

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

SUBJECT: LPAB Comments – Coliseum Area Specific Plan
DEIR Scoping Session

DATE: May 13, 2013

At a regular meeting on May 13, 2013 the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) received public comments and commented on the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Coliseum Area Specific Plan. The LPAB is advisory to the Planning Commission, which held its own review on May 1, 2013.

At the May 13, 2013 meeting, the LPAB voted unanimously to direct staff to prepare a summary of their comments/recommendations and to forward the summary to the Planning Commission.

Summary of LPAB Comments/Recommendations

- 1) **Document the historical and cultural significance of the Coliseum and Arena buildings.** Tonight's report covers little of their significance. The original buildings are an amazing piece of mid-century architecture. They are iconic buildings and exceptional examples of structural modernism. They are spectacular at night when lighted. They are noted on many online architectural sites, such as World Architecture. There's a duality between the two buildings and the site as a whole. The buildings as an ensemble are important to study.¹
- 2) **Address the potential for retaining both buildings, which the current plans do not consider.** This needs to be rethought. So far, we've only seen options of keeping the Arena. These are two great buildings that could find a new purpose or reuse. The economic viability issues and the sports teams' requirements do not preclude an alternative for reuse of the iconic buildings. There is a way to reach both goals of providing new sports venues, and keeping some of the existing historic buildings that have a long life ahead. This approach would be consistent with economic and sustainable/green issues and would draw people to the City.
- 3) **Study the following alternatives:**
 - a. **Restoration of both the Coliseum and Arena.**
Restoration of the Coliseum (removal of the Mount Davis addition and

¹ Note that the OCHS rating is a Potentially Designated Historic District, an Area of Primary Importance (API). API's appear eligible for the National Register.

restoration of the original design), along with restoration of the Arena (removal of the Oracle signage and entries).

b. Reuse of both the Coliseum and Arena for the sports, two-venue proposal.

Reuse as sports venues, with renovation upgrades that meet the current sports teams' standards, if feasible. Study retaining the facade and changing the interior.


c. Adaptive Reuse of both the Coliseum and Arena.

Other uses of the buildings should be explored. Proposed activities in the specific plan around the area of the building ensemble may lead to new patterns that suggest new uses. Uses suggested at the LPAB meeting include an Olympic size swimming pool, a sports venue for women's sports, or a sports venue for minor league baseball. Other economically viable uses should be explored.

- 4) **Analysis should include the existing alterations to the Coliseum and Arena buildings and their impact on the historic status of both the individual buildings and the building ensemble.**
- 5) **Analysis should include impacts to the Area of Primary Importance if only the Arena is retained.** If only the Arena is retained, the wholeness of the design is gone.
- 6) **Study the visual and/or structural impacts to the ensemble, should both buildings remain, and to the Arena, if it remains alone, due to proposed development of the Plan.**
- 7) **Study revision of the proposed plans so that the ensemble can be retained.**
- 8) **Require that all surface parking lots use permeable pavement.** This is a stormwater management issue with respect to runoff, especially since this is at a low elevation and close to the Bay.
- 9) **Study the potential competition with the West Oakland Specific Area Plan which proposes similar uses, science and technology.**
- 10) **Study a Phased Approach.** The current proposed plan appears to be overly ambitious, but perhaps more easily attainable over time.
- 11) **Archeological investigation and study should include an archeological field survey approach.** The archeological investigation should be in greater depth than a standard records research and consultation with Native American organizations. This is a very large, 800-acre plan. These environments are precisely where you would expect to find early prehistoric artifacts because the same thing that draws people here today, the Damon Slough and access to the Estuary, would have drawn people earlier. The Damon Slough has a higher probability of having cultural artifacts than other areas.
- 12) **Study the economic benefits/liabilities of sports teams on the City.**

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