



LINDA VISTA ~ ANNANDALE ASSOCIATION

November 18, 2011

Mayor Bill Bogaard
Councilmember Victor Gordo
Councilmember Chris Holden
Councilmember Steve Madison
Councilmember Gene Masuda
Councilmember Margaret McAustin
Councilmember Jacque Robinson
Councilmember Terry Tornek
City Manager Michael Beck

Re: NFL use of the Rose Bowl Stadium

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Linda Vista/Annandale Association Board recently voted unanimously to oppose any occupancy of the Rose Bowl Stadium by the NFL. We'd like to tell you why.

Pasadena Has Spoken

In 2006, 72% of Pasadena's electorate voted against the NFL in the Rose Bowl. The vote against the NFL carried in every Council District. City-wide, the residents of Pasadena expressed their intent to keep the NFL out of the Rose Bowl and our City. Although the circumstances of the current proposal are different to some extent, the spirit and intent of the vote was clear: **NO** NFL in the Rose Bowl and the Central Arroyo.

The "Temporary" Occupancy

Now, due primarily to the Rose Bowl Renovation Project funding "gap" of over \$16 million and possibly more, the NFL is back again, this time as the source of "bail out" money to close the funding gap. Why is the NFL acceptable this time around? It appears that the answer is that the NFL will occupy the Rose Bowl, the Central Arroyo and our City, only "temporarily."

Based on discussions with various City officials and on articles printed in the Pasadena Star News, LA Times, Pasadena Sun and Pasadena Weekly, we understand that both Majestic Realty and AEG hope to persuade an NFL team to move to Los Angeles in early 2012. Once an NFL team agrees to move to LA, it will no longer be welcome in its then-current city, so it would require a "temporary" stadium until the new stadium is completed. The target date for completion of a Downtown Los Angeles stadium is 2016 or 2017, which means that the team would need a stadium for at least four or five years, not just two or three.

The construction of the Downtown stadium is really two construction projects: reconstruction of one wing of the LA Convention Center, and construction of the stadium itself. The success of the Downtown stadium plan is dependent on raising \$275 million from a bond issuance to finance the reconstruction of the Convention Center.

In today's turbulent financial markets, it is likely that the desired sum of \$275 million will not be raised. It was a disappointing auction in a bond offering that contributed to the shortfall in the fund to finance the Rose Bowl renovation. What sort of delays to the Downtown stadium project might such a financing shortfall cause?

Even if the bond offering is successful, how likely is it that both major construction projects will be completed on time and on budget? Anyone experienced with public or private construction projects (even remodeling a home) will appreciate how many unexpected circumstances can delay a project. If it will take an estimated three years to construct a new fire station in the San Rafael neighborhood, how can anyone be confident that the Downtown stadium, a much larger and more complex project, will be completed in just two or three years?

It seems that the estimated four or five years that the Rose Bowl would be home to an NFL team could easily stretch to six, seven or eight years, or perhaps even longer. It is difficult to rely on assurances to the contrary when there are so many factors beyond anyone's control. **What is referred to as just "temporary" is really "indefinite."**

We have been informed by staff that a lease to the NFL would be for two years, with options for up to two more years, for a total of four years, at the end of which the NFL would be asked to leave. However, if more than four years is needed, it is unrealistic to think that after spending millions of dollars to establish an LA franchise, the NFL team would vacate the Rose Bowl and be left without a stadium in which to play. It is more likely that the Pasadena City Council would be placed under enormous pressure to extend the lease. Once an NFL team begins to play in the Rose Bowl, it will continue to do so until it is ready to leave. Let us repeat: the lease term will be for four years, not two, as some assume. Will the lease term slip again?

Impact on Recreational Use of the Central Arroyo

The Central Arroyo is one of the principal recreational areas for not only the City of Pasadena, but also for the entire San Gabriel Valley. Every day of every week, but particularly on weekends after working hard all week and in need of exercise and recreation, swimmers enjoy the Aquatic Center; families enjoy the Kidspace Children's Museum; picnickers relax at Brookside Park, walkers and joggers, cyclists, roller-bladers and dog walkers circle the loop; hikers enjoy the trails; tennis players gather at the courts, equestrians enjoy their trails, and golfers gather at Brookside Golf Course. Also, on weekends, numerous AYSO soccer games are played on Area H. The world famous Rose Bowl Flea Market is a great attraction every second Sunday of each month. Charity events such as the Wiggle Waggle Walk and the Autism Walk are successful in part because they are held in the beauty of the Central Arroyo. And, to the delight of all, the Rose Parade float tents take up residence in the Central Arroyo each December for a month.

The NFL season begins in August and runs through January. According to the Rose Bowl Events Calendar, during that six month period, approximately 100 events take place in the Central Arroyo. With crowds up to 100,000 (composed of ticket holders and NFL fans who just come to stadiums to soak up the atmosphere), and with extensive tail-gating, NFL games will shut down the Central Arroyo for all forms of recreational use. Pre-game “set up” and post game clean-up could render the Central Arroyo unusable for two or three continuous days of each week. When UCLA games are held on Saturday, and NFL games are held on the next day, Sunday, it could be three or four continuous days that the Central Arroyo will be unavailable to the residents of the entire City. How will the NFL crowds co-exist with recreational users of the Central Arroyo, AYSO soccer, the Rose Bowl Flea Market, the Tournament of Roses tents, and charity events? The Rose Bowl Stadium and the Central Arroyo should belong to the citizens of Pasadena and the residents of the San Gabriel Valley, and not to Majestic Realty, AEG or an NFL football team.

Parking and Tail-gating

Where would the 100,000 NFL fans park and tail-gate? Adding ten or more major events to the Rose Bowl schedule could significantly degrade Area H and the Golf Courses. When the rains come in the fall and winter, the Brookside Golf Courses cannot be used as a parking lot. When the Rose Parade tents are erected in December, a significant portion of the parking lots will be unavailable. Plans to develop the Parsons property on Walnut may severely limit the use for Shuttle parking at that site during construction. The Central Arroyo is not equipped to accommodate vehicles of NFL-type crowds of this size on a regular basis.

Additional Concessions

The longer an NFL team is in the Rose Bowl, the more likely it will be to demand greater concessions. Will it want big screens posted outside the stadium for viewing by ticketless tail-gaters? Will it demand retail outlets? We all remember what they asked for in 2006 – that the City absorb most of the costs and expenses associated with its activities. And, where will the NFL-required practice field be located? Another part of the Arroyo, such as Hahamongna?

Trash and other Pollution of the Central Arroyo

The Rose Bowl Stadium is located in an environmentally sensitive park and nature area. Trash from Rose Bowl events pollutes the stream that feeds into the LA River and ultimately the ocean. The City’s current clean-up efforts are less than adequate. Pasadena aspires to be a green city that protects and preserves its parks and open space. Offering the Rose Bowl and the Central Arroyo to the NFL for possible short-term financial gain is inconsistent with that vision.

Environmental Impact Report and Traffic Study

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the primary California method to provide decision makers with the information that they need to understand all the significant impacts of major projects and to adopt necessary mitigations to protect citizens and their environment from harmful impacts. Yet, the trend is to excuse NFL stadiums from compliance based on the “benefits” to cities of such projects. Will Pasadena follow this trend to the detriment of the Central Arroyo?

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The answer is not yet clear, although the City is conducting a small, focused CEQA baseline Central Arroyo traffic study without any community input as to scope, duration, and similar metrics. This situation does not inspire community confidence.

We think that a full EIR is required to study and mitigate to the greatest extent possible all project impacts from the "temporary" NFL team in the Rose Bowl, including traffic and circulation, parking, game scheduling, including week-day and night games; land use (just how will the current limitations on major events have to be changed to permit so many more major events?); air quality; noise; public safety; deterioration of the environmentally sensitive park, and historic resources (the historically renovated Rose Bowl itself.) How much more cumulative City-wide traffic impacts can Pasadena bear?

We support the current uses of the Rose Bowl and the Central Arroyo. We also support the current renovation of the Rose Bowl stadium. We do not believe, however, that the Central Arroyo should be sacrificed to fill the Rose Bowl renovation funding gap, or any other City budget shortfall.

Discussed above are many of the reasons that the Linda Vista-Annandale Association opposes the possibility of an NFL team "temporarily" occupying the Rose Bowl Stadium and the Central Arroyo. As the impact of a "temporary" arrangement with the NFL becomes more widely known, we believe that the citizens of Pasadena will oppose this proposal just as they opposed the NFL plan in the 2006 referendum.

THE LINDA VISTA/ANNANDALE ASSOCIATION

By  _____
Lee Zanteson, President

cc: East Arroyo Residents Association
Kidspac Children's Museum
West Pasadena Residents Association
Los Angeles Times
Pasadena Star News
Pasadena Weekly
Pasadena Sun
Anschutz Entertainment Group
Majestic Realty
Assembly Member Anthony Portantino
State Senator Carol Lui