

Editorial

## Keep Sonics at the Key

A cadre of big-name Seattle developers has put forth an intriguing vision for Terminal 46 on Seattle's waterfront that would turn the massive container yard into a vibrant cityscape of housing, offices and parks.

But the idea to anchor the development with an iconic building for the Sonics makes no sense.

It would be wrong to rob Seattle Center of the Sonics' revenues, crowds and cachet — and threaten its vitality — in order to boost development in another part of the city. Eight years ago this month, Seattle Center was putting the finishing touches on a \$74-million reconstruction of KeyArena. Seattle Center will be paying off the building through 2015.

The Sonics have been losing money for years, and declining revenues have hit Seattle Center hard. The two parties are discussing their lease, which ends in 2010. The team should make every good-faith effort to stay put.

Frank **Stagen** of Nitze-**Stagen** and his fellow developers have no shortage of ideas for transforming the asphalt and gigantic red cranes of Terminal 46 into a lively place to live, work and play, even though the prospect remains many years and many rezones from reality. They should focus on other concepts for an anchor building.

The notion of a radical new use for the prime slab of waterfront has yet to stir its owner, the Port of Seattle. The Port wants to extend its current lease with shipper Hanjin beyond 2010 and has committed \$70 million in improvements to please its tenant.

Still, developers should keep dreaming and drafting — as long as they erase the Sonics from their renderings.