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[Bellaire Mayor Concerned About Dynamo Stadium Idea](#)

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The Houston Dynamo is eyeing a site on the outskirts of Bellaire as the potential location of the soccer team's future \$80 million stadium. The idea has some Bellaire officials concerned, but discussions are so early, the idea could just as easily fail as succeed.



The Houston Dynamo is considering this tract at South Rice Avenue and Westpark Drive as a potential location for its new stadium.

"It is within a soccer kick of the City of Bellaire," said Dynamo President Oliver Luck. The soccer team is in very early discussions with Midway Companies, a real estate developing firm, about building a 20,000-seat stadium on 30 acres of land at South Rice Avenue and Westpark Drive. For the past two years, the team worked on a 10-acre tract in downtown Houston, but those negotiations stalled recently.

"It is so preliminary it probably shouldn't even be in the public arena for discussion yet," said Brad Freels, chairman and CEO of Midway Companies. "When it was mentioned in commissioners court yesterday, it took me by as much surprise as it did everyone else."

When a Dynamo fan addressed the Harris County Commissioners Court on Jan. 26 about the stalled plans for the downtown stadium, Commissioner Steve Radack mentioned the Midway Companies option.

"A lot of people are of the opinion now if people want to build sports facilities, it's preferable to do it without taxpayers money. I personally don't like seeing government money used to build stadiums," Radack said today. "It's interesting when a company steps forward and says 'We believe we can do it'."

At this point, the Dynamos haven't given up on former plans to build the stadium downtown, on a track owned by the City of Houston. Under that deal, the Dynamos would pay \$60 million, the city of Houston would contribute \$10 million. The team wanted Harris County to pitch in the remaining \$10 million, but negotiations stalled when the county refused.

Brad Freels said his company has owned the tract at South Rice Avenue and Westpark Drive for 10 years. It has collaborated with the city of Bellaire and METRO on studies of good, smart development for the land, he said.

The idea now, Freels said, is to have the stadium in a mix-used development that also includes space for hotels, offices, retail stores, restaurants and more. Bellaire's new

Comprehensive Plan envisions similar mixed-use developments for a tract of land — The site of a future light rail line — that is right across from the Midway Companies property.

"I think it can be extremely positive for Bellaire," Freels said about the stadium idea. "I think it can be extremely positive for Uptown. I think it can be extremely positive for West University. The whole area could benefit from this."

Luck said he is talking with Midway Companies to see if the team can negotiate an ideal financial package similar to what it has tried at the downtown Houston site.

"The question really is, does this site with the private developer like the Midway Companies, does this offer the same kind of package," Luck said. "If the answer to that is no, the financials don't work, there's no sense doing the rest."

The matter of a financial agreement could be answered within weeks, said Luck. But even with an agreement, "the rest" could cause hang ups. Developers would have to consider the environmental impact, noise, traffic, parking and more.

The traffic question is one that will probably concern many Bellaire residents. Mayor Cindy Siegel said she learned about the plan last week from Midway Companies, and today she sent the company a letter opposing the plan.

"No matter how I look at it, in looking at that property, I just think it will hurt Bellaire and I don't think it will be good for fans because I think it will be difficult for them to get to that site," Siegel said.

She said the Bellaire Police Department already responds to large numbers of car accidents at the intersection of Loop 610 and Southwest Freeway, and more traffic would only make the problem worse.

Freels said he thinks the traffic that would head to the stadium for the Dynamos' 20 games per year would not be nearly as significant as the workers who drive daily in the Galleria area. It would be more like traffic heading to Joel Osteen's 18,000-seat Lakewood Church, which holds just 2,000 people less than the planned stadium.

City Manager Bernie Satterwhite said it's too early for him to speculate about what is good or bad about the idea, because he hasn't seen the details. But he did envision traffic as a potential problem.

"I'm sure there will be people out there who have grave concerns and there will be people out there who think it would be something good," Satterwhite said. "It's my job to kind of listen to all those things and help facilitate the consensus."

This post was written by:



[Angela Grant](#) - who has written 303 posts on InstantnewsBellaire.com.

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3 Responses to "Bellaire Mayor Concerned About Dynamo Stadium Idea"



1. [brandon](#) Says:
[January 28th, 2010 at 6:33 am](#)

The Dynamo Stadium will provide an immediate economic impact to the Houston community. I find it funny that the Bellaire mayor doesn't agree with the stadium because it isn't in Bellaire and the city isn't asked to invest any money. It sounds like the mayor is trying to get in the headlines by opposing the stadium, instead of doing what's right for the city



2. [Honestposter](#) Says:
[January 28th, 2010 at 10:44 am](#)

I work right next door to Lakewood Church and while the volume of traffic in/out of there can be annoying at times, it never creates a significant problem for those who wish to pass through the area. Good turn lane design and assistance from traffic personnel (I hope the church is paying for that!) ensures excellent flow. Just do good planning up front and the Dynamos stadium should have minimal impact (20x/year-big deal!) as well.

I've lived in many major cities in the US and this is the first one in which I've enjoyed the close proximity of many major entertainment venues to major roads that are easily navigable. NY had the subway to Madison Square Garden and Chicago had the L train to Wrigley Field, but other venues were more difficult to get to/from in those cities. We should welcome another "neighborhood" stadium and encourage smart planning that can enhance our quality of life. Just visit Wrigley Field to see the significant positive impact it has had on the surrounding area (and they play games 81 times a year).



3. [Buba](#) Says:
[January 28th, 2010 at 1:26 pm](#)

We live in Houston, there's going to be traffic; deal with it.

Someone with push forward and welcome this stadium into their community and that community will be laughing all the way to the bank 5-10 years from now. They will be glad they took a slight risk on a great deal while everyone else sat on their hands. In 5-10 years the original proposed site east of downtown will still be a dump and those in the area wish they would have taken the deal for a private entity to pump \$60 million into it. But no, El Franco Lee turn it down because, although great for his constituents, there was nothing in it politically for him.

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