There’s a lot happening at the south end of Seattle’s downtown. Bertha the Boring Machine has begun her long trek underground, carving out the tunnel which will allow the old, unsafe viaduct to come down. The new surface street replacing Alaskan Way will provide access to a stunning waterfront along Elliott Bay. New housing, restaurants and a hotel are rising on what used to be the Kingdome’s north parking lot. King Street Station has completed a $50 million renovation with Amtrak, and Sound Transit commuter trains deliver tens of thousands of passengers there each month. New streetcars will soon connect to First Hill bringing more diners and sports fans to Pioneer Square, Chinatown/International District, and the Stadium District.

Our two major league sports stadiums – Safeco and CenturyLink Fields – sit at the front door to all of this. On upwards of 500 event days a year, at least one of these facilities pulses with excitement as our local teams compete on the field. How can we leverage this activity to enhance the economic vitality and residential livability of adjacent neighborhoods?

This was a question that brought together the boards of directors which govern the publicly-owned Safeco and Century Link Fields, (the Public Facilities District and Public Stadium Authority respectively). Together we undertook a planning process to develop a 10-year vision for a successful Stadium District – one that is economically vibrant, safe, innovative, and irresistibly fun to live in and visit. We were aided in this effort by our tenant teams: the Seahawks, Sounders and Seattle Mariners, as well as by many community partners. ZGF Architects and AECOM Consultants helped provide a visual vocabulary and economic analyses to give form to our ideas.

The result was the Stadium District Concept Plan, which we released jointly in December 2012. While our original intent was to create a document to guide our own thinking and actions over the next ten years, the City of Seattle’s Department of Planning and Development, after reviewing our work, suggested that it form the framework for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, which would establish a formal Stadium District.

Following public review of the plan by stakeholders in stadium district neighborhoods, the City of Seattle’s Department of Planning and Development is now developing necessary zoning and Comprehensive Plan changes to be considered by the Seattle City Council. The PFD and PSA will continue to stay engaged with the City as we help advance the goals of the Concept Plan.

Take a moment to read our recommendations and review the creative representations of the plan within this report and at www.stadiumdistrict.org. And please contribute your thoughts, by emailing us at inquiries@ballpark.org. Be a part of what’s happening in the Stadium District!

Sincerely,

Charles Royer, Chair
PFD Board of Directors

Charles Royer, Chair
Charles Royer was Mayor of Seattle from 1978 through 1989 following a career in newspaper and television journalism. After leaving office, Mr. Royer served as Director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard University and as Lecturer at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. A downtown Seattle resident, he currently serves as a Trustee of the Downtown Seattle Association, and is chairman of the Alliance for Pioneer Square, the community organization for Seattle’s historic neighborhood.

Craig Kimzier
Craig Kimzier is founder & CEO of Kimzier Real Estate Services. He is a licensed attorney, CIR & real estate broker. Craig serves on the Foundation Board of Seattle Children’s and is a past director of the Seattle Chapter of Commerce. He is a member of the Community Development Roundtable and sits on the Advisory Board of UW Foster School of Business Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship as well as the University of Washington’s Law Foundation Board.

Joan Enticknap
Joan Enticknap is Chief of Staff of HomeStreet Bank. Joan culminated a twenty-three year career with Bank of America as executive vice president of commercial banking in the Northeast Region. She was chief financial officer of the bank for four years. Joan is also a member of the board of directors of Puget Sound Public Radio (KUOM).

Dale R. Spelling
Dale R. Spelling has been active in the Pacific Northwest’s real estate community for more than 30 years. Prior to founding Outspell, Dale was Executive Director of Seattle Metro where he led the agency’s cleanup of Lake Washington and Elliott Bay and the startup of Metro Transit. He is a board member for the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and Coastal Environmental Systems. In 2009 the University of Washington’s College of Engineering recognized Terence’s many accomplishments with the Diamond Award for Distinguished Service to Industry.

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Additional parking is a critical need in the area. Since Safeco Field opened in 1999, more than 3,900 on- and off-street parking spaces have been lost in the SoDo and Pioneer Square neighborhoods. Much of this loss is due to construction staging for the Viaduct Replacement Project as well as new residential and business growth. The possible addition of a new basketball arena in the area would place further demands on existing parking.

Our Concept Plan suggests reclaiming viaduct construction staging property to develop in a combination of parking and open space, providing a fitting front door to both the waterfront redevelopment and to the stadiums.

Seattle has done less well than its peers (San Diego, Denver and Baltimore) in capturing ancillary food and beverage retail revenue from patrons visiting the Stadium District. The Concept Plan proposes enlivening the arrival experience for fans with a sports promenade along Occidental between King Street and Royal Brougham. Providing attractive open space and inviting street level activity will encourage fans to arrive earlier and stay later, generating greater economic returns in the process.

Neighborhoods in peer cities have become not just active game day places, but attractive and economically sustainable places to live, work and play. We believe that a truly vibrant district requires additional residential uses to sustain activity 24/7. Our concept plan proposes the addition of 2,000 new housing units within a 15-minute walking radius of the stadiums. More than 700 such units are now completed, permitted, or under construction. Leveraging the vitality of a stadium district to increase urban housing benefits the City of Seattle, the region and the state.

The Concept Plan also includes ideas for enhancing connections from the stadiums to the waterfront and adjacent neighborhoods with pedestrian and bike trails, active open space above a proposed parking garage, and a new sports promenade along Occidental Avenue S. Pedestrian friendly links to transit hubs will further encourage fans to arrive on public transportation, thereby reducing game day traffic congestion.

Our two stadiums, representing more than $1 billion in public and private investment, serve as major economic generators, not to mention cornerstones of a vibrant quality of life for Washington citizens. The PFD and PSA boards take seriously our mission to protect the public’s investment in these facilities, and to leverage greater economic benefits for citizens of Seattle, the region, and Washington State.

We invite your comments. Please email us at inquiries@ballpark.org.
Safeco Field opened for play on July 15, 1999, and hosted the All-Star Game in 2001. Since opening day, over 38,000,000 baseball fans have passed through the gates of Safeco Field.

Safeco Field is consistently rated among the Top 10 ballparks in the country for fan experience, atmosphere and food.

In 2011 the International Association of Venue Managers named Safeco Field winner of the annual Venue Excellence Award for Stadiums.

In 2013 the Mariners installed a new high definition video display system in centerfield, the largest in Major League Baseball.

In 2013 the Mariners recycled or composted 91% of all waste generated at Safeco Field, more than a 700% increase over their rate in 2006, earning Major League Baseball’s “American League Recycling Champions” award for the second consecutive season.

The bonds that financed the public’s contribution to the construction of Safeco Field were completely paid off five years ahead of schedule, saving the public about $44 million in interest cost.