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From the Los Angeles Times

## Dodgers may open fifth gate to ease traffic flow

The team plans to use the Scott Avenue exit, closed years ago after neighbors complained.

By Bill Shaikin  
Times Staff Writer

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The Los Angeles Dodgers plan to reopen a fifth gate to Dodger Stadium this weekend, hoping to alleviate parking lot congestion without alienating the neighborhood groups that successfully lobbied for that gate to be closed 11 years ago.

The team intends to use the Scott Avenue gate as an exit route after every game and an entrance route before games with particularly large crowds, Dodgers spokeswoman Camille Johnston said Tuesday.

In 1996, then-owner Peter O'Malley agreed to close the Scott gate after neighbors argued that stadium traffic overwhelmed the surrounding residential area. That year, the Dodgers drew 3.2 million fans. The team sold 3.8 million tickets last season.

"We need to open the gate to alleviate the stress on the other four arteries," Johnston said.

City Councilman Eric Garcetti, whose district includes the neighborhood, said the Dodgers contacted him about reopening the gate after the severe parking problems of opening day, when thousands of fans were stuck for more than an hour getting into and out of the stadium.

Garcetti and Councilman Ed Reyes, whose district includes other areas around Dodger Stadium, said the team has agreed to pay for traffic officers to prevent departing fans from using side streets on their way to freeways. Johnston said the team is paying for traffic officers outside other gates as well, starting this season.

Reyes said he would prefer that the Dodgers kept the gate closed but would consider supporting the reopening if residents' concerns could be mitigated. Garcetti said he would take no position until he heard from area residents.

"I love the Dodgers. I hope we can get a lot of people moving into and out of the community, but we've got to do it in a way that protects our neighbors," he said. "The community deserves to be heard. If it can't work for them, it will be tough to work for the Dodgers."

Team officials met with one neighborhood group Tuesday and are scheduled to meet with another tonight. Johnston said the Dodgers want to keep neighbors informed but plan to open the gate Friday.

In his meetings with the Dodgers, Garcetti said, team officials said they had the unilateral right to open the gate. If the city does not approve, Garcetti said, it could respond by blocking traffic on Scott Avenue, but he said he was optimistic that the Dodgers could work with residents to resolve traffic issues.

"We don't want a return to the '80s, when people couldn't get out of their homes," Garcetti said.

Dodger Stadium opened in 1962, and Johnston said the parking lot was designed for traffic to flow through five gates.

Still, Garcetti said, the Dodgers cannot fix their parking problems just by opening another gate or adding spaces to their lot. He wants to work on providing mass transit options to Dodger Stadium, he said, and the team is receptive.

"You can't solve this just by figuring out how to accommodate cars," Garcetti said.

Tonight's meeting, with the Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council, starts at 7 at Barlow Hospital, 2000 Stadium Way.

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