

EAST OAKLAND STADIUM ALLIANCE



January 6, 2019

Commissioner Rob Manfred
Major League Baseball
245 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10167

Dear Commissioner Manfred:

We represent the East Oakland Stadium Alliance, a coalition of Oakland community members, labor organizations, businesses, and baseball fans who are deeply concerned about the Oakland A's proposal to leave the team's current Coliseum location in East Oakland in favor of a stadium/mixed-use development at Howard Terminal. We understand from your recent comments, as reported in the media, that you are seeking a faster process to facilitate construction of a new Major League ballpark for the A's in Oakland.¹ Our coalition values the A's as a critical part of our city's social and cultural fabric, and we agree with you that the final outcome of this process should be the construction of a new, world-class stadium here in Oakland that the A's can call home for years to come. But we are unwilling to accept – and do not believe city leaders should accept – a stadium plan that would weaken Oakland's vital industrial economic base, displace West Oakland residents, or take economic resources away from East Oakland families.

Given the numerous transportation, infrastructure, economic, and safety hurdles associated with the A's Howard Terminal proposal, we respectfully suggest that you and the A's work with the City of Oakland and Alameda County to build a new stadium at the A's current East Oakland location. That location is where the conditions exist to support the swift construction of a world-class ballpark.

The Coliseum already has the transportation infrastructure in place to support a Major League stadium, with a dedicated BART station and convenient freeway access. Howard Terminal, on the other hand, is

¹ For example, *San Francisco Chronicle*, "MLB commissioner has strong words for Oakland mayor, council president about A's stadium litigation" by Susan Slusser, Oct. 2, 2019 and *San Francisco Chronicle*, "MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred talks about A's stadium situation, threat of relocation" by Susan Slusser, Dec. 11, 2019.

difficult to access via BART and sits adjacent to economically vital trucking and rail corridors that are incompatible with stadium traffic. Creating the necessary infrastructure from scratch would come at a massive cost. Mitigating the rail conflicts alone – which would require a series of grade separations to protect public safety – would be an extremely expensive, complex, and time-consuming process.

By every possible measure – not just transportation logistics – the Coliseum is a more practical choice than Howard Terminal. The Coliseum is already zoned for sports-and-entertainment uses, which creates an opportunity for a relatively fast public approval process for a development anchored by a new ballpark. The working Port around Howard Terminal, however, is zoned for industrial and maritime uses, and changing those designations will require a series of onerous approval processes with local, regional, and state governmental bodies. Likewise, building at the Coliseum wouldn't risk disrupting a major jobs center. In fact, it's an opportunity to create economic development that serves long-neglected East Oakland neighborhoods. By contrast, putting a stadium and massive mixed-use development at Howard Terminal threatens the jobs of the tens of thousands of men and women who have good-paying, blue-collar careers at Oakland's industrial waterfront. Those men and women can be counted on to fight hard to protect their livelihood.

Our coalition recently commissioned an economic study on the potential impacts of the proposed development at Howard Terminal. The study, conducted by Economic and Planning Systems (EPS), a respected land use economic consulting firm, confirms many of coalition members' worst fears about the Howard Terminal plan – and also underscores the likelihood that, should the Howard Terminal project go forward, it would be hampered by frequent delays and intractable conflicts.

In particular, the EPS study finds that the A's project puts at risk some of the existing 27,000 jobs directly and indirectly linked to the Port of Oakland and some of the 500,000 jobs statewide related to the Port's operations. It identifies numerous transportation, land use, and maritime conflicts with the project – including major traffic congestion along trucking corridors, stadium lights interfering with ship docking during night games, recreational boaters disrupting ship movements, the dangerous convergence of freight trains and pedestrians, and the loss of a critical staging area for truck, train, or ship loading. It also finds that the A's plans currently fail to address the cost of infrastructure improvements needed at the site to make it workable for anything other than an industrial use – leaving unanswered many questions relating to potentially hundreds of millions of dollars worth of infrastructure costs.²

Over the last year, numerous community leaders in East Oakland and West Oakland have spoken loudly in opposition to the A's Howard Terminal proposal – in East Oakland because they don't want the A's to abandon their neighborhood, and in West Oakland because they don't want the disruption that an incompatible stadium and mixed-use development would bring. If the goal is to get a stadium built quickly, then it would seem to be a poor approach to leave behind a community that enthusiastically wants the team to instead move to a part of the city where many residents and workers strenuously oppose its arrival.

The best way to reach that goal is working collaboratively to build a modern ballpark at the Coliseum site in East Oakland. We hope you will give serious consideration to this opportunity to build the A's a state-

² "Impacts of the A's Proposed Howard Terminal Stadium on the Operations and Economics of the Oakland Seaport" by Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., September 2019.

of-the-art new home that benefits not only the A's and Major League Baseball, but also the workers and residents of Oakland.

Sincerely,

BayPorte Village Neighborhood Watch
California Trucking Association
Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of Northern California
GSC Logistics, Inc.
Harbor Trucking Association
Inland Boatmen's Union of the Pacific
International Longshore and Warehouse Union
International Organization of Masters, Mates, & Pilots
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
Pacific Merchant Shipping Association
Quik Pick Express, LLC
Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc.
SSA Marine, Inc.

Enclosure