

# Second phase of building Baltimore Grand Prix race course begins

## 9,300-pound concrete barriers will protect fans from the cars

By [Don Markus](#), The Baltimore Sun | 9:26 p.m. EDT, July 25, 2011

The sight of a forklift lowering a 9,300-pound concrete slab onto [Pratt Street](#) attracted a crowd Monday night at the [Inner Harbor](#).

Curiosity-seekers joined organizers running the first [Baltimore Grand Prix](#) as the second phase officially began in constructing the downtown race course that will be used for the [Labor Day](#) weekend event.

Martyn Thake, the [Baltimore Grand Prix](#)'s director of operations, said that the first phase, resurfacing and repairing many of the city streets that will be part of the two-mile course, has been completed.

This new phase, which also includes putting up safety fences and grandstand seating for some of the 100,000 expected race fans, will cost around \$2.5 million, Thake and [Grand Prix](#) President Jay Davidson said.

Construction will take 40 days to complete, Thake said, adding that his company is also contractually obligated to remove about 2,200 barriers, fences and 16 grandstands within 30 days after the end of the event.

The three main grandstands will be built at the Inner Harbor, the [Baltimore Convention Center](#) and [Camden Yards](#). Having three "anchors" gives the [Baltimore Grand Prix](#) an advantage over other race courses that typically have one main area for fans to congregate, Davidson said.

"It's a major day for us, the [Grand Prix](#) and the city," Davidson told reporters. "Just to see the actual track being built is a great thing."

Thake, who relocated his 30-year-old race-course constructing company from Denver to Baltimore, said that construction is on schedule, but added, "We started today, so we can't be behind schedule."

Thake said that two local companies, Paul J. Rock and Conder and Associates, will do "a majority" of the work on this phase of the course construction.

Davidson said he is sensitive to the complaints of motorists who have been inconvenienced by the resurfacing and repair of many city streets and is aware that this phase of the project will also test their collective patience.

Asked about the condition that he and his mostly local construction crews found the streets, Thake said bluntly, "They were bad," but quickly pointed out that it isn't unusual for a city of Baltimore's size "to have that kind of volume" of traffic.

Thake has said often and repeated Monday that Baltimore has a chance to become "the Long Beach of the

East," referring to a downtown race course in that California city where [Grand Prix](#) races have been held for more than three decades.

Davidson said that organizers were at "75 percent of our goal" in terms of ticket sales, and that those viewing the race on television will get a taste of the city from cameras inside the race cars.

"The in-car shots coming up Conway [Street] to Camden Yards, that's going to be pretty," Davidson said.

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