

## **Cellcom Green Bay Marathon seeks extended use of Lambeau Field**

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The Cellcom Green Bay Marathon wants access to Lambeau Field for two days because of the growth of the event.

Marathon organizers have approached the Green Bay Packers and the Green Bay/Brown County Professional Football Stadium District Board about using Lambeau Field for an extra day. Runners in four events pass through Lambeau before finishing their races in the stadium parking lot.

"Our plan is to put this on our next agenda as a formal request from the marathon and pursue this with the team," Patrick Webb, district executive director, said at Wednesday's stadium board meeting.

Marathon organizers, in a letter to the board, said the event has grown from 4,500 finishers to nearly 10,000 in the past four years.

"As the event has grown, the challenge of conducting four overlapping events on one day has raised concerns for the event organizers and local public safety departments," the letter said.

Organizers would like to move the 5K run, which now starts at a family-unfriendly 7 a.m., to Saturday. That also would allow organizers to remove a cap on the number of participants in the half marathon, which would continue to start on Sunday along with the full marathon.

Webb said that might also mean more people would come to town on Friday and stay two nights.

"We think this is good for tourism," he said.

According to marathon statistics, 28 percent of runners are nonlocal Wisconsin residents, and 16 percent are from out of state.

Webb said sales tax distributions for 2009 are 7 percent behind last year at this time. Statewide sales tax collections are 8 percent less than last year, and the Miller Park sales tax collection is 11 percent less.

The district receives the proceeds from a 0.5 percent sales tax collected in Brown County. The tax was enacted to help pay for the \$295 million renovation of Lambeau Field in 2003.

Webb said collections remain on a trend to pay off outstanding debt in 2011 and set aside a mandated amount of money for continuing Lambeau Field maintenance by 2014 or early 2015, at which time the tax will expire.

Webb said the board should plan for what it will do when the debt is paid and then when the tax expires. The district remains the landlord of Lambeau Field until dissolving, which it has option

of doing when the tax expires. If the board dissolves, the city of Green Bay becomes the landlord.

Board chairwoman Ann Patteson said the board needs to consider the benefits and disadvantages of dissolution.

"If we can't somehow figure out how to pull off (special events at Lambeau Field), I see dissolution as the preferred route. That's the one area where the board can make a difference," she said.