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## Citizens can't park

The Phillies will add thousands of new parking spaces at the former site of Veterans Stadium by November, but neighbors contend the work was promised earlier.

By [David Gambacorta](#)  
August 12, 2004

For once, the Phillies had residents near Veterans Stadium looking forward to October.



Neighbors say the team had promised that by Oct. 1, cleanup work at the site of the former stadium would be finished, creating 5,500 parking spaces just in time for postseason baseball and the start of the football season.

However, the organization announced a different timetable last week that would create parking spaces in three phases, with work scheduled to end in mid-November.

The news angered residents who have grown to disdain the incessant noise of construction equipment and the daily vibrations that shake their homes.

"People are very upset," said Judy Cerrone, director of district one of the [Stadium Complex Special Services District](#). "There was a lot promised to us, but the Phillies aren't following through."

The team maintains that it never settled on an actual date for work to be completed on the parking spaces, and that the contractors -- Brandenburg Industrial Service Co. and Demolition Dynamics -- would only have incurred penalties if they didn't finish the construction of Citizens Bank Park on time.

"We always talked about the fall. We never had a firm finish date," said Richard Deats, the Phillies' vice president in charge of ticket sales.

Shawn Jalosinski, the executive director of the stadium district, begrudgingly agreed with the Phillies' assessment.

"Unfortunately, none of this was in writing," Jalosinski said. "A lot of their answers were open-ended, but this is still disappointing."

The revamped schedule also is pushing back plans for the construction of a 20-foot berm around the sides of the lot that border the neighborhood.

Funded by a grant from the Citizens Alliance for Better Neighborhoods and designed with neighbors' input, the berm is supposed to be landscaped with trees and flowers in an effort to cut down on the noise and the impact of the glaring stadium lights.

Because the Phillies still rely on the Geary Street entrance to their parking lot, work on the berm won't begin until they build a new entrance on Broad and Hartranft streets.

Deats said the team expects the new entrance to be completed by early October.

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"Ideally, we want to get it done as soon as possible," he said, noting that one portion of the parking lot will be finished earlier than expected.

Although the 50-acre Vet site is still covered with mounds of concrete silt that will be used to fill in the hole where the stadium once stood, part of the site closest to Citizens Bank Park will be done by the end of this month, opening up 1,000 new parking spaces.

More spots will open in early October, with the rest coming in November.

The Phillies also opened a small lot between the Holiday Inn and the new ballpark on Monday, although it can hold only 650 cars.

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**While the team** hasn't started work on the Hartranft Street entrance yet, the Packer Park Civic Association began a long-planned streetscape project over a month ago on Hartranft, from Broad to 20th streets.

The \$1.2-million project, funded with a state grant and money from City Council President Anna Verna, is designed to control traffic entering and leaving the neighborhood.

Fearing heavy flows of traffic before and after Phillies and Eagles games, PPCA board members lobbied to have curblines extended 30 feet to narrow the traffic lanes and give pedestrians a larger area to stroll.

"It's going to be very pedestrian-friendly, and the neighbors won't have to worry about cars flying down the street anymore," Jalosinski said.

The Phillies also will pay for the construction of a traffic island that will make it impossible for fans leaving the stadium to enter the neighborhood, the director said.

The plan has gone over well with residents, although some gripe that the extended pavements are taking away parking spots.

"Every time the sidewalk comes out that far, we lose two spots," said a woman living on the 1700 block of Hartranft Street. "But we're better off being safe, I guess."

Neighborhood safety concerns dominate many of Jalosinski's conversations with the Phillies, who are still addressing the issue of whether the Vet cleanup is damaging homes on the 1300 block of Geary Street.

Seismograph readings were at their highest a week ago, although Jalosinski insists that the readings aren't high enough to cause structural damage.

"We are worried, however, if there will be a cumulative effect over time" because of the daily disturbances, Jalosinski said.

Officials from Brandenburg and Demolition Dynamics are supposed to get back to residents who placed prior complaints about implosion-related damages in the coming days, he added.

"We'd like to hear back from them sooner rather than later," Jalosinski said. "I feel the pain of everybody living in these neighborhoods, but we are actively pursuing solutions to all of our problems. Everyone has the right intentions."

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