

From the San Antonio Business Journal

[:http://www.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/news/2015/10/09/centro-san-antonio-ready-to-take-a-swing-at-new.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/news/2015/10/09/centro-san-antonio-ready-to-take-a-swing-at-new.html)

# Centro San Antonio ready to take a swing at new downtown stadium

Oct 9, 2015, 12:35pm CDT



[W. Scott Bailey](#)

Reporter/Project Coordinator- San Antonio Business Journal

[Email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Google+](#) | [Facebook](#)

After years of chatter among local business and political leaders about the merits of a new baseball stadium in the center city, Centro San Antonio has stepped up to the plate to help move such a project closer to reality. Centro has reached out to national stadium consultant **Brailsford & Dunlavey** to provide expertise on where such a ballpark should be developed, how it could be funded and what San Antonio can expect with regard to economic impact opportunities.

"We are ready to embark on a study for a downtown ballpark. We are in the process of finalizing the contract with the consultant," Centro San Antonio President and CEO [Pat DiGiovanni](#) said.

Centro will fund the new study, which stadium supporters hope will trigger more serious discussions about the need for a venue that could accommodate a Triple-A team. Currently, San Antonio is home to the Missions, the Double-A affiliate of the **San Diego Padres**.

## See Also

- [San Pedro Creek makeover could be home run](#)
- [Urban ballpark more than field of dreams, Wolff says](#)

"We are starting to have a real conversation about a downtown stadium," DiGiovanni said. "This study is an important element in how we proceed."

Securing funding for a downtown ballpark will be one of the bigger challenges local leaders will face. Bexar County Judge [Nelson Wolff](#), for whom the Mission's stadium is named, has been most vocal about the need for a new downtown ballpark. However, the county may be somewhat hamstrung in its ability to help fund such a project because of a contract it signed more than 15 years ago with the **San Antonio Spurs**. That arena operating agreement for what is now the **AT&T Center** includes a "No Competing Facilities" clause, which states in part that, during the term of the agreement, the county shall not directly or indirectly "own, manage, operate, control, finance, sponsor (or) develop" any indoor or outdoor sports venue with a capacity of 5,000 to

30,000 seats.

That may be one reason why San Antonio Mayor [Ivy Taylor](#) has become more involved in discussions about a new ballpark.

One option the city could explore is using future bond money to help finance a downtown stadium.

Taylor points to Charlotte, North Carolina, as an example of the level of economic activity a downtown ballpark can ignite. That city invested \$54 million to develop a new home for the Triple-A Knights, BB&T Ballpark, which opened in 2013 in an urban area that needed a jolt.

BB&T Ballpark is expected to attract roughly \$700 million worth of new development to the surrounding area, according to a 2014 Charlotte Observer report. Already, previously neglected blocks of real estate in the nearby Third Ward are filling up with new apartment buildings, restaurants and retail establishments as entrepreneurs look to grab some of the hundreds of thousands of baseball fans on their way into and out of the new stadium.

DiGiovanni said Brailsford & Dunlavey, which is based in Washington, D.C., has worked on a number of newer minor league ballpark projects, including Spirit Communications Park in Columbia, South Carolina. That roughly 8,500-seat stadium will anchor a larger Bull Street project, a public-private redevelopment of the former South Carolina State Hospital site.

The goal, said DiGiovanni, is to have Brailsford & Dunlavey launch its San Antonio study this month and complete its work by the end of the year.

"I think we have a team that can do the analysis and do it relatively quickly so that we can be in a position for the city's bond cycle, if that becomes a funding source."

W. Scott Bailey covers health care, tourism, sports business, economic development; he also plans and edits some special reports.