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Sports Stadiums Are a Bad Deal for Cities.

But cities can fight back.

When I want to go to an Oakland A's baseball game, I walk 10 minutes to the MacArthur bart station. The station was part of an infrastructure plan that cost Bay Area taxpayers in the 1960s and '70s \$1.6 billion, and currently costs billions in maintenance and expansion. I pay a few bucks to ride—about 75 percent of bart's operating costs are maintained by fares. If the train car I step into is new, it cost taxpayers \$2 million.

The train travels south, dips underground through downtown Oakland, hangs a left around Lake Merritt, and resurfaces in Fruitvale. It stops outside of the looming monstrosity called the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, home to the A's and, for now, the Raiders. Just behind it is the Oracle Arena, home to the Golden State Warriors basketball team, also for now. Both stadiums opened in 1966 and together cost \$25.5 million for construction, in addition to \$1 million for the land they sit on, all funded by municipal bonds, which is to say taxpayers.

I and my fellow passengers walk over the sloping concrete bridge, where vendors hawk tickets, T-shirts, and beers amid the din of train whistles and street drummers, and we merge with other fans. They've come in cars and buses, maybe bicycles or Bird e-scooters, streaming in on public roads that will cost Oakland at least \$66 million to improve and maintain in 2019. We all go inside, having given our money to John J. Fisher, the billionaire majority owner of the A's, who in exchange lets us watch his team play.

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THE ATLANTIC

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