

=



AGENDA REPORT

TO:	Honorable Mayor & City Council	FROM:	Councilmember Kaplan (At-Large)
SUBJECT:	Affirming the Oakland A’s Belong in Oakland	DATE:	November 7, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

Recommended That The City Council Adopt:

Resolution Affirming That The Oakland A’s Belong In Oakland, And Recognizing The Substantial And Tangible Progress The City Has Achieved In Working Toward A Proposed Oakland Waterfront Ballpark District To Be Developed On The Property Known As The Howard Terminal (Adjacent To The Ferry Dock And The Area Known As Jack London Square) At The Port Of Oakland.

Summary

The Oakland A’s have a long and storied history in the City of Oakland. Over the past several years, the City has worked in conjunction with the A’s ownership group to secure financing and approvals for a [new ballpark development at Howard Terminal](https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/waterfront-ballpark-district-at-howard-terminal-faqs). (<https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/waterfront-ballpark-district-at-howard-terminal-faqs>).

After local governments achieved Oakland City Council approval for a deal, Alameda County and City declarations in support of providing an Infrastructure Financing District, approval from the Port of Oakland, which owns the land, environmental approval, and raising hundreds of millions of dollars, the A’s made the decision to enter into a “binding” land agreement in Las Vegas. Oakland Athletics fans launched very successful Reverse Boycotts <https://theathletic.com/4752714/2023/08/05/oakland-athletics-reverse-boycott-fifth-inning/> where they filled the seats in a show of support for the players and the local support for the Oakland Athletics team here.

This resolution includes re-affirmation of the Council’s support for the A’s remaining in Oakland and outlines the steps the City has taken to keep the A’s rooted in The Town. Those steps include: adopting approvals for the Howard Terminal project as requested by the A’s owners, securing \$428 million in off-site infrastructure funding; certifying an EIR and successfully defending it in court; working to secure multi-jurisdiction approvals for the project; drafting agreements, development standards, design guidelines and more to enable development.

In doing so, the City has cleared significant hurdles for a large, mixed-use, highly complicated project which includes residential, commercial and retail elements, elements the A's ownership had at the time insisted were necessary to make any ballpark project feasible.

In sharp contrast, the A's ownership group is now pursuing a much smaller 9-acre ballpark-only project on leased land in Las Vegas. Yet despite the scaled back nature of that project, it has already become mired in controversy and legal challenges and ballot challenges to a primary public funding source. Further, major questions remain about the Las Vegas site, including where the team will play during construction as well as basic design, costs, and funding sources. With owners of the Athletics changing their desired project to a more focused ballpark project, or even a medium-sized ballpark with entertainment and dining, Oakland can easily accommodate the focused project rapidly, as those are elements of existing approvals, within both Howard Terminal and the Coliseum areas. In addition, with the excellent weather in Oakland, no roof would be needed. Thus, construction of a new ballpark could take place more quickly, and be more affordable, in Oakland.

This Resolution also provides that a more focused project, such as more recently described by A's owners, would be able to move forward in Oakland readily.

Furthermore, in acknowledging that the land of Howard Terminal is owned by the Port of Oakland, this Resolution authorizes City Administrative staff and Port leadership to work together in pursuit of this effort.

In addition, the Athletics leadership, in 2018, acquired ownership interest in the Oakland Coliseum, and at that time, stated that doing so would ensure they would build a ballpark in Oakland. See: <https://twitter.com/athletics/status/978275521661304832>. The A's leadership stated that the Coliseum site would either be used a for a ballpark, or it would be used to raise revenue to help fund a ballpark at Howard Terminal. (See Attached letter). They have thus far utilized neither of those options, which can be used to help fund and expedite a ballpark in Oakland.

The City of Oakland has provided viable, detailed and mutually beneficial project and that the A's should remain in Oakland, their home for more than 55 years, with a powerful fan base, great weather, funding and sites available, region-wide access, and the ability to build a strong future.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Councilmembers Kaplan Recommends That The City Council Adopts A Resolution Affirming That The Oakland A's Belong In Oakland, And Recognizing The Substantial And Tangible Progress The City Has Achieved In Working Toward A Proposed Oakland Waterfront Ballpark District To Be Developed On The Property Known As The Howard Terminal (Adjacent To The Ferry Dock And The Area Known As Jack London Square) At The Port Of Oakland

Respectfully submitted,



Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan

Oakland City Council

November 7, 2023



OAKLAND ATHLETICS

Oakland Athletics Baseball Company • 510-638-4900 • athletics.com • @athletics

March 25, 2018

The Honorable Libby Schaaf, Mayor of Oakland
Oakland City Council
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mayor Schaaf and City Council Members,

As you know, the Oakland A's have been hard at work over the past two years studying sites for a new privately financed ballpark in Oakland. During this process, we launched our "Rooted in Oakland" campaign publicly reaffirming our long-term commitment to Oakland and the East Bay.

In 2017, we narrowed the choice to three viable locations in Oakland for a privately financed ballpark: Howard Terminal near Jack London Square; the Peralta Community College District Offices near Lake Merritt, and our current home at the Coliseum complex in East Oakland. In September of 2017, we notified the City and the County via letter that the Peralta site was our preferred location for the ballpark and ancillary development. Our intention was an economic deal by the end of 2018, groundbreaking in 2021, and opening day in 2023.

Following significant efforts for community outreach and engagement with the Peralta Community College District and Laney College administration, students, and staff, negotiations on the Peralta site were suspended on December 10, 2017 at the direction of the Peralta Board of Trustees.

This left the A's with only two sites in Oakland: Howard Terminal and the Coliseum.

2018 - our 50th Anniversary in Oakland - brought a renewed focus on the viability of the Howard Terminal site as the last downtown location for an A's Ballpark. The evaluation of Howard Terminal remains ongoing and we have had favorable preliminary conversations with various representatives of the Port. Transportation solutions and the costs of large needed infrastructure improvements are major outstanding items for Howard Terminal, along with the numerous public agencies with jurisdiction of this waterfront site.

Of course, significant uncertainty remains on how the various challenges for Howard Terminal can be satisfied. Given our previous experience at Peralta, it has become clear that the A's need to solidify control of the one site in Oakland that offers an assured path for the development of a new privately financed baseball venue - the existing Coliseum complex.

This letter serves as an indication of the A's desire to *assume control and purchase the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum complex in exchange for paying all remaining debt service on the more than \$135 million of debt ultimately owed by the City and County against the Coliseum complex.* If consummated, our offer would end the long-standing cash drain from the City and County's general funds caused by ownership of the Coliseum, and ensure that the A's possess one assured route to a new privately financed stadium in Oakland.

We would like to enter a formal exclusive negotiating agreement (ENA) as soon as possible to determine if we can together negotiate and complete a transaction for the benefit of Oakland, Alameda County and the long-term success of the Oakland Athletics.

This is a critical moment for the A's and our community. The venue process has taken too long. We seek your immediate engagement to work with us on a transaction for the Coliseum complex, as we continue to plan for a state of the art privately financed new baseball park in Oakland. The future of the A's is too important to further risk alternate uses of the Coliseum site at this time.

We are grateful for your ongoing reception and support to help keep the A's in Oakland.

Play ball,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Kaval'.

Dave Kaval
President
Oakland Athletics

WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS
1910 • 1911 • 1913 • 1929 • 1930 • 1972 • 1973 • 1974 • 1989

Oakland City Council

November 7, 2023