Good afternoon and welcome to our market analysis discussion around the Federal Hockey League’s Western Conference expansion location.

As detailed throughout this process, the FHL was looking for a location with a stable or growing community that had a penchant for dining out. Meeting these criteria would be key for any finalist to take the next and last step and be selected.

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Keeping this in mind, I’d like you all to meet the Smith family.

They're a two-income, middle-aged, highly educated couple living in a household with younger children in Hays Kansas. With their double income, they are able to support a very comfortable lifestyle, which is important as their kids definitely generate a busy day-to-day. A family with young children are often looking to take in athletic and recreational activities, but also take part in movie nights, theme parks, museums, and sporting events. This is a family often on the move and with the ability to dine out as needed.

We believe this type of family and these types of people are the right kind of demographic to expand into for a new Western Conference league team. You tasked us with going out and identifying the city best suited for immediate FHL expansion and we have settled on two finalists that will be discussing in depth today – Hays Kansas and Alpena Michigan.

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To answer this, we believe that Hays, Kansas is the preferred location over Alpena, Michigan for a few reasons. To begin, we believe that the community in Hays, Kansas is comprised of the “right” type of people that will make this location a success for FHL expansion.

What’s shown here, is that three of the larger populations comprising Hays are members of the “Colleges and Cafes” group (15.9%), “Suburban Sophisticates” (17.5%), and “Family Funtastic” (13.3%). These three groups, comprising close to half of the population, makes clear Hays is an appropriate community for expansion with this base’s willingness to take in the local flare. The Smith’s themselves would fall into the Family Funtastic group and would be a clear demographic to target.

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Not only is the right demographics themselves available in Hays, but Hays, Kansas’s historical and projected population growth are assuring signs of a stable community. Alpena, Michigan, on the other hand, has shown a clear history of decline and projects to decrease further over the coming years.

Specifically, Hays has grown 3.8% from 2000 to 2010 and is further expected to grow 0.9% from 2021 to 2025. While this may just appear to be negligible or modest at best growth, the specific demographics that are increasing within Hays are an encouraging. Populations making between $100,000-149,999 and $150,000+ from 2021 to 2025 are projected to increase 20.2% and 24.8%, respectively.

Hays’ community size dwarfs Alpena, which stands only at around 10,000. While Alpena has grown into a desirable summer tourist location over the years, this falls out of season and the injection of community activity is irrelevant.

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Another huge advantage with Hays is that the population of Hays infuses each winter with the Fort Hays State University student body, creating a sizable and young population keen on taking in any local entertainment that may be available. However, even excluding this student body, Hays itself boasts a young community, with the median age being 31 years old, standing in stark contrast to the much smaller Alpena population with its median age around 42 years old.

In regards to FHSU specifically, this university injects approximately 16,000 additional students into the community already hovering around 21,000 members. This injection not only bolsters the town’s economy but nearly doubles the potential fanbase tied to this expansion team.

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Additionally, the transportation infrastructure already available at each site would allow for easy travel for away games but also facilitate an expanded fanbase.

For Hays, KS, Interstate 70 runs essentially East-West through the town and US Highway 183 runs North-South. Both highways would allow for those from nearby towns to have straightforward travel options that would make attendance a smooth process.

Additionally, Hays, Kansas has the Hays Munjor Regional Airport very nearby, an extremely valuable transportation option for the fans and the team alike. Not only could those from a non-driving distance now take in a game with this airport nearby, but the team could easily integrate into the FHL and travel as needed to away games.

Hays, Kansas, in addition to their population keen on taking in the local scene and dining out, also already has local breweries and dining options throughout the city. This makes it an ideal spot for expansion as fans will have options outside of just the hockey game itself to explore and can make weekend trips that all parts of the family could enjoy.

Further, as can be seen, with virtually no nearby competition, as well, the winter-to-spring hockey season schedule would be the only local option to take in a sporting event for 35,000+ community members.

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For why Alpena was not selected, Alpena’s future outlook population-wise is a major concern. Hays already practically doubles Alpena, and Alpena’s population of just around 10,000 community members does not get the same major student influx as Hays from the local community college. Additionally, projections for 2025 data continues to show a decrease of about 1.2%, a concerning trend that the community may not be heading in the appropriate direction.

while there is a tourism bump in the summer months in Alpena, this is outside of the typical league schedule, so this influx will not effect the available fanbase during the league here.

Lastly, the population residing in Hays would be preferred over the members of Alpena. While half of the population of Hays was comprised of the groups noted earlier, Alpena is almost half comprised of “True Grit Americans”, typically blue collar workers that are not as likely to take in a local game or dine out option.

With these major factors in mind, the decision to move forward with Hays, Kansas as the FHL expansion location is recommended over the Alpena, Michigan location.

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With Hays as our recommended expansion site, the following 3 actions we believe would be suitable next steps:

Begin community outreach to families like the Smith’s to generate excitement around the newly formed team following selection

For the beginning of the season, discuss promotions that will encourage on the fence members of the community to attend (themed games, giveaways, etc.)

Reach out to local restaurants and other companies to discuss sponsorships and promotions, as well

Begin discussions with Hays city leadership around the needed facilities (ice rink, lodging, etc.) and their availability

Will an ice rink be readily available? If so, will additional seating be needed to handle the expected fan attendance?

Is there sufficient hotel/motel availability to handle away teams traveling in and out of area fans attending games?

Alert other teams within the Federal Hockey league of the decision to allow for early preparation and a successful expansion season. Thank you for your time and I hope you will consider these findings and select Hays Kansas as your expansion site.