

Could Picturesque Views From Safeco Field Be Blocked?

Written by The Staff
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One of the more beautiful views from a ballpark may be in jeopardy of being blocked.

The view from the upper concourse of **Safeco Field**, dubbed "Lookout Landing" takes in spectacular views of Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountain range, and downtown Seattle. But the views may be blocked due to the development of new office and residential towers that developer **Greg Smith** hopes to someday build just northwest of the ballpark—development that has yet to take off in the area around Safeco Field where the

Mariners

play and

Qwest Field

where the NFL

Seahawks

play. As

[reported by the Seattle Times](#)

:

Smith said new buildings, with restaurants and shops at street level and hundreds of people living above them, could help create a bustling stadium district and enliven nearby Pioneer Square.

The Public Facilities District (PFD), an appointed board that oversees taxpayers' investment in Safeco, is dead-set against Smith's plan. The board has hired consultants to plot public-relations strategies; has sought CEOs, sports figures and former governors as allies; and has even stretched its budget for a politically charged battle that pits ballpark views against dense urban development.

The fight over Smith's site spotlights a thorny question: As Seattle grows, what's to be sacrificed and what's to remain sacrosanct?

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As PFD Chairman **José Gaitán** said, "It shows you don't have to have a million bucks to have a million-dollar view." But, others in city government grapple with how to manage such issues. "It's a public stadium, but the public in general can't go in without paying," said **Diane Sugimura**, head of the city planning department.