



February 9, 2026
2:30 P.M.

T-Mobile Park
PFD Conference Room
110 Edgar Martinez Drive S
Seattle, WA 98134

The PFD will be holding this Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors in-person and in a manner consistent with guidance from the Attorney General's office. Virtual access via Teams is available upon request. Members of the public desiring to leave a comment but not able to attend the meeting in person should submit them to curtisj@ballpark.org at least 24 hours prior to the meeting start time.

BOARD MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

- A. Call to Order / Welcome** (Board Chair, Christopher Marr)
- B. Public Comment** (any written public comment received prior to the meeting will be summarized and read aloud)
- C. Approval of the Minutes**
 - 1. December 8, 2025 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- D. Board Briefings and Potential Actions:**
 - 1. Guest Presentation: District Energy Opportunities and Feasibility (Trent Berry, Reshape Infrastructure Strategies) – *Materials Presented At Meeting*
 - 2. Mariners Update (Trevor Gooby, Seattle Mariners) – *Verbal Presentation Only*
 - 3. PFD Board of Directors Annual Retreat: Topics Discussion (Joshua Curtis) – *Materials Sent Separately*

4. 2026 Reference Ballpark Trip: Preview (Annie Thenell) – *Verbal Presentation Only*
5. Treasurer’s Report (Omar Riojas, Joshua Curtis) – *Materials Included and Board Action Anticipated*
 - a. Proposed Resolution 26-001: Approval of 2025 Capital Contribution
 - b. Balance Sheet/Profit and Loss Review
 - c. Proposed Resolution 26-002: Voucher Approval

E. Reports

1. Chair’s Report (Board Chair, Christopher Marr)
2. Executive Director’s Report (Joshua Curtis)

- F. **Executive Session:** The Board may meet in Executive Session to “review contract performance of publicly bid contracts” RCW 42.30.110 (1)(d); and/or to "review the performance of a public employee" RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g), and/or to discuss with legal counsel real estate lease matters and/or “potential litigation to which the agency . . . is, or is likely to become, a party, where public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency” RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i). Formal Board action is not anticipated following the Executive Session.

G. Adjournment

WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM PUBLIC FACILITIES
DISTRICT

Monday, December 8, 2:30 P.M.
Public Facilities District, Conference Room
110 Edgar Martinez Drive South, Seattle, Washington 98134

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The PFD held a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors in-person and in a manner consistent with guidance from the Attorney General's office. Virtual access was provided via a Microsoft Teams conference system (video or phone) upon request. Members of the public desiring to leave a comment but not able to attend the meeting in person were asked to submit comments to curtisj@ballpark.org at least 24 hours prior to the meeting start time.

CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME

Board Chair Marr called the meeting to order at 2:32 pm pursuant to notice. Board Members Stacy Graven and Donny Stevenson joined the meeting in person. Board Members Omar Riojas, Brian Surratt, and Andrea Sato joined virtually. Staff and consultants present: Joshua Curtis (Executive Director), Annie Thenell (Business Operations Manager), Tom Backer (Legal Counsel), Jennifer Ziegler (Legislative), and Sandeep Kaushik (Legislative). Also joining in person were Dave Wilke (Seattle Mariners Senior Director of Facilities) and Carmela Ennis (King County). Joining virtually via Teams were Christian Halliburton (Mariners Senior Director & Deputy General Counsel), Lizanne Lyons (Consultant), Mike Wooley (Venue Solutions Group), John Christison (BCI + Network) and Jamie Sullivan (CAA-ICON).

Chair Marr noted in his call to order that Board member Surratt had recently been identified by Mayor-elect Katie Wilson as her incoming Deputy Mayor. As a result, Brian announced that he would be leaving the Board to take on his new position in the mayor's office. Brian thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as a steward of the ballpark, working to ensure that Seattle Mariners were held to account and that the standards identified in the lease with the Club were met. He expressed his hope that the City and the PFD could work together as engaged partners in the ballpark neighborhood.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No written public comment was received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Chair Marr asked for a motion to approve minutes from the October 27, 2025, Board Meeting. Member Graven moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Stevenson. Motion carried 6-0.

BOARD BRIEFINGS AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

1. Mariners Update (Dave Wilke)
Mr. Wilke reported that the Club is well underway on implementing the 2026 Capital Plan. Projects include structural steel painting & rust protection, the \$12-million new Mariners Vision Board that will be launched for Fanfest weekend at the end of January, four elevator rebuilds, two escalator replacements, seating upgrades,

security camera work, new plumbing for portable concessions stands, and artwork. Chair Marr asked what changes will be noticeable from the fan perspective when seeing the new Vision Board. Mr. Wilke replied that when it is turned off it will look the same as the old board, but when it is turned on the visual experience will be much improved, with better clarity.

2. 2025 Operations and Maintenance Review (Mike Wooley, John Christison)

Mr. Wooley and Mr. Christison summarized the presentation included in the Board packet. They thanked and commended the Mariners staff for being very helpful and accommodating during their inspection of the ballpark. Chair Marr asked if the concrete cracking on the 300-level concourse is concerning. Mr. Wooley replied that the Mariners have been proactive with grouting and sealing the cracks, which is standard practice, and that there should not be any structural issues.

3. Post-Election Analysis (Sandeep Kaushik)

Mr. Kaushik reported that the city election was a 'change' election, focused on public safety and homelessness. Chair Marr asked if there was a shift on the city Council. Mr. Kaushik answered that there were progressive wins in the election, but now there are three groups of 3 on the Council, with no majority.

4. Current Initiatives Update (Joshua Curtis)

Mr. Curtis summarized the presentation included in the Board packet.

- a. WOSCA
- b. Pedestrian Improvement Project
- c. Light Rail
- d. South Holgate Street Crossing Study

5. 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule (Chris Marr)

Chair Marr presented the materials included in the Board packet and moved approval. Member Graven seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

6. Treasurer's Report (Omar Riojas, Joshua Curtis)

a. Final 2026 Operations Budget Review

Mr. Curtis reviewed the materials included in the Board packet. Member Graven moved approval, seconded by Member Stevenson. Motion carried 6-0.

b. Balance Sheet/Profit and Loss Review

Mr. Curtis reviewed the materials included in the Board packet.

c. Proposed Resolution 25-008: Voucher Approval

Member Riojas introduced Proposed Resolution 25-008 to approve the regular voucher payments, noting that he had reviewed all the financials with

Mr. Curtis and did not have any concerns. Member Graven moved approval, seconded by Member Sato. Motion carried 6-0.

REPORTS

Chair's Report

Chair Marr deferred giving a report, due to time constraints.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Curtis summarized the Executive Director's report included in the Board packet.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board moved into Executive Session at 3:57 p.m. for the reasons stated in the meeting notice. The Executive Session was expected to last 30 minutes and formal Board action was not expected following the session. The Executive Session ended at 4:21 p.m. and the Board returned to regular open session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Chair Marr declared the meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Annie Thenell,
Recording Clerk

Christopher Marr, Board Chair
Board of Directors, Public Facilities District



THE BOARD'S SPECIAL PLANNING MEETING

Thursday, March 19, 2026, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
T-Mobile Park: Club 1 Conference Room, 5th Floor
Enter through Third Base Entry on 1st Ave S and register with Mariners' security

DRAFT AGENDA

02.03.26; Edition #2

THE MEETING'S GOAL:

The PFD's Mission Statement

Revised 2016

Maintain and enhance our iconic baseball park in order to promote the success of Major League Baseball in the State of Washington, enhance fan enjoyment, and contribute to an economically successful, safe, desirable, innovative, and walkable stadium neighborhood.

8:30 Refreshments Served

- *Please come early to enjoy refreshments and be ready to start the meeting at 9:00.*

9:00 Welcome, Introductions, Review Meeting's Goal - Chris Marr, Board Chair

9:03 Review Agenda, Ground Rules, Facilitation Techniques - Jim Reid, Facilitator

9:05 Review the PFD's Major Accomplishments of 2025 - Chris/Joshua Curtis, ED

- *What were the accomplishments of the PFD during 2025 that helped advance the PFD's mission and the Board's vision?*
- *Do Board members want to add any accomplishments or reflections?*
- *Did we not achieve something that we expected to? Why? What lessons did we learn?*

9:30 Setting the Stage for Today's Discussions - Board

At last year's retreat, the Board reiterated its commitment to the Mission Statement, identified actions to advance the mission, discussed "generational" issues and the Board's potential roles in addressing them, and reiterated the PFD's commitment to strengthening relationships with the Seattle Mariners and the diverse organizations and agencies that could influence the ballpark's future. (ATTACHMENT: The Board's Planning Meeting of 03.20.25: Summary of the Key Discussions and Agreements)

- *Given where we are today, is there any reason to refine the Mission Statement?*
- *Are the issues and challenges we foresaw last year still of interest and relevance to the PFD's mission?*
- *What do we foresee as major issues and challenges (political, social, economic, operational) facing the PFD in the next 1-3 years?*
- *Where do we want the PFD to be three years from now?*
- *NOTE: This discussion will frame the goal-setting we'll engage in this afternoon when we discuss the PFD's potential workplan for the next three years.*

10:10 Break

10:20 Creating a Safe and Vibrant Stadium District - Board

A few days before our March 2025 retreat, the Seattle City Council approved the Stadium Makers District legislation, which allowed for construction of limited housing in the Stadium District. At the retreat the Board discussed what role the PFD might play in creating the conditions required for a safe neighborhood. For instance, what urban design interventions could help to ensure the safety and vitality of the area for future residents and visitors?

After the retreat, the Stadium Makers District legislation was struck down by the Growth Management Hearings Board . This decision is currently being appealed by the City. Given

the uncertainty of this legislation's future and the work already under way to improve the pedestrian experience from the light rail station, we would like to have a discussion regarding how the PFD's work in advancing the goals of a safe and vibrant Stadium District might evolve.

11:35 Prep for Lunch with Mariners' Representatives - Board

Today we will be joined by the following representatives of the Seattle Mariners:

At last year's retreat the Board expressed an interest in continuing to strengthen the PFD's relationship with the Mariners.

- *How do we assess our relationship with the Mariners today?*
- *What issues or joint initiatives or actions should we focus on in today's conversation?*
- *What outcomes do we seek as a result of the discussion?*

12:00 Break

12:05 Lunch with Representatives of the Seattle Mariners - Everyone

At this time, we welcome these representatives of the Seattle Mariners:

- *What is the Mariners vision for both the organization and the surrounding community?*
- *What are the Mariners' plans for the vacant lot at First Avenue South and Edgar Martinez Way? Is there a role for the PFD to play in helping to bring the Mariner's vision to fruition?*
- *Are there other issues or initiatives for which the Mariners seek a partnership with the PFD?*

1:00 Break

1:10 Debrief the Lunchtime Conversation - Everyone

- *What are the key takeaways from our conversation with the Mariners' representatives?*
- *Are any follow-up actions needed?*

1:20 Our Work Plan for the Next 1-3 Years - Everyone

- *Based on our discussion this morning about mission and future challenges and our conversation with the Mariners' representatives, what should be the major goals and initiatives of the PFD between now and three years from now?*
- *As a result of this discussion, what are our highest priorities for the next few years?*
- *Is there agreement among the Board?*
- *What are the next steps in fashioning them into a specific work plan?*

1:55 What Are We Taking Away from Today's Meeting? - Everyone

2:00 Adjourn

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3 RESOLUTION NO. ____

4 A RESOLUTION ratifying the transfer of funds from the
5 District’s Operating Fund to its Capital Expenditure Fund.

6 WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 36.100 RCW, as amended, the
7 Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District (“District”) has
8 been created and possesses all the powers of a public facilities district; and

9 WHEREAS, Section 5.1.3 of the Amended and Restated Ballpark Operations and
10 Lease Agreement (“Lease”) addresses the allocation of base rent paid to the District by the
11 Seattle Mariners; and

12 WHEREAS, the Lease provides that the District will first allocate funds to pay the
13 District’s operating expenses, including any Waterfront LID assessments, and then (to the
14 extent that funds are available) contribute annually to the District’s Capital Expenditure
15 (“CapEx”) Fund in the amount of \$250,000, adjusted annually based on changes in the
16 Consumer Price Index (“CPI”); and

17 WHEREAS, the District’s Operating Account balance was \$3,210,069.60 as of
18 December 31, 2025, so funds were available to make an annual contribution to the CapEx
19 Fund; and

20 WHEREAS, the CPI change for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue All Urban Consumers
21 in 2025 was 3.1%, as described in the attached CPI December 2025 report from the United
22 States Bureau of Labor Statistics, resulting in at total CapEx Fund transfer amount of
23 \$327,495 (2024 CapEx amount of \$317,648 X 1.031); and

24 WHEREAS, Section 7.3.5 of the Lease requires that this contribution to the CapEx
25 Fund be made no later than thirty (30) days after the end of each Lease Year, and the
26 contribution was timely made; and

27 WHEREAS, the Board wishes to ratify the allocation of \$327,495 to the Capital
28 Expenditures fund; and

29 WHEREAS, further allocations to the Operating Reserve Fund, the Ballpark
30 Neighborhood Improvement Fund or other authorized fund can be made at any time.

31
32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
33 THE WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM PUBLIC
34 FACILITIES DISTRICT AS FOLLOWS:

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1. The transfer of \$327,495 from the District Operating Fund to the District Capital Expenditure Fund is hereby ratified; and

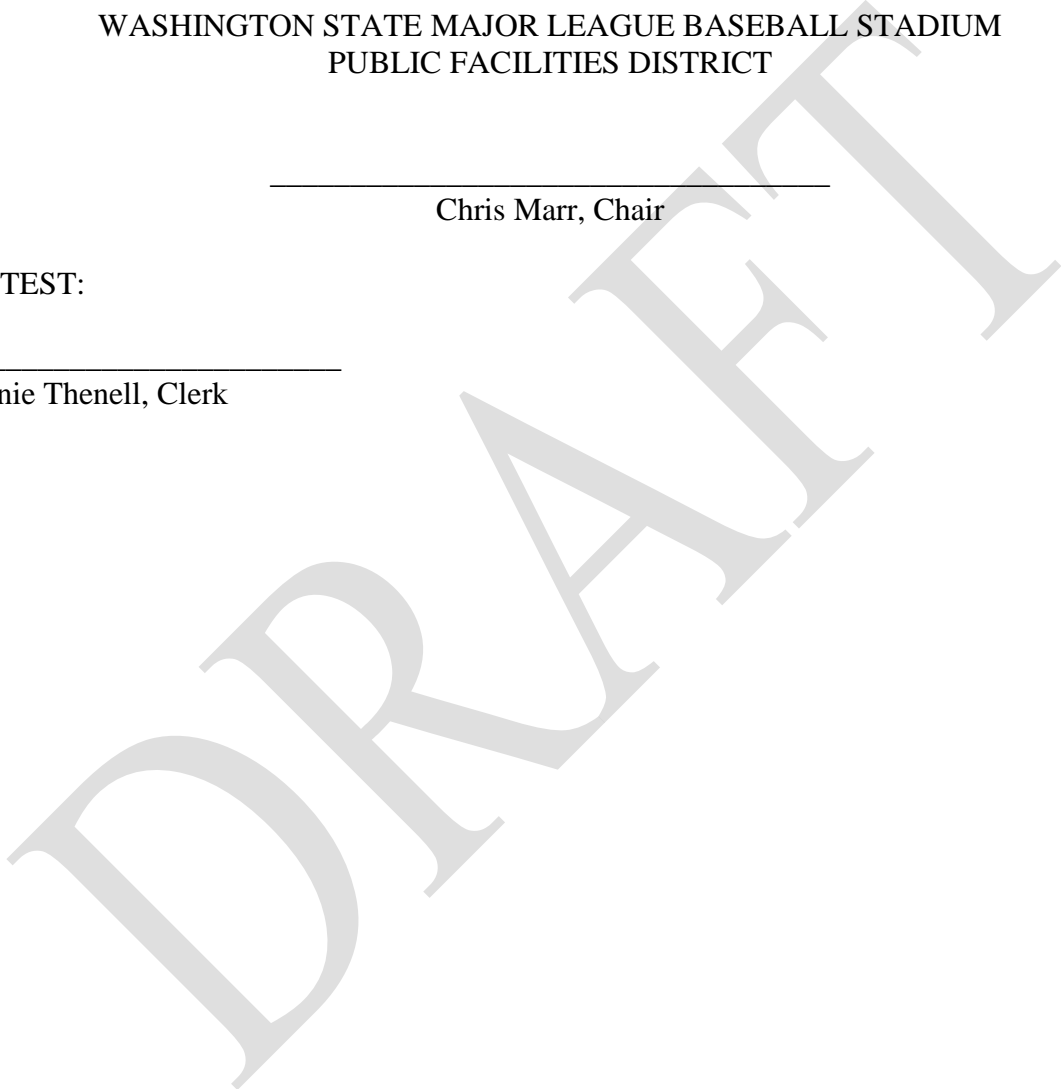
PASSED by a vote of ____ to ____ this 9th day of February 2026.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM
PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Chris Marr, Chair

ATTEST:

Annie Thenell, Clerk





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News Release Information

26-80-SAN
Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Contacts

Technical information:

(415) 625-2270
BLInfoSF@bls.gov
www.bls.gov/regions/west

Media contact:

(415) 625-2270

Related Links

[CPI historical databases](#)

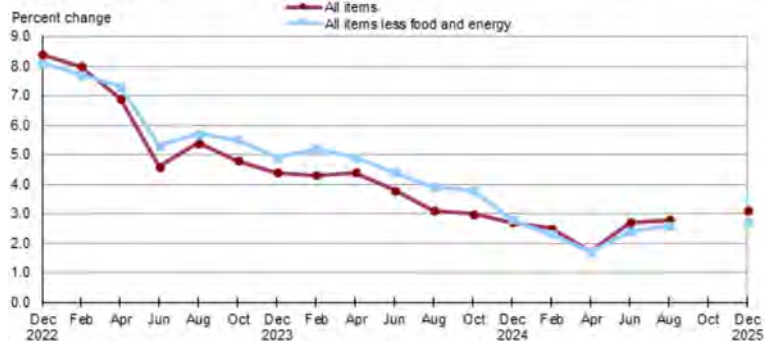
Consumer Price Index, Seattle area — December 2025

Area prices were up 3.1 percent over the year in December

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue increased 3.1 percent for the 12 months ending in December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. Regional Commissioner Chris Rosenlund noted the index for all items less food and energy rose 2.7 percent over the year. The food index increased 4.4 percent, and the energy index rose 7.2 percent.

BLS did not collect survey data for October 2025 due to a lapse in appropriations. BLS is unable to retroactively collect these data. For a few indexes, BLS uses nonsurvey data sources instead of survey data to make the index calculations. BLS was able to retroactively acquire most of the nonsurvey data for October. Accordingly, all analysis in this release is over the year and not seasonally adjusted.

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, December 2022–December 2025



Note: The October 2025 data values are not available due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[View Chart Data](#)

Food

The food index rose 4.4 percent over the year. Prices for food at home (grocery store purchases) increased 1.5 percent, and prices for food away from home (restaurant, cafeteria, and vending purchases) rose 7.6 percent.

Energy

Energy prices increased 7.2 percent from December 2024 to December 2025. Over the year, gasoline prices rose 2.9 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.7 percent over the year. Among the index's components, prices were higher for medical care (+5.3 percent) and shelter (+1.7 percent).

Table A. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
February	1.2	1.7	1.7	8.1	1.4	8.0	1.2	4.3	1.1	2.5
April	1.1	3.4	2.1	9.1	1.0	6.9	1.2	4.4	0.4	1.7
June	2.2	5.5	3.2	10.1	1.0	4.6	0.4	3.8	1.4	2.7
August	1.1	5.2	0.0	9.0	0.8	5.4	0.1	3.1	0.2	2.8
October	1.1	6.5	1.0	8.9	0.4	4.8	0.3	3.0	-	-
December	0.6	7.6	0.1	8.4	-0.3	4.4	-0.5	2.7	-	3.1

Note: The October 2025 data values are not available due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.

Federal Government Shutdown

BLS did not collect survey data for October 2025 due to a lapse in appropriations. BLS was unable to retroactively collect these data. For a few indexes, BLS uses nonsurvey data sources instead of survey data to make the index calculations. BLS was able to retroactively acquire most of the nonsurvey data for October. CPI data collection resumed on November 14, 2025.

Additional information about the [impact of the shutdown on CPI data](#) is available online.

Changes to health insurance index

With the release of November 2025 data on December 18, 2025, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) removed long-term care (LTC) insurance from the health insurance index. There have been changes in the market for LTC insurance that now make it out of scope and ineligible for pricing in the CPI market basket.

The February 2026 Consumer Price Index for the Seattle area is scheduled to be released on March 11, 2026.

Technical Note

The [Consumer Price Index](#) (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Consumer Price Index for Seattle is published bi-monthly. The set of components and sub-aggregates published for regional and metropolitan indexes is more limited than at the U.S. city average level; these indexes are byproducts of the national CPI program. Each local index has a much smaller sample size than the national or regional indexes and is, therefore, subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error. As a result, local-area indexes are more volatile than the national or regional indexes. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

A full all-items data series history for the original index value and for 1-month, 2-month, 3-month, 6-month, and 12-month percent changes can be accessed via BLS data query tools. A direct link to the all-items series is provided in Table 1 of this release under historical data.

The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, metropolitan area covered in this release is comprised of King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties in the State of Washington.

Refer to the national [CPI news release technical note](#) or the [Handbook of Methods](#) for more information.

Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Telecommunications Relay Service: 7-1-1.

Table 1. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, CPI-U by expenditure category for December 2025, not seasonally adjusted (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Historical data	Indexes			Percent change from -		
		Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Dec. 2024	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025
All Items		-	-	365.447	3.1	-	-
All items (1967=100)		-	-	1,114.026			
Food and beverages		-	-	383.913	4.1	-	-
Food		-	-	386.827	4.4	-	-
Food at home		-	316.464	332.893	1.5	-	5.2
Cereals and bakery products		-	404.940	395.074	-0.9	-	-2.4

Footnotes

- (1) Index is on a November 1977=100 base.
- (2) Index is on a November 1982=100 base.
- (3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
- (4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
- (5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date. Data not seasonally adjusted.

Note: October 2025 data values are not available due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from -		
	Historical data	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Dec. 2024	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs		-	306.363	309.025	4.1	-	0.9
Dairy and related products		-	272.463	298.641	0.0	-	9.6
Fruits and vegetables		-	475.596	516.499	1.5	-	8.6
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		-	432.573	463.989	13.2	-	7.3
Other food at home		-	230.988	248.323	-2.0	-	7.5
Food away from home		-	-	472.715	7.6	-	-
Alcoholic beverages		-	-	339.114	0.3	-	-
Housing		-	-	443.319	2.9	-	-
Shelter		-	505.438	506.941	1.7	-	0.3
Rent of primary residence		-	511.828	513.905	1.9	-	0.4
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2)		-	539.974	540.790	2.1	-	0.2
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(2)		-	539.974	540.790	2.1	-	0.2
Household furnishings and operations		-	-	237.873	5.7	-	-
Apparel		-	-	130.097	5.9	-	-
Transportation		-	-	303.773	1.4	-	-
Private transportation		-	-	318.959	1.6	-	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)		-	-	124.562	-0.6	-	-
New vehicles(1)		226.817	-	225.827	0.5	-0.4	-
Used cars and trucks(1)		426.091	-	415.864	2.2	-2.4	-
Motor fuel		-	487.971	466.660	2.7	-	-4.4
Gasoline (all types)		519.642	498.577	476.686	2.9	-8.3	-4.4
Unleaded regular(4)		560.602	537.347	513.295	2.9	-8.4	-4.5
Unleaded midgrade(4)(5)		414.710	398.796	381.071	2.5	-8.1	-4.4
Unleaded premium(4)		489.295	471.087	451.896	3.2	-7.6	-4.1
Medical Care		-	-	499.676	5.3	-	-
Recreation(3)		-	-	127.861	4.3	-	-
Education and communication(3)		-	-	148.288	1.5	-	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		-	-	1,999.264	3.7	-	-
Other goods and services		-	-	551.623	3.0	-	-

Footnotes
(1) Index is on a November 1977=100 base.
(2) Index is on a November 1982=100 base.
(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.









- Data not available.
Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date. Data not seasonally adjusted.
Note: October 2025 data values are not available due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.

Table 2. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, CPI-U by special aggregate index for December 2025, not seasonally adjusted (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Special aggregate index	Indexes				Percent change from -		
	Historical data	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Dec. 2024	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025
All items		-	-	365.447	3.1	-	-
Food		-	-	386.827	4.4	-	-
Energy		-	432.601	420.194	7.2	-	-2.9
All items less food and energy		-	-	363.050	2.7	-	-
All items less energy		-	-	366.487	2.9	-	-
All items less medical care		-	-	359.716	3.0	-	-
All items less shelter		-	-	310.222	4.0	-	-
Commodities		-	-	247.642	3.6	-	-
Commodities less food		-	-	192.717	3.0	-	-

Footnotes
(1) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.

- Data not available.
Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.
Note: October 2025 data values are not available due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.

Special aggregate index	Indexes				Percent change from -		
	Historical data	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Dec. 2024	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025
Commodities less food & beverages		-	-	187.200	3.1	-	-
Durables		-	-	150.073	3.3	-	-
Nondurables		-	-	301.105	3.7	-	-
Nondurables less food & beverages		-	-	225.843	3.0	-	-
Nondurables less food		-	-	235.068	2.8	-	-
Services		-	-	474.810	2.9	-	-
Services less rent of shelter ⁽¹⁾		-	-	446.761	4.4	-	-
Services less medical care services		-	-	467.282	2.5	-	-
Footnotes							
(1) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.							
- Data not available.							
Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.							
Note: October 2025 data values are not available due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.							

Last Modified Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS Western Information Office Attn: EA & I, 90 Seventh Street Suite 14-100 San Francisco, CA 94103-6715

Telephone: 415-625-2270_ www.bls.gov/regions/west [Contact Western Region](#)

Balance Sheet

31-Dec-25

	<u>Total</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Cash - Capital Projects Fund	6,792,990.86
Cash - County Tax Revenues Fund	8,103.75
Cash - Impaired Investments	15,020.04
Cash - Neighborhood Improvement Fund	3,664,044.56
Cash - PFD Operations Fund	3,197,663.86
Cash - PFD Reserve	3,753,766.79
Cash Equivalents	2,728.70
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 17,434,318.56
Total Accounts Receivable	\$ 31,357,829.25
Total Current Assets	\$ 48,792,147.81
Total Fixed Assets	\$ 399,316,404.80
Total Other Assets	\$ 0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 448,108,552.61
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Total Liabilities	\$ 73,947,956.80
Total Equity	\$ 374,160,595.81
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$ 448,108,552.61

Profit and Loss

November & December

	Nov-25	Dec-25	YTD	2025 Amended Budget	Delta	% Spent
Expenses						
Salaries / Benefits						
Salaries & Wages	26,662	26,662	303,874	302,684	-1,190	100%
Employee Benefits - Health	3,827	4,613	58,113	53,407	-4,706	109%
Retirement Benefits	800	800	9,116	9,081	-36	100%
Payroll Taxes	869	869	20,227	24,795	4,568	82%
Total Salaries / Benefits	\$ 32,158	\$ 32,944	\$ 391,330	\$ 389,967	-\$ 1,363	100%
Professional Services						
Accounting/Auditing	3,341	13,356	51,516	59,464	7,948	87%
Consulting Fees - Admin	24,920	32,272	389,116	473,318	84,202	82%
Legal & Professional Services	8,816	3,842	59,227	108,000	48,774	55%
Website & IT Support	2,051	1,001	14,080	8,059	-6,021	175%
Total Professional Services	\$ 39,128	\$ 50,471	\$ 513,938	\$ 648,841	\$ 134,903	79%
General & Administrative						
Bank, Payroll, & Investment Fees	1,355	1,255	13,483	11,495	-1,988	117%
Board Support		1,400	9,198	12,147	2,948	76%
Dues & Subscriptions	2,046	16	8,304	6,555	-1,749	127%
Insurance Expense		780	8,174	10,300	2,126	79%
Office Equipment Rental	820	820	5,068	8,610	3,542	59%
Office Supplies	147	11	6,846	4,120	-2,726	166%
Professional Development		140	995	2,000	1,005	50%
Repairs & Maintenance	617	483	13,115	17,200	4,085	76%
Software Expense	388	388	4,522	4,138	-384	109%
Telephone Expense	210	210	2,370	3,240	870	73%
Travel			26,434	26,500	66	100%
Utilities	215	215	2,578	2,400	-178	107%
Total General & Administrative	\$ 5,799	\$ 5,719	\$ 101,088	\$ 108,704	\$ 7,617	93%
Total Expenses	\$ 77,085	\$ 89,133	\$ 1,006,356	\$ 1,012,274	\$ 5,919	99%

RESOLUTION NO. ____

A RESOLUTION to approve payments made by the District.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 36.100 RCW, as amended, the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District (“District”) has been created and possesses all the powers of a public facilities district; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 478 [Proposed No. 20-002] appointed the District Executive Director, Joshua Curtis, as Auditing Officer; and

WHEREAS, the Board Chair or the Chair’s designee has been designated to review and approve payments, subject to final review and approval by the Board; and

WHEREAS, Board member R. Omar Riojas has been designated by the Board Chair to review and approve payments; and

WHEREAS, the Auditing Officer has reviewed and approved ballpark vouchers #20251107161614, #20251121102038, and # 20251128165848, as produced by King County (the District’s treasurer); credit card statements covering November 2025 and December 2025; and the November and December payroll expense reports as produced by Gusto (the District’s payroll administrator); as summarized as follows:

November 2025

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1. Capital Projects Fund	
2. County Tax Fund	
3. Operating Reserve Fund	
4. Neighborhood Improvement Fund	
5. Operating Fund	
• Salaries/Benefits	
○ Salaries	\$26,662
○ Employee Benefits - Health	\$3,827
○ Employee Benefits – Retirement	\$800
○ Payroll Taxes	\$869
• Professional Services	
○ Accounting/Auditing	\$3,341
○ Consulting Services	\$24,920
○ Legal Fees	\$8,816
○ Website & IT Support	\$2,051
• General & Administrative	
○ Bank, Payroll & Inv. Fees	\$1,355

40	○ Board Support	\$0
41	○ Dues & Subscriptions	\$2,046
42	○ Insurance Expense	\$0
43	○ Office Equipment Rental	\$820
44	○ Office Supplies	\$147
45	○ Professional Development	\$0
46	○ Repairs and Maintenance	\$617
47	○ Software Expense	\$388
48	○ Telephone Expense	\$210
49	○ Travel	\$0
50	○ Utilities	\$215
51	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD	\$77,085

52
53 December 2025

54		
55	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Amount</u>
56	1. Capital Projects Fund	
57	2. County Tax Fund	
58	3. Operating Reserve Fund	
59	4. Neighborhood Improvement Fund	
60	5. Operating Fund	
61	• Salaries/Benefits	
62	○ Salaries	\$26,662
63	○ Employee Benefits - Health	\$4,613
64	○ Employee Benefits – Retirement	\$800
65	○ Payroll Taxes	\$869
66	• Professional Services	
67	○ Accounting/Auditing	\$13,356
68	○ Consulting Services	\$32,272
69	○ Legal Fees	\$3,842
70	○ Website & IT Support	\$1,001
71	• General & Administrative	
72	○ Bank, Payroll & Inv. Fees	\$1,255
73	○ Board Support	\$1,400
74	○ Dues & Subscriptions	\$16
75	○ Insurance Expense	\$780
76	○ Office Equipment Rental	\$820
77	○ Office Supplies	\$11
78	○ Professional Development	\$140
79	○ Repairs and Maintenance	\$483
80	○ Software Expense	\$388
81	○ Telephone Expense	\$210
82	○ Travel	\$0
83	○ Utilities	\$215
84	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD	\$89,133

85
86

87 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
88 THE WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM PUBLIC
89 FACILITIES DISTRICT AS FOLLOWS:

90 Vouchers #20251107161614, #20251121102038, and # 20251128165848, as
91
92 produced by King County (the District's treasurer); credit card statements covering
93 November 2025 and December 2025; and the November and December payroll expense
94 reports as produced by Gusto (the District's payroll administrator); are hereby approved.

95 PASSED by a vote of ____ to ____ this 9th day of February, 2026.
96
97

98 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
99 WASHINGTON STATE MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM
100 PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

101 _____
102 Christopher Marr, Chair
103

104 ATTEST:

Annie Thenell, Clerk



Executive Director Report January 2026

Financial and Lease Management

- 2024 Audit – The 2024 audit has been [posted to our website](#).

Board Development

- Board Appointments – Sandeep and I will be meeting with KC Executive Zahilay's Chief of Staff, Jasmine Weaver, this Friday (2/6). The goal of the meeting will be to introduce the PFD to the Executive's staff and to ask for their support in filling the two open seats (both County appointments). I will share any relevant outcomes at Monday's board meeting.
- Annual Retreat & Reference Ballpark Trips – Annie and I will be providing updates on both events at Monday's board meeting.

Policy Tracking/Engagement

- Holgate Closure Technical Working Group – In addition to my participation with the SDOT-convened working group, I have also joined a smaller group comprised of the Port, Amtrak and the Club to discuss shorter-term solutions to address pedestrian and bike safety issues at the Holgate rail crossings. The group is being convened by the Sound Industrial Alliance and has thus far been productive. We are in the process of drafting a letter to SDOT in which we will encourage them to include some short-term scenario planning as the solutions currently being considered would likely be at least ten years out.
- State Legislative Session – Jennifer has been tracking a handful of bills during this session. Of note, Rep. Santos' bill allocating a portion of the existing sales tax collected at the stadiums has been re-introduced. I will be having coffee with the Historic South Downton's Executive Director, Kathleen Johnson, on Wednesday, 2/12 to discuss the bill. My understanding is that there continues to be no additional tax collection and that this is a reallocation of funds.

Neighborhood Improvement Fund

- PIP Update – Gensler has hit the ground running and we have already held project launch and visioning sessions, both of which Stacy and Omar attended. I've attached to this report a summary of status, timeline, and next steps from Maria at Bloom Projects. We will discuss these and how they might align with the existing board schedule at Monday's meeting.

Relationship Management/Outreach

- Port of Seattle – I recently had lunch with the Port Commission’s Chief of Staff, Aaron Pritchard. Aaron and I met on the Chamber’s Germany trip last year and have stayed in touch. We discussed collaboration opportunities for the Port and PFD/stadiums. One area of interest was the improvement of pedestrian connectivity between the waterfront/Pier 46 and Pioneer Square/North SODO. He expressed interest in learning more about our pedestrian improvement projects and we discussed briefing Port Commission leadership on the designs at the appropriate time.
- Amtrak License – The Club and PFD have finalized negotiations with Amtrak for a revocable license and use agreement. The agreement grants Amtrak emergency access where the north end of their property abuts the PFD’s garage parcel. Amtrak had approached the PFD and Mariners last year when the City of Seattle’s Fire Department required a second point of emergency egress as part of their new facility. This egress will be provided through a sliding gate onto and across our property. The Mariners have been integrally involved in the discussions and the egress is not anticipated to have a negative impact on their operations. The license will automatically renew on an annual basis and both parties have the ability to terminate without cause with 90 days’ written notice. We have the license on file in case you would like to review.

PFD PIP Project Update

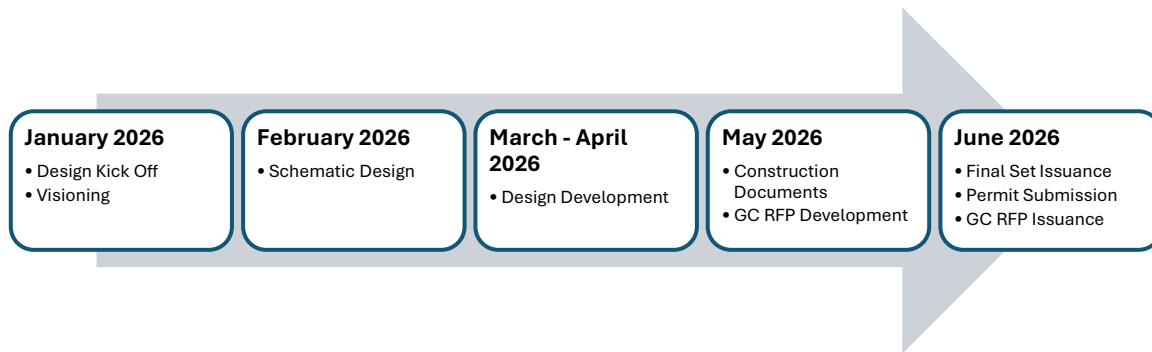
February 2026 Board Meeting Report

Status, Timeline, and Next Steps

Project Status

- **Design Kick-Off** held on January 12, 2026
- **Visioning Session** conducted on February 3
 - Focused on reviewing images, voting, and discussing preferences to capture project expectations for concept development by Gensler
- **Schematic design** phase underway
 - Three design concepts to be provided by Gensler in early March for selection of the preferred option that best matches project goals and budget
- **AHJs** permit and coordination early conversations in progress

High-Level Project Timeline



Next Steps (Now to May)

1. Gensler to finalize and present three schematic design concepts by early March
2. PFD Board to review and select preferred concept that meets expectations and budget
3. Design Development to start following concept selection and continue through May



Media Report January 2026

Attachments & Summary

- “How the Sports Stadium Went Luxe” John Seabrook, New York Times, December 1, 2025
 - Is the race to create ever more lavish spectator offerings in America’s largest entertainment venues changing the fan experience?
- “Mariners announce new TV and streaming options for 2026 season” Ryan Divish, Seattle Times, January 29, 2026
 - The Mariners announced options for various viewing platforms, confirming they will broadcast games on cable and satellite TV, on a new Mariners TV channel, while also offering Mariners.TV as a streaming option for fans. Fans who reside outside the Pacific NW can still access Mariners games through MLB.TV.
- “Can Seattle’s Terminal 46 come back to life?” Mike Merritt, Post Alley, December 9, 2025
 - The Northwest Seaport Alliance is seeing a glimmer of hope in putting the shuttered Terminal 46 back into cargo operations, signing a 12-month agreement with a global infrastructure investor to seek opportunities for new cargo and industrial uses at the largely empty terminal.
- “Mariners to honor record-setting 2001 team with statue in T-Mobile Park” Adam Jude, Seattle Times, February 1, 2026
 - The Mariners will pay tribute to the franchise’s iconic 2001 team and honor the 25th anniversary of the Sept 11th terrorist attacks with a new statue at T-Mobile Park.
- “Rick Rizzs, ever faithful voice of Seattle baseball, will retire after one last pennant race” Tyler Kepner, MLB.com, January 27, 2026
 - Iconic Mariners radio voice Rick Rizz announced his retirement after the 2026 season. Rizz, who turned 72 in November, has worked in baseball for 51 seasons, including 40 with the Mariners.

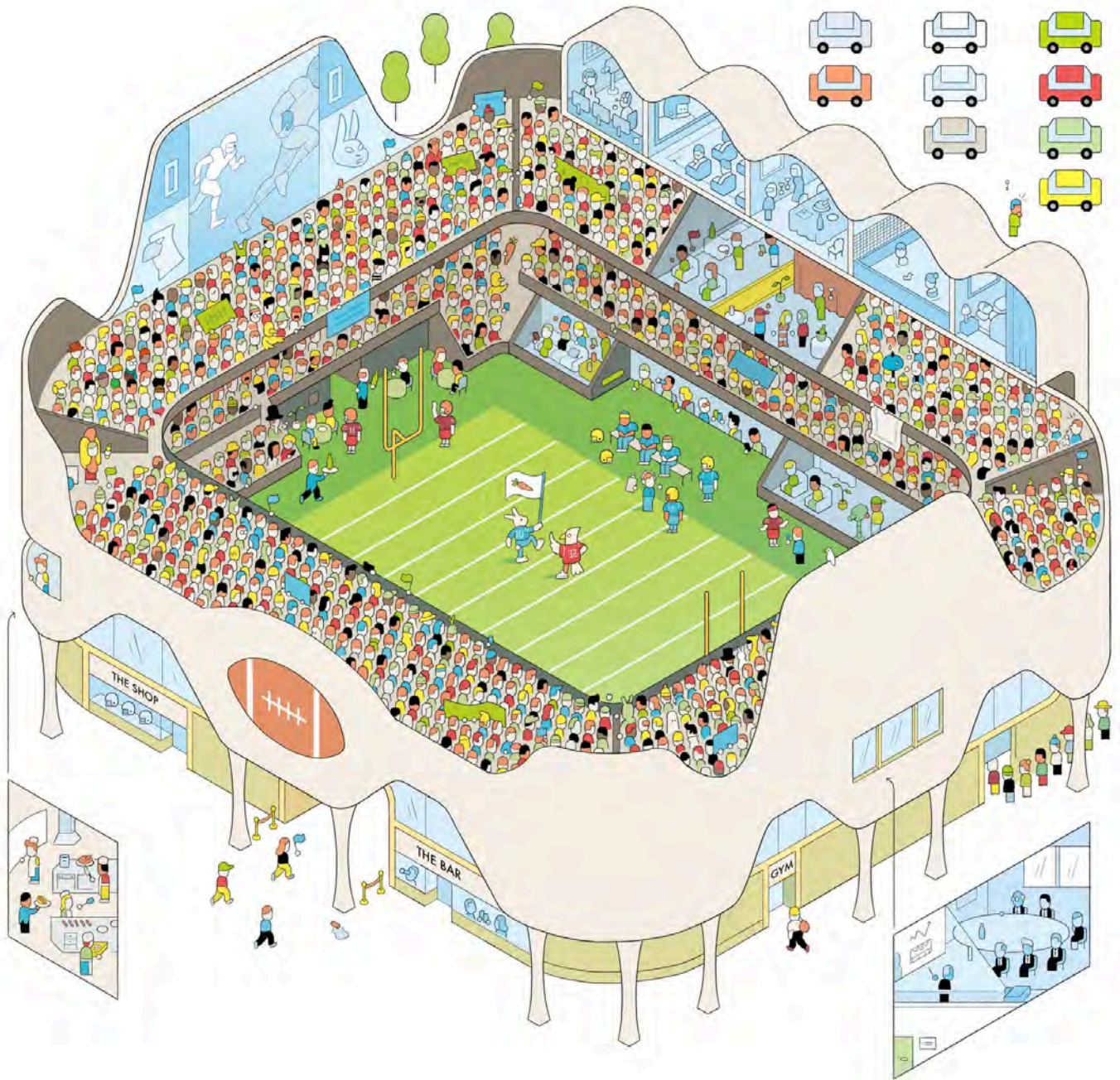
THE SPORTING SCENE

HOW THE SPORTS STADIUM WENT LUXE


Is the race to create ever more lavish spectator offerings in America's largest entertainment venues changing the fan experience?


By John Seabrook

December 1, 2025



In today's stadium, every inch of space is monetized. At SoFi Stadium and the Capital One Arena, the most exclusive suites can be leased for around a million dollars a year. Illustration by Giacomo Gambineri

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In April, 1966, Roger Angell attended an indoor baseball game, his first, at the Astrodome. “It was not just the prospect of witnessing weatherless baseball played on Chemstrand grass under an acrylic-painted Lucite sky that induced me to travel to Houston last month,” Angell wrote, archly, of visiting what was then the world’s only domed stadium. (It had opened a year earlier.) Angell covered baseball for this magazine for many years, in addition to editing fiction, and although he was ostensibly there to scout the Astros—the team had finished thirty-two games behind the National League-pennant-winning Dodgers the year before—he was distracted from his scorecard by the orange spacesuits and white helmets worn by the groundskeepers, the rainbow-colored tiers of seats, and the billiard-table green of the first synthetic field in pro sports, made of a brand-new Monsanto product called AstroTurf. (The real grass had begun to die during the previous season when the skylights were painted over, to block the glare of the sun. Searching for a blade to chew while watching batting practice, Angell discovered AstroTurf to be “pluckproof.”) Most intrusive of all was the scoreboard—four stories high and lit by more than forty thousand bulbs—the first to offer hype videos and animated ads. “By the middle innings,” he wrote, “I found that I was giving the game only half my attention; along with everyone else, I kept lifting my eyes to that immense, waiting presence above the players.”

The air-conditioned digs only slightly benefitted the ’66 Astros, who finished twenty-three games behind the reigning first-place Dodgers. But their building, a project that cost north of thirty million dollars and was partly funded by the taxpayers of Harris County, would forever change both the way stadiums were conceived and the spectacles they hosted. Tourists flocked to see what the sportswriter Joe Trimble called the “Taj Mahal of sport.” Billy Graham held a Crusade for Christ rally there in 1965. Evel Knievel jumped thirteen cars, on two consecutive nights, in 1971. Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs competed in the Battle of the Sexes there in 1973.

Apart from the roof, the Astrodome’s structure was conventional—a circular concrete doughnut, surrounded by a parking-lot playa, that resembled other publicly funded multisport stadiums of the era, including Shea Stadium, in New York; Veterans, in Philadelphia; and R.F.K., in Washington, D.C. Unlike those relatively spartan facilities, however, the Astrodome had cushioned seats for all patrons, instead of hard ones. It was also the first stadium to have luxury “skyboxes.” The Astros’ first owner, Roy Hofheinz, installed around fifty of them near the top of the stadium. These were leased on a yearly basis, turning the least desirable seats into the most expensive and coveted spots in the house.

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Angell was put off by the skyboxes. Perhaps he sensed where luxury seating would lead—to the ongoing arms race among stadium and venue owners to create ever more lavish spectator offerings, transforming what was once a public right into a privilege.

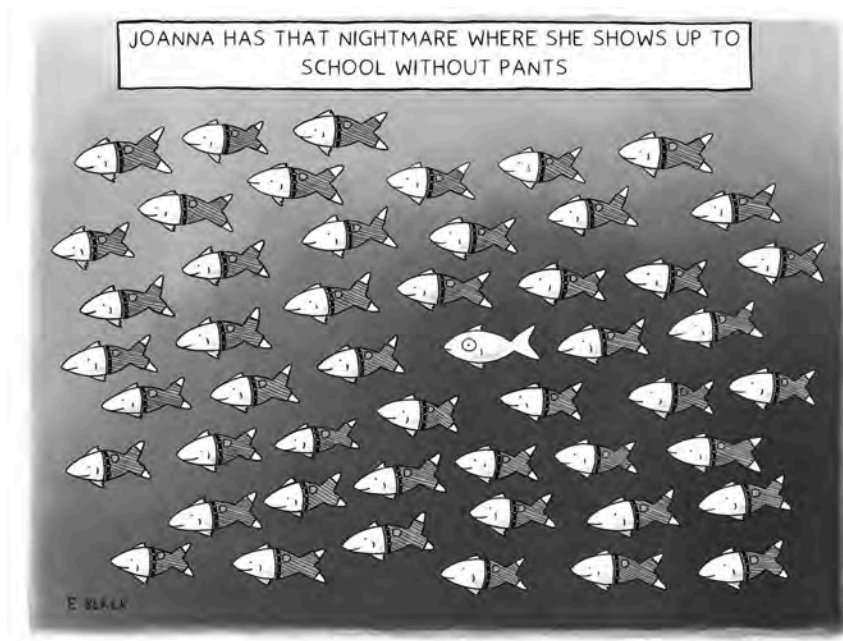
“I can only say I found them immensely glum—sad, soft caves for indoor sportsmen,” he wrote.

It was not just the prospect of watching Beyoncé perform under an open-sided translucent ethylene-tetrafluoroethylene (E.T.F.E.) roof canopy that drew me, in May, to SoFi Stadium, in Inglewood, a city in the greater Los Angeles metro area. An entire economy of luxury fan experiences in sports and entertainment has grown out of the sad, soft caves Angell spelunked in Houston, and I wanted to have one of those experiences, too.

SoFi Stadium, which opened in 2020, during the pandemic, is the home of two N.F.L. teams, the Rams and the Chargers. It is the largest stadium in the league by square footage, a seventy-thousand-seat behemoth capable of accommodating more than a hundred thousand people, and will co-host the opening ceremony of the 2028 Summer Olympics. It is estimated to have cost between five and six billion dollars to build and was privately funded by Stan Kroenke, a reclusive, Missouri-born billionaire commercial-real-estate developer, and his investors. (Kroenke is married to Ann Walton, a niece of Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart, and many of his retail projects are anchored around its stores.) SoFi, a California-based financial-services company, pays around thirty million dollars a year for the naming rights, according to *Bloomberg*.

Kroenke also owns Hollywood Park, an adjacent, nearly three-hundred-acre “entertainment and retail district” that retains the name of the site’s former occupant, a horse-racing track. Hollywood Park includes apartment buildings; a hotel; a state-of-the-art gym; shops; the YouTube Theatre, a five-thousand-seat venue; and Cosm, a “shared reality” space for viewing televised sports in an immersive, planetariumlike setting where drinks and Wagyu double smashburgers are always at hand. The Intuit Dome, the new home of the L.A. Clippers, is within walking distance, as is the Forum, the Lakers’ former base. Similar ersatz sports towns adjoin other stadiums, including Titledown, next to Lambeau Field, in Green Bay, and Centennial Yards, outside Mercedes-Benz Stadium, in Atlanta.

SoFi is under an LAX flight path. In order to meet F.A.A. requirements, three-quarters of the stadium is below ground level; the playing field is a hundred feet down. Walking in from the parking lot, you are immediately greeted by a Grand Canyon of fan experiences. TV, which flattens space, can’t convey the scale or the sound of stadiums, particularly at a place like this. The suite levels are layered throughout the lower bowl like the buttercream filling in a Dobos torte, forming an inverted cone of the strata of American affluence. Dun-colored concrete cliffs above form the general-admission seating.



Cartoon by Ellie Black



[Open cartoon gallery](#)

The basic typology of stadiums was established in Rome nearly two thousand years ago by the Colosseum—an elongated concrete oval with regularly spaced “vomitories,” which were passageways for spewing out spectators, not chow. Naming rights, of a sort, went to Nero, whose giant bronze colossus stood nearby. SoFi leans into its Roman heritage, as befits America’s grandest and most expensive stadium; the imperial vibes are strong. There are columns below the roof, and a canopy, made of three hundred and two panels of E.T.F.E., echoes the Colosseum’s fabled fabric awning, known as the velarium, which required experienced sailors to unfurl it over the arena. SoFi’s roof allows in indirect sunlight, although not enough to grow grass. The stadium isn’t air-conditioned (except, of course, in the suites and the clubs), and on a hot day it can feel like a terrarium.

Lance Evans, the lead architect on SoFi, which was designed by the Dallas-based firm HKS, delineated the building’s premium offerings for me. “Historically, there have been three different seat types,” he explained, of stadiums built before the nineteen-nineties. “You could buy a general-admission seat, or you could get a club seat,” which allowed the holder access to an exclusive area within the concourse offering superior food and drink. “Or you could get a suite.” Club seats were ten times more expensive than ordinary seats, and suites were twenty times that. “And that leap was just unattainable for a lot of people,” Evans said. At SoFi, a menu of premium experiences, each with its own price point, insures that on “every step along an individual’s journey through life they have an opportunity to create an experience that aligns with their place in the world,” he went on. “As they get their first promotion, there’s a spot in the stadium for them to celebrate. When they become a partner in a law firm, there’s a place for them, and as they become C.E.O.s there’s a place, too.” (If your journey leads only as far as the parking lot, you can tailgate.) Airlines and credit-card companies pioneered these elite-status hierarchies; stadiums have rendered them in concrete and steel.

Most of the upper bowl in SoFi is not designated as premium. But even nosebleed seats at an N.F.L. game or for a top act like Kendrick Lamar go for at least two hundred dollars. The premium seating at a stadium like SoFi, where it takes up about twenty per cent of the total house, can account for more than fifty per cent of the ticketing revenue, according to Bill Dorsey, the founder of the Association of Luxury Suite Directors. (By contrast, at Lambeau Field, in Wisconsin, which is co-owned by the city of Green Bay and a special business district created to support the stadium, the premium sections account for around ten per cent of the total seating.) At SoFi, a club seat can cost as much as two thousand dollars a game, and a suite can go as high as fifty thousand dollars a game.

The N.F.L. players' union has negotiated a formula to calculate the athletes' take of the league's total revenue. The revenue from general-admission tickets is always shared with players. N.F.L. owners don't have to share certain types of premium revenue if they use the money to pay down any debt incurred in financing the stadium. Income from naming rights can also be used to pay off construction costs. (Once a stadium is paid off, naming-rights and premium-seat revenues are shared.) Owners also keep the revenue from virtually all events not related to football, like the Beyoncé show I was at SoFi to see, one of a five-night run. Premium seating allows owners in large cities with affluent fan bases and big-spending corporations to finance massive luxury stadiums. Essentially, players are helping to cover the costs of building these mega-stadiums.

Before Beyoncé went on, Otto Benedict, SoFi's senior vice-president of operations, took me on a tour of some of the venue's two hundred and sixty premium suites, which are segmented into twelve different categories and ascend in price as one descends into the lower bowl. Much of the premium seating is tied to a club that is branded by a corporate sponsor. We began at the Gallagher Garden and the Toyota Patio Club, on the upper level, then we walked down to the Google Cloud Club, and then to the Wynn Club, the most exclusive at the stadium, which serves the patrons of what are known as the owner's suites. Along the way, burgers became sliders, which became beef sliced from the bone in front of you; chips and popcorn gave way to nachos and chicken tenders and finally to sushi; plain old hot dogs became celebrity-chef takes on the hot dog. The mid-market-chain-hotel-style furnishings and fixtures in the suites became airport-lounge-like in the Google Cloud, and Four Seasons-esque in the Wynn Club.

On the field level are the cabanas and the bungalow suites, where you can sit at a barstool overlooking the sideline, your view partially blocked by bodies (of coaches and players when it comes to football, and, on this night, of the Beyhive—at least those fans lucky enough to have floor tickets). A pair of bungalows hold the Bootsy Bellows speakeasy, which offers specially crafted cocktails in a setting that resembles a retro night club. Most suites come with fifteen to twenty-five seats and are leased by corporations looking to host clients and court new business. Smaller “perch suites,” which seat eight to twelve, are available for more modest groups.

Two of the owner's suites at SoFi are reserved for the actual team owners—Kroenke and Dean Spanos, whose family has owned a majority share in the L.A. Chargers since 1984. The other twenty-four owner's suites, twelve on each side of the stadium, form the richest layer of the money torte. The suites are elevated enough to overlook the sideline, with more than ample catering and mingling spaces behind, reportedly for around a million dollars a year with at least a ten-year commitment. In addition to the corporate leaseholders—banks, airlines, tech companies—LeBron James and Magic Johnson each use an owner's suite, Otto Maly, the president of Kroenke Holdings, told me. Tenants get access to every game and concert at the stadium, excluding marquee events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup, but they can sell their suites on a single-event basis, if, say, the Monster Jam, which the stadium would host a couple of weeks after Beyoncé's concerts, isn't their particular jam. There's also a corporate boardroom on the owner's-suite level, in case Mr. Kroenke or Mr. Spanos (owners are always addressed as "Mr.") needs to call a meeting before or after the game around the room's long, football-shaped table. The room itself is the shape of a football, and appointed with blue faux-pigskin walls. On the ceiling is a football-shaped lighting fixture, embossed with five laces.

The stage had been placed at one end of the field, and about a quarter of the stadium behind it was closed from the field level to the top. I watched the show in a Google Cloud suite at the opposite end of the stadium. (At the Suite Experience Group, a kind of Airbnb for suite rentals, Google Cloud suites go for up to thirty thousand dollars per event.) From that vantage point, the stadium seemed much bigger than the star. Beyoncé and her dancers were so tiny that I caught most of the show on an eighty-million-pixel Infinity Screen that hangs from the roof—a far more immense waiting presence than the one Angell ogled in Houston—forming a video halo of sorts above the crowd. The screen houses more than two hundred and sixty speakers and fifty-six 5G wireless antennas that support the building's robust Wi-Fi, because it's not enough to have a premium fan experience—your friends and followers must know that you're having one, too. I sent my sixteen-year-old daughter pics of Beyoncé on the giant screen, and, for once, I got a timely response: "STOP. I can't handle it," followed by the eyes-welling-up emoji.

My seat was comfy, but I rarely got out of it. I looked enviously at the concertgoers above me in the cheaper seats leaping up and down and dancing. That's the best part of the fan experience: getting so caught up in the emotion that you feel at one with the crowd. But no one was sporting assless chaps in our suite. Suites are for corporate schmoozing and sips and bites, not bonkers fandom. Money prefers quiet; it's more civilized. Perhaps to counteract the stultifying effects of affluence at the Intuit Dome, Steve Ballmer, the Clippers' owner, has installed sensors that can monitor sound in individual seats; on one occasion, the ten loudest fans were awarded free tickets to a playoff game.

As for the music, the low-frequency kick of the bass—amplified by the subterranean setting, contained within SoFi’s steep sides, and ricocheting off the E.T.F.E. roof—was crushingly loud. It penetrated to the bone. A friend who’d joined me, undone by the stronger-than-expected gummies that we’d ingested beforehand, retreated from the volume and sat in a chair next to the congealing remains of a spread of wings and sliders, her head in her hands. I sought refuge in the suite’s private bathroom. On entering, I had a flashback to the intense anxiety that I felt in the men’s room at Veterans Stadium when, as a boy attending Eagles and Phillies games, I would wait to take my place at the urinal trough between huge men holding beers in their free hands.

I’m not sure how long I spent in the bathroom, but I was grateful for our sad, soft cave. Later, when I fact-checked my notes with a SoFi rep, I realized that I had hallucinated a football-shaped toilet.

Stadiums are secular megachurches, where believers gather to share communion, to exalt and mourn, and to don the vestments of faith. There’s nothing like the oceanic feeling of celebrating a touchdown or a home run or a classic guitar solo with tens of thousands of people who are having the same fan experience as you. Jonathan Mallie, a managing director of Populous, the largest stadium designer in the country, calls these venues “cathedrals for memories.” (The firm, which is headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, is building the Buffalo Bills’ new shrine, New Highmark Stadium, alongside its predecessor; it will open in 2026.) The difference is that in stadiums, unlike in cathedrals, every inch of the space, and every sight line—not only to the field but also to the sponsors’ logos—is monetized. Stadiums may be the most rigorously monetized spaces on earth.

Football and baseball are played on fields with different geometries, and accommodating the two sports in one stadium, as mid-century multisport buildings like the Astrodome tried to do, made for less than ideal experiences for both. Architecturally, the death knell for shared stadiums came with the construction of the Truman Sports Complex, which opened in Kansas City in the early nineteen-seventies, and featured a separate structure for each sport. Royals Stadium (now Kauffman Stadium) and Arrowhead Stadium (where the Chiefs still play) were joined by a vast parking lot. Arrowhead also included an elegant multistory apartment, where the Hunt family, the owners of the Chiefs, reportedly still views home games in what is now branded GEHA Field.

In the ensuing years, baseball architecture would hark back to early-twentieth-century ballparks like Fenway and Wrigley. With the opening of Baltimore's Camden Yards, in 1992 (designed by HOK Sport, which became Populous in 2009, after a buyout from its parent company), the national pastime fully embraced nostalgia. Roger Angell loved Camden Yards. Football stadiums, on the other hand, welcomed futuristic technology, spectacle, and change.

Pricing also diverged. In baseball stadiums, some tickets remained affordable, partly because the sport has so many games. At Yankee Stadium, for example, it's still possible to snag a bleacher seat at a midweek game for less than thirty dollars. In most football stadiums, which in a given year host ten home games at best, twenty in SoFi's case, limited supply has pushed prices up. This year, according to the Athletic, the average price of a ticket to a Philadelphia Eagles home game, the highest in the N.F.L., is four hundred and seventy-five dollars. (Tickets to the first Super Bowl, in 1967, were twelve dollars at most—the equivalent of around a hundred and fifteen dollars today.) A ticket to see the Browns in Cleveland, the cheapest in the league, goes for a hundred and fifty-eight dollars. The average cost for a family of four to attend an N.F.L. game, including parking and food (a beer and a hot dog go for around twenty-seven bucks at SoFi), is more than thirteen hundred dollars, according to one analysis.

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After the Beatles pioneered the stadium concert, at Shea Stadium in 1965, concerts became an important source of unshared revenue for owners. But only a handful of acts are big enough to fill a football stadium. Some of them—like Paul McCartney, the Stones, and Springsteen—have been around for more than half a century, and Taylor Swift can only tour so often.

Football stadiums are almost always the largest and most expensive structures in the cities they serve. (And now, with the Trump Administration's tariffs on imported steel and other building materials, costs are rising faster than ever.) They often require years of regulatory permitting before ground is broken. Local and state governments are much less inclined to finance these projects than they used to be, in part because they're too expensive and in part because economic studies consistently show that owners, not taxpayers, derive most of the financial benefits.

For fifty years, the work of designing sports buildings was concentrated in Kansas City; the Truman Sports Complex made it the nation's talent hub for sports architecture. An astonishing number of stadiums and other sports venues built since the seventies have a connection to Kansas City-based architects, who possess the specialized knowledge that these structures often require. Jay Cross, a developer who was once the president of the New York Jets and oversaw business operations for the Miami Heat, told me, "A contractor once said to me, 'You know, these buildings are really complicated.' I said, 'Really? They're just a bunch of seats.' He said, 'No, no, no, everything's in an oval shape, and the sections are all forty-five degrees.'" Cross added, "The geometry makes it very complicated. You have to be able to think in 3-D."



“I thought they meant something else when they asked me to come out of retirement to do one last job.”

Cartoon by Jon Adams



[Open cartoon gallery](#)



Nowadays, software does most of that thinking. Jordan Goldstein, a co-C.E.O. of Gensler, the world’s largest architecture firm, showed me some of the tools that his teams employed to redesign the seating bowl of the Capital One Arena, in Washington, D.C. The venue reopened this fall with greatly expanded premium offerings, including subterranean “vault suites,” with courtside access, which can be leased for upward of a million dollars a year.

Gensler might seem like an odd fit for such a renovation; it is best known for designing office, airport, and retail interiors. But as venues and stadiums have become more like five-star hotels, and locker rooms more like wellness centers, new firms have entered the field. (Gensler has also opened its own Kansas City-based office and has been poaching local talent.) In-house software allows clients to see how different kinds of seating configurations affect revenue. Another tool allows designers to populate virtual environments with different types of fans and watch as they move around the space. The tools had been used for workplace or health-care projects, Goldstein said, but “we started doing this with sports venues, and the reaction has been really amazing. I’ve sat in a room where we showed this to an ownership group and they started crying.”

The skyboxes at the Astrodome were a clever gimmick to sell the worst seats at top prices. They planted the seed of luxury seating, but the real benefit to owners—leverage—didn’t become clear until the arrival of the Palace of Auburn Hills, the home of the Detroit Pistons, in 1988. Tom Wilson, who oversaw the team’s business operations, is often credited with being the first person to move luxury seating from the upper deck to the lower levels. At the same time, he pioneered long-term suite leases, which give lenders the confidence

to finance these enormously expensive projects, because income starts to flow long before a stadium opens. Offering prospective season-ticket holders the chance to purchase personal seat licenses before construction started—a practice begun in Charlotte by Jerry Richardson, in 1993, in order to raise the funds to establish the Carolina Panthers—turned fans into investors. As a result, in the nineties and the two-thousands there was a boom in new stadiums and other venues financed as public-private partnerships. The municipally backed mid-century stadiums began to disappear. Many of these old stadiums had been named, in the manner of bridges and tunnels, for places and public figures. The new buildings were branded by banks, insurance companies, and chain stores.

“A lot of these teams were playing in antiquated facilities with old leases where they were making payments to the municipality,” Jay Cross said. “The municipality probably wasn’t maintaining the building, and it wasn’t doing a good job of selling sponsorships. And, at the same time, people were beginning to see the importance of suite income. So that really kind of changed the game.” He went on, “If you go back to the classic ballparks, they were built as venues of respite for the working man. They were very industrial in their character. You worked all day in a garment factory, and then on the weekend you went to a ballgame with your family and friends, and it wasn’t so dissimilar to their work environment. But by the time we got to these nineties venues we were building arenas like shopping malls, putting down terrazzo and tile floors. I’m not altogether sure it was a good change.”

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Even after long-lease luxury suites became part of stadium financing, owners continued to rely on their operations staff, not their sales teams, to advise the architects on the buildings’ layouts. Cross explained, “They were, like, ‘Oh, I can really focus on the refrigeration room and the garbage pickup.’ So I came in and said, ‘How many square feet are we building? What’s the net revenue versus the gross square footage? How much income are we generating per seat?’ It was really designed to maximize revenue per seat. That was a new concept in the world of sports.” He added, “The other thing that changed around that time was that everybody was trying to outdo the previous arena.” Thirty-year life spans, the long-standing benchmark for major sports venues, became twenty-five or twenty. Renovation is not just a once-a-decade thing; it never ends.

The modern arms race of luxury fan experiences began in Arlington, Texas, with the opening, in 2009, of the Dallas Cowboys’ new stadium, later branded by A.T. & T. Jerry Jones, the team’s owner, is a brash Arkansas-raised businessman who made his money in oil and gas. Jones, who is now eighty-three, visited the

Astrodome as a young man, and the memory served as inspiration. According to Ken Belson's new book about the N.F.L., "Every Day Is Sunday," the "Owners Experience" V.I.P. tour at AT&T Stadium ends with a hologram of Jones, which tells the story. "Thirty years later I was thinking about a new stadium for the Dallas Cowboys," it says. "One thing I didn't have to think about was 'could a man do it?' because when I was nineteen I saw one built that looked like it came from Mars." But the premium seating at Jerry's World, as AT&T Stadium is sometimes known, was on a scale that those who built the Astrodome could scarcely have imagined. The building continues to be one of the league's top earners, and it has helped make the Dallas Cowboys the world's most valuable sports franchise. Last year, luxury-suite revenue alone at AT&T Stadium netted Jones a hundred and thirty million dollars, according to Sportico, the most in the N.F.L.

To sell tickets, stadiums have to contend with the fact that more than ninety-five per cent of a football team's fans watch at home. And even those fans who do attend games often spend them watching other matchups on their phones, to monitor their fantasy leagues, or their bets on FanDuel. Younger, TV-allergic fans may watch only the postgame highlights, usually on social media. "We're not competing with the N.B.A. or M.L.B.," Roger Goodell, the N.F.L. commissioner, said after the 2024 Super Bowl, according to the football journalist Mike Florio. "Our competitors are Apple and Google." Taylor Swift's presence in a suite at Travis Kelce's games has helped drive interest in private boxes, Scott Spencer, the president of the Suite Experience Group, told me. With the Swift-Kelce union, the marriage of sports, entertainment, and eyeballs has been consecrated.

In the old days, everyone in general admission paid the same price; now ticket prices for most stadium events aren't fixed at all. They rise and fall according to "dynamic pricing," which factors in supply and demand, as measured by, say, a team's recent performance or the quality of an opponent or the release of an album or, as the event nears, weather, injuries, and the whims of musical taste in the age of TikTok. Ticketmaster ramped up dynamic pricing around 2022, ostensibly to keep brokers and other resellers from gobbling up tickets and keeping the added revenue when prices rose. Blocks of tickets are sometimes made available to brokers, however, to offset the risk of holding them. And ticket holders can scalp their own seats through marketplaces like SeatGeek and StubHub. At a Rams-49ers game that I attended at SoFi in October, the stadium was packed with Niners fans who had, presumably, bought the Rams fans' tickets.

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A patron can add to the cost of going to a game time spent in traffic, and the possibility of either sitting in the sun for three and a half hours or getting drenched. It's not surprising that most fans stay home. Since the

nineteen-seventies, the N.F.L. has earned the majority of its money from broadcast rights, not from stadium revenue. There may be little incentive for the league to preserve affordable seating—which has the lowest return on investment—aside from the energy that pictures of frenzied fans in the sections behind the end zones add to the broadcast. Most stadiums are too big, but the N.F.L. has historically required owners to accommodate at least seventy thousand spectators if they want to host the Super Bowl, a lucrative fan-experience bonanza. At ho-hum games, large swaths of seats in the upper bowl are empty.

But wealthy fans can be lured to stadiums if they're offered "elevated" experiences that they can't get from a screen. And, these days, there are nearly twenty-four million millionaires in the U.S. Roughly equivalent to the population of Florida, they constitute their own mass market. There are nine hundred and two billionaires—a number that has doubled in the past twelve years. (Thirty-six million people in the country live in poverty.) The end of the pandemic, which had confined all fans to watching games at home, provided a boost in high-end-seating sales. The pandemic was also instrumental in convincing owners that, instead of trying to fit as many seats as possible into a venue—the traditional mind-set—they could make more revenue by removing seats, because people would pay for space. Bill Dorsey, the founder of the Association of Luxury Suite Directors, told me, "We may all remember going to stadiums when we were younger, and we didn't have much of an issue with being shoulder to shoulder with other fans. That's not the case any longer."

Stadiums set to open in the next couple of years—Cleveland, Buffalo, Chicago, Nashville, and Washington, D.C., are all getting new football stadiums, and Jacksonville's arena is undergoing a major renovation—will offer ever more lavish experiences. The quest for the ultimate fan experience now extends far beyond stadiums and the sports towns that surround them: fans can fly to away games on a replica of their team's plane, and be greeted on arrival by executives and team legends. A similar stadium-makeover boom is occurring in college sports, where universities want more luxury seating for wealthy boosters, who help pay the top players' "name, image, and likeness" fees.

New York City Football Club, one of New York's two men's pro soccer teams, is building a state-of-the-art, twenty-five-thousand-seat soccer-specific stadium, the city's first, in Willets Point, Queens. (New York's other men's soccer team, the Red Bulls, plays in New Jersey.) The stadium, which will cost around seven hundred and eighty million dollars and open in 2027, is a hundred per cent privately financed. N.Y.C.F.C.'s majority owner is City Football Group, which is largely controlled by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al-Nahyan, a member of the Abu Dhabi royal family, whose wife is the daughter of the ruler of Dubai. (The Yankees have a ten-per-cent stake in the team's parent company.) Advocacy groups have accused Mansour of "sportswashing"—City Football Group also owns Manchester City, in the English Premier League—to deflect attention from his country's poor human-rights record.

The project bounced around potential sites for a decade, including Pier 40, on Manhattan's West Side; Flushing Meadows Corona Park, in Queens; the South Bronx; Columbia University's athletics center, in Inwood; Randall's Island; and Belmont Park, on Long Island, before finally securing a site in Willets Point, on a former swamp that the Brooklyn Ash Removal Company used as a dump from the early years of the twentieth century until the nineteen-thirties, creating mountains of ash that were up to ninety feet tall. Discussions about calling the development the Valley of Ashes, the name that F. Scott Fitzgerald conferred

on the site in “The Great Gatsby,” didn’t get far. The stadium itself will be known as Etihad Park, after the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, Etihad, which secured the naming rights.

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Steve Cohen, the hedge-fund billionaire and owner of the Mets, who will soon be N.Y.C.F.C.’s neighbor—the new stadium is across the road from Citi Field—reportedly opposed the development early on. He has been fighting to advance his own bid for an eight-billion-dollar casino-anchored Hard Rock-branded development next to Citi Field, which he plans to call Metropolitan Park. Cohen’s project still needs to secure a license from the New York State Gaming Commission, which will approve up to three casinos, the city’s first, by the end of the year.

Etihad Park and the surrounding development sit on twenty-three acres of land that has been leased from the city for forty-nine years, allowing City Football Group to avoid paying property taxes. In return, the project is supposed to create more than fifteen hundred permanent new jobs. In addition to featuring the usual restaurants, shops, accommodations, and open spaces—much like the gambling town that Cohen is promising—the site will include a public school and twenty-five hundred units of affordable housing.

Because long-term suite leases, club seats, and sponsorships are so crucial to securing financing, stadium developers open “experience centers”—showrooms with immersive video displays, model suites, and renderings of finishes—long before construction is complete. N.Y.C.F.C.’s experience center is on the seventeenth floor of an office building in midtown. Legends, a high-end hospitality company and venue operator that is jointly owned by the New York Yankees and the Cowboys’ Jerry Jones, helped build it. Brad Sims, the president and C.E.O. of N.Y.C.F.C., met me there one afternoon in May.

Sims, a passionate salesman, explained how the Tunnel Club, one of the most exclusive offerings, would work: “You’re the only group that has valet parking and gets dropped off right in front of the club. And they’re going to know your name. ‘It’s great to see you again, Mr. Seabrook. I’ll take your coat. Let’s go to the table.’ You’ll have a menu with entrée options from celebrity chefs. And you can order your cocktail or your nice glass of whatever you’d like.” An important part of the enhanced fan experience, I was beginning to see, is the way it slots perfectly into other similarly elevated experiences, in stores, restaurants, hired cars, airplanes, airports, and hotels, enabling a 24/7 premium life style.

At game time, N.Y.C.F.C. players and their opponents will pass through the dining room on their way to the pitch. “So you’re watching a player walk right by,” Sims told me. “High five. Fist bump. And once the players

leave out through the tunnel to go on the field, then these fans walk out the exact same tunnel as the players. A few can sit right on the pitch next to the players, in the eight seats closest to the bench on both sides. In basketball parlance, you call those the Hollywood seats because it's where Jack Nicholson would sit. But, I mean, this is New York. You can't use Hollywood here." The solution was obvious: "We're calling them the Gatsby seats." A Gatsby will set you back fifty thousand dollars a year, with a five-to-eight-year commitment. (Sims has since sold out of both Gatsby seats and Tunnel Club memberships.)

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The plan for the stadium calls for twenty per cent of the seating to be high end, but Sims wishes he'd done thirty per cent or more: "We were thinking of it in terms of, you know, the proverbial eighty-over-twenty rule, where eighty per cent of your revenue comes from twenty per cent of your clients. For us, it might be like eighty-five-to-fifteen, or ninety-ten." He added, "Everyone says that they want more premium and more super-high-end premium, especially in the past couple of years. In Cincinnati, they want more premium. In Columbus, they want more premium. In Minneapolis, they want more premium. It's like everyone wants more."

“At the end of the twentieth century and in the first two decades of the twenty-first, the American stadium gentrified,” Frank Guriidy writes in his 2024 book, [The Stadium: An American History of Politics, Protest and Play](#). “Its remaking into an enclave of exclusivity thwarts and in some ways undoes the social gains America’s marginalized groups made during the freedom struggles of the sixties, seventies, and eighties.” Guriidy, a history professor at Columbia, cites the protests against police brutality led by [Colin Kaepernick](#) as an example of marginalized groups trying to reclaim stadiums for public discourse. (The action cost Kaepernick his career.) More recently, the [Charlie Kirk](#) memorial service, at the Arizona Cardinals’ stadium, showed that the buildings can still play a significant civic role outside sports. But such uses are anomalies in the long-term transformation of stadiums from working-class cathedrals for the people into luxury palaces for the rich.



DESPITE THE SUDDEN DROP IN TEMPERATURE
WE PRESSED ON WITH OUR PICNIC

Cartoon by Glen Baxter



[Open cartoon gallery](#)

Sports isn't the only area where formerly affordable recreational experiences have been "elevated" out of reach; stadiums are merely keeping pace with the rest of the economy. At Disney World, young children are introduced to the premium economy early, by seeing other kids cut the lines at rides because their parents bought a Lightning Lane pass. Dynamic pricing has begun to appear in restaurants; a burger that costs twelve dollars on a weekday could cost twenty on a Saturday night. Likewise, the prices of lift tickets at major ski centers rise stupidly high with holiday demand.

Where will the gentrification of stadiums end? The financial crisis of 2008 hurt the luxury market. Though many corporations could still afford suites, fat cats high-fiving while their employees lost their jobs and their companies were taking bailouts was a bad look. A similar economic collapse could result in stadiums' premium products becoming silent strata of empty seats. And what if the fans in the upper tiers are dynamically priced out of those seats? Then stadiums might sound like SoFi did in the Rams' and Chargers' first season there, when the teams played in an empty building because of the pandemic.

Could the stadiums, ballparks, and venues of the future become luxury-only environments exclusively for corporate sportsmen? When I ran this dystopian scenario by Jonathan Mallie of Populous, he said that he wouldn't build a premium-only stadium, because it would violate the social contract that sports teams have with their fans. A sports venue "should be something for everybody," he said. "Sports and entertainment connect everybody. The passion of fan bases creates an energy around the project." Home-field advantage, which is largely a matter of how much sound the fans make, would cease to exist. "That's what helps teams win," he said. "That's what helps you, Mr. Owner, make more money, right?"

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But what if Mr. Owner wants to move the team away from its fans, and build a stadium in a city of sports lovers who may not have any particular allegiance to his team? In that case, Las Vegas is the place to go.

I was in Vegas in June, for the ground-breaking of the country's newest baseball stadium: a futuristic-looking domed building, designed for the A's, the baseball team formerly of Oakland. The ceremony was held indoors, in an air-conditioned pavilion that had been erected for the occasion, with a large window overlooking the levelled site. (At 9 A.M., when the event began, the outdoor temperature was already eighty-four degrees.) Yellow earthmovers had been strategically positioned for the cameras. A scale model of the infield, made from real dirt, had been built on the front of the stage, with a rack of gold-painted shovels nearby, one for each person on the podium.

The N.F.L.'s Raiders left Oakland nearly six years ago, when the team's owner, Mark Davis, abandoned the Oakland Coliseum—one of the last remaining multisport stadiums—and the Raiders' fan base for the opulently appointed Allegiant Stadium, just off the Las Vegas Strip, which opened in 2020 and is now one of the top earners in the country. When John Fisher, the owner of the A's, threatened to leave for Vegas, too, the city of Oakland, desperate to avoid losing three major-league teams (the N.B.A.'s Golden State Warriors had departed for the Chase Center, in San Francisco, in 2019), tried to make a deal. The city claimed to have secured four hundred and twenty-five million dollars in funding to develop the area around a new ballpark for the A's. The city also offered a magnificent fifty-five-acre waterfront site at Howard Terminal. But Fisher, who is a son of Donald Fisher, the billionaire founder of the Gap, left anyway, for a nine-acre site right on the Strip, where the Tropicana hotel once stood. (A spokesperson for Fisher cast doubt on Oakland's ability to deliver the financing it had promised.) Fisher secured three hundred and eighty million dollars in public funding from the state of Nevada for the \$1.5-billion ballpark, designed by the celebrated Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, who founded the firm BIG, and the Kansas City-based firm H.N.T.B.

Left behind were not only tens of thousands of enraged A's fans, many with generational ties to the team, but also the players themselves, who have been relegated to a minor-league park in Sacramento, where attendance is sparse, for the next three years. Fisher, who is now perhaps the most hated man in Northern California, has been enthusiastically received by officials in Nevada, where the project has moved at a rapid clip. At a time when municipalities are reluctant to finance stadiums, Las Vegas is all in. It has never been a sports town, but, as gambling has become increasingly available to anyone with a phone, the city has sought to reinvent itself. Forty million annual visitors offer a large pool of potential ticket buyers, some of whom may prefer a ballgame to a show, especially if their home-town team is playing during their visit.

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The A's stadium will be much smaller than the Oakland Coliseum, with thirty thousand fixed seats. When I spoke to Fisher in New York, where he maintains a residence, he told me, "Our feeling was that we would have a much better experience for the greatest number of fans by making a smaller stadium, with a more intimate experience. And, of course, that runs very much counter to what we had at the Oakland Coliseum." There might not be many A's fans in Vegas yet, but, "hey, the great thing about Vegas is that you have a hundred and fifty thousand hotel rooms within two miles or three miles of us," he added.

Attached to the stadium will be a new three-thousand-room resort and casino, Bally's Las Vegas—Bally's is the site's leaseholder, and will sublet to the A's—with direct access to the ballpark, offering a "mix of dining concepts, flagship retail, and immersive experiences," according to the Bally's chairman. In renderings of the project, it's hard to tell where the casino ends and the stadium begins, and this may be the point. As wagering and the fan experience merge (inevitably causing scandals like the N.B.A.'s and M.L.B.'s betting crises), the stadium and the casino could blend into some new form. If that happens, the stadium will have returned to its early-twentieth-century origins, before baseball sought to banish gambling from its grounds.

At the ceremony in Vegas, Fisher wore a blue suit, a yellow tie, and an A's hard hat. He picked up a shovel and dug into the tiny infield as the assembled dignitaries, who included the commissioner of the M.L.B., Rob Manfred, cheered. Four days later, it was reported that the cost of the new ballpark was approaching two billion dollars.

Unlike the Taj Mahal, which is almost four hundred years old and draws nearly seven million tourists annually, the Astrodome has been abandoned. It failed a fire inspection in 2008—the sprinkler system no longer worked—and was condemned the following year. The air-conditioning is broken, and the toilets no longer flush. No sport of any kind has been played there in twenty years; the place was used as a refuge for more than ten thousand Hurricane Katrina refugees in 2005. The multicolored seats were auctioned off to fans and local collectors in 2013, and are displayed in local sports bars. The AstroTurf has been stripped off the former playing field.

The building is too expensive for Harris County to renovate on its own, but it is too historic to tear down. One proposal called for the stadium to be flooded and used for reenacting naval battles, as the ancient Romans are thought to have done in the Colosseum. It's hard not to see the Astrodome as a casualty of the very phenomenon that it unleashed, and that Angell went to witness, with its skyboxes, its scoreboard, and its spectacles—the headlong rush into ever more premium fan experiences, making everything that's come before it obsolete. ♦

An earlier version of this article mischaracterized the cause of rising ticket prices for football games.

Published in the print edition of the December 8, 2025, issue, with the headline “Only Fans.”

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*John Seabrook has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1989 and became a staff writer in 1993. His books include “The Spinach King: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty.”*

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Mariners

The Seattle Times

Mariners announce new TV and streaming options for 2026 season

Jan. 29, 2026 at 11:00 am | Updated Jan. 29, 2026 at 7:16 pm

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Seattle Mariners fans celebrate a grand slam for the Seattle Mariners in the eighth inning against the Toronto Blue Jays of ALCS Game 5 at T-Mobile Park... (Ivy Ceballo / The Seattle Times)

More



By **Ryan Divish**

Seattle Times staff reporter

Since the decision was made to [shutter ROOT Sports](#) after last season, there has been some concern and uncertainty from Mariners fans as to how they would watch their team play in 2026.

At the time, the Mariners were adamant that their new deal with Major League Baseball to add the responsibility of handling distribution and production of their broadcasts would provide the same, if not more, opportunities to view games.

On Thursday, the organization provided more clarity for watching games in 2026 with the announcement of options for various viewing platforms, confirming they will broadcast games on cable and satellite TV while also offering streaming options for fans.

For fans who prefer to watch games on linear television through a cable or satellite provider as they did with ROOT Sports, there will now be a Mariners TV channel. The major difference being that the channel will exclusively air game content, along with a brief pregame and postgame show.

<https://twitter.com/Mariners/status/2016949693667037483>

With MLB handling the negotiations for the team's distribution rights with providers like Comcast Xfinity, DirecTV, YouTube TV and others, the specifics, like exact channel information, likely won't be announced until closer to opening day of the MLB season. The Mariners open the season March 26 against the Cleveland Guardians at T-Mobile Park.

For cord-cutting fans who prefer to stream games on their chosen devices, the Mariners will be offering "Mariners.TV," which is similar to the ROOT Sports direct-to-customer streaming option that debuted last season. The Mariners.TV stream will work in conjunction with the MLB.TV platform and mobile app.

For \$19.99 a month, or \$99.99 for the entire season, fans can stream Mariners games in Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Alaska, Montana and Hawai'i with no local blackout restrictions. Sign-ups for Mariners.TV will open Feb. 10 at Mariners.com/Stream.

Fans who reside outside of the Pacific Northwest can still access Mariners games through MLB.TV.

“We’re excited Mariners fans will be able to watch our games on all the platforms they’re used to seeing them on,” said Mariners senior vice president of marketing and communications Gregg Greene in a statement. “With a continued presence on cable and satellite providers, plus streaming options covering fans in the Pacific Northwest, Mariners Baseball will be as accessible as ever.”

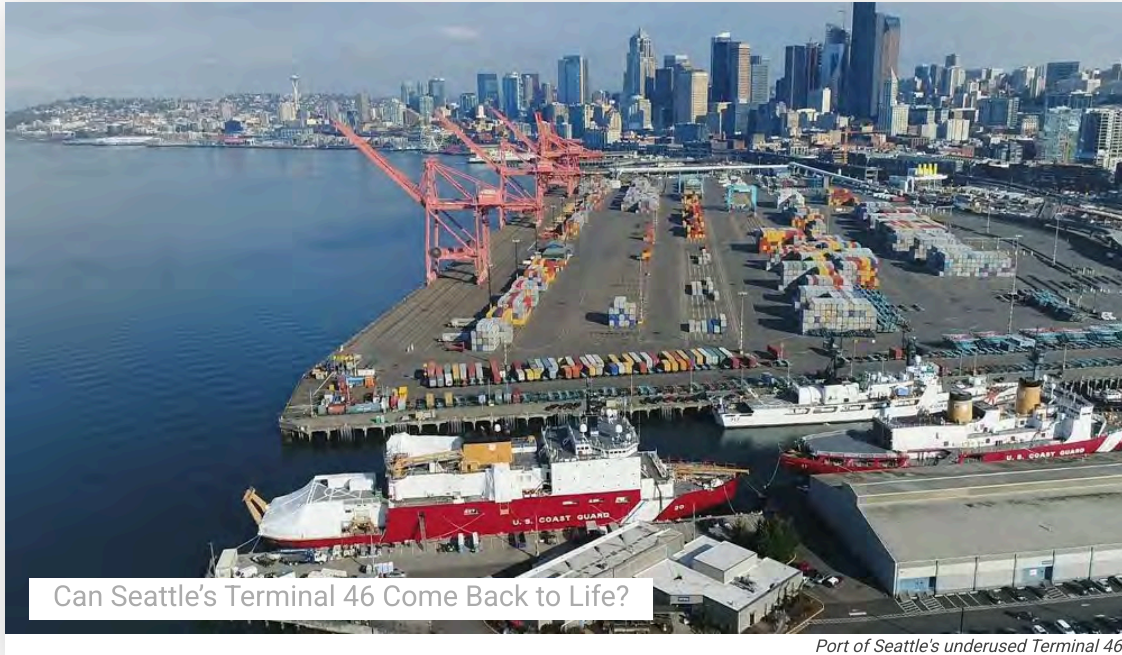
As for Cactus League games, the number of games that will be televised has yet to be determined. Sources said the organization is planning to provide at least some free webcasts of the games, similar to the past two seasons, for fans hungry to watch spring training games.

On Wednesday, [the organization announced](#) it will be bringing back the same broadcast group for the 2026 season.

Ryan Divish: rdivish@seattletimes.com. *Ryan Divish is the Mariners beat reporter at The Seattle Times.*

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Post Alley | Seattle



Port of Seattle's underused Terminal 46.



By **Mike Merritt** December 9, 2025  0

After six years of frustration, the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NMSA) is seeing a glimmer of hope in putting the shuttered Terminal 46 back into cargo operations. On Tuesday, the Alliance, which operates the Seattle and Tacoma ports, signed a 12-month agreement with a global infrastructure investor to seek opportunities for new cargo and industrial uses at the largely empty terminal just south of the central waterfront's Ferry Terminal.

The agreement gives Brookfield Infrastructure Group exclusive rights to develop maritime business opportunities at the 86-acre terminal, with a focus on international container cargo, in partnership with NWSA.

Commissioners enthusiastically approved the agreement. Terminal 46, on the Duwamish River near SODO, is a "rare gem," said Seattle Port Commissioner Toshiko Hasegawa. "We could not be more excited to see this explored. This is an important step in the right direction."

Brookfield describes itself as "one of the largest owners and operators of critical global infrastructure networks which facilitate the movement and storage of energy, water, freight, passengers and data," with \$1 trillion in assets. In the transportation field,

Brookfield | Post Alley | Seattle

along with railroads and transportation equipment leasing.

Terminal 46, on the Duwamish River near Pioneer Square, was once one of Seattle's premier terminals, long operated by Hanjin Shipping Co. until the company collapsed in 2017 during the global maritime recession. Another shipping line briefly took over the terminal, but due to declining cargo volumes shifted operations elsewhere in the Seattle harbor. Since 2019, business has been limited to occasional cargo and auto storage.

Peter Stone, Brookfield senior vice president, told the Alliance commissioners that his firm has been working with Alliance CEO John Wolfe and staff for several months, studying a variety of options for reopening the terminal. Under consideration is direct management of the terminal by the Alliance, rather than leasing to third parties as is common.

Efforts over the next year will be focused on developing a specific business proposal, but Stone offered no details. "We think we've got something," said Stone, expressing confidence in the regional economic climate.

In a recent interview, Wolfe of the Alliance alluded to the pending Brookfield deal and possibility of direct terminal operation. "I'm willing to give it a try," Wolfe said. "We've got to shake things up a little bit."

Local longshore union leaders were equally enthusiastic. The union has strongly lobbied the Alliance and Seattle commissioners to preserve T-46 for cargo uses and to reject other uses — such as the U.S. Coast Guard's proposal to acquire much of the terminal for patrol vessel berths. The Coast Guard is in the midst of a major renovation of its Pier 36 base just south of T-46.

Cargo volumes in both the Seattle and Tacoma harbors have struggled to return to pre-pandemic levels. Parts of the BNSF rail yard have shut down for lack of business, and Terminal 30, another Duwamish River terminal, recently closed due to legal problems and low volumes. As a result, longshore workers' hours in Seattle have declined sharply.

In a nod to the unions, the Brookfield agreement sets a goal of developing container operations "utilizing human-operated cargo handling equipment," not automated machines such as those in increased use at other ports around the country. "We love that," said Herald Ugles, a former president of the longshore workers' union Local 19.

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Although of hope after several false starts over the years. "Terminal 46 has always kept me up at night," said Tacoma Commissioner Deanna Keller.

But significant challenges lie ahead. Trump Administration trade policy has shattered long-time partnerships with China, the Alliance's largest trading partner, and imposed tariffs that have increased the costs of imported goods. Other West Coast ports are aggressively fighting for market share. For instance, the Vancouver, BC, port is embarking on a major expansion to lure more Asian cargo.

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Mariners

The Seattle Times

Mariners to honor record-setting 2001 team with statue at T-Mobile Park

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1 of 2 | Seattle Mariners crowd together in congratulations following their Game 5 victory of the American League Division Series Monday, Oct. 15, 2001, in Seattle. The Mariners beat the Cleveland Indians 3-1. (Elaine Thompson / The Associated Press)



By Adam Jude

Seattle Times staff reporter

The Mariners will pay tribute to the franchise's iconic 2001 team and honor the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks with a new statue at T-Mobile Park.

The statue will feature Mike Cameron and Mark McLemore raising the American flag during a defining moment of the Mariners' 2001 season.

The Mariners won an American League-record 116 games in 2001, and the team had a subdued celebration after clinching the AL West title on Sept. 19, 2001, following MLB's seven-day suspension of games.

Mariners long-time video coordinator Carl Hamilton, a Marine veteran, brought the American flag onto the field, and McLemore took it to the pitcher's mound, where players kneeled in a prayer circle.

"This was the high point of my career, definitely my highest moment in baseball," McLemore, the Mariners' veteran utility player and team leader, said later that night. "And it was right. After what our country has gone through, what many of our people have gone through, this was tasteful and respectful."

Public address announcer Tom Huttyler asked the sold-out crowd of 45,459 for a moment of silence. McLemore, still carrying the flag, then led a procession around the field, teammates in tow.

Cameron, the center fielder, called it "the best way we could show our love for the Seattle fans and the people of America. There were definitely conflicting emotions out there, but the right way to do this was the way we did it. It was beautiful."

The statue will be unveiled during a Sept. 3 game vs. the Athletics and displayed in the Center Field Plaza at T-Mobile Park.

Plans for the statue were announced Sunday during the Mariners' FanFest event at T-Mobile Park.

“We’re honored to commemorate one of the most meaningful moments in both American history and the history of the Mariners,” Mariners chairman John Stanton said in a statement. “Baseball has always brought communities together, and the 2001 team embodied that spirit during a time when our country needed connection, hope and healing.”

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Rick Rizzs, ever-faithful voice of Seattle baseball, will retire after one last pennant chase



Rick Rizzs has called 40 seasons of Mariners baseball, all without a World Series appearance. Perhaps that will change in his final year on the job. Daniel Shirey / MLB Photos via Getty Images



By **Tyler Kepner**

Jan. 27, 2026



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The Seattle Mariners were out of it, as always, four games away from winter in 1991. This was a Wednesday night in Arlington, Texas, three ballparks ago, 12,000 people in the stands. To the visiting broadcaster, it might as well have been the World Series.

achievement, clinching mediocrity, but it would mean something. And when the Mariners beat the Rangers that night, Rick Rizzs cared enough to let the moment move him.

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“We knew that this could be a baseball town,” Rizzs said, in a conversation in Seattle a few years ago. “We just hadn’t seen it yet, because they hadn’t seen a really talented ballclub. We didn’t have a winning season for 15 years, nothing to go crazy about. And finally, we went nuts! We were crying in the clubhouse in Texas, hugging Alvin Davis and Dave Valle. It was something special. We weren’t losers anymore.”

Rizzs, 72, confirmed on Tuesday that the 2026 season – his 41st with the Mariners – will be his last in the radio booth. He said he would call all the home games this season, plus four road trips. And then, perhaps after another postseason run, he would retire to spend more time with his three grandchildren.

But he will not stray far.

“I’m going to have four tickets, so I’ll still be coming out to games,” Rizzs said by phone on Tuesday. “I’ll be going to spring training. So I’m not going anywhere. I’m just going to wind down a wonderful journey.”

The journey started as a boy in Chicago, where sirens whirled through Rizzs’ neighborhood when the White Sox won the pennant in 1959. Sixteen years later, Rizzs

then working three innings of play-by-play.

Life in the booth suited Rizzs, who moved on to call games for teams in Amarillo, Texas; Memphis; and Columbus, Ohio, before the Mariners hired him in 1983. After a discouraging three-year detour in the 1990s with the Detroit Tigers – he replaced Ernie Harwell, who wasn’t ready to retire and ultimately returned – Rizzs came back to Seattle and never left.

TOP LEAGUE CONTENT

“He is Mariners, through and through,” said Dave Sims, the radio play-by-play voice of the New York Yankees, who spent 18 seasons as a fellow Mariners broadcaster. “If he could snap his fingers, that franchise would have five or six rings. I know from talking to him today, he’d love to go out with a bang and win a World Series.”

Rizks, in fact, has been to the World Series just once, as a fan in 1993. The Mariners nearly delivered him there last fall, coming closer to a pennant than ever with a seven-game ALCS loss to the Toronto Blue Jays.

It was a bitter defeat, [a dream season halted eight outs short](#) of the World Series. But never expect Rizks to lose faith.

“He leads with optimism,” said Shannon Drayer, the Mariners’ longtime pre- and postgame radio host. “And it’s not a blind optimism. It’s truly based in a rock-solid belief that good things are going to happen. He’ll talk to guys behind the cage in batting practice, pat them on the back and give encouragement, and it’s from such a real place. That belief and goodness just radiates from him.”

For Drayer, the feeling crystallized in the abbreviated 2020 season, when pandemic restrictions kept fans from the ballpark and broadcasters from traveling. They called road games off a TV screen in the home booth of a silent stadium. Invariably, Rizks would remind the audience that scientists were working hard on a vaccine, and someday soon they would all be together again.



Rizks celebrates with fans at T-Mobile Park after the Mariners' Game 5 win over the Blue Jays in the 2025 ALCS. Tyler Kepner/The Athletic

reach the World Series.

“That’s who he is,” she said. “He believes that the Mariners can get to a World Series. He believes he can sit down with Dave Henderson and figure out, on a cocktail napkin in a bar at the end of a season, how they can help thousands and thousands of needy kids in this area.”

Rizzs and Henderson, the former outfielder, founded a charity in 1995 that has provided new toys at the holidays for 360,000 underprivileged children in the Pacific Northwest. In the decade since Henderson’s death, Rizzs has awarded 80 \$5,000 scholarships in Henderson’s name, while starting another foundation providing baseball equipment to kids in need.

“Rick is so kind,” said Chicago Cubs pitcher Matthew Boyd, a close friend of Rizzs who welcomed him for pancakes at his home just last week. “As a human being, it just doesn’t get any better. He’s selfless, he cares for others. He’s kind to my whole family. I’m just so grateful to call him a friend.”

Boyd grew up a Mariners fan on Mercer Island, Wash., and the first time he pitched in Seattle, he sought out Rizzs to thank him. Riding home from Little League games in the back of his father’s Crown Victoria, Boyd said, it was always Rizzs on the radio, synonymous with childhood. Rizzs and Dave Niehaus, he said, made him fall in love with the game.

Dave Niehaus Way and Edgar Martinez Drive.

When Rizzs was struggling in Detroit, it was Niehaus who lobbied to bring him back home – and he did, just in time for the 1995 playoff run that sparked the kind of baseball fervor Rizzs always knew could grip Seattle. His mentor is always on his mind.

“I will never, ever replace Dave Niehaus,” Rizzs said a few years ago. “When the bases are loaded, I’m still gonna say, ‘Get out the rye bread and mustard, Grandma, [it is grand salami time!](#)’ He was the best storyteller, one of the greatest announcers of all time, and my job is for his legacy to continue. I want people to feel like Dave Niehaus is still sitting next to me in the broadcast booth.”

By the time he retires this fall, Rizzs will have worked seven more seasons of Mariners baseball than his best friend. He has one more chance for the call of their dreams.



By **Tyler Kepner**
Senior Writer, MLB

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