

Executive Summary

FPHL Recommendation: Jackson, MI

Currently, the FPHL has a presence in the state of Michigan with two teams (Port Huron and Battle Creek).

Bleacher Report ranks Michigan as the #2 hockey state.

Jackson, MI is the only city in Jackson County, and serves as the county seat..

Background

The Federal Prospects Hockey League (FPHL) is looking to expand its Western Division. They have narrowed down their potential locations to two cities: Jackson, MI and Racine, WI. The league would prefer to expand into thriving, smaller cities that do not have any other professional sports presence. The FPHL would also like a community with a stable or growing population and income. There should be some local dining establishments as well. Our goal is to research both cities based on the criteria requested by the league and recommend the best place for expansion.

Recommended Action

When comparing the two cities, Jackson, MI provides a better opportunity for expansion. First, Jackson is located along I-94 roughly 80 miles west of Detroit, home of the NHL's Red Wings, and is equidistant to two BIG10 college programs at Michigan and Michigan State. Although the population has slowly decreased over the past 20 years, the median household income has increased by 9.7% and expected to grow another 13.9% by 2025. They spent roughly 7% of their income eating out and about 40% of that spending is on dinner. On the Northwest side of the city, there is an existing arena (Optimist Ice Arena) being used for recreation hockey leagues.

This facility will need some upgrades but it can likely be used. The arena is near I-94, shopping (including retail sporting goods stores), hotels and restaurants. Lastly, the state of Michigan has more hockey players per million than Wisconsin. There should be ample opportunities for players and development.

Rejected Option

Racine, WI has some good qualities as well. Although, the population has also been slowly decreasing since 2000, the median household income has increased at a higher rate. Even though they have a higher income, the average amount spent eating out is almost the same as Jackson. Racine is

located roughly 6 miles east of I-94 between Milwaukee and Chicago. There are some restaurants near downtown. The key difference is that Racine does not have an existing arena and recent plans to build one were put to rest in 2017.

Action Steps

1. Reach out to Optimist Ice Arena owner for leasing opportunities.
2. Discuss enhancements to seating and concessions for the arena.
3. Start to fundraise and look for corporate sponsors.
4. Establish retail presence for fan merchandise (future).