

New football stadium would benefit Temple campus, neighborhood

By Rick Gabe · November 30, 2015



 Temple's P.J. Walker, front, sprints to the end zone for a touchdown after a long run during the second half of an NCAA college football game against SMU on Friday, Nov. 6, 2015, in Dallas. Temple won 60-40. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez, file)

Officials of Temple University made public in October their intention to build an on-campus stadium for the football team. A number of subsequent op-eds published since then have tried to substantiate some components of the stadium, but even more have talked down the stadium as a [bad idea](#).

Among the first to voice displeasure of the university's stadium plans are the North Philadelphia neighbors who ring the campus. But such has been the case with most every campus expansion over the last 20 years, the strongest example being the Liacouras Center, completed in 1997 at Broad and Norris. However, as in the past, the university will move past this opposition.

The university has expanded its campus for competitive purposes and as part of its transformation from commuter to residential campus. The stadium would be a great addition to the infrastructure that is blossoming now.

“[Visualize Temple](#)” is the University’s master plan for an ambitious campus expansion over the next 10 years. The stadium has not yet been approved by the Board of Trustees, so it’s not included in the plan. What has been approved, and is now under construction, is a new athletics field for the soccer and lacrosse teams at Broad and Master streets.

The current home of these teams is Geasy Field, which sits, not surprisingly, on the land proposed as the site of the football stadium, running from [Norris Street to Berks Mall and from Broad to 16th streets](#).

Not easy, but rewarding

As a Temple alum who is strongly in favor of the stadium, I do realize there are significant obstacles ahead for the university to make this a reality. Among them are game day traffic, tailgating and parking.

These issues will not have quick solutions. Many alums who I have spoken to have great concerns about these issues, especially those who have grown comfortable with Lincoln Financial Field’s ease of access, parking and tailgating.

In an [article in the Temple student newspaper](#), “The Temple News,” President Neil Theobald, who realizes the importance of athletics to a university, elaborated on many facets of the stadium. He shared that studies on fundraising, traffic and parking were near completion and the results will be included in the stadium proposal to be presented to the university’s board in December.

Said Theobald, “We know the proposed stadium will cost \$100 million — \$70 million will be streamlined from what was already being paid to the Eagles to play at Lincoln Financial Field, while the other \$30 million will come from fundraising.”

Theobald added, “Are we Ohio State? No. That is not our goal. We are a very good academic university that plays a high level of football.”

No, Temple may never be Ohio State or Michigan, but why not aspire to have the total game day experience- on campus, for everyone in attendance, from the student athletes to the fans.

“Financially, football drives the bus, there’s no doubt about it,” Theobald added. “Football because of TV revenue and marketing and all the things that come with it ... is the piece you really have to pay attention to, because that’s what allows you to do what you want to do here.”

8 good reasons

And so the time to move forward with the stadium is now. The Temple football program is having, arguably, its most consistent success — over the last six years — than it has had in its entire 100-year-plus history.

Does an on-campus stadium equate to continued football success? Certainly not by itself.

Some additional benefits to a stadium on campus:

Temple would no longer pay nearly \$1 million per season to the Eagles for renting Lincoln Financial Field. It was reported in an April 12, 2014, [philly.com](#) article that [this rent would increase to \\$2 million a year](#), along with a \$12 million payment required up front, as part of any new contract beyond Temple’s current deal, which ends after the 2017 season.

It would be much easier for students to walk across campus to the stadium than to brave a commute to an off-campus facility. And so by this measure alone, student attendance at games should increase exponentially from current attendance at the Linc.

On game days, the estimated 35k capacity in attendance comprising students, alums, and fans of the football program will be at Temple, experiencing its environs — and not in a barren, South Philly concrete jungle.

One ongoing goal of the Temple University Alumni Association is to attract alumni back to campus. Alumni who return to campus — and feel increased pride in their alma mater — are more likely to donate to their school.

Further, the game-day experience on campus is more likely to help increase university enrollments as prospective Temple students can experience the vibrancy of campus on their visit. All concessions and parking revenue will belong to Temple, as will any seat license fees,

advertising within the facility and any revenue from stadium naming rights. At the Linc, concessions go to the Eagles and parking goes to the City of Philadelphia.

Though no designs have been completed, the stadium is purported to be a multi-use facility with classrooms. The facility would possibly also hold other sporting events and commencement ceremonies as well.

Businesses on campus would see increases in revenue on game day — and perhaps these same local businesses might spawn new repeat customers as a result. Jobs would be created within these businesses as well.

So even with the hurdles that Temple has in making this on-campus stadium a reality, the benefits are numerous and should be the impetus to move forward so that kickoff at Temple Stadium- North Broad- will happen in September of 2018 — or soon after.

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<https://whyy.org/articles/new-football-stadium-would-benefit-temple-campus-neighborhood/>