

QuickPoint! - There is no Field of Dreams at the Expo Center

By Seth Bowman

The Portland Expo Center has been serving our region through trade shows and local events for nearly 60 years. However, the facility has been under-maintained, and in 2019 upgrades to the Oregon Convention Center made the Expo Center obsolete.

The Expo Center is operated by Metro, which is looking for alternative uses for that site. In June, a public meeting was held to unveil Metro's latest vision, which is a recreational sports center featuring basketball and volleyball courts, ice skating rinks, and turf fields.

However, sports facilities are expensive both to build and operate. Metro's forecast for the Expo Center rebuild is expected to cost \$225-450 million in taxpayer dollars. Metro claims that no further subsidies would be necessary because the facility would be self-sustaining.

However, similar facilities around the country are currently losing half a million to two million dollars annually.

Metro will hold another public meeting on the project in December. At that time the agency should consider additional options. One could be to sell the property. Another could be to convert it to a homeless shelter, with spaces set aside for people living in vehicles.

Other venues operated by Metro, including the Convention Center and the Portland Zoo, have never been self-sustaining. Voters should be skeptical of claims that a new sports complex will pay for itself.

Seth Bowman is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

July 10, 2024

Word Count: 220

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute is a tax-exempt educational organization as defined under IRS code 501 (c)(3). Nothing appearing in this Cascade Commentary is to be construed as necessarily representing the views of Cascade or its donors. The views expressed herein are the author's own.

