

# Menino dismisses plan to rebuild Fenway

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With the cost of renovating Fenway Park now estimated at more than \$500 million, Mayor Thomas M. Menino yesterday rejected the rebuild plan as "impractical" and urged lawmakers to back the \$545 million new ballpark project proposed by the Red Sox.

Citing an analysis of the Save Fenway plan by PricewaterhouseCoopers released this week, Menino said the time for studying the renovation proposal has passed.

"This review makes it clear that we need a new ballpark because the problems associated with trying to renovate — and the costs of doing so — are just too great," Menino said. "Trying to rebuild is not a wise public investment."

The study concludes it would cost "in excess of \$500 million" to rebuild the historic park.

Save Fenway, however, is not giving up. Backers of the plan said

## Cites study in call for new ballpark

they could cut costs by redesigning the project. Others argued that some cost estimates for the Red Sox plan may also be too low.

PricewaterhouseCoopers reviewed Save Fenway's plan, at no cost to the city, after Menino requested a professional analysis of the grassroots group's proposal. But skeptics note that Menino was a strong proponent of a new ballpark long before the study was released.

Nonetheless, both the mayor and Pricewaterhouse officials vehemently denied the review was biased toward a new ballpark. The study's authors argued they were "conservative" in the estimates they used for land acquisition and cost overruns.

"If we wanted to be negative, we could have justified using a bigger contingency to cover the significant risks associated with renovating and the project's four-year phased construction timetable," said Robert

Paglia, a partner in the firm. "But we didn't. Whenever there was a judgment call, we always gave the benefit of the doubt and took their figures at face value."

Both plans include a new, 44,000-seat ballpark and \$80 million for new parking garages.

Save Fenway's plan would allow the team to keep playing on the current infield, but calls for a "mostly new" ballpark to be built around it.

The Red Sox project includes a new \$350 million ballpark and preserves the current infield as a public park. It also includes \$50 million for infrastructure and \$65 million for land acquisition.

The Red Sox are still developing a financing plan. The team may need up to \$200 million in public money to build its new home. The Red Sox proposal is expected to take center stage on Beacon Hill once the bud-

get stalemate is resolved.

Meanwhile, some Fenway residents opposed to the new ballpark yesterday denounced the process the city is using to rezone the area.

Arguing that Menino has "rigged" a newly constituted local planning board with Red Sox backers, two members of the proposed 35-member panel resigned yesterday, just hours after they were appointed by the mayor. Led by the Fenway Action Coalition, opponents of the new ballpark pledged to create an alternative planning task force.

City officials, however, emphasized that only a handful of nominees to the task force were rejected. "This was a very inclusive process," said BRA director Thomas O'Brien. "We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and working with these community representatives to do the real planning work required for a variety of developments proposed in the neighborhood."