

# Images and Details Show Possible Rebirth of Wrigley Field

Written by Maury Brown  
Tuesday, 22 January 2013 01:02



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Since the Ricketts family purchased the Chicago Cubs, one of the looming questions has been renovating baseball's second-oldest ballpark in Wrigley Field. With the Red Sox completing a 10-year renovation to the league's oldest ballpark, it was shown that renovation over a completely new facility could be done in a way that would modernize even the oldest of structures to allow modern day amenities for both fans and the players.

The problem has been gaining funding. Whether the dour economy or the fact that some municipalities may have grown weary of providing the lion's share of the funding, getting renovations off the ground for the Cubs has been about as easy as winning a World Series for the Ricketts since purchasing the club in 2009. In 2010 a state funding bill withered and died in the Illinois legislature.

But, that could finally change... if the city of Chicago corporates.

Cubs Chairman Tom Ricketts said this past weekend at the Cubs Convention that if some restrictions are lifted, the club will fund a 5-year, \$300 million renovation that will provide wider concourses, all new clubhouse, restaurants, a new landing in left field, a much-needed set of batting tunnels, work on suite, and much more. The first phase would be a massive upgrade to the clubhouse.

[SEE COMPLETE DETAILS, PLUS ALL 20 IMAGES OF THE PROPOSED WRIGLEY FIELD RENOVATION](#)

"The fact is that when you look at all of the limitations that we have, whether that's signage in the outfield, which we are not allowed to do, or what kind of stuff we do in the park or around the park, I think we'd just like a little more flexibility to have some options on that stuff," Ricketts said at the Cubs Convention.

"We have an opportunity cost there that's tremendous. Just give us some relief on some of these restrictions, and we'll take care of (renovating) Wrigley Field.

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“We’re told what we can do to the park. We’re told what we can do in the park. We’re told what we can do around the park. We think, from our position, if you just let us run our business, we can get started on some substantial renovations, make the fan experience better, make the player experience better, and really preserve the park for the next 50 years. We’re not a museum. We’re a business.”

The restrictions that [Ricketts made reference to included](#) :

**Signage:** The bleacher vista may be significantly altered if the Cubs get their way. In 2010, the Cubs agreed to a four-year moratorium on additional advertising signs that would rise above the Wrigley Field bleachers in order to gain city approval of a Toyota outfield sign. That moratorium expires after this season, and the Cubs would like to increase their outfield signage, along with other areas in the ballpark. They’re the only team with signage restrictions.

Co-owner Laura Ricketts said the restriction on signage puts the team at a disadvantage, “but also forces us to be extra creative in the advertising that we do have, and that makes Wrigley Field, in my opinion, the most special place to watch a ballgame in all of baseball... With our renovations, that’s definitely something we want to preserve going forward.”

**Night games:** A city ordinance granted the Cubs permission to play 18 night games a year starting in 1988. In 2004, the city council approved an increase of four night games per year through 2006, giving them their current allotment of 30. The Cubs haven’t said how many more night games they need, but one source said “half,” or 41, would suffice, including an occasional Saturday night game. The Cubs also would like the return of 3:05 p.m. starts on Friday, believing the weekend restrictions are an anachronism in a commercialized area.

**Concerts:** An agreement in 2005 between the Cubs and the city gave the Cubs permission to hold two Jimmy Buffet concerts that summer, with the team donating \$150,000 of the proceeds to neighborhood schools and reserving 3,000 concert tickets for purchase by people who lived within one mile of the ballpark. The Cubs agreed to hold 29 night games in 2006 instead of the permitted 30. In 2009, the city allowed the Cubs to hold three concerts, including two by Elton John and Billy Joel. The Cubs haven’t said how many concerts they’d like, but they’d like to increase it without having to ask for city permission.

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[See more images of the proposed Wrigley Field renovation](#)

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