

The City of Seattle

Resolution 32198

A resolution affirming The City of Seattle’s readiness for a National Basketball Association (NBA) team; declaring that Climate Pledge Arena is ready for an NBA team; and affirming Seattle is a basketball city.

Recitals:

On March 25, 2026, the National Basketball Association (NBA) Board of Governors voted unanimously to formally explore expansion to Seattle, making Seattle an official candidate to receive a franchise.

Seattle has a proud and storied history as home to the Seattle SuperSonics, an NBA franchise from 1967 to 2008, including the 1979 NBA Championship team that remains a source of civic pride and identity.

Seattle has continued to cultivate one of the nation’s strongest basketball ecosystems, with sustained growth in youth participation, elite grassroots programs, and nationally recognized high school and collegiate competition.

Generations of players from Seattle and the Pacific Northwest have gone on to successful collegiate and professional careers, reinforcing Seattle’s reputation as a premier talent pipeline and a community deeply connected to the game of basketball at every level.

The departure of the Seattle SuperSonics left a lasting impact on the Seattle community, and public interest in the return of the NBA has remained strong and consistent across generations of residents.

Through a competitive request for proposals process initiated in 2017, The City of Seattle (City) ensured the original home of the Seattle SuperSonics was successfully redeveloped and modernized into today's Climate Pledge Arena – a 100 percent privately-funded, world-class, sustainable, state-of-the-art facility designed to host professional basketball at the highest level.

The construction and redevelopment of Climate Pledge Arena was made possible by thousands of skilled union construction workers and building trades professionals, reflecting Seattle's deep expertise in delivering complex, large-scale infrastructure projects to the highest standards.

As part of the Lease Agreement (Lease), the City required Climate Pledge Arena to use all commercially reasonable efforts to pursue an NBA team as an arena tenant, for that team to play its home games at the arena at Seattle Center, and maintain the team's corporate headquarters in Seattle.

Exclusivity being required to incentivize the \$1.15 billion private redevelopment of Climate Pledge Arena at Seattle Center, the City agreed during the Lease term not to provide future financial support, benefits, or incentives for construction of any additional live entertainment venue with a capacity of more than 15,000 seats within Seattle.

Climate Pledge Arena has been designed, constructed, and intended for a dual hockey National Hockey League (NHL) and basketball Women's National Basketball

Association (WNBA) / National Basketball Association (NBA) operation, and as such meets and exceeds NBA standards, including seating capacity, premium amenities, broadcast capabilities, locker room facilities, and fan experience infrastructure.

Critical to the successful operation of Climate Pledge Arena and its readiness to host an NBA franchise is a skilled and experienced workforce of more than 1,500 part-time employees represented across eight collective bargaining units, reflecting Seattle's strong labor partnerships and commitment to high-quality event operations.

Climate Pledge Arena has hosted 144 basketball games to date (out of nearly 1,000 total public and private events), which includes 90 WNBA / Seattle Storm games, 23 Seattle University Men's games, 15 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's and Women's Tournament games, four NBA preseason games, and more.

The Seattle Storm, a WNBA franchise, has achieved sustained local and national success and strong fan support, further demonstrating the region's deep commitment to professional basketball.

Seattle has demonstrated its ability to successfully support major professional sports franchises, including the NHL, WNBA, Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL), National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), Major League Soccer (MLS), and National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) with strong attendance, national visibility, national titles, and passionate fan engagement.

Seattle has a history of ardently supporting teams affiliated with semi-professional sports leagues, including the United States Basketball League (USBL), the USL W League, and the USL League Two, among others.

Seattle is one of the largest media markets in the United States without an NBA franchise, with a robust and growing population, a diverse and highly educated workforce, and one of the strongest regional economies in the country.

Seattle's business and innovation ecosystem – including global leaders in technology, life sciences, aerospace, and clean energy – provides a deep base of sponsorship, partnership, and long-term financial support for a successful NBA franchise.

The return of the Seattle SuperSonics would generate significant economic, cultural, and community benefits, including job creation, increased tourism, small business growth, continued downtown revitalization benefits, further activation of Seattle Center, and enhanced national and international visibility for Seattle and the region.

Community support for the return of the Seattle SuperSonics includes widespread public enthusiasm, strong grassroots advocacy, and the continued preservation of the Seattle SuperSonics' legacy through fan organizations, alumni engagement, and civic leadership.

The City of Seattle is committed to ensuring that the return of the Seattle SuperSonics aligns with broader community priorities, including equitable access to play, community development opportunity, workforce development, youth engagement, and impacts in underserved communities. Therefore,

Be it resolved by the City Council of The City of Seattle, the Mayor concurring:

Section 1. Affirmation of readiness. The City of Seattle formally affirms its readiness to welcome the return of the Seattle SuperSonics and expresses its strong desire to partner with the NBA to make this vision a reality.

Section 2. Arena commitment. The City affirms that Climate Pledge Arena is fully NBA-ready and capable of serving as a premier home venue, supported by lease terms, operational readiness, and infrastructure aligned with league requirements.

Section 3. Market strength and sustainability. The City highlights the strength of the Seattle market, including its economic vitality, corporate base, media reach, and demonstrated fan support, as a foundation for long-term franchise success.

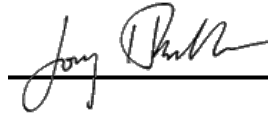
Section 4. Partnership with the NBA. The City commits to collaborating with the NBA, potential ownership groups, and regional partners to facilitate expansion opportunities that would return professional basketball to Seattle.

Section 5. Regional and civic collaboration. The City will continue to collaborate with regional stakeholders – including King County, the State of Washington, business leaders, and community organizations – to support a unified and compelling case for the return of the NBA.

Section 6. Legacy and identity. The City recognizes the enduring legacy of the Seattle SuperSonics and affirms its commitment to honoring that history as part of any future NBA franchise in Seattle.

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Brian Surratt/Lish Whitson
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Adopted by the City Council and signed in open session in authentication of its
adoption on April 7, 2026.



President _____ of the City Council

Signed in concurrence on April 14, 2026.



Katie B. Wilson, Mayor

Attested on April 14, 2026.



Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

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