

Bob Trumphour
Southern Illinois University

Ballparks and Politics in Boston: Boston and the Sports Stadium: Press Coverage and Response to Construction Initiatives from the Gilded Age to the Present

This paper traces the history of the stadium construction issues in the Boston metropolitan area, focusing on facilities for professional football and baseball. One dimension of this paper concentrates on Progressive Era construction, subsequent renovation, and more recent efforts to replace Fenway Park, while another looks at attempts to construct a stadium for professional football in this region. Early efforts to construct facilities were largely controlled and determined by team ownership, but more recent construction initiatives have involved considerable input from the public and from community leaders. The insular nature of community politics within Boston's city limits has pushed new construction efforts out of the city. In addition, recent political resistance to taxpayer-based construction subsidies have blocked the replacement of Fenway Park and have forced private funding for the construction of a new football stadium for the Patriots. Concerns for historical preservation have complicated the Fenway Park issue as well. Despite this resistance to subsidies, some taxpayer funds have been committed to projects of this nature. In the Patriot's case, new construction was made possible through a \$72 million infrastructure subsidy and private financing of stadium construction. In the Red Sox case, a more generous subsidy package was offered, but legislation that would require that the Red Sox bear the responsibility for cost overruns has pushed the team to more carefully consider continued use of Fenway Park instead of committing to new ballpark construction. This metropolitan area's most recent struggle with construction takes place at a time of unprecedented construction of new sports facilities within the United States.
