

MBA APPROVES NEW BALLPARK AND INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGETS



The Minnesota Ballpark Authority (MBA) approved a revised ballpark budget and an updated infrastructure design budget at their Board meeting on February 27th. Both decisions will have a major impact on the ballpark and the current and future neighborhoods near the ballpark.

Ballpark Budget

The MBA's vote increases the overall ballpark budget from \$390 million to \$412.4 million. The new figure reflects an additional \$22.4 million the Minnesota Twins are contributing for construction costs. The public's contribution of \$260 million remains unchanged. [Click here to view a breakdown of the project budget.](#)

The additional \$22.4 million will pay for several ballpark architectural elements and enhancements. For example, the ballpark façade will be adorned with real limestone from Vetter Stone in Mankato. In addition, the revised budget will fund a high definition scoreboard with a video screen that measures 102-by-57 feet as well as additional women's restrooms and heated concession stands/shelters.

"The Twins additional contribution shows their ongoing commitment to building a state of the art ballpark," MBA Commissioner Michael Vekich said. "This is another step forward in building a world-class facility at no additional cost to taxpayers."

Infrastructure Design Budget

The MBA's approval of the updated infrastructure design budget includes a reallocation of \$12 million, initially set aside for district enhancements, to pay for on-site infrastructure costs.

The current infrastructure design will cost about \$17 million more than anticipated because of the ballpark site's poor soils, complex utility relocations and the increased costs of the 6th Street plaza and bridge.

The budget reallocation will eliminate, at least for now, funds for enhancements to the surrounding neighborhoods, such as streetscape, public art and ornamental lighting.

MBA Chair Steve Cramer says the MBA fully recognizes more can be done to connect the ballpark to the neighborhood and to create opportunities for new development.

"We're excited about helping lead discussions to identify additional infrastructure priorities and potential partnerships to fund these enhancements," said Cramer referring to a series of discussions scheduled between public officials and North Loop property owners and residents.

The MBA and the project design team have already made substantial improvements to public spaces that were not originally proposed back in 2006. For instance, the functionality of the ballpark was improved by moving the Burlington Northern Rail Line and 5th Street Bridge abutment, creating a corridor for the Cedar Lake Trail. Public access has been increased by funding major pedestrian bridge improvements along 7th Street and a direct stair connection from the new 6th Street pedestrian bridge to the existing skyway system.

MBA Executive Director Dan Kenney says these improvements were added based on more in depth study of the site through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, additional work by the project design team and input from the Ballpark Implementation Committee.

"These enhancements will help improve the flow of fans on game days and connect pedestrians to the neighborhood that will be created around the ballpark," Kenney said.

Hennepin County's Ballpark Project Coordinator, Rick Johnson, said there may be some funding freed up in

the future. He told the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners on February 12th that he hopes the project's infrastructure contingency funds of about \$5.5 million can eventually be redirected to pay for amenities around the ballpark.

The Hennepin County Board approved this revised budget on February 26th adding a requirement that any contingency funds remaining at the close of the project be dedicated to extending the pedestrian bridge to 1st Avenue North and other ballpark district enhancements.