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## Learning from penalties

After two home games under a new permit-parking system, neighbors saw fewer violators.

By [R. Jonathan Tuleya](#)

November 7, 2002

The parking-authority trucks had their hitches warmed up and ready to tow again last Monday night before the Eagles game.

And those fans who did not learn from the 52 drivers whose vehicles were ticketed and towed the previous Sunday quickly discovered those large white signs -- "Stadium event, permit parking only, all other vehicles will be towed!" -- were no joke.

Another 30 vehicles were towed during the Monday-night game, said Tony Greco, president of South Philadelphia Communities Civic Association.

"I guess there were a whole bunch of them that still didn't believe that was going to happen," he said.

The permit parking for stadium events only affects the [Sports Complex Special Services District's](#) third district, covering the blocks between Broad and Seventh streets from Oregon Avenue to Interstate-76.

Permanent signs posted in that area warn people of the fate of their car should they park there during Eagles games. Similar temporary signs, like those positioned at Broad and Bigler streets and 13th Street and Oregon Avenue, reinforce the message.

Residents decided on the program after a series of civic meetings and discussions with the Philadelphia Parking Authority this summer. All homeowners were issued windshield decals for their vehicles in addition to two guest passes.

Greco declared the program a success.

"For the most part, people have called me saying how much they love it," he said. "It's been so long since they have seen any spots open on a football Sunday or football Monday night."

Since fewer cars were towed during the last home game compared to the one before, Greco said he believes fans are getting the message that they can no longer hide in his neighborhood to avoid paying to park.

Except for a few residents who had their cars towed because, Greco said, their parking permits were not properly displayed, the program has run smoothly. He said he sees no cause for any changes.

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**In the three** other neighborhoods comprising the special-services district, older parking programs are still in place. At least one of the leaders from those communities is watching Greco's district with some interest.

Barbara Capozzi, president of the Packer Park Civic Association and community director for District 2, said she has contacted the parking authority to discuss implementing a similar plan in her neighborhood.



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She stressed this is a preliminary idea that could not be implemented before next year, and it would need residents' approval. Capozzi said she would feel more comfortable with a program enforced by the police rather than the parking authority.

Police stationed at the entrances to Parker Park enforce the existing sticker program by letting only residents into the neighborhood. Capozzi admitted there are flaws in that system because officers often are called away from their posts to deal with other police matters.

Permit parking would not be necessary anywhere if parking was sufficient, Capozzi said. Residents should not be the only ones yelling about that -- the fans should be, too, she maintained.

Capozzi added that more parking is needed for all stadium-complex events.

"I have Flyers tickets and I can't give them away," she said. "People don't want the hassle. There is nothing fun about going down there, getting stuck in traffic and fighting with the parking-lot guys."

Capozzi is not confident the parking problem will go away after construction of the new stadiums is finished and Veterans Stadium is demolished.

John Furey, president of Broad Street West Civic Association, disagreed. He believes the situation will improve, at least in his neighborhood, with the completion of the new stadiums.

Few Eagles fans can find parking in Furey's neighborhood because the streets are congested with residents' cars, he said.

"[The fans] are looking for parking spaces that don't exist," Furey said. "The neighbors don't even have spaces they can grab on the street."

There once was a problem with fans parking and tailgating in the Amadee Bregy School lot, 17th and Bigler streets. Some residents use that space for their vehicles on weekends.

The civic association now keeps fans out by having volunteers stationed at the entrance who allow access to residents only, Furey said.

Furey and the stadium-area group's District 4 representatives, director Ted Scairato and alternate director George Hatton, have discussed other parking programs to help residents. One thing they are not considering is permit parking, according to Furey.

"Once you invite the parking authority into your neighborhood for any reason, our experience is they write tickets for every little infraction they can find," he said.

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**Judy Cerrone, president** of the Stadium Community Council and community director for District 1, called the parking situation caused by last Monday night's game a "nightmare."

Her neighborhood also depends on police to enforce its sticker program. However, when the city failed to deliver the barricades that usually block the entrances to her neighborhood at Packer Avenue and Juniper, 13th and Broad streets, police were run ragged trying to stop cars from entering her neighborhood.

Cerrone said she watched traffic stop dead for 30 minutes between 10th and Broad streets because police did not know where to send fans.

"I found out the next day there was parking available at the Navy Base and FDR Park," she said, "but if the fans don't know it, they can't get there."

Cerrone blamed poor communication between the parking-lot attendants and the patrolling officers. Yet District 1 residents want no part of permit

parking, Cerrone said.

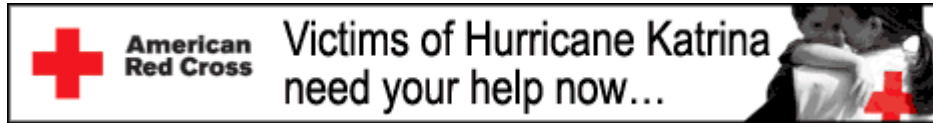
"We feel the neighborhood can be controlled by us," she said. "We don't want them coming in towing our cars here."

Also, Cerrone said, the police presence deters rowdy fans from disrupting the neighborhood.

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