

District Energy for the Stadium District

An Opportunity for Public Value, Shared Efficiency,
and Neighbourhood Leadership

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The Global Shift: Stadium Districts as Energy Districts

Worldwide, stadium precincts are evolving from single-use event venues into mixed-use urban districts — and leading examples are integrating district energy as foundational infrastructure.



Mixed-Use Stadium Districts

- Stadiums are anchoring housing, office, hotel, and entertainment development
- London Olympic Park, Mission Rock (SF), Melbourne Park
- New value from surrounding land creates a compelling case for shared infrastructure



District Energy Integration

- Arenas and stadiums are connecting to district systems in Toronto, Minneapolis, Nashville, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Denver
- New-build projects are designing district energy from scratch (Mission Rock, London Olympic Park)
- Swiss stadiums recover waste heat from ice rinks for surrounding buildings



Policy & Decarbonization Drivers

- Building emissions standards are accelerating electrification of existing buildings
- District energy offers a cost-effective, space-efficient pathway to compliance — especially for large, complex facilities
- Public anchors (stadiums, arenas, convention centres) are natural initiators

The common thread: publicly owned or anchored venues are uniquely positioned to convene neighbours and catalyze shared infrastructure.

The Seattle Stadium District: Good Ingredients for a District Energy System



Existing & Future Thermal Loads

- T-Mobile Park — facing equipment upgrades, BEPS compliance pathway
- Lumen Field & Events Center — active ecodistrict exploration
- King Street / Amtrak Station
- Hansen Group properties south of ballpark (Parcels C, D, E)
- Mariners vacant lot (Parcel B)
- WOSCA site (~4 acres, potential redevelopment)
- Stadium North future development (~150,000 m² GFA)



Low-Carbon Energy Sources

- King County WTD sewer main — proven heat recovery source, year-round
- Data centre waste heat — 10 MW at Home Plate Center
- Ground-source heat exchange — North Lot borefield potential
- Existing stadium central plant infrastructure — potential shared backbone

Favourable Policy Environment

Seattle BEPS

Net-zero building emissions by 2050. Large buildings must meet targets starting 2031. District energy is a recognized compliance pathway.

WA Thermal Energy Networks

HB 2131 (2024): Utilities can own/operate TENs. \$25M state grant fund for gas utility pilots. HB 1514 (2025): Expanded regulatory framework, discounted electric rates for TEN operators.

WA Clean Energy Transition

PSE pathway to merge gas/electric rate base and electrify neighbourhoods. 100% clean electricity by 2045. District energy aligns with gas system transition.

Federal Support

IRA incentives for heat pumps and clean energy infrastructure. King County \$50M EPA grant for building decarbonization.

Estimated district-wide heating load: ~45 MW peak | Multiple low-carbon sources available | Strong and growing policy tailwinds

The Challenge: All the Ingredients, but No Chef

Why it hasn't happened yet

- Multiple facility owners with different investment cycles, priorities, and decision-making timelines
- No single entity has the mandate to convene all stakeholders and explore shared infrastructure
- Energy sources are distributed across properties with different owners (sewer main, data centres, ground beneath parking lots)
- Individual building upgrades won't capture the economies of scale and load diversity a district system offers
- Piping across rights-of-way requires public coordination and easements no private party can easily secure alone

Why the PFD Is Uniquely Positioned

Public mandate — Mission extends to neighbourhood improvement and walkable district development

Anchor load — T-Mobile Park faces equipment upgrades and emissions compliance; district energy could reduce capital costs and improve outcomes

Convening authority — As a state-created public body, the PFD can bring together the City, King County, neighbouring facility owners, and utilities in a way no private party can

Neighbourhood Fund — Existing mechanism for investing in community improvements; could backstop early-stage due diligence

What district energy offers the PFD directly



Avoided Capital

Shared plant reduces T-Mobile Park upgrade costs



BEPS Compliance

Low-carbon thermal meets Seattle emissions targets



Space Savings

Off-site plant frees stadium footprint for other uses



Public Value

Neighbourhood benefit strengthens social licence

Pathways Forward: The PFD's Role

Three possible approaches for the PFD to move from interest to action — each with a different level of commitment and risk.

A Detailed Feasibility Study

PFD commissions a comprehensive district energy feasibility study

- Defines loads, sources, routing, costs, governance options
- PFD leads stakeholder engagement directly
- Produces a business case for the Board to act on

Best if: PFD wants full control of scope and narrative before engaging partners

B Request for Interest

PFD issues an RFI to identify a qualified utility partner

- Partner conducts due diligence, engages neighbours, and develops the concept
- PFD provides anchor commitment + backstop for early engagement costs
- Brings market expertise and capital to the table early

Best if: PFD wants to engage market capability and move faster with less upfront spend

C Hybrid: Scoping + Market Test

PFD commissions a light-touch scoping study to define the opportunity, then uses findings to issue a targeted RFI

- Scoping provides a credible foundation for the market process
- Demonstrates seriousness to potential partners
- PFD retains narrative control while leveraging partner capability

Best if: PFD wants to move decisively but needs to build internal confidence first