

Off-Strip

NFL, Next Door

THE RAIDERS' WORLD-CLASS SPORTS FACILITY WILL BE STRIP-ADJACENT

Ever since their inception in 1960, the Raiders have never had a stadium that they could truly call their own. However, beginning in 2020, the team will relocate to Las Vegas and open a new \$1.8 billion, 65,000-seat clear domed stadium just off-Strip.

The Raiders are the most recent riders on NFL's relocation carousel, and the move gives Southern California and Nevada with a third NFL franchise after the Rams and Chargers.

For Angelenos, the Raiders have a presence that is on par — if not arguably better — than Tinsletown's current tenants. From 1982 to 1994, the Raiders played at L.A.'s Memorial Coliseum, winning a Super Bowl in 1983 before they were unceremoniously moved back to Oakland.

Their next best move was to roll the dice, and, in the omen made famous by late owner Al Davis, to “just win, baby” in Las Vegas. It's a boon not only for Sin City's thirst for major sports, but for fervent L.A. fans that grew up with the team.

“It's a short trip from Los Angeles and a weekend in Vegas is already fun. Being able to watch my favorite football team in a state-of-the-art stadium also? No way I can turn that down,” said L.A. resident Joseph Gray, a die-hard fan who

was born in 1985 at the height of the team's SoCal reign.

Just across the 15 from Mandalay Bay, the ultra-modern stadium, now under construction, will have 80-by-120-foot-folding lanai doors that offer views of The Strip and a translucent polymer ceiling for natural light and temperature regulation.

Earlier this year, the Raiders also broke ground on a \$75 million, 30-acre site in Henderson for their corporate headquarters and practice facility.

The Raiders' move should have a ripple effect across Las Vegas. The city will host the NFL Draft in 2020, and an upcoming Super Bowl in the new facility is a matter of when, not if.

“The diversity of the Raiders and its fans always made me feel like one of them,” said Gray. “I'm excited for the move to Las Vegas. Finally, the jokes about their outdated facilities and field can be put to rest, hopefully leading to a resurgence that carries into all aspects of the organization.” ■



Photo courtesy of Mance Architecture

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By MANOUK AKOPYAN, Custom Publishing Writer

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