

Portland's to lose, or to win

By [The Oregonian Editorial Board](#)

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The city of Beaverton has blown a chance, but it's still possible, and important, for the metro area to hold onto the Beavers

This is turning into a slow-motion heartbreaker, only with a strange twist.

The stars on the field -- the people who should be scrambling to save the Triple-A Portland Beavers baseball team -- are instead just freezing and folding. We're watching from the stands as, first, the Portland mayor and City Council, and then the Beaverton mayor and City Council, blow their chances to secure the team.

Clackamas County and/or Clark County may be interested. And that would be fine, too. It would be better, far better, than losing the team. Right now, though, it's perfectly plausible that the metro area will lose it, without anything resembling a real effort from the Portland City Council to save it.

That's not to minimize the difficulties of finding a 12- or 13-acre site to build a roughly 8,000-seat stadium for the Beavers. Yes, it would be a scramble. But it's not impossible.

At the very least, Portland should take another look at Terminal One, a large site on the west bank of the Willamette, north of the Fremont Bridge. It is now owned by the city and used as a staging area for the construction of the Big Pipe sewer project. Other potential sites exist as well.

Most likely no new home for the Beavers can be built in time for the 2011 baseball season. That was Beavers' owner Merritt Paulson's original proposal and Portland Mayor Sam Adams' original plan. Paulson and the city have already agreed to convert PGE Park, the Beavers' present home, to a soccer-football stadium, creating the need to move the Beavers.

But if Paulson had an agreement in hand by January or February 2010, the Beavers could improvise in 2011. Paulson spokesman Dan Lavey said Monday that the team could play in another city or even in a combination of cities if necessary.

On Friday, Paulson pulled the plug on his bid for a Beaverton stadium after it became clear that Beaverton's efforts to assemble the land and a development plan were hopelessly bogged down. By our count, that makes three failed civic efforts to assemble the land, a plan and the political will (not to mention skill) to keep professional baseball in Portland or nearby.

Adams, now in Japan, has taken a couple of lunges at the problem but came up empty. Of course, any one of the council members could make this save. In fact, Commissioner Randy Leonard already played the starring role in landing Major League Soccer.

He's the only council member who seems to understand how upset Portlanders would be about losing the Beavers. Paulson has conservatively projected that the boutique baseball stadium he's proposing would attract 450,000 baseball spectators a year.

Keeping the team here -- and by that we mean somewhere in the metro area -- ought to be an important priority. Professional baseball has been a beloved and popular part of life here for more than a century. The object of this exercise to begin with was to expand the community's recreational choices, not reduce them.

The City Council shouldn't sit on its hands and let pro baseball get away.