

Stadium discussion good for community

The idea of a new football stadium on Colorado State University's main campus is what best-selling business author and thinker Jim Collins would call a BHAG — Big Hairy Audacious Goal.

Right up front, let me state that I don't have an opinion, yet, about the stadium, and the organization I represent has not taken a position. There are too many unanswered questions at this point.

Even so, CSU President Tony Frank and Athletic Director Jack Graham get high marks for laying out a big, bold vision. As the new heartthrobs of Fort Collins, they have set pulses racing with excitement and anger.

They must be the toast of cardiologists and therapists all across Northern Colorado! The community hasn't been this animated about a proposed building project since the Anheuser-Busch plant a generation ago.

As the exploratory process goes forward, here are some of the issues I hope are

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From this perspective



addressed:

» Where would people park? If you live or have a business within walking distance of the proposed stadium, you have every right to question the impact of the stadium on your lifestyle and property values.

In the name of preserving good town-gown relationships, the steering committee working on this will have to give serious attention to parking, including how use of the MAX Bus Rapid Transit on the Mason Street Corridor could help disperse parking.

» How would traffic patterns change on game days? Routing traffic to an uncongested edge of the community is obviously different than routing it into the already congested city core.

» What is the economic benefit of the proposed stadium to the community? Would an on-campus stadium near the heart of the community have a net economic benefit above that of the current remote location? Common sense says "yes," but where's the data to prove or disprove that assumption?

Based on how quiet Fort Collins is now during most home games, a case can be made that the current remote location doesn't leverage the enthusiasm and economic benefit of having a Division I football program in town.

» Would an on-campus stadium benefit the university academically because of the enhanced branding and visibility, as supporters contend? The argument goes that the typical "outsider," including a prospective 18-year old student, has no real clue about the great veterinary school or the strong college of business or any other academic program.

Stadium supporters claim that people know a university

because of its athletic programs, which serve to introduce them to the rest of what the university has to offer. This argument needs proof.

» Would the new facility translate into elevated alumni enthusiasm and financial support that benefits the overall university? Are there examples of strong research universities that benefited academically and financially because of an enhanced football program with an on-campus stadium?

» How else would the facility be used?

Answers to these and other questions will get aired out in the months ahead. In the meantime, kudos to President Frank and AD Graham for thinking big. The safe thing for them would be to go-along-to-get-along. The right thing to do is to fully explore this BHAG.

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