

Dauphin County sportsplex study moving forward

May 30. 2012 9:00AM - Last modified: May 30. 2012 9:09AM

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A feasibility study for what could end up being a premier multisport complex in Dauphin County likely will wrap up by the fall, said Mark Shade, a spokesman for the Mid State Alliance, a South Hanover Township-based nonprofit.

With [\\$70,000 in gaming grant support](#) from Dauphin County, Mid State Alliance has been exploring the idea of bringing a sportsplex to the county since last fall.

Area club sport officials have expressed a desire for a facility that could offer playing surfaces for practice and games year-round, as well as the option to stage major tournaments and championships to attract teams from all over the East Coast, Shade said.

The nonprofit and its hired facility-planning and program-management company, Washington, D.C.-based [Brailsford & Dunlavey](#), currently are meeting with parents, coaches, players and potential business partners in focus groups.

The centerpiece of the project would be top-notch fields for baseball, rugby, soccer, football, field hockey, lacrosse and other sports. There also will be nature trails, picnic areas and open space that would be available free for the public to use, Shade said.

There are no proposals or projected costs on the table, Shade said.

“It’s too early in the process,” he said.

The organization would love to find a 300-acre tract that could accommodate indoor and outdoor facilities, he said. However, that might not be realistic.

This will not be a “build it and they will come” project, Shade said. The hired firm will take all of the stakeholder input into account regarding how the facility could be used by area teams and the potential draw from outside the region.

County officials have said they see this facility as a way to bolster tourism as well as strengthen youth sports leagues.

A [143-acre sports complex in North Carolina](#) has an annual economic impact of \$5 million to \$10 million, Shade said.

Mid State Alliance hopes to eventually turn the project over to a professional board of directors that would manage the facility, he said. The sportsplex would be funded through a public-private partnership.

In addition to finalizing a vision for the project, the focus groups are intended to help identify financing options, Shade said.

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