



A Regional Initiative to Catalyze Transformative Job Creation and Economic Growth

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Think BIG to Explore Job Creation and Economic Benefits of Major League Baseball
Group highlights distinct advantages of Sacramento baseball market and plans for further exploration

SACRAMENTO – Today, Mayor Kevin Johnson and Think BIG Executive Director Kunal Merchant announced plans to explore the viability of bringing Major League Baseball (MLB) to Sacramento.

“Sacramento is a major league city,” explained Mayor Johnson. “We’re the capital of the one of the largest economies in the world. We’re a top 20 media market. The 2.3 million people in our region have an incredible track record of supporting our sports teams. Our market is poised for takeoff, and bringing an MLB team to town in a new world-class stadium is precisely the kind of economic and civic catalyst I’m committed to pursuing.”

As part of today’s announcement, Think BIG released a preliminary analysis of the potential economic and civic benefits a professional baseball franchise and new stadium would bring to Sacramento. The analysis highlights several distinguishing factors that would make Sacramento an attractive MLB destination:

- **LOCATION:** Availability of the Railyards site, an optimal MLB-ready location to maximize job creation and economic impact to downtown and the region;
- **CAPACITY:** Adequate acreage to ensure a world-class baseball stadium with dimensions and scope consistent with MLB standards;
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Significant portions of infrastructure required for a stadium already planned and/or in progress;
- **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP POTENTIAL:** Potential \$255M in public support ready and available to support stadium financing within the framework of a true public-private partnership consistent with the City and taxpayers’ best interests

Think BIG will devote the next 10-12 weeks in an exploratory effort to evaluate the viability of baseball in greater detail. To support these efforts, the Mayor also announced that Kevin McClatchy, former owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates and current Director of newspaper publisher The McClatchy Company, would serve as an informal “advisor-in-chief” to the Mayor and Think BIG.

“I believe in Mayor Johnson and I believe in Sacramento,” said McClatchy. “The Mayor and I have talked about bringing baseball to Sacramento for many years. I know what it takes to be a successful MLB city, and I have every confidence that Sacramento can become a great baseball town. As a friend to the Mayor and native Sacramentan, I am happy to support this effort.”

“Kevin’s advice and counsel will be invaluable,” said Mayor Johnson. “He offers deep expertise with Major League Baseball and developing an MLB-level stadium. But, just as powerfully, he is committed to Sacramento -



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as a native son, and as the leader of a major company with an 150+ year commitment to the Sacramento community.”

The announcement follows news last week that Think BIG will devote the next six months to evaluating a range of strategies to accelerate job creation and economic development in three areas: the Railyards, downtown Sacramento, and Sacramento region as a whole. Think BIG’s immediate focus will be on the Railyards, the 244-acre site that could be host to a range of arts, entertainment, business, transit and sports-related projects.

“The Railyards site is the game changer for our downtown, for our city and for our region,” said Merchant. “We need to pursue ideas worthy of its economic potential, and bringing a professional baseball team to a new world-class stadium is one great example of what we could accomplish here.”

Think BIG’s exploratory effort will examine all potential options, including the opportunity to bring the Oakland A’s franchise to Sacramento.

“We fully respect that the A’s energy and attention are focused in other markets,” explained Merchant. “Our goal is to articulate why Sacramento is an exceptionally viable MLB destination and worth a fresh look in the event other opportunities don’t materialize.”

“I learned a long time ago that if you don’t take a shot, you cannot score,” said the Mayor. “I am committed to aggressively examining every opportunity to move our economy and our city forward. This is only one of several pathways to maximizing our economic potential, and we want to be ready to move quickly if opportunities come our way.”

Kevin McClatchy is the Chairman of the Board of The McClatchy Company, the third-largest newspaper company in the country, McClatchy's operations include 30 daily newspapers, including The Miami Herald, The Sacramento Bee, and The Charlotte Observer. McClatchy is the former owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates, where he served as Chief Executive Officer and Managing General Partner from 1996-2007. McClatchy also served as a member of MLB’s Executive Council, Blue Ribbon Task Force, Labor, and International Committees. McClatchy was responsible for Pittsburgh hosting the 2006 All Star Game and Extravaganza. The stadium has been ranked by several national publications as “the best ballpark in America.” McClatchy is a native of Sacramento and earned a degree in Political Science from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Think BIG is a regional initiative launched in 2011 by Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson to promote job creation, economic growth, cultural development and civic pride across the greater Sacramento metropolitan area. Think BIG is led by a broad, and bipartisan committee comprised of over 70 business, labor, political and civic leaders from across the six-county Sacramento region.

For more information, visit www.thinkbigsacramento.org.

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