



Toytown developers want more time to study landfill before building

By [David DeCamp](#), Times Staff Writer

In Print: Tuesday, June 2, 2009 Environmental hazards at the Toytown landfill could lay waste to hopes of building a new Tampa Bay Rays stadium at the mid Pinellas site.

The old landfill made the speculative list of potential sites because of its central location and considerable size.

But building atop the 240-acre landfill would mean drilling pilings through an aging stew of waste to reach clay — while avoiding a rupture into the aquifer below.

Adding a massive stadium could require deeper pilings into the clay, closer to the limestone and aquifer that feeds into Tampa Bay, said Bob Hauser, the county's solid waste director.

But the group also has yet to nail down its best option after spending the past year studying the site's geology and building opportunities.

The developer instead will ask the Pinellas County Commission today for another year to study how to pull off **the \$1 billion project that calls for offices, stores and housing** on northeastern edge of St. Petersburg near Interstate 275 and Roosevelt Boulevard. Construction is slated to start in 2013.

Lobbyist Todd Pressman also went unpaid for months but said he has resolved the problem.

"We're very comfortable they're in a good financial position — well, as good as any developer can be in this market,"

Bear Creek Capital officials did not answer requests for comment.

Meidel, Hauser and state officials said no meetings about the environmental aspects of adding a stadium have taken place. The developer's May report doesn't mention a stadium. But Meidel said the makeup of Toytown's future isn't locked in, though adding a ballpark would be a significant change.

The landfill has a mix of sludge, trash and brush added from 1961 to 1984 before being closed in 1990. A 20-year-old slurry wall protects the mixture of rainwater and waste from seeping away. But the site requires county monitoring.

In fact, the county has to reinforce the slurry walls and the drain system to meet state environmental standards. The development plan counts on the county paying for that roughly \$3 million project. Hauser said the improvements need to be done anyway.

Even without a stadium, builders would need to relocate and level 750,000 cubic yards of trash, then add up to 1 million tons of clean dirt to isolate the waste. They estimate that work alone could take a year.