

Benjamin Franklin Parkway Action Plan

Community Meeting – July 23rd

Second Pilgrim Baptist Church

Project Goal:

Develop an action plan for the Parkway that is based on civic engagement and, ultimately, leads to a set of projects that can be funded and implemented in the next few years.

Agenda

6:00 - 6:30: Registration and socializing

6:30 - 6:45: Introductions and Welcome

Michael DiBerardinis, Commissioner, Department of Parks and Recreation

6:45 - 7:00: Overview of the Project and of the Work Tonight

Harris Steinberg, PennPraxis

Harris Sokoloff, Penn Project for Civic Engagement

7:00 - 8:15: Small Group Work

Moderators: Germaine Ingram, Carol Lydon, Bryan McHale, Loretta Raider, Karen Scott

8:20 - 8:30: Plenary Discussion

Key action ideas and next steps

8:30: Adjourn

PHILADELPHIA
**PARKS &
RECREATION**



Parkway Project

Meeting Location: Second Pilgrim Baptist Church

Date: July 23, 2012

Moderator: Germaine Ingram

There were nine people in this break-out group---diverse in race/ethnicity, age and residential location. The group was about evenly split between African Americans and Anglo. There were 4 males in the group. The participants included a teen; 2-3 people who appeared to be in their 20s-30s; 4-5 people who appeared to be 40s-50s, and one person who identified herself as "senior with health problems". The African Americans in the group and one other person were from the Francisville community and came principally for the community voting meeting. One participant lives in NJ, another lives in the suburbs, 2 live in areas near the Parkway, but outside the Francisville area. One identified herself as a mother of three young children under age 5.

This was an energetic group; amiable throughout. They listened to one another's comments, and built on the comments of other people in the group. Except for the teen (who left early), everyone was forthcoming in stating their views, and they expressed themselves well. There were diverse viewpoints, but no open disagreements. They continually expressed their gratitude and excitement about citizens being asked to share their views on improving the Parkway.

1. Why people came to the meeting

- ~ Likes to know what's going on in the community
- ~ Likes to "be involved"
- ~ Saw something on TV about making improvements to the Parkway
- ~ An intern at a CDC is interested in successful use of public space
- ~ Heard about the public forums and this was the one that fit into her schedule
- ~ Several people had specific concerns about the Parkway that they wanted share and discuss:
 - -Need for more accessible shade and seating
 - Need for sanitary and accessible restrooms
 - -Need for more attractions for walkers; desire for greater ease for walkers to use the Parkway---someone said "No way to walk, no way to cross...."
 - -Wants Parkway to be more vibrant
 - -When there are large events on the Parkway, the City is efficient in cleaning up the Parkway afterwards, but areas close to the Parkway are left with debris from the event.
 - -Parking is a problem
 - -Dog poop
 - -Parkway is a physical barrier to places she wants to get to with her children.
 - -The institutions along the Parkway don't extend themselves outside their buildings, into the open spaces, or into the adjoining neighborhoods. One person described them as "insular".
 - -There were nods of agreement around the circle when someone said that the experience of using the Parkway does not match the physical beauty of the space.

2. Who uses the Parkway

- Joggers
- Cyclists

- Vendors
- Dog Walkers
- Homeless
- Tourists
- Local Residents
- Students (Moore, Hallahan)
- “Athletes”
- Children
- Elderly
- Drivers
- Special Event Planners
- Museums
- Workers on break
- Gardeners
- Wedding Parties
- Photographers
- Film makers
- Visual/Performing Artists
- Festival goers

3. Who Doesn't Use the Parkway

- Seniors avoid the Parkway because of the traffic, limited seating and shade.
- Traffic-haters avoid the Parkway because of the congestion and the confusing traffic patterns.
- People with injuries and disabilities avoid the Parkway for the same reasons as the elderly.
- Residents of buildings along the Parkway---love/hate relationship with the Parkway
- People with several children because it's hard to negotiate the traffic, and there is not much that is attractive to young children.
- At-risk youth, and kids who stick to their own neighborhoods---the person who offered this said that he thinks it's more an issue of the kids' self-containment rather than anything about the Parkway that excludes them.
- People whose mindsets do not include the Parkway.
- [I asked whether there are people from any identifiable parts of the City who don't, as a rule, use the Parkway. The answer was that they could not think of any.]

4. What people do along the Parkway

- -Physical fitness and athletics: jogging, biking, field games
- -Walk/run their dogs
- -Entertain children
 - Engage in special events---concerts, festivals, weddings
- -Pursue arts activities-----photography, drawing/painting, performance, film making
- -Read
- -Listen to music
- -Eat lunch
- -Make it a gateway to Fairmount Park

- -Play in the fountains
- -Listen to the sounds of the city
- -Walk to other destinations
- -Sleep/camp out
- -Feed the homeless
- -Catch public transit
- -Have picnics

5. What would make the Parkway more useful or accessible to you and others?

[For this group this was a more relevant question than asking what other things people could do on the Parkway.]

- -Better public transit to and from the Parkway, e.g. a shuttle bus [One challenge raised is that some people prefer driving, and some are concerned about the safety of public transportation.]
- -Free Parking, including parking pods that are served by shuttle buses
- -Effective marketing of transportation options
- -More shade and more seating
 - Food options; kiosks that sell food, newspapers, snacks and beverages [But control the number of kiosks; keep green space; commercial activities must be attractive and consistent with the environment]
- -Restrooms
- -Parkway institutions spilling outside their doors and into the adjoining neighborhoods
- -Less traffic congestion and pedestrian-friendliness (change traffic patterns; create pedestrian lanes; restore and increase pedestrian-controlled traffic lights)
- -More play options, children, young people, and adults
- -Engage more young people in the conversation about what the Parkway does/could mean to them.

6. **What makes the Parkway important?**

- -It's a physical and cultural asset to the City
- -The City has made substantial investment in the Parkway that isn't paying sufficient dividends.

7. **What should we do first?**

- -Improve physical access by creating more walkways for pedestrians; providing free bus service along the Parkway, and between locations like 30th Street Station and the Parkway; and reducing the speed and congestion of traffic on and around the Parkway.
- -Break down the insularity of institutions that line the Parkway---Museums and institutions need to become more welcoming and reach out into the adjoining space and neighborhoods.
- -Provide structured areas for activities: create a dog park; create play areas for children and adults [But do not sacrifice green space for these designated areas----use underutilized spaces. Look at how people are using the areas along the Parkway for ideas about how to expand and enhance usage.

Parkway Project

Meeting Location: Second Pilgrim Baptist Church

Meeting Date: Monday, July 23, 2012

Moderator(s): Carol Lydon

There were eight people in the group (5 men, 3 women, 5 white, 3 African-American, all but one were under 50). Only 5 live in Francisville/Fairmount; the others are from Rittenhouse Square, North Philadelphia and West Oak Lane (two were young men, who, I believe, were working at the meeting and joined in our group).

1. Why people came out to the forum this evening

- It was a chance to become more involved in the neighborhood
- It's my "backyard" and I want to give input
- Came with already-prepared vision to share
- One was an architecture student and came to gain insight
- Lives at 2601 Pennsylvania Ave. and feels disconnected from the Parkway/neighborhood – hopes to find a way to connect areas
- Came for first meeting and stayed for the second
- Wants to see the beauty of the Parkway extended all the way to Broad Street

2. Who uses the Parkway:

- Skateboarders
- Tourists
- Museum-goers
- Kids who play in the fountains
- Students
- Bikers
- Roller skaters
- People who work nearby to eat lunch
- Homeless people
- Strolling moms and babies
- Pet owners
- Commuters

- Those who go for leisure (reading, napping, resting)
- Concert-goers
- New Yorkers
- Bike racers and watchers
- Triathletes
- Rowers

3. People/groups who do not use the Parkway, and why not:

- City shoppers – nothing to draw them there
- Residents – “It bores me. There’s nothing there for me.” Long stretches of nothing.
- Those intimidated by traffic – 6 lanes of traffic, too many cars
- Families – No attractions for kids, other than museums, which might be expensive for some.
- Dates – no nightlife, no bars, nothing stays open late.
- Those without money for museums – admissions are expensive for many. Can’t go to all. “It’s a Museum Mile with not a lot of museums.”
- Penn/Drexel students – no connection of Parkway with W. Philadelphia – there’s no easy way to get from one to the other.
- Picnic-ers. No place to sit, no restrooms, not enough trash cans.
- Diners/Coffee drinkers. There are no restaurants or cafes.
- Elderly. Traffic makes it difficult for them.

Two general observations:

- It’s a “dark barrier” at night that divides the city. Especially as a woman walking alone, it doesn’t feel safe to cross at night.
- There a lack of signage telling people what’s there and where it is.

4. What people do along the Parkway (uses):

- “Swimming” in the fountains.
- Reading
- Lounging
- Boating in the Schuylkill
- Try not to get hit by cars
- Jogging

- Biking
- Run up Rocky steps
- Science Fair
- Light show at Moore College of Art
-

5. In addition to those current uses, here are some other things they could do there: (with possible “early action items” starred):

- Skate park
- Picnic areas – with moveable chairs and tables
- Dog run
- Free workouts e.g., yoga, Zumba, tai chi, etc.
- Bike rentals
- Movies
- Learning tables (with various crafts or projects)
- Workshops
- Lectures
- Year-round playgrounds (summer – water activities, winter – ice skating [bring own skates])
- Farmers markets
- Sidewalk sales by local businesses/craftspeople
- Night Market
- Book stalls – lending – outside reading room (in park across from Free Library)
- Free health screenings
- Free vet screenings
- One night smaller events (as opposed to the 4th of July concert/fireworks, Live 8-type events)
- Kiosks for coffee, ice cream, etc.
- Local (visual) artist spotlights and exhibits
- Food trucks
- Food nights featuring local restaurants or culinary schools (these could be demonstrations, workshops, competitions or cook-offs)
- Push-carts and strolling food vendors
- Pop-up mini-golf, like at the Porch at 30th Street
- Beach Day (pop-up beach with activities)

- Outdoor sculpture garden (including relocating existing general statues to Eakins Oval)
- Convert outer lanes to bike lanes
- Improve public transit to area (how to connect 30th Street/West Phila. to area)
- Parking
- Community gardens
- Pedestrian walkway from Art Museum to Fairmount (overhead)
- Incorporate One Book One City into community events on the Parkway
- Soap box derby
- Smaller concerts

6. Why the Parkway is important:

- It's something that other cities don't have
- It gives Philadelphia a chance to be LEGENDARY and unique in having the Parkway
- It gives people something to do
- It could promote "good" activities, rather than "bad" activities and set an example to motivate others in their lives
- It's open space for people to take advantage of
- Could be used to generate revenue for the city
- Could bring a Huge amount of people to the area, which would result in increased revenue for the city
- It connects green space to a dense population
- It's an important tool for commuters (people might commute by bike or foot, if easier and safer)
- It's unique to Philadelphia
- It's a point a pride – a place to take visitors
- More green space leads to positive environmental results

7. If we can't do it all, the things we should do first are:

Group 2 decided that the first things to do were "mobile events", i.e. smaller events, which could take place as a one-off or regularly scheduled. These could include farmers markets, night markets, small concerts, push-carts and vendors, lectures and/or workshops, health screenings, – things that could be quickly planned and bring people to the parkway on a regular basis

rather than just for large events. Everyone agreed that food always attracts people. It was also suggested that if there was any revenue from these events, it be reinvested into the Project for in the long-term, a closer commercial-Parkway connection and in the short-term, more events. In order to accommodate the people attending these events, they want to have moveable chairs and tables put along the Parkway.

8. Possible barriers:

- Negative thinking. We can't do it. It's too much money, etc.
- NIMBYs
- Financing
- Lack of communication with community/city
- Lack of park funding
- Perception of crime in city and around Parkway (flash mobs)
- Need more buy-in from local businesses and charities
- Traffic

Meeting #1 – Second Pilgrim Baptist Church – 7/23/2012
Group # 3 – (Moderator) Bryan McHale

About the Group: A group of eleven, six from the Francisville neighborhood, four from Fairmount, and 1 more from the Brewerytown area. Group was engaged and knowledgeable about the interrelationship between the Parkway and the neighborhoods to the North.

Why People Came Out:

- Parkway is a part of their community
- Work near Parkway
- Volunteer at the Franklin Institute
- Involved in running sports programs at fields on Parkway
- Bike riders
- Walk across Parkway to get to Center City

Who Uses the Parkway?

- Residents in the area
- Walkers & Joggers
- Retirees
- Dog-walkers
- Families
- Week-enders
- Tourists / Out-of-towners
- Students
- Volunteers
- Party-goers / Event-goers
- Event competitors
- Couples
- Cyclists

Who doesn't use the Parkway? Why not?

- Dog Walkers – Lack of places to dump waste.
- Foreign visitors who have no signage in foreign languages.
- People who are fearful or not interested in large events and traffic.
- People who fear the PPA and the lack of parking.
- No Bathrooms or fountains
- Parkway is not a destination. People meet and go somewhere else or only go to specific sites like major institutions.
- Young professionals don't come because there is no nightlife and the bars are off of the Parkway in the neighborhoods.
- Use fades in the winter for lack of any activities.
- People not familiar with the area or any of the transit options don't come to the Parkway.
- The sports fields are there but are not a casual destination for anyone who comes across them.

- Conventioneers do not seem to use the Parkway.
- People who can't afford it due to costs of transit, passes into institutions, and general fees (parking, etc.)
- People who aren't aware of events on the Parkway. Love Park has a better social media and marketing presence which the rest of the Parkway lacks.
- Not enough handicapped access to facilities along the Parkway.

What do people do along the Parkway?

- Enjoy a lunch or a picnic.
- Run / Bike / Jog / Exercise
- Sunday events / Parades
- Use the library
- Go to museums
- Heading to the Art Museum or to City Hall
- Workers passing along the Parkway
- Drive ***
- Children uses stretches of the Parkway as a playground
- Swimmers use the fountains in the summer
- Attend fundraisers at the institutions along the Parkway

What else people could do along the Parkway:

- Take pets to a dog park
- Dancing at the Art Museum steps
- Temporary one day markets other than food, like art or flower festivals similar to the events at Rittenhouse Square.
- Outdoor gaming – Chess, Ping-pong, etc.
- Speaker's Corner
- Tables and chairs to sit and watch people.
- More lighting at night to attract a nightlife and avoid clogging surrounding neighborhoods.
- Relaxing / inexpensive events
 - Theater or concerts like the weekly summer jazz at Penn's Landing.
 - Lawnchair events
- Develop the Parkway more as open green space.
- Integrate Bike and Segway rentals and routes with the Schuylkill Banks Trail.
- Establish a guide to activities targeted to the Parkway.
- Connect more events to volunteerism in the surrounding institutions.
- More outdoor art activities like live arts, movie screenings, painting along the Parkway, etc.
- Make parking people nicer

Concerns: Is the Parkway already too jammed as a thoroughfare? Who are we bringing in to the Parkway? Is this going to cannibalize local businesses?

Why is the Parkway important?

- Free outdoor space
- Pedestrian artery
- Beautiful
- Pride of the City
- Centrally located
- Not intense and overwhelming
- High quality architecture, statues, and art
- Horticultural exhibit
- A unifying location with the flags along the length of the Parkway
- Cultural avenue
- Unofficial pathways like the ones around the Rodin museum show constant use.

Tensions:

- Between active and passive users
- Between Drivers, bikers, and pedestrians. Bikers especially need to pay attention to red lights.
- Major events vs. the neighborhood.
 - Can't cross on the numbered streets
 - City needs to learn lessons of previous events
- Need to balance targeting tourists and locals

Barriers:

- Skateboarders
- Need to separate travel uses
- SEPTA scheduling
- Prices along the Parkway – *Membership pricing may help*
- Elimination of parking – removal of Sunday parking

First steps:

- Dog Park
 - Improve sanitation.
 - Parks and Rec has removed too much space from use by animals.
- Evening events with vendors
 - Reduce congestion by having all of the nightlife in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- More bike mediation – currently too dangerous along the Parkway with bikes
- One day markets
- Outdoor games / social areas
 - Easy to do and cheap – look to 30th St Porch

Parkway Project

Meeting Location: Second Pilgrim Baptist Church

Meeting Date: July 23, 2012

Moderator(s): Loretta Raider, Karen Scott

About the group:

The group consisted of eight total (5 men and 3 women); 1 student(urban studies major), 1 retired person, 1 person of color(female), 1 Francisville business owner, 1 artist. The group was very thoughtful, lively and engaged.

Residency

Neighborhood	Number of Participants
Francisville	4
Fairmount	1
Fitler Square	1
Chestnut Hill	1
Northern Liberties	1

1. Why people came out to the forum this evening

- Saw a flyer and received an invitation from a friend.
- Love Center City, want to know what's going on. Saw flyer.
- Lifelong Francisville resident, interested in what is happening in the neighborhood.
- Interested in Public Art. Wants to see more.
- Came because of regular community meeting.
- Francisville business owner, concerned about city and how we use/not use spaces/resources.
- Enjoy civic engagement; Parkway is a dead zone; this is a good opportunity.

2. Who uses the Parkway:

- Drivers
- Tourists
- Homeless

- Pedestrians
- Event goers
- Sport players
- Museum goers
- Bicyclists
- Joggers
- Workers –commuting by foot to work
- Residents
- Dog Walkers
- People who play and swim in fountains
- Young people use the library

3. People/groups who do not use the Parkway, and why not:

- Local suburbanites –attracted to other Center City neighborhoods, nothing open in the evening on the Parkway.
- Homeless – being displaced because of the commercialization.
- Museum goers –go home after visit to the museum because nothing else there to do.
- Residents (near and far) – no restaurants, cafes to linger about. Safety and fear issues at night.
- Parents with toddlers in strollers – no access or easy navigation.
- All people – no people watching areas. Not enough recycle/trash bins.
- Teens- the area is not cool, there is nothing to do.
- Hipsters (20's –early 30's) – no activities for them; too expensive only use for exercise.
- Skateboarders – no place to skate.
- Pedestrians – dangerous streets.

4. What people do along the Parkway (uses):

- Visit the museums.
- Homeless use as a home.
- Pedestrians only to reach destination.
- Sit at Logan Square, eat, read, hangout and picnics.
- Pass-through (e.g. joggers and bikers to get to Kelly drive and other exercise routes.

- Attend events including walks/runs.
- Visit Moore College of Art.
- Run up and down Art Museum/Rocky steps and get picture taken with the Rocky statue.
- Get married and have photos taken in the Azalea garden.
- Play sports (softball)
- Rollerblade and jog.
- Attend Free Library events.
- Show off cars and motorcycles.
- Feed the homeless.
- Visit Family Court.

5. In addition to those current uses, here are some other things they could do there: (with possible “early action items” starred):

The priorities noted by the group are activities are free or inexpensive, fun and provide gathering spaces.

- * Increase the number of free things to do(e.g. events and other activities); a good example is the DC National Mall and memorials -
- * Public Art (can move isolated statues located elsewhere to the Parkway)
- * Musicians
- * Chess Tables
- * Moveable chairs
- * Terrain garden
- Climbing wall
- Pop-up workshops
- Public Square in front of Art Museum/ Eakins Oval center of changing programs
- * More kid-friendly activities
- * * * Free WiFi
- Miniature golf
- ** Bathrooms
- Cafés with bathrooms as opposed to portable toilets.
- * * * Beer garden, café, wine bar.

- * * * Open cinema
- Every single block should have an area that can be used by a pedestrian
- Institutions in Logan Circle need to engage the perimeter (e.g. Library book sale and fair)
- * Performance artists (e.g. Stilt walkers)

6. Why the Parkway is important:

- It is a cultural treasure chest.
- It is an anchor and magnet for people to use and move into the city.
- It exists so its' use should be optimized.
- The vista of the city from the top of the Art Museum steps.
- Public events bringing the city together.
- Victory parades

7. If we can't do it all, the things we should do first are:

- * * * Free WiFi
- * * * Beer garden, café, wine bar.
- * * * Open cinema
- ** Bathrooms