

Site Search:

[Extended Search](#)

Week of  
January 12-18, 2006



- [home](#)
- [news](#)
- [op-ed](#)
- [lifestyles](#)
- [food](#)
- [sports](#)
- [police report](#)
- [youth & schools](#)
- [calendar](#)
- [socials & obituaries](#)
- [classifieds](#)
- [real estate](#)
- [place an ad](#)
- [menu guide](#)
- [medical guide](#)
- [archives](#)
- [contact us](#)

## Fielding concerns

Though some residents are looking forward to the school district's new athletic complex at 12th and Bigler, others have issues with the plans.

By [R. Jonathan Tuleya](#)  
January 15, 2004



The School District of Philadelphia's proposal to renovate the Bok-Southern athletic fields was greeted with mixed reactions at a neighborhood meeting Monday night.

School officials presented to about 50 residents their plan to replace the football field's pitted and bumpy grass gridiron with artificial turf and its antiquated cinder track with a rubberized, all-weather surface.

The district has dubbed the complex a "super site." The South Philly location will be one of four the district has planned around the city. Other super sites are slated for Northeast High School, Germantown High School and the fields shared by Ben Franklin and Dobbins high schools.

So far the district has budgeted \$1.5 million for the project at 12th and Bigler streets, according to Anton Hackett, director of external and community affairs for the district. That will be enough to pay for renovations to the field and the track. Work is scheduled to begin in late fall.

"The children have been cheated for so long," Hackett said. "We would like to see this happen expeditiously."

Another school official called the current conditions of the field "unusable and unsafe."

The super site would serve as the home field for games and practices for teams from South Philly and Bok high schools.

It also could be the home for teams from the consolidated St. John Neumann and St. Maria Goretti high schools. That plan depends on what the Archdiocese does with Neumann's current complex at 26th and Moore. Neumann's varsity football team already uses the 12th and Bigler field for its home games.

University City High in West Philly and Bartram High in Southwest also would be granted access to the field for games, a school official said.

---

**The school district** wants to make other improvements to the complex -- like adding security lights, replacing the fencing around the field, landscaping, installing artificial turf on the baseball and soccer fields, moving the complex's entrance to 10th Street and adding a parking lot -- but those plans depend on additional funding.

Tony Greco, president of the South Philadelphia Communities Civic Association, who organized the meeting, said the civic group would pursue additional funding through state Sen. Vince Fumo, Council President Anna Verna and the [Sports Complex Special Services District](#).

**Artificial Outdoor Plants**

Landscaping plants, trees, palms  
Waterproof U.V. Stabilized Foliage  
[www.earthflora.com](http://www.earthflora.com)

A representative from Verna's office attended the meeting and indicated the Council president supported the district's plans contingent on the neighborhood's approval.

Before the super site gets any funding through the SCSSD, a majority of the district's seven board members would have to approve it. Some members of the SCSSD and the district's executive director, Shawn Jalosinski, attended Monday's meeting and raised questions about the plans.

Other neighbors also voiced concerns about the super site. They ran the gamut from serious issues about security and traffic to one woman's complaint about the cheerleaders and announcers making too much noise.

School officials seemed surprised by the resistance. Ron Cohen, the coach of the George Washington High School football team -- whom the district recruited to help reform the public schools' athletic facilities -- tried to reassure neighbors by telling them the fields will be something to behold.

"People are going to come from all over the country to see these fields," Cohen said.

Greco called the decision to renovate the field a "no-brainer" and noted the school district expressed a willingness to hear input.

He also said the civic association would have keys to the fields, which would allow local residents to use them, and the organization would have a say about to which groups the city would issue permits to use the field.

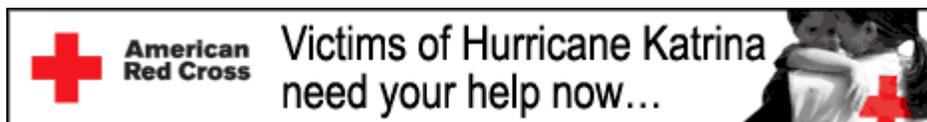
Greco assured residents the off-street lot at the super site would not be open to spectators attending events at the complex.

Schools CEO Paul Vallas included improvements to the district's athletic fields in the district's five-year \$1.5-billion capital improvement plan released in December 2002. Since then, a team led by Cohen and facilities manager Arthur Haskin has traveled from Haverford to Harlem, checking out complexes at public and private high schools and cultivating ideas for the super sites.

---

 [E-mail this article to a friend](#)

[back to top](#)



© 2006 [Review Publishing Privacy Policy](#)

visit our sister papers: [PW-Philadelphia Weekly](#), [Atlantic City Weekly](#), [Connections Weekly](#),