



## A New Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center

*rev. April 11, 2025*

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. What is the shared vision for the new Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center?**

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) and the City of Seattle (City) have successfully managed and programmed Memorial Stadium for decades with sporting events, high school graduation ceremonies, concerts, walk/run fundraising events, community festivals such as Bumbershoot, and other special events.

SPS and the City are now building upon their longstanding partnership – along with One Roof Stadium Partnership (a consortium of Seattle Kraken, One Roof Foundation, and Climate Pledge Arena) identified by SPS and the City as their private partner – with plans for a new multi-use student and community events facility. Together, the partners seek to replace the nearly 80-year-old Memorial Stadium with a legacy investment for year-round athletics, education, entertainment, and a focus on expanding the ways the stadium serves students and other youth from all backgrounds. The new stadium will be seamlessly integrated with the Seattle Center campus.

This project builds upon the basic \$66.5 million athletic facility replacement approved by voters in the 2022 SPS Buildings, Technology, and Academics/Athletics Capital Levy (BTA V) with significant public investment including \$21 million secured from the City, plus an additional \$19 million planned in project funding from the City, nearly \$4 million in state funding, and approximately \$30 million in philanthropic support. In addition, One Roof Stadium Partnership will invest in, design, build, operate, and maintain the new stadium, with SPS continuing to own the stadium and maintain priority use. This approach helps SPS pay for the enhancements and reduces the school district's maintenance and operations costs, while providing students with a premium facility beyond what SPS and the City could develop on their own.

Shared values guide this work with a focus on students, equity, community access and engagement, quality design and experience, partnerships, operations, maintenance, and financial and environmental sustainability and stewardship.

Carefully woven into the Seattle Center campus, this new state-of-the-art facility will serve as a welcoming hub of year-round activity with flexible spaces for a variety of athletic, learning and development programs, and cultural and entertainment events for the community.

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## **2. What is the history of Memorial Stadium?**

Seattle Public Schools' Memorial Stadium is the successor to Civic Field, which was built in 1927 as part of the City's Civic Complex.

In 1946, the City deeded the land to SPS to build, operate, and maintain a new athletic field. Voters approved a school levy and bonds (issued in 1942 and 1944) to provide funding for the improvement of school buildings and the construction of today's Memorial Stadium, completed in 1947.

The stadium was selected as the site for a war memorial by a group of community leaders appointed by Seattle Mayor William Devin following World War II to pay tribute to the nearly 800 former students who lost their lives in the war.

Revenues from Thanksgiving Day football games played in the stadium from 1947-1949 paid for the Memorial Wall, which was designed by Garfield High School student Marianne Hanson. The formal memorial dedication occurred on May 29, 1951.

Today, the deteriorating Memorial Stadium is used for many events annually – attracting hundreds of thousands of students and community members each year for high school athletic events, graduation ceremonies, and community events.

## **3. What is the status and timing of the project?**

SPS and the City have collaborated on a shared vision for a new Memorial Stadium. In 2023, SPS and the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a private partner to invest in, design, build, operate, maintain, and manage the new facility.

In June 2023, following the RFP process, SPS and the City announced the selection of One Roof Stadium Partnership (comprised of Seattle Kraken, One Roof Foundation, and Climate Pledge Arena) as their potential private partner.

The SPS Board of Directors and Seattle City Council are expected to finalize the agreements in June.

## **4. Who will own the new stadium?**

The new stadium will continue to be owned by SPS and operated for the benefit of students – who will retain priority use – as well as for use at other times by Seattle Center, sports teams, concerts, and community events.

## **5. Who will operate the new stadium?**

In addition to investing in, planning, permitting, designing, and constructing the new stadium, One Roof Stadium Partnership will operate, maintain, and manage the year-round venue for at least the initial five years. SPS will continue to operate its athletic games, practices, and events. This approach would help SPS, and the City, pay for the development of the new stadium for an initial term of five years, which also reduces SPS' costs to operate and maintain the facility.

**6. What is the design and construction timeline for the new stadium?**

Initial planning began in 2023, with the design work continuing through today. Construction will commence in mid-2025 and will be completed by the end of 2027, per the RFP.

**7. How can community members share their opinions and perspective about the design of the new facility? What is the timeline for that input?**

Initial outreach began in 2022 with student and cultural groups, Seattle Center staff and resident organizations, and dozens of community-based organizations.

Expanded community engagement began in Spring 2024 with students and the community. The equitable and inclusive process, guided by best practices used in other successful civic and school projects, is based on strong commitments to racial equity, inclusion, and access – and is informed and inspired by the voices of students of color furthest from educational justice.

**8. What is the design concept for the new stadium?**

The One Roof Stadium Partnership proposal – informed by Seattle Center’s Century 21 Master Plan – envisions a target of 6,500 seats, with full capacity of 8,000, to host student athletic, arts and culture, and community events. The proposal both honors the stadium’s unique history and preserves Memorial Wall, while also including additional programmable open space and pedestrian amenities – with a public plaza at the west end of the stadium adjacent to the International Fountain Lawn – and enhanced sightlines from the stadium into the Seattle Center campus.

**9. What is the anticipated cost – and funding agreement – for the new stadium?**

The plan envisions a new 6,500-seat/8,000-person capacity stadium to host student athletics, arts and culture, and community events. The anticipated cost of the new facility is \$130-\$150 million.

The voter-approved 2022 SPS Buildings, Technology, and Academics/Athletics Capital Levy (BTA V) provides \$66.5 million for Memorial Stadium, which alone would fund a basic student athletics facility by replacing the stands, field turf, lighting, and additional building upgrades. This stadium would seat approximately 4,500 people.

This new project builds upon the basic \$66.5 million athletic facility replacement with significant public investment including nearly \$4 million in state funding, \$21 million secured, plus \$19 million in planned funding from the City, and approximately \$30 million in philanthropic support.

As the project’s private partner, One Roof Stadium Partnership will invest in, design, build, operate, and maintain the new stadium, with SPS continuing to own the stadium and maintain priority use. This approach helps SPS pay for the development of the new stadium and reduces the school district’s maintenance and operations costs, while providing students with an enhanced facility beyond what SPS and the City could develop on their own.

**10. Why is the City investing up to \$40 million in a new Memorial Stadium which is owned by Seattle Public Schools?**

Memorial Stadium, although owned by Seattle Public Schools, has always been an integral part of Seattle Center. The shared SPS and City vision for a new stadium supports the Seattle Center’s Century 21 Master Plan, integrating it into the Seattle Center campus, by expanding public space, removing walls, and opening views as never before.

Specifically, the project provides the possibility of several direct public benefits including the creation of new programmable open space linking the International Fountain with the stadium and new view corridors on all four sides of the stadium, replacing the fortress-like structure existing today. None of these City-requested project elements would be provided if SPS were to construct a basic replacement stadium.

Plans for the new stadium also provide improved operational spaces for essential Seattle Center operations at the center of the campus – including warehouse and shop spaces – saving the City \$500,000 annually in offsite rent.

**11. How much funding for the stadium comes from the capital levy, and how much from philanthropy and other sources?**

One Roof Stadium Partnership’s involvement builds upon significant public investment which includes \$66.5 million approved by Seattle voters in the 2022 SPS BTA V capital levy, as well as nearly \$4 million in state funding; \$21 million from the City, plus an additional \$19 million planned in project funding, and approximately \$30 million in philanthropic support, including a lead gift of \$5 million from Seattle Kraken owner Samantha Halloway and Climate Pledge Arena developer and operator Oak View Group, as well as \$2 million commitments from both Amazon and WaFd Bank. Additional donations from local philanthropists and community foundations include Northcliffe Foundation (\$7.5 million), Steve and Connie Ballmer (\$5 million), the Brotman family (\$2.5 million), Gates Foundation (\$1 million), and Schultz Family Foundation (\$1 million). Grousemont Foundation, Glen and Alison Milliman, Mary Pigott, Walker Family Fund, and W. Razore Family Foundation also made contributions.

**12. How will the new stadium prioritize students and equitable access?**

The new venue will continue to prioritize students by providing a premier athletic field for SPS student athletic events and graduation ceremonies. The re-envisioned flexible design will be a place for everyone, allowing for year-round activity, including athletics, education, and a diverse array of arts, culture, and community events. It provides opportunities to strengthen partnerships with resident Seattle Center organizations and expand career and technical education programs as a training ground for careers in a broad spectrum of industries.

**13. How does the new venue contribute to the future vision of Seattle Center?**

The Seattle Center’s Century 21 Master Plan calls for active, public open space – and the reimagining of Memorial Stadium will fulfill that vision in several ways, including the removal of the current stadium’s massive, view-obstructing walls; improved pedestrian access and amenities; the creation of new public open space linking the International Fountain with the stadium; and preservation of the Memorial Wall.

**14. Who will be responsible for scheduling events at the new stadium?**

Once finalized, the operations agreement between SPS, the City, and One Roof Stadium Partnership will address the new stadium’s operations, maintenance, marketing, and use agreements, including a scheduling protocol led by the private partner under the direction of a joint oversight board consisting of representatives from the three partners. Scheduling will prioritize SPS needs for student events.

**15. How will the partners ensure the upkeep of the stadium in the future?**

SPS will benefit from the venue management expertise of One Roof Stadium Partnership in maintaining the new stadium, as well as from event hosting at the venue which will provide revenue to support ongoing maintenance.

Routine maintenance will be the responsibility of One Roof Stadium Partnership, with a joint oversight board – comprised of representatives from the three partner organizations – responsible for overseeing overall operations, major maintenance, and capital improvements.

**16. What is the plan for Memorial Wall with the replacement of Memorial Stadium?**

SPS, the City, and One Roof Stadium Partnership recognize the importance of Memorial Wall, and as outlined in the RFP are committed to preserving and enhancing the wall – which the Seattle Landmark Preservation Board designated as a landmark in late 2023, elevating its place of honor at the new stadium.

**17. What are the benefits of public-private investment in the Memorial Stadium project?**

Enlisting One Roof Stadium Partnership as a private partner to invest in, plan, design, construct, operate, maintain, and manage the new stadium provides the additional capital necessary for this legacy project, beyond what the school district could afford on its own. One Roof Stadium Partnership led the private fundraising campaign necessary to complete the shared vision, including making an initial contribution of \$5 million. The state-of-the-art stadium – and the more frequent and broader range of student and community events it can host – would also rely on a professional event venue operations and management partner. With year-round programming, it benefits from a higher level of expertise than either the City or SPS is equipped to provide. By partnering with a private investor-operator, SPS and the City can ensure that the civic investment is managed,

operated, and maintained at the highest professional standards without competing priorities or at the uncertainty of budget cycles.

The shared vision for the new stadium provides for further advancement of educational and racial equity, including opportunities to deepen engagement with Seattle Center’s resident arts, cultural and sports organizations. In support of this vision, SPS and the City sought a private partner to bring creative approaches to help advance the longstanding partners’ commitment to education and their objectives for fostering potential workforce development with career technical training in fields such as cultural, culinary, and performing arts; science; journalism; and sports and sports management.

The public-private partnership model has proven to be successful with many other Seattle area venues, including several located at Seattle Center: McCaw Hall, Pacific Science Center, MoPOP, Seattle Children’s Theatre, Seattle Center Armory, Fisher Pavilion, Climate Pledge Arena, and others.

#### **18. Why was One Roof Stadium Partnership selected as the private partner?**

The prospective partner proposals were evaluated – and partner interviews conducted – as part of a deliberative review process by a panel of community representatives, as well as SPS and City staff, with an eye for creative designs which meet the project vision, objectives, program requirements and shared values. The most heavily weighted criteria for the selection included:

- Project Vision and Approach – addressing the core program requirements including values alignment, student-centered programming vision, creative design, educational and racial equity, Seattle Center integration, and welcoming to all in the community.
- Experience and Operations – experience with redevelopment and operations of public-private partnership projects and proven ability to deliver a balance of SPS, community and commercial programming.
- Financial Strength and Development Plan – ability to finance and willingness to provide a significant capital contribution, along with a strong development plan which addresses planning, design, scheduling, permitting, construction, and occupancy.

#### **19. What agreements are needed to finalize the partnership?**

Agreements about the development, operations and maintenance of the new Memorial Stadium must be negotiated and approved by the SPS Board of Directors and Seattle City Council and are expected to be finalized by June.