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## Rebuilt stadium would look little like existing one

BY DAVID SINGLETON (STAFF WRITER)

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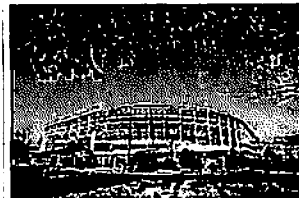
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Linda Morgan / Staff Photographer Craig Schmitt, stadium architect, gives a presentation on the proposed renovated stadium during a joint public hearing of the Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners and the Multi-Purpose Stadium Authority of Lackawanna County.

Image Gallery for Rebuilt stadium would look little like existing one

A proposed \$40 million renovation of PNC Field would create a stadium that bears little resemblance to the ballpark that now occupies the site.

The most noticeable difference: no more nosebleed seats.

"Even though technically we are not building a brand new stadium, for all intents and purposes it's going to look and feel new," said architect Craig Schmitt of Ewing Cole, who unveiled conceptual designs for the rebuilt stadium at a public hearing Monday evening. "I'm convinced that taking on something like this is absolutely going to transform the experience of attending a baseball game in Lackawanna County."



Under the proposal, only four elements of the existing stadium would be retained: the lower seating bowl, the playing field, the home locker room and the parking lots, Mr. Schmitt said. Everything else, including the upper-level deck, would be demolished.

The rebuilt stadium would have an elevated single- or double-tier of suites, club seats and media facilities behind home plate, but the rest of the seating would be on or below a concourse that

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would wrap around the entire playing field like a promenade, he said.

The promenade concept, now popular at many major and minor league stadiums, allows fans to view the game from multiple vantage points, he said.

"The idea of a promenade lends itself, we think, to the very leisurely and social aspect of attending a ballgame," Mr. Schmitt said.

In addition to about 5,500 fixed seats on the lower level, Mr. Schmitt said there would be "lots and lots" of spaces where fans could stand along the railing at the edge of the

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concourse to watch the action on the field.

Concession stands would line the concourse, he said. There would be grassy areas where families can picnic, and a children's play area would be situated along the outfield concourse.

Although the stadium's total capacity would fall from 10,800 to between 8,000 and 8,500, the fan experience would become much more intimate, he said.

"The new structure, architecturally anyway, is going to look nothing like the old one," Mr. Schmitt said. "Without an upper deck, the mass and the scale of this newly renovated ballpark would be significantly smaller."

It is expected construction would take at least nine months, Mr. Schmitt said. A number of options are under consideration, including spreading the project over two construction seasons.

"SWB Yankees are going to have a big say in that," he said.

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