadium would require.
- In going for maximum revenue, Franklin County may have turned a community asset into a community nuisance.

## Lessons to Be Learned from Other Cities' "Civic Stadiums"

### 8. Sulfur Dell; Nashville, Tennessee

[website](#)

Opened	Ownership	Construction	Status
1927	City of Nashville	Concrete and steel	Demolished

#### Notes:

- Six years of valiant efforts to preserve Sulfur Dell followed the Vols departure. In the end it was demolished in 1969.
- The site was covered with asphalt.
- City Councilor Buster Boguskie's explanation, "The city just couldn't afford the upkeep."

#### Advantages and Disadvantages:

- The neglect of the stadium finally got to the point that supporters didn't think they could successfully rehabilitate Sulfur Dell.
- The layout of the field did not lend itself to other uses besides baseball.

#### Lessons for Civic Stadium:

- Though neglected, Civic Stadium is still structurally sound and rehabilitation will not be a major undertaking if it is begun soon.
- The site is very flexible for myriad uses.
- In a loving remembrance, Sulphur Dell historian Nelson Eddy quoted lines of Joni Mitchell's song "Big Yellow Taxi": "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot" and, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."