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## Bracing for a blowup

As the Vet nears demolition, stadium-area neighbors have hired their own engineer to survey the plans.

By [R. Jonathan Tuleya](#)  
November 20, 2003



The Phillies are not the only ones preparing for Veterans Stadium to come down as the demolition date approaches.

The **Sports Complex Special Services District** has hired a geotechnical engineer to examine the ground below the homes nearest the stadium. Neighbors want the expert to predict if the area can withstand the vibrations of an implosion.

Veterans Stadium is scheduled to be demolished in February. The Phillies are responsible for the demolition, as determined by a deal with the city. Engineers hired by the team have recommended implosion as the safest option for the neighborhood and the least expensive for the team.

Some residents from the east side of Broad Street, nearest to the Vet, have been upset because they feel Phillies management has excluded them from the process.

During a September community meeting, it was suggested that an independent engineering firm be hired to make its own recommendation for demolition.

Recently, the seven members of the SCSSD -- which includes four neighborhood representatives, plus a representative from the Phillies, Eagles and Comcast-Spectacor -- voted unanimously to release funds to pay for an independent engineer.

Last week, the district hired Schnabel Engineers, a company based in Virginia with a local office in West Chester, according to Shawn Jalosinski, SCSSD's executive director. Jalosinski declined to say how much the district would pay Schnabel for its services.

The firm has worked on stadium implosions in Seattle and Baltimore, he said.

"First and foremost, we want to be sure that the type of demolition is the safest method for the residents," Jalosinski said, "whether it's implosion, conventional demolition or a combination."

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The SCSSD plans to hold a community meeting to introduce the engineer to residents, and to calm some people's concerns, Jalosinski said. The date for the meeting has not been set. Some in the neighborhood have increased their homeowners' insurance and begun taking "before" pictures of the property in advance of the implosion.

"There is a fear out there, which is serious," Jalosinski said. "However, I

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think there is also a lot of misinformation circulating."

One of Schnabel's primary responsibilities will be to double-check the Phillies' engineer's report. The firm also will analyze the soil and foundations beneath the homes, and during the demolition it will place seismographs to measure vibrations.

There is no time frame for Schnabel to make its recommendation to residents, Jalosinski said. It depends on subsequent reports still pending from the Phillies' engineer.

"It's a risky thing, regardless, and we want to minimize those risks and take every necessary precaution as we go through this," the director said.

In September, the Phillies announced they had hired Chicago-based Brandenburg Industrial Services Co. as the demolition contractor. Brandenburg has not yet hired a subcontractor to conduct the actual implosion.

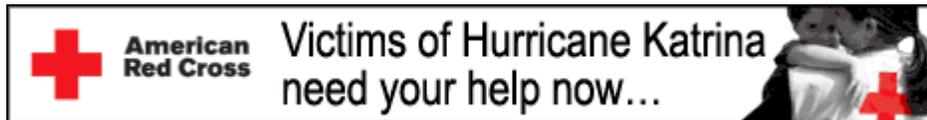
The city has issued permits to begin some of the preliminary work associated with the demolition, such as the removal of stadium seats, but a demolition permit has not been issued.

Veterans Stadium stands 120 feet tall and is nearly 1,900 feet in circumference. The closest homes sit 150 feet from the arena.

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