



## A New Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center

*rev. June 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.

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.

#### 2. What is the status 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 which was approved by the SPS Board of Directors and Seattle City Council in spring 2025.

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**3. When does construction begin for the new stadium?**

Following the final high school graduation ceremonies in mid-June 2025, the site was closed for a groundbreaking ceremony and public open house event on June 26<sup>th</sup> – giving the community a final opportunity to experience the stadium prior to construction. Beginning in July 2025 crews began preparation, with demolition work throughout the summer. Construction is expected to commence in September 2025 and will be completed by the end of 2027.

**4. How can I stay informed about construction updates and neighborhood impacts?**

Regular updates will be shared via SPS and Seattle Center channels including the project website at [SeattleMemorialStadium.com](http://SeattleMemorialStadium.com) where you can find construction updates and learn about neighborhood impacts and Seattle Center access throughout the project. Monthly email construction updates are also available via an email request to [MemorialStadium@sellen.com](mailto:MemorialStadium@sellen.com).

**5. Where will SPS events (football games, All-City Marching Band practices, graduation ceremonies, etc.) be relocated during construction?**

SPS is coordinating with alternate fields and venues as temporary solutions to ensure these essential student events continue without interruption during construction. Given that Seattle has experience with the temporary sharing of venues in support of other major civic projects in the past, we're confident that our community will rise to the occasion again. Details will be shared in advance of the 2025/26 academic year via SPS communications channels and [SeattleMemorialStadium.com](http://SeattleMemorialStadium.com).

**6. Will any current uses of Memorial Stadium be permanently displaced?**

No. Aside from the short-term construction-related displacement, no school activities will be displaced from the new stadium.

**7. Which architectural and construction firms were selected for the project?**

The new stadium is being designed by Generator Studio, an architecture firm nationally recognized for its work on community-centered sports and entertainment venues. Sellen Construction, a trusted Seattle-based builder, will lead construction. Both were selected through a competitive public process.

**8. How have community members shared their opinions and perspectives about plans for the new facility?**

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. The final community open house was held inside the stadium at the public farewell event on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

**9. 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 design plan 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.

**10. Will the new stadium include a running track?**

No. The existing land parcel does not allow sufficient space for adding a running track.

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

The anticipated cost of the new facility is \$130-\$150 million.

Funding for the new stadium comes from the voter-approved 2022 SPS Buildings, Technology, and Academics/Athletics Capital Levy (BTA V) and other capital resources totaling \$69.3 million (which alone would only fund a basic student athletics facility replacing the stands, field turf, lighting, and additional building upgrades, including seating for 4,500 people).

The approved project is also supported by significant public investment including nearly \$4 million in state funding, \$40 million from the City, and approximately \$30 million in philanthropic support – including a lead gift of \$5 million from Seattle Kraken owner Samantha Hallaway 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.

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.

**12. 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.

**13. How will the new stadium be operated as a not-for-profit venture?**

The new stadium will operate under a not-for-profit model, managed through a partnership between SPS, the City, and One Roof Stadium Partnership. This ensures a focus on educational programming, year-round community use, and equitable public access.

**14. Who will own and operate 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.

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.

**15. 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.

**16. 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.

**17. What new or expanded programs and events are anticipated when the new stadium opens?**

The new stadium will continue to prioritize students by providing a premier athletic field for SPS' student athletic events and graduation ceremonies. However, 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. This includes opportunities to strengthen partnerships with resident Seattle Center organizations and expand career and technical education programs such as a training ground for careers in a broad spectrum of industries. It also will provide opportunities for collaborations with groups such as King County Play Equity Coalition for the benefit of young people across the region; for festivals such as Bumbershoot and community fun runs; and potentially for future use by professional teams such as the Seattle Seawolves or Ballard FC.

**18. 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.

**19. Will there be any changes to the adjacent parking lot as part of the redevelopment?**

The redevelopment includes reconfiguration of adjacent parking areas to better honor Memorial Wall, to create a new plaza and enhance pedestrian safety, to improve event access, and to better integrate with the Seattle Center campus. The old parking kiosks will be removed, and the lot will be restriped to minimize reduction in the number of stalls. More information will be available at [SeattleMemorialStadium.com](http://SeattleMemorialStadium.com) as designs are finalized.

**20. Are there any plans to finish the segment of the bike lane on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North as part of the redevelopment?**

No. The bike lane segment on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North is included in the Seattle Transportation Plan and in the North Downtown Mobility Action Plan, though there are no current project plans or funding for these improvements. The Memorial Stadium replacement project boundary is to the west of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue along the west edge of the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North surface parking lot, so the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North bike lane improvements are outside the scope of this project.

**21. 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.

**22. 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.

**23. 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.

**24. Will there be a name change for Memorial Stadium or for Leon B. Brigham Field?**

We intend to retain the Memorial Stadium name with the new venue, though the field and other stadium assets may be considered for naming rights in the future, which would require SPS Board approval.

**25. Are there public art installations associated with the project?**

Yes. The project includes a public art component which reflects the cultural and civic legacy of Memorial Stadium. The art plan is being developed in partnership with the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, with opportunities for community involvement.

**26. 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.

## **27. 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.