

# Ohio House budget would help the Cleveland Browns build a new stadium. Here's how

By Haley BeMiller  
Columbus Dispatch

The [Cleveland Browns](#) could get help from state lawmakers to build a new stadium under a budget proposal unveiled Tuesday by the Ohio House.

The state would provide \$600 million in bonds for a domed stadium in Brook Park, according to a plan released by the House Finance Committee, which helps craft the state's two-year budget. The Browns want to leave Cleveland despite [objections from city leaders](#), who have accused owners Jimmy and Dee Haslam of violating state law.

"We're going to have local Super Bowls played in the stadium – hopefully an Ohio team is playing in one of them," Rep. Brian Stewart, R-Ashville, said. "This is going to be a destination center. I really do think when the ribbon is cut and people walk in the door, I think people are going to be happy that this is in Ohio."

The House budget would scrap Gov. Mike DeWine's proposal to double the gaming tax and use the additional money to fund youth sports and construction for sports facilities. DeWine contends taxpayers can't continue to foot the bill for stadium projects and wants sports betting companies to "pay their fair share."

"This will permanently solve our problem," DeWine said [during a recent forum](#) at the Columbus Metropolitan Club. "If we don't do this, every legislature, every governor in the future is going to have to face the challenge of, 'Gee, do we put \$20 million here, do we put \$40 million here for this stadium or that stadium?'"

The Browns asked state and local leaders for [\\$1.2 billion in bonds](#) to fund half of the stadium project, which includes a new entertainment district. The state would repay its bond with tax revenue generated by the development. Including interest, Stewart said the bond would cost around \$1 billion over its 30-year life.

Haslam Sports Group pledged to invest \$38 million up front – which Stewart said could grow to \$130 million – to help with repayment if the stadium doesn't make enough money.

"This would be Ohio's first dome stadium, and it will change the trajectory of northeast Ohio and create transformational change for our region and the state of Ohio," Ted Tywang, chief administrative officer for Haslam Sports Group, told a House committee last month.

The Haslams' proposal has sparked blowback and legal battles. Cleveland officials contend the project runs afoul of the [Modell Law](#), which restricts the movement of professional sports teams that use taxpayer-funded facilities. Critics also worry the Haslams overstated the economic benefits of a new stadium.

Unlike DeWine's plan, the House budget wouldn't extend to other stadium projects in Ohio. The [Cincinnati Bengals](#) could have expensive renovations on the horizon at Paycor Stadium, and Franklin County leaders want to update the Columbus Blue Jackets' home base, [Nationwide Arena](#).

*(This story was updated with additional information.)*

*Akron Beacon Journal reporter George M. Thomas contributed.*