



KNOXVILLE AREA
ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

New Poll Shows Knox County Voters Overwhelmingly Support Multi-Use Stadium Development

June 3, 2021

Knoxville Area Association of Realtors®

KNOXVILLE, Tennessee — The Knoxville Area Association of Realtors (KAAR) today released results from a new poll regarding the multi-use, multi-sport stadium development proposed for downtown Knoxville. The poll was conducted from March 21 to March 23 by the nationally renowned polling firm American Strategies and included 400 registered voters in Knox County.

“These polling results show that the Knoxville community overwhelmingly supports this transformative public project,” said Hancen Sale, KAAR’s Governmental Affairs and Policy Director. “When developed through public-private partnerships, civic infrastructure and public spaces like the multi-use stadium make Knoxville an even more desirable place to live and foster inclusive economic development.”

“The project accomplishes multiple goals, not least of which is increasing the number of available housing units near public transit in a time when Knoxville is facing its most severe housing shortage since at least the 1990s,” Sale said.

The proposed multi-use entertainment venue and ancillary development, including \$100 million in private mixed-use residential and commercial development, would be located immediately adjacent to the Austin Homes affordable housing site.

“We shouldn’t gloss over the fact that this project is also a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create the sort of mixed-income neighborhoods that research consistently shows is critical for promoting upward income mobility and access to economic opportunity,” Sale said.

“Substantial public investment in close proximity to existing affordable should be the model.”

In April, KAAR’s Board of Directors [voted](#) unanimously to endorse the project. The board released a statement indicating its support and referring to the project as “an opportunity Knoxville cannot afford to miss.”

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The Knoxville Area Association of Realtors® is a trade association, representing around 5,500 members and affiliates involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

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Date: April 14, 2021

To: Interested Parties

From: Joe Goode

RE: Survey Results – Knox County Stadium Project

Knox County voters are broadly supportive of the proposed baseball stadium development in East Knoxville and are even more likely to back the project after they learn more about it. Currently, 59 percent favor building the multi-use stadium with 39 percent opposed. Overall, two-thirds have a favorable opinion of the Tennessee Smokies and 63 percent would like to see the team return to Knoxville.

These findings are from a new American Strategies poll of registered voters in Knox County. The poll was conducted from March 21 to March 23 and included 400 registered voters. The margin of error associated with the poll results is plus or minus 4.9 percentage points.

After hearing a short description of the stadium project and funding,¹ just under six-in-ten voters (59 percent) favor the proposal with 39 percent opposed. Strong supporters of the stadium outnumber those who strongly oppose it by 7-points (30 to 23 percent). Many voters, however, do not yet have strongly held opinions: 29 percent only “somewhat” favor the stadium while 17 percent are “somewhat” opposed.

Support for the stadium is bipartisan, with 65 percent of Democrats in favor compared to 61 percent of Republicans. A majority of independents (53 percent) also favor the project.

While most voters (79 percent) have heard, read, or seen something about the new stadium, they have limited information. Only 19 percent have heard “a lot” about it, while a majority have heard “some” (27 percent) or just a little (33 percent). One-in-five voters have not heard anything at all about the stadium proposal.

Voters react strongly to hearing more details about the stadium project. Seventy-one percent are more likely to support the stadium after hearing that it would be open year-round for community use, like a city park where people could walk and exercise when not in use for other events. Other community aspects also resonate:

- 68 percent are more likely to support the stadium after hearing that the park would be a multi-use stadium designed for baseball and other outdoor sports, but also for concerts, festivals, markets, community events, and more.
- 67 percent are more likely to support the stadium after hearing that the project would help revitalize East Knoxville with new housing, jobs, and infrastructure improvements.

¹ See Appendix A for question wording.

Appendix A

- A. Would you say you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the Tennessee Smokies baseball team.

	Very Fav	Smwt Fav	Smwt Unfav	Very Unfav	(No Opin/ Ntrl)	(Never heard)	(Dk/ Ref)	Total Fav	Total Unfav
The Tennessee Smokies baseball team	35	33	3	3	22	3	1	68	6

- B. Have you heard, read, or seen anything recently about the proposal to build a new stadium for the Tennessee Smokies baseball team near downtown Knoxville?

(IF YES) Have you heard, read, or seen a lot, some, or just a little about the proposal?

	Total
Yes - a lot	19
Yes - some	27
Yes - a little	33
No - have not heard	21
(Don't know/refused)	0
Total Yes	79

- C. As you may know, the Tennessee Smokies used to play their home games in Knoxville, but moved to Sevierville in the year 2000. Generally speaking, would you like to see the Tennessee Smokies minor league baseball team return to Knoxville? (ROTATE) Yes or no?

	Total
Yes	63
No	27
(Don't care/not important to me)	7
(Don't know/refused)	3

- D. The Knox County Commission and the Knoxville City Council are considering a proposal to build a new multi-use stadium in the Old City area near downtown Knoxville. This project would be a public-private partnership which would bring the Smokies back to Knoxville and would also develop new housing and retail around the stadium. The stadium would be paid for by tax revenues and fees generated by stadium operations and development around the stadium. The city and county would issue sales-tax backed bonds to pay for the stadium and would be accountable for paying off the debt.

Just based on what you know, do you (ROTATE) favor or oppose building the new stadium?

(IF FAVOR OR OPPOSE) And would you say you strongly FAVOR/OPPOSE or somewhat FAVOR/OPPOSE building the new stadium?

	Total
Strongly favor	30
Somewhat favor	29
Somewhat oppose	17
Strongly oppose	23
(Don't know/refused)	2
Total Favor	59
Total Oppose	39

E. Now I am going to read you a list of details about the proposal to build a new baseball stadium on the edge of the Old City near downtown Knoxville. Please tell me whether hearing each detail makes you (ROTATE) more or less likely to support the proposal, or whether that detail makes no difference to you either way.

(READ ITEM, PROMPT) Would that make you (ROTATE) more or less likely to support the proposal?

(FOLLOW UP) And is that much MORE/LESS likely or somewhat MORE/LESS likely?

	Much more likely	Smwt more likely	Smwt less likely	Much less likely	No difference	(Dk/ Ref)	Total more likely	Total less likely
1. The park would be a multi-use stadium designed for baseball and other outdoor sports, but also for concerts, festivals, markets, community events, and more.	51	17	5	10	16	0	68	15
2. The stadium would be open year-round for community use. It would be like a city park where people could walk and exercise when not in use for other events.	51	19	4	10	15	1	71	13
3. The stadium project would help revitalize East Knoxville with new housing, jobs, and infrastructure improvements.	45	22	7	10	16	1	67	17