



# A's get 'huge win' in vote regarding new Oakland stadium project

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A consequential vote by the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission Thursday brought hope for the A's pursuit of a new waterfront ballpark in Oakland.

After hours of discourse between the commissioners, as well as a large public comment portion that included an opening statement from Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, 23 of 25 SFBCDC members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the A's request to remove priority port use designation from Howard Terminal. The removal, described by team president Dave Kaval as a "huge win," allows the A's to move forward with their waterfront ballpark project and planned development in the surrounding area.

"Getting a 23-2 vote is just massive," said Kaval. "It exceeded our expectation. We thought we were sitting at 18 or 19 [yes votes], and to get to 23 is just a credit to everybody involved in the process. The city, Mayor Schaaf, the port, ourselves and our union partners. Everyone just articulating the vision and the benefits of this project and doing it in a very thoughtful and methodical way."



Thursday's "yes" vote is significant to the hopes of keeping the A's in Oakland for the long term. Had the request for removal not received the necessary two-thirds majority, the team's ballpark proposal at Howard Terminal would have essentially been killed, leading the organization to focus its efforts on relocation to Las Vegas, where Kaval has also been exploring potential sites for a new stadium.

In addition to a 35,000-seat open-air waterfront ballpark, the A's plan includes up to 3,000 units of housing, 1.5 million square feet of office space, 270,000 square feet of retail space, 280,000 square feet of hotel space and a 50,000 square-foot indoor performance venue with a capacity of up to 3,500.



"We're thrilled with such a positive vote," Kaval said. "This is a very difficult approval needing super majority. To navigate the kind of byzantine organization that is [SF]BCDC and do that successfully to get the 'yes' vote was a huge day for the A's and our project in Oakland."

So, with Thursday's hurdle cleared, what's next? Well, the A's still must seek approval from various agencies, including one from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control after submitting a plan for toxic remediation around the area of the proposed site.

The next, and perhaps last, major hurdle is to develop a binding development agreement and community benefits package to address the details of the project with the city of Oakland. This would represent one of the last critical steps for the A's before a final vote for a binding agreement with Oakland, which would give way for shovels to finally hit the ground at Howard Terminal.



“We’re one big approval away from having this project as a binding deal,” Kaval said. “We’re running out of time and need to schedule that vote to see if that final approval is something that the public policy makers are on board with.”

The removal of priority port use gives the A’s until 2025 to enter that binding agreement. Of course, with the current lease on the Oakland Coliseum, the A’s home since 1968, expiring in 2024, they’d like to reach an agreement much sooner, which is why the club continues to urge city council to provide a final vote by the end of 2022. For Kaval, the final vote would ideally take place sometime in September or October, which would be prior to Oakland’s general elections in November.

“We’re really encouraging the city to schedule that vote as soon as possible,” Kaval said. “Libby [Schaaf] is only in office the remainder of the year. She’s our biggest proponent and advocate. Once she leaves, it’s going to be difficult to advance in the same way.

“We also want to build on the momentum of today. This is a great moment for the project to get through this really difficult approval. We want to show that same level of urgency with the city council.”