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After a Decade of Delays, DPW Promises Paul E. Joseph Stadium Will Be ‘Substantially Complete’ by Year-End

Despite skepticism rooted in broken 2022 and 2023 pledges, DPW says construction on key elements like bleacher roofs, utility relocation, and field grading is progressing, with substantial completion of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium expected by December.

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An aerial view of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium during an earlier phase of construction. This image does not reflect the most recent progress on the project. Ask ChatGPT By. V.I. DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS.

“We've finally been able to get past some of the design hurdles that were challenging us,” said Derek Gabriel, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works. He was referring to the Paul E. Joseph Stadium construction project, which broke ground [over 10 years ago](#) and has suffered a series of stops, starts, and delays in the intervening years. According to Mr. Gabriel, residents can expect to see the stadium “substantially complete” by as early as the end of the year.

Now that issues such as federal regulatory approvals have been cleared and the major scope of work items fully determined, DPW officials have increased the pace. “Our project management team really has been trying to lean in and make some of those design decisions in a timely fashion so that [the contractor] can go back, adjust, make sure,” Mr. Gabriel explained. “We've really been meeting a lot even to make decisions like colors, tile...we've really been involved in.”

“Now we've kind of given the contractor a runway where he can complete some major items,” the DPW commissioner said. Some of these major items include the structural steel for the bleacher roofing, which is going up right now. In coming months, work on the outfield wall is also expected to begin. “We are also doing some site work items that need to be done...grading the site to that it can actually look like a ball field,” Mr. Gabriel outlined. “Utility relocation is something that we are also focused on,” he continued.

The stadium project would be all but finished “by the end of the year, maybe leaking a little bit into the first quarter next year,” Mr. Gabriel said. “That's our goal.”

This is not the first time such promises have been made. In September 2022, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced that completion of the beleaguered stadium [was six months away](#), and in February 2023, Mr. Gabriel said work would be completed [in the coming months](#). Both promises were broken.

Noting an upcoming appearance before the Legislature, Mr. Gabriel promised that there would be “a lot of discussion” on progress made thus far and plans for future work on the stadium. He sought to clear the air on his [department's failure to appear](#) the last time senators met to discuss the stadium. “I, Derek Gabriel, the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, was never formally invited,” he stated. “I didn't receive a committee invitation. I think some of the narrative that's been put in the public has been a little bit disconcerting, to be very honest with you.”

Mr. Gabriel defended his record of appearances before the legislature when summoned. “My team and I always show up...I would assume it was miscommunication.” He made assurances that both DPW and the contractor would make full representation at Friday's upcoming committee meeting. “We look forward to providing a comprehensive update.”