

August 17, 2022

To: David Ellis, Wake County Manager

From: Dennis Edwards, President & CEO, Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau

RE: 2027 Summer World University Games

The Wake County Board of Commissioners requested input from the Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau regarding the tourism impact of the 2027 Summer World University Games. The following is our response.

Impact of the Summer World University Games

July 13-25, 2027

Delegation including athletes: 10,000

Participates: 600 universities and 150 countries

All athletes will stay in university dormitories

Proposed sports in Wake County

Cary- Soccer, Rugby, Tennis, Water Polo

Raleigh- Archery, Basketball, Volleyball, Judo, Table Tennis

18 Sports outside of Wake County

All venues must be provided free of charge

Budget Requested- Need \$100 million in cash and \$25 million in in-kind

BENEFITS:

- Wake County & Central NC featured in 5-year global marketing campaign
- Test events, international meetings and county site visits in years prior to the WUG
- UC Universities and host cities highlighted globally as premier educational and sporting locations
- International students given extended exposure to NC communities
- Increased and enhanced regional cooperation and communication
- Wake County and North Carolina's sports tourism capabilities and reputation taken to next level

KNOWN:

PNC Arena will likely be under renovation and may not be available

NC State University is not available for competitions and housing

There has not been a request for hotel rooms for the event through the GRCVB

Projected attendance from outside the market has not been determined

The RCC is currently available and the discounted rental costs would be \$591,800



Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau Position Statement:

The World University Games have been contested since 1959. It is an established, legitimate event run by the International University Sports Federation (FISU) that has been held around the world, including once in the United States (Buffalo, 1983). It will feature 19 sports and about 7,000 athletes from around the world.

We can consider the World University Games from two vantage points.

First, from a regional perspective. If it has strong ticket sales and a good media (broadcast) partner, the Games could be a tremendous success in the Triangle. The Games could be popular within the region and serve as a rallying point throughout the community, enhancing the Triangle's already highly-regarded quality of life and providing a jolt of civic pride.

Next, from a tourism-based economic development perspective. The World University Games could potentially be a success in terms of its economic impact. However, at this time it is impossible to know what attendance from outside the market (in other words, visitors) will be, and the impact it may or may not have on Wake County hotels. All athletes will stay in dorms (rather than hotels), and we project that the large majority of ticket-buyers will be local or regional, rather than out-of-state or international visitors.

Athletes' families will certainly stay in hotels and visit our restaurants, as will visiting event workers and officials. But out-of-market attendance would drive economic impact and it is the big unknown. It is also important to note that, in order to host an event of this magnitude, it will require five years of extensive local resources (funding, time, manpower). Strictly from a tourism-based economic development viewpoint, it is difficult to determine if the Games will ultimately justify the cost (estimated to be at least \$125 million of cash and in-kind). Looking five years down the road, it is challenging to accurately project what the ROI might be, based on the massive investment required to conduct these Games.

