

Designers unveil 'groundbreaking' design for Goodyear ballpark

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Designers for Goodyear's planned baseball stadium have borrowed elements from major league ballparks in hopes of creating an urban feel around the ballpark.

Erik Judson, a principal with developer JMI Sports, described the design as "groundbreaking stuff" Monday in a presentation to the Goodyear City Council.

Plans calls for offices and hotels - private businesses developed separately from the ballpark - to be built close enough to grant line-of-sight access into the 8,000-seat ballpark, much like at Chicago's Wrigley Field or Petco Park in San Diego.

"We want people sitting up there (in the buildings) watching a game," said Judson, who also worked on Petco Park.

The buildings would be built with views into the playing field, making the park a focal point and fostering an "urban energy" around the stadium, Judson told the council.

Goodyear signed last month a use agreement with the Cleveland Indians, designating the proposed stadium as the team's spring training home for at least 20 years.

The stadium, planned southeast of Estrella Parkway and Yuma Road, is scheduled to open in 2009.

The Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority will reimburse the city for about half of the \$74.7 million cost.

"We see this as a next-generation ballpark and training facility," said David Bower, a principal with the architecture company HOK Sport.

Councilman Rob Antoniak said the idea of the park/business interaction was exciting, creating a unique experience around the city's ballpark.

"I think it's the next phase (in stadiums) and it's going to set us apart," he said.

The ballpark would also include a "street activity zone" along one side of the stadium, designed to accommodate street festivals and other activities, and a playing field large enough to host soccer and football games.

A six-field training facility is also being developed.

Under the use agreement, the Indians would have exclusive access to the clubhouse and two playing fields.

Four additional fields at the south end of the facility would be available for youth leagues or community events outside of the spring training season.

The practice complex is scheduled to open for spring training in 2008.