

For some time, the future of Glenwood, particularly the vacant land along the riverfront, has been a hot development topic in Springfield. Various ideas, including a convention center and a parking garage constructed of cross-laminated timber, among others, have surfaced without coming to fruition. Most recently a proposal has surfaced to construct an indoor track facility, one that would apparently complement the reconstructed Hayward Field and offer to make “Track Town USA” the home for both world class outdoor and indoor events. That proposal was the topic of a presentation at Springfield City club on February 20

Board members of the Springfield Community Development Corporation, Kari Westlund of Travel Lane County and Greg James of the Willamalane Park and Recreation District, discussed a proposal for an indoor track facility before a packed house at the City Club program. The facility would feature an indoor 200-meter banked hydraulic track that would accommodate indoor track meets as well as serve as a training facility.



The track could be flattened to provide space for volleyball, gymnastics, martial arts, basketball, weightlifting and other indoor sports and community gathering and event space, including exhibitions often held in convention center type spaces. As a performance space, the speakers said the facility could accommodate over 10,000 in the audience.

The Springfield Community Development Corporation is a non-profit organization created to determine an owner/operator model for, and raise funds to construct, the structure. Although the speakers were clear to say no site has been determined, and that sites other than Glenwood were under consideration, there seem to be many hints that Glenwood was viewed as the preferred or optimum site. Proximity to the University of Oregon, to I-5, to transit, and as a central point in the Springfield-Eugene metropolitan area were all identified as important siting criteria.



There is a preliminary design team in place, including architectural support. Ms. Westlund and Mr. James pointed to a recently constructed facility at Liberty University in Virginia as the leading example of the concept. It is the most recent of the 14 or 15 such facilities in the United States, none of which, they say, are along the I-5 corridor. A similar facility was recently constructed at the University of Michigan. Noting that the most recent examples were all University based facilities, Ms. Westlund said that the supporting group believed that ownership outside of the University of Oregon setting would make it easier for other than collegiate

activities to prosper at such a facility. She spoke of trying to attract all education levels, as well as

professional, non-collegiate sports. She did not rule out the possibility of significant contributions to the cost of the facility and utilization from the University or its supporters.

Questions were raised about the ability of a facility of this type to generate significant revenue, Mr. James said that the *pro forma* the group had created, indicated that the facility could become self-sustaining in four years, but he agreed that it would not be a generator of significant additional revenue to the City of Springfield. Ms. Westlund pointed out, however, in response to a question, that the structure could synergize the development of adjacent facilities that would provide both strong economic stimulus as well as significant tax revenue. Both speakers noted the absence of any similar facilities on the west coast meant many programs could either not participate in indoor track programs (which happen in the winter months) or, if they could, found it necessary to travel long distances to participate in events or even do training. They said their preliminary studies indicated a strong potential market for a facility of this kind, particularly in Glenwood where there is rapidly expanding hotel space.



Other questioners asked how this structure would fit within the economic development priorities of the City and on what basis the City was supporting the activity. The speakers pointed out that a work session on March 16 before the City Council might address those issues.