

The Coalition for Preservation of the Arroyo Asks: What Happened to the NFL? Part 2

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The NFL did not announce a team for Los Angeles by this year's "deadline", February, 2013. Does this mean that the NFL is never coming to Los Angeles, or that the possibility of a "temporary" team in the Rose Bowl for up to 5 years is "dead"? **NO**. It means that the situation is more complex than previously perceived, and action by the NFL is likely delayed, not abandoned. The expanded use of the Rose Bowl by the NFL remains approved by the City and our legal challenge remains essential to the protection of the Central Arroyo and our neighborhoods.

Here are important publicly accessible facts determined by the Coalition as of April, 2013:

NFL POSITION: NFL sources (owners and the headquarters in New York City) believe that the NFL must return to Los Angeles soon. It is the second largest market in the U.S. The preferred plan would be for 2 teams to play in L.A., both playing in the same permanent stadium, in which case the Rose Bowl might be in play as the "temporary" location for one of the 2 teams even if another interim location is preferred. Also:

- No individual team will be able to decide on its own to move to L.A. – a move can only be accomplished through the NFL office in New York; and
- Since no decision was made by the NFL owners in 2013, no announcement of a move can be made before February, 2014, the next NFL owners' meeting.

AEG/PHILIP ANSCHUTZ: Farmers Field is not "dead", only possibly delayed. The NFL favors AEG because it prefers an L.A. downtown stadium. But, NFL "sources" report that the cost of Farmers Field (and a new L.A. Convention Center West Annex) will be about \$1.8 billion, not \$1.2 billion as reported by AEG -- a 50% difference. The NFL publicly has expressed its concern that the AEG stadium proposal is not economically viable, although negotiations may take place to try to resolve these cost issues. Also:

- **Anschutz is quoted as saying (March 14th reported interview in the Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Daily News, and The Hollywood Reporter; March 15th reported interview in The Denver Post) that he is dedicated to bringing a team to L.A.; he is willing to be flexible about the terms of the deal; and, he has already spent about \$45 million to bring a team to L.A.; and**

- Sports columnists have observed that the fact that AEG is no longer for sale is viewed by the NFL as positive because the NFL prefers dealing directly with Anschutz.

MAJESTIC REALTY/ED ROSKI: The NFL prefers the AEG stadium site over the Roski proposal in City Of Industry (located on the north side of the junction of the 57 and 60 freeways), but, the NFL is said to like Roski's terms better. The NFL also thinks that Roski's stadium is closer to being "shovel ready". Also:

- The Roski bid probably is the most likely to result in a "temporary" NFL team playing in the Rose Bowl. The Rose Bowl is more convenient to the Roski permanent stadium; and
- The Rose Bowl has actively courted Roski, as was filmed and reported by KNBC, Channel 4 News.

THE GUGGENHEIM PARTNERS: The Dodgers' owners are a relatively new entrant in the effort to acquire an NFL team for L.A., although there has been talk of a football stadium in Chavez Ravine going back to the 1990s. This possible proposal is still preliminary, but it is rumored that there have been talks very recently between the Dodger ownership and the NFL.

Coalition's Summary of Key Issues:

- Once 2013 was missed, some ask if the lawsuit filed by the Coalition for Preservation of the Arroyo, which challenges the related City-certified environmental impact report (EIR), was premature?

The Coalition's response? Powerful forces in L.A. continue to seek an NFL team in Los Angeles (or, maybe 2), and powerful forces continue to push for a temporary NFL lease in the Rose Bowl for up to five years. Missing 2013 did not end these efforts, and, it is clear to the Coalition that the question of the NFL in the Los Angeles area will not be finally resolved until 2014 at the earliest, or maybe some time after that date.

- Further, the amendment the City Council made to the Arroyo Seco Public Lands Ordinance, which allows up to 13 NFL games in the Rose Bowl each year (doubling the number of Rose Bowl major displacement events), never expires and, as it stands, subject to the Coalition's legal challenge, has cleared all environmental hurdles.
- To question timing, of course, begs the central issue: When *is* the correct time to study the NFL-Rose Bowl deal? Before we have specifics? Before we know whether the possibility of an NFL Rose Bowl lease still exists? That is exactly what the City did: "study" a factless possibility to clear the way for future NFL negotiations. The City publicly admits this. Members of the City Council have publicly stated: "We'll take care of you (citizens) later."

- Let's not forget that the purpose of an adequate EIR, especially in this case, is to protect us, our neighborhoods and the Central Arroyo from NFL impacts. That can only be accomplished by identifying and adopting enforceable, performance-based, mitigations against the impacts of an actual NFL lease of the Rose Bowl. That's why we believe that permitting the City to sidestep its environmental obligations so it can freely negotiate with the NFL in the future is neither acceptable nor legal.
- And, by prematurely certifying a legally inadequate EIR, the City gave us no choice: **we have only one bite at the apple, and, this is it.** Following certification of the EIR, the period to sue was very short – only 30 days after filing of the CEQA Notice of Determination. If we had skipped carefully reviewing and challenging the EIR while waiting, possibly for years, to know for sure about the NFL in the Rose Bowl, the certification of the EIR would be final and we would have lost our legal rights to obtain an adequate and effective primary NFL/Rose Bowl EIR (subject to a possible requirement to update or supplement the EIR in the future due to the passage of time,)

The Coalition for Preservation of the Arroyo is composed of the East Arroyo Neighborhood Preservation Committee (EANPC), the Linda Vista~Annandale Association, (LVAA) and the San Rafael Neighborhoods Association (SRNA), and is supported by the West Pasadena Residents' Association (WPRA)

We encourage you to support the NFL EIR litigation. Help us protect our neighborhoods and the Central Arroyo. To read more and contribute, go to lvaa.net, srapasadena.org, or wpra.net.