



On Monday, December 15, 2003, the Bloomington City Council adopted the following six stadium policies and amended at its February 17, 2004 meeting.

Background

The City of Bloomington was the home to Minnesota's professional baseball, football and hockey teams starting in 1961 with the Twins first home game at the Metropolitan Stadium. The Met Stadium and Met Center facilities shared a 147-acre site that included about 15,000 surface parking spaces. In 1979 the State of Minnesota decided to build a new indoor stadium in downtown Minneapolis for the Twins and Vikings. The North Stars left the Twin Cities for Dallas in 1994. Today Met Stadium site is home to the Mall of America and the Met Center site is being developed as the second phase of the Mall.

Objectives

- Retain professional sports teams in the Metropolitan area as key "quality of life" attractions to a Metro area and state that does not have many natural competitive advantages.
- Because professional sports are a statewide asset (hence the names *Minnesota* Twins and *Minnesota* Vikings) any public stadium subsidy should come from statewide sources.
- To enhance the fan experience and to have a long, useful life, any new stadium needs to make provision for a retractable roof.
- The facility should be located to maximize the use of existing public and private infrastructure such as parking, highways and transit. Locate the stadium(s) in such a way that:
 - The City of Bloomington does not have any direct cost
 - It is not done at the expense of the present infrastructure
 - It does not lessen the amount of property tax development in the City
 - Any additional taxes created in Bloomington are at least metro wide, if not state wide

General Policies

The City of Bloomington is willing to consider stadium proposals for a stadium as set forth in the following policies:

1. The City of Bloomington supports retention of professional major league teams by building a new stadium with provision for a retractable roof.
2. The City of Bloomington will not initiate any effort to bring a stadium to the community.
3. Any proposal located in Bloomington needs to provide sufficient transportation infrastructure to handle both future planned development and peak events at the stadium and successfully address the issue of aircraft noise impact on the professional sports experience.

Financing Policies

4. Any public support should be raised from statewide resources. Proposals for any specific taxes to fund the public support for a stadium that are not at least metro wide, are ones that the City would oppose. While the extension of the 6.2% rental car tax (that is set to expire in 2006), on either a state or at least metro wide basis, would be acceptable as would use of a state wide general or specific lodging and liquor sales tax to fund the stadium, the use of either a general sales or liquor or lodging tax or even extension of the rental car tax on less than a metro wide basis is not acceptable.
5. The City of Bloomington will not contribute any significant share of funds to a stadium – either directly or via local taxes imposed only in Bloomington.
6. Any proposal in Bloomington will need to pay for parking, transportation infrastructure improvements, and compensate the City for loss of tax-paying alternative uses.

Challenges to Locating a Professional Sports Stadium in Bloomington

Much has changed since professional sports took the field in Bloomington over 40 years ago. There was little development in Bloomington –“the cows must be grazing in the streets” said one commentator at the Twins’ opening day game. As a result, land was cheap and parking space was not a problem.

Today the land in the vicinity of the old Met Stadium is some of the highest valued in the Metro Area. Available open land next to freeways is quite limited. Vacant land in Bloomington’s Airport South District either has approved development plans or is within an airport safety zone where stadiums are a prohibited use. When it opens in 2005, runway 17-35 will have 37% of all aircraft operations at MSP Airport – not something that will enhance the outdoor major league sports experience.

Any proposal for a stadium in Bloomington needs to successfully address the following challenges as a result of these changes.

- Land Scarcity – A stadium with surface parking needs at least 100 acres.
- Parking – If there is not sufficient land for surface parking, a stadium in Bloomington would need to have structured parking that would most likely have to be funded by the proposal itself. Unlike downtown Minneapolis where existing structured parking for office buildings is utilized, the peak demand for stadium parking overlaps with the peak demand for Bloomington’s Airport South District.
- Infrastructure Capacity – While Airport South utilities could probably handle a new stadium, the present transportation infrastructure does not have sufficient capacity to handle the event demand associated with Major League Baseball or the National Football League.
- Competitive Stadium Process – The Governor’s competitive proposal process will likely result in selection of the highest local contribution (combination of public and private contributions to reduce the state’s involvement).

- Economic Challenges – In addition to the direct capital costs of a stadium, its parking and infrastructure, the City has other considerations:
 - Property Tax Status - If the stadium is publicly owned, it is tax exempt and would not pay for any of its capital or operating costs through property taxes.
 - Alternative Uses – The synergy of the Mall and Airport South will attract a variety of taxpaying uses that would not otherwise come to the area if a stadium absorbs the development site.
 - Related Businesses – While touted as boon for the hospitality business, Bloomington’s hotel share increased and prospered after professional sports left town. The hospitality industry depends on the Mall of America and MSP Airport much more than on professional sports.