

# MORE PARK, LESS WAY:

## AN ACTION PLAN TO INCREASE URBAN VIBRANCY ON THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY

FOR  
PHILADELPHIA  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION

PREPARED BY  
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FOUNDATION

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

PennPraxis is pleased to submit *More Park, Less Way: An Action Plan to Increase Urban Vibrancy on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway* to the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation (PPR) and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. The action plan was developed for the City of Philadelphia as a way to capitalize on nearly a decade and a half of public and private investments along the Parkway. It is designed to be implemented by 2015—the final year of the administration of Mayor Michael A. Nutter.

The Parkway has already undergone significant changes, with the recent completion of \$20 million of city-, state-, and philanthropic-funded streetscape improvements, along with the opening of The Barnes Foundation's new museum building. This is in addition to the renovation of the Rodin Museum and Garden; the opening of the Perleman Building of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the creation of the museum's Anne d'Harnoncourt Sculpture Garden and their installation *Sol LeWitt: Lines in Four Directions in Flowers*; the building of Sister Cities Café; and the restoration of Logan Square. The Parkway has never looked better.

All of which begs the question posed by Michael DiBerardinis, deputy mayor for environmental and community resources: "Now that we've fixed up the Parkway, what do we want it to be?"

This action plan responds to this question directly, by offering a series of actions that would ultimately

invite Philadelphians to use the Parkway on a regular basis. With more than 70,000 people living within a ten-minute walk of the Parkway, this plan looks to the neighborhoods along the edges of the Parkway as a natural audience for new park space and programs that will release the magic of urban life that makes well-loved, people-centric public spaces sparkle.

This plan was generously supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Lenfest Foundation. The Penn Project for Civic Engagement deftly facilitated the public engagement process that provides the basis for the recommendations. A host of advisors, experts, policy makers, advocates, and citizens contributed their knowledge, skills, and ideas to the effort. Importantly, the plan builds on recent planning efforts by the Center City District and the Parkway Council Foundation. We are grateful for everyone's efforts.

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway is Philadelphia's most important civic and cultural space. By enhancing the Parkway as a beloved park space for Philadelphians to use on a daily basis, the City of Philadelphia has the opportunity to fully realize the vision of the Parkway as one of the world's great cultural boulevards, linking Philadelphia's City Hall with the riches of our cultural institutions and the glories of Fairmount Park beyond.

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January 2013

# INTRODUCTION





**THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY EVOLVED SLOWLY OVER ITS FIRST FOUR DECADES.**

From its initial inception in 1871 as a gateway to Fairmount Park to the current design by French landscape urbanist Jacques Greber in 1917, the Parkway has been shaped by the powerful forces of politics, progressive planning ideals, and the public interest. Envisioned in the early 20th century as a diagonal boulevard, lined with Philadelphia's great cultural institutions and linking the Philadelphia Museum of Art with City Hall, the City has only partly realized that vision for the Parkway. Over the past century, the Parkway became less an elegant pleasure drive to the park and more an automotive conduit to the city. The redesign in the 1960s of Eakins Oval as a traffic circle tipped the balance in favor of the car over the pedestrian experience.

With the release of this action plan, the City of Philadelphia is poised to lead the effort to guide the next iteration of the Parkway's history. As a result of the work of the public and private sectors over the past decade and a half, the Parkway has evolved from the heavily-trafficked thoroughfare it had become. There has been a collective impact of significant public funding for pedestrian, traffic, and streetscape improvements; the restoration of buildings and gardens along the Parkway; and the construction of new museum buildings, parks, and amenities: The boulevard is on the brink of becoming an active player in the city's now-thriving urban landscape.

With its signature vistas and sweeping views of the city, the Parkway is unsurpassed as both an iconic image of Philadelphia and as a scenic backdrop for large-scale events, and yet work remains to be done to truly integrate the Parkway into the urban life of the city. Parking dominates Eakins Oval. Pedestrian crossings remain difficult despite recent traffic improvements. There is a dearth of amenities along parts of the Parkway. Perhaps most significantly, there is little to entice the daily user to stop and linger. While the Parkway's scale and grandeur are able to accommodate events such as parades, charity runs, and major concerts, this has been at the expense of creating and maintaining the fine-grained and nuanced urban texture that can draw and retain Philadelphians throughout the day, week, month, and year.

*More Park, Less Way: An Action Plan to Increase Urban Vibrancy on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway* focuses on the Parkway from Logan Square to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It recommends a series of actions to shape the evolution of the Parkway as a 21st-century public space. The actions include designing high-quality urban parks on long-overlooked parkland; reconsidering how the community accesses the Parkway; programming public space along the Parkway in creative and consistent ways; and developing a structure for ongoing management of the Parkway as a special district within the park and city. Together, these actions will bring much-needed urban vitality to Philadelphia's grand cultural corridor.

### HISTORY

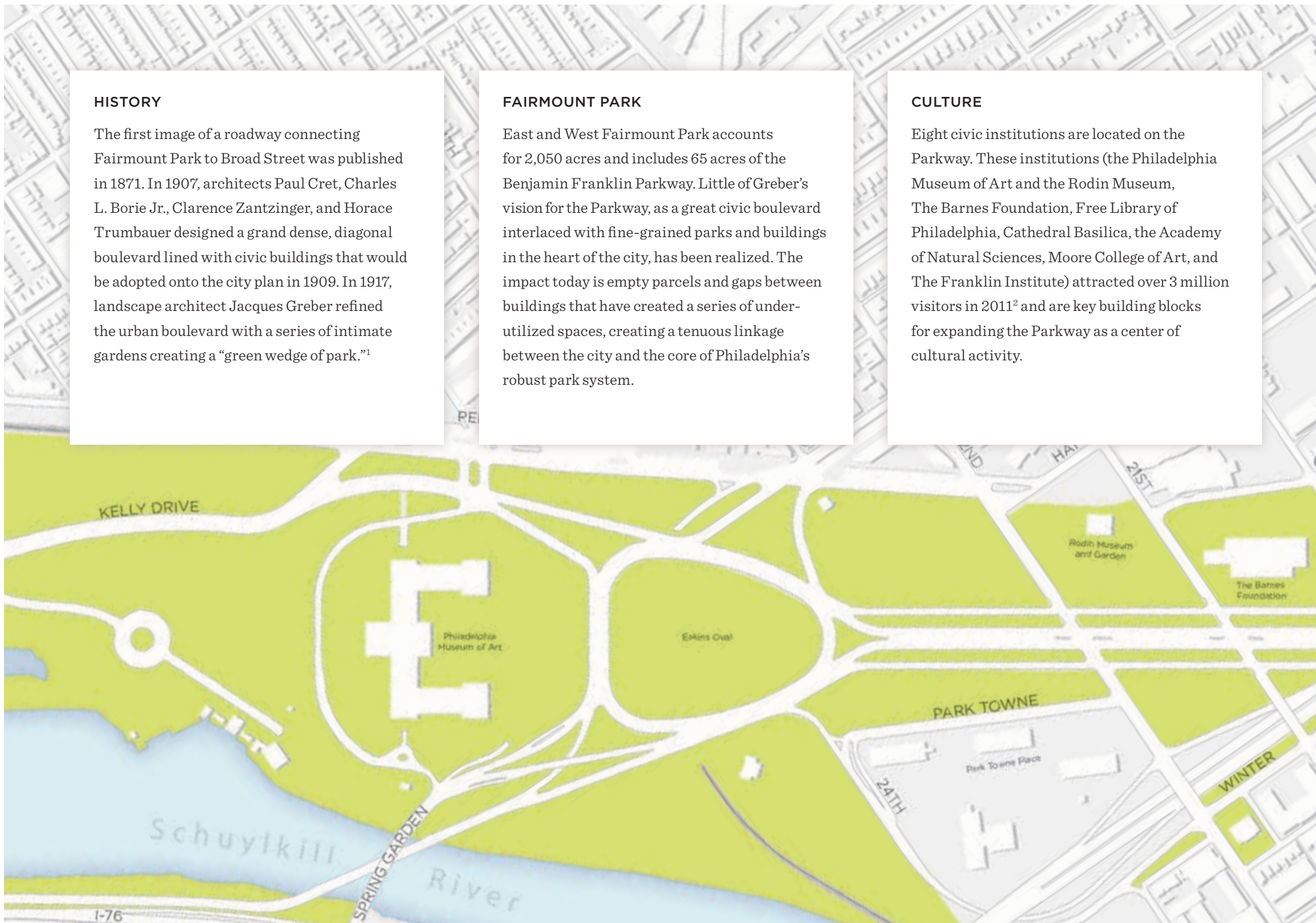
The first image of a roadway connecting Fairmount Park to Broad Street was published in 1871. In 1907, architects Paul Cret, Charles L. Borie Jr., Clarence Zantzinger, and Horace Trumbauer designed a grand dense, diagonal boulevard lined with civic buildings that would be adopted onto the city plan in 1909. In 1917, landscape architect Jacques Greber refined the urban boulevard with a series of intimate gardens creating a “green wedge of park.”<sup>1</sup>

### FAIRMOUNT PARK

East and West Fairmount Park accounts for 2,050 acres and includes 65 acres of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Little of Greber’s vision for the Parkway, as a great civic boulevard interlaced with fine-grained parks and buildings in the heart of the city, has been realized. The impact today is empty parcels and gaps between buildings that have created a series of under-utilized spaces, creating a tenuous linkage between the city and the core of Philadelphia’s robust park system.

### CULTURE

Eight civic institutions are located on the Parkway. These institutions (the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Rodin Museum, The Barnes Foundation, Free Library of Philadelphia, Cathedral Basilica, the Academy of Natural Sciences, Moore College of Art, and The Franklin Institute) attracted over 3 million visitors in 2011<sup>2</sup> and are key building blocks for expanding the Parkway as a center of cultural activity.





## NEIGHBORHOODS

The Parkway is adjacent to established communities: Logan Square, Fairmount, Spring Garden, Brewerytown, Francisville, Powelton, and Mantua. With 70,000 people living within a ten-minute walk of the Parkway, this area has the potential to become a destination that supports lively cultural, educational, and recreational activity on a daily basis. The future of the Parkway centers on establishing a balance between its roles as a distinctive setting for world-class institutions and making the Parkway a welcoming place for residents.

## TRAFFIC

The original, early-20th-century vision for the Parkway represented a balance of park, urban cultural destination, and “pleasure drive.” By the mid-20th century the Parkway had become a high-speed, high-volume traffic conduit. However, within the last decade, a number of street design initiatives have begun to steadily undo the undesirable side effects of the auto-dominated design and have helped to enhance the appeal of the Parkway and the overall safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

## THE PARKWAY TODAY

Several recently completed projects have begun to reshape the future of the Parkway. These include pedestrian and roadway improvements, a variety of building renovations and expansions, and the addition of new park spaces. Despite these recent efforts, large areas of the Parkway lack public amenities and are characterized by under-utilized spaces. Addressing these spaces is an occasion to think strategically about the next generation of projects that will come to define this civic boulevard.



# KEY ISSUES

## PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

In recent years, the city has invested \$20 million in important streetscape improvements along the Parkway. However, along the northern and southern edges of the Parkway outstanding issues impede the Parkway's ability to thrive as a pedestrian environment. These include narrow sidewalks, long crosswalks, lack of maintenance of sidewalks, minimal curb and crosswalk striping, high-speed turns owing to highway-like road geometries, and lack of attention to landscaping and other pedestrian amenities.

## 70,000 PEOPLE WITHIN A TEN-MINUTE WALK TO THE PARKWAY

Today's urban residents rely more on foot, bicycle, and public transit than on cars for travel across the city. Based on 2010 census data, 70,000 people live within a ten-minute walk of the Parkway. More than 60% of these residents use modes other than automobiles to commute to work. What would make these residents use and linger on the Parkway on a more regular basis?

## TRAFFIC

The current Parkway design accommodates significant volumes of automobile traffic at the expense of pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit. This has far-reaching implications for users seeking to access destinations along the Parkway. Ensuring the comfort and safety of pedestrian and bicycle movements along and across the Parkway is critical, given the growing levels of pedestrian activity within and through the district.

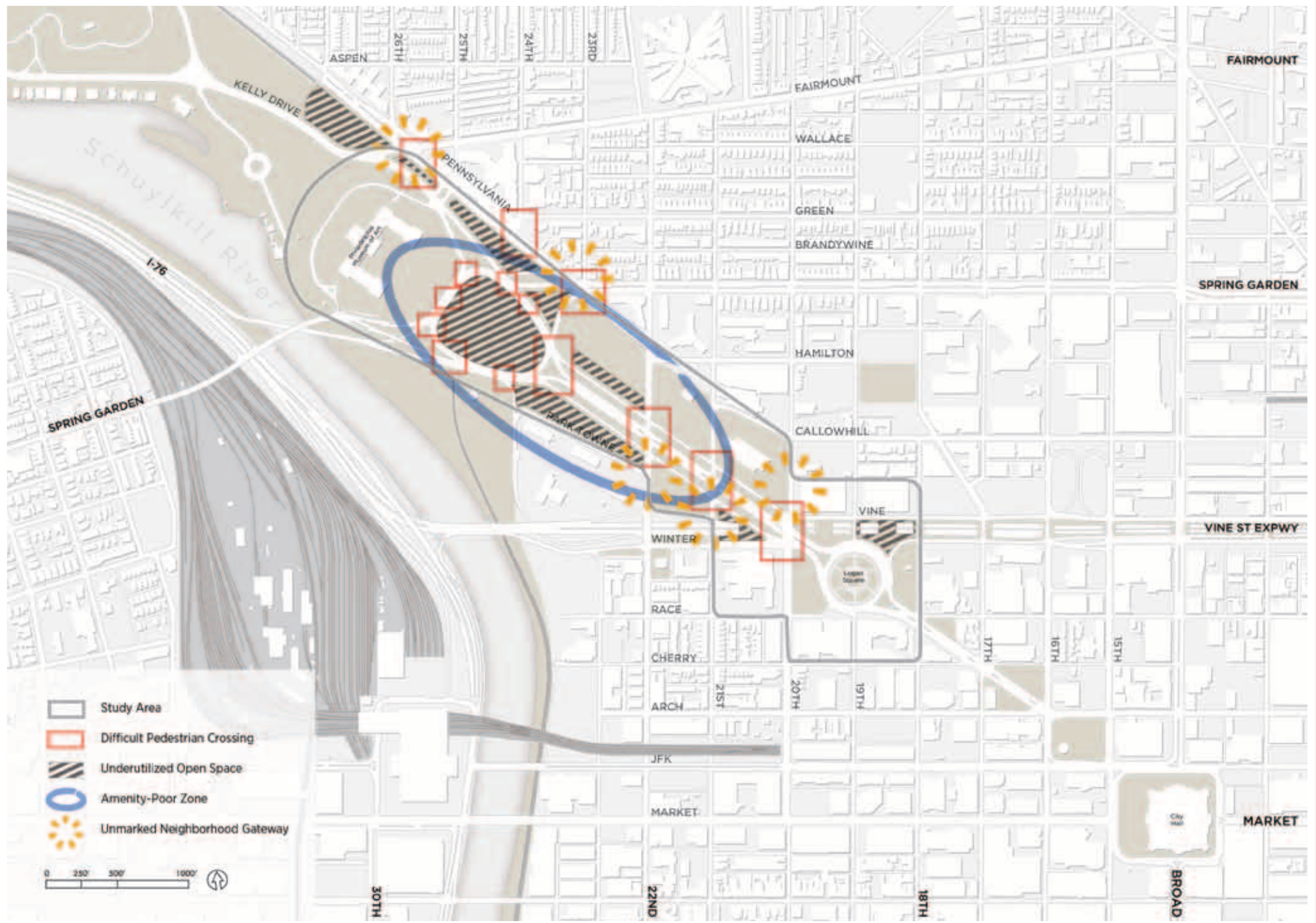
## GAPS IN AMENITIES AND UNDERUTILIZED SPACES

A 2003 study<sup>3</sup> highlighted a significant lack of amenities for pedestrians within a five-minute walk from any cultural institution. Since then, impressive strides have been made. Today, the Parkway includes new amenities between City Hall and Logan Square such as Café Cret and Sister Cities Park, yet these amenities taper off between Logan Square and the Art Museum.

## TENSION BETWEEN LARGE-SCALE CIVIC EVENTS AND THE SMALL-SCALE CHARACTER OF ADJOINING NEIGHBORHOODS

Over 600,000 people visit the Parkway throughout the year to attend the various special events hosted there.<sup>4</sup> Some feel the Parkway is overused for special events and that large events negatively impact both quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods and attendance at Parkway institutions.







# CIVIC PARTICIPATION





The Key Issues map on page 7 highlights the challenges that hinder the full integration of the Parkway into the fabric of the city. Without question, the recent inventory of Parkway improvement projects has moved Philadelphia closer to realizing the 20th-century vision of a grand, green civic boulevard lined with cultural institutions. However, a key component in creating a vibrant Parkway remains absent: a means of connecting the boulevard to the nearby neighborhoods.

Since 1998, an impressive inventory of Parkway and neighborhood planning efforts has been completed (see the list of resources on page 63).<sup>5</sup> The goal of this action plan is to build upon the plans that have been completed during the past decade and a half and outline steps that the Nutter Administration and Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation (PPR) can take to reassert the Parkway as both the “heart of a great city and the crossroads of a region.”<sup>6</sup> The City believes that the Parkway itself is a work of art and an amenity that Philadelphians and visitors alike can, and should, enjoy.

A distinguishing element of this action plan centers on engaging the surrounding neighborhoods, key stakeholders and community members in order to define actions that will fully integrate the Parkway into the civic life of the city. During the summer of 2012, PennPraxis and the Penn Project for Civic Engagement convened four public forums that drew more than 200 residents and community leaders from Logan Square, Fairmount, Spring Garden, Brewerytown, and Francisville. The facilitated engagement process

encouraged participants to think about why the Parkway is important to the community, the city, and the region and to think about how the Parkway is used today. In the end, the participants defined criteria that helped to inform the action plan. This input informed a set of civic values that serve as the basis for the recommendations in this plan (see pages 10–11). PennPraxis also collected postcards during the outreach process from more than 300 citizens with feedback about their vision for the future of the Parkway. The project website (<http://planphilly.com/benjamin-franklin-parkway-action-plan>) features the drawings, opinions, comments, and ideas collected during the process.

In addition, one-on-one interviews with representatives from community development corporations, neighborhood groups, and representatives from the Parkway Council Foundation helped to highlight issues impacting the daily life of residents living and working near the Parkway.

#### LEADERSHIP GROUP

Two City agencies and three non-profit organizations played an important role in leading the planning process and helping refine the recommendations for the action plan. These included: PPR, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, the Center City District, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. These partners provided important technical advice, leadership, and insight into current and future plans for the Parkway.

#### ADVISORY GROUP

The advisory group helped to guide the project and provide input at important junctures. Convened by Michael DiBerardinis, deputy mayor for environmental and community resources and commissioner of PPR, and Alan Greenberger, deputy mayor for economic development, the advisory group included representatives from city, state, and regional agencies, community development corporations, institutional leaders, members of the Parkway Council Foundation, and representative from key non-profits.

*A distinguishing element of this action plan centers on engaging the surrounding neighborhoods, key stakeholders and community members in order to define actions that will fully integrate the Parkway into the civic life of the city.*

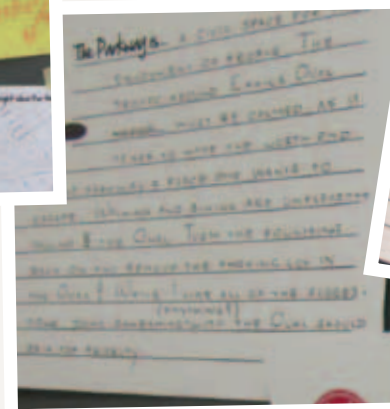
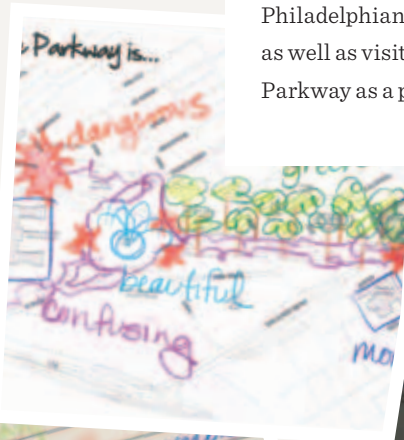
# CIVIC VALUES

## DESIGN FOR PHILADELPHIANS

For too long, Philadelphia has defined the success of the Parkway in terms of how well it attracts tourists and visitors from out-of-town, with an emphasis on the axial connection between City Hall and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In order to increase urban vibrancy along the Parkway, the remaining open spaces along the Parkway should focus on designing for Philadelphians who live near the Parkway, with an emphasis on current north-south pedestrian paths and lines of desired pedestrian movement. The design of successful public spaces must provide amenities and spaces that people will use on a daily basis. Only then will Philadelphians from other neighborhoods, as well as visitors and tourists, seek out the Parkway as a place to visit, linger, and enjoy.

## MORE PARK, LESS WAY

Over time, the automobile has come to dominate public life on the Parkway. The negative impacts of vehicular traffic remain challenging to pedestrians. Even with the recent traffic-related improvements, the Parkway remains difficult and confusing to cross on foot at any time of day, which hinders pedestrian travel along and across the Parkway. As a result, the roadway has become a physical and mental barrier that separates neighborhoods and effectively pushes an entire segment of the city beyond the perceived boundaries of Center City. It is essential that PPR continues to reprioritize the “park” component of the Parkway, rebalancing it as a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly zone, reducing the highway-esque nature, and reconnecting it to the city grid. The goal is to place priority on people, not cars.





### CIVIC GRANDEUR, NEIGHBORHOOD CHARM

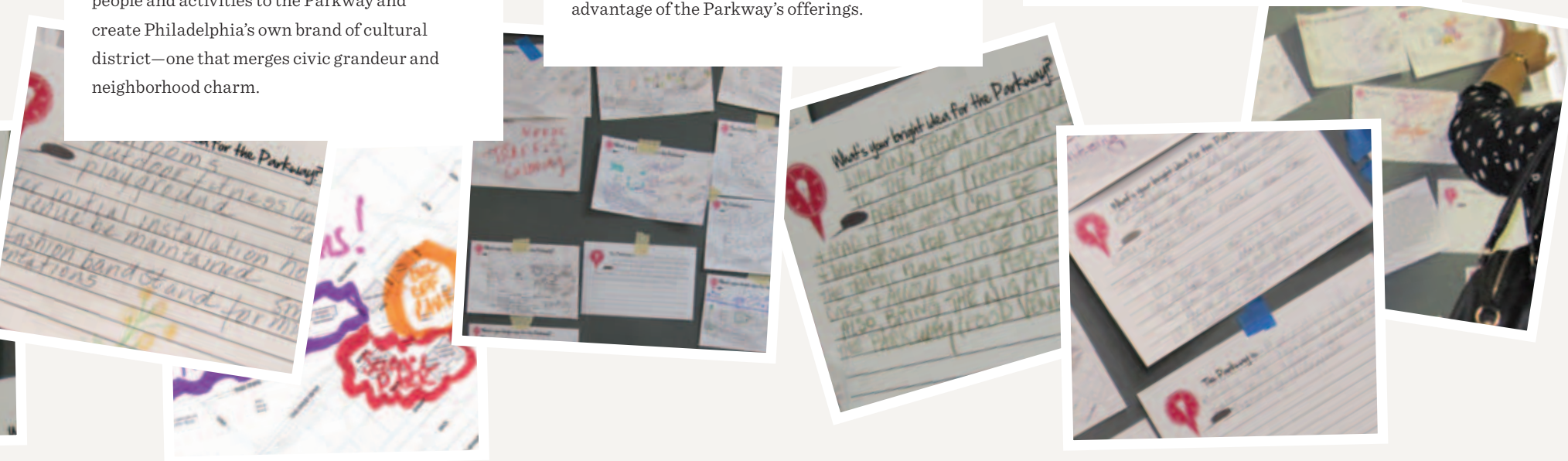
The presence of many of our foremost cultural institutions along the Parkway is a defining element of its identity. The grandeur of its urban design and the stunning vistas of Center City make the Parkway a highly desirable setting for many large-scale civic events. And yet, Philadelphia is also a “city of neighborhoods,” where neighborhood pride defines each section of the city. As local, regional, and national assets, cultural institutions along the Parkway will continue to play a leadership role with the City in driving Parkway activity. However, we should build upon the assets that adjoining neighborhoods have to offer. Accentuating neighborhood pride by highlighting local cuisine, art, commerce, and programs can bring more people and activities to the Parkway and create Philadelphia’s own brand of cultural district—one that merges civic grandeur and neighborhood charm.

### CONNECT THE DOTS

At present, many people experience the Parkway as a place to pass through on the way to another location. Yet, the Parkway could be a destination in and of itself. Recent improvements have added new sparkle and luster to the Parkway, such as the Anne D’Harnocourt Sculpture Garden, the Art Museum’s Perelman Building, the restoration of the Rodin Museum and Garden, the opening of the Barnes Foundation museum, and the restoration of Logan Square. Still, there remain few places for the casual visitor or passer-by to feel welcome. Café Cret and Sister Cities Park are notable exceptions. Creating more public oases and activity centers in existing, underutilized open spaces for pedestrians who are either crossing the Parkway or walking its length will encourage people to take full advantage of the Parkway’s offerings.

### ENLIVEN THE PARKWAY

A key to the success of celebrated urban parks are amenities such as food, public conveniences, comfortable places to sit, and interesting programs and activities. Shortening the perceived distance between destinations, with attractive places designed to attract a variety of users, means incorporating current Parkway venues into an integrated urban experience. This can be accomplished with cafés, souvenir stands, information and ticket booths, newspaper vendors, book stalls, and reliable performances along the way.”<sup>7</sup> With 70,000 people living within a ten-minute walk, the Parkway’s energy can come from people who use it on a daily basis.





# OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS

1

## DESIGN HIGH-QUALITY URBAN PARKS

DRAW UPON THE 70,000  
PHILADELPHIANS LIVING WITHIN A  
TEN-MINUTE WALK OF THE PARKWAY

CAPITALIZE ON THE LARGE,  
UNDERUTILIZED OPEN SPACES THAT  
ARE ADJACENT TO NEIGHBORHOODS

CREATE INVITING, PEOPLE-FRIENDLY  
PUBLIC SPACES

INTEGRATE PUBLIC ART INTO  
CIVIC LANDSCAPES



2

## ENSURE SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS

COMPLETE THE TRAFFIC CALMING  
PROGRAM ALONG THE PARKWAY

LINK THE PARKWAY TO ADJOINING  
RIVER TRAILS

COMPLETE THE BIKE LANE NETWORK  
ALONG THE PARKWAY

REDUCE THE WIDTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE AND CREATE NEW PARKING AREAS

PROVIDE RELIABLE AND DEPENDABLE  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM  
THE PARKWAY

3

## PROVIDE A VARIETY OF AMENITIES

FILL IN THE GAP IN AMENITIES BETWEEN  
LOGAN SQUARE AND THE ART MUSEUM

PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY,  
DEPENDABLE PROGRAMMING

PROVIDE FOOD AND  
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

4

## CREATE A FOCUSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

CREATE A PARKWAY DISTRICT  
FUNDING STREAM

DESIGN AND BUILD THE NEW PARKS

PROGRAM THE OPEN SPACES

MANAGE THE CONCESSIONAIRES

MAINTAIN THE PARK SPACES



1

# DESIGN HIGH-QUALITY URBAN PARKS

1.1

DRAW UPON  
THE 70,000  
PHILADELPHIANS  
LIVING WITHIN A  
TEN-MINUTE WALK  
OF THE PARKWAY

1.2

CAPITALIZE ON  
THE LARGE,  
UNDERUTILIZED  
OPEN SPACES THAT  
ARE ADJACENT TO  
NEIGHBORHOODS

1.3

CREATE INVITING,  
PEOPLE-FRIENDLY  
PUBLIC SPACES

1.4

INTEGRATE  
PUBLIC ART  
INTO CIVIC  
LANDSCAPES





**URBAN PARKS MATTER. THEY PROVIDE ECONOMIC, PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL, COMMUNITY, AND EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS.**

Urban parks are also transformative. Well-designed and well-maintained parks promote civic pride, help to connect community, and spur important economic growth. Given this, there is little doubt that investments in the well-designed public realm can be a key to the continued revitalization of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

In Philadelphia today, a series of new parks are beginning to redefine neighborhoods. For example, on the Parkway itself, the renewal of Logan Square and Aviator Park, coupled with the reopening of Sister Cities Park and the gardens of the Rodin Museum, represent important success stories in humanizing the Parkway and reclaiming it as the gateway to Fairmount Park.

Additionally, the development of the Race Street Pier has shown that targeted investments in public spaces can catalyze additional private investment. Since its opening in 2011, three major developments—one commercial and two mixed use—have been proposed on properties near or adjacent to the pier. Franklin Square's transformation from an inaccessible, dreary and dangerous square into a family-focused, highly programmed regional attraction has brought new life to a once-overlooked section of Center City.

Finally, the anticipated 2014 opening of the new Dilworth Plaza on the west side of City Hall and the 2015 redesign of Love Park highlights Philadelphia's continuing commitment to integrating more high-quality public spaces into the urban fabric of the city.

Investments in the public realm attract more residents, workers, and visitors to the city. Thus, as the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation (PPR) thinks about future open space investments, the Parkway—already verdant, with strong institutions and stable adjacent neighborhoods—offers promising ground for strategic investments in high-quality park projects that can leverage the substantial existing assets of the Parkway.

By reimagining existing underutilized green spaces as more formal park spaces, PPR will be able to integrate the Parkway into the surrounding urban fabric and reduce the perception of a barrier between communities to the north and south. Thoughtfully transforming a number of the remaining green spaces along the Parkway—with an eye towards the needs of the adjacent neighborhoods and in keeping with the high urban design standards of the Parkway itself—will mean that the renewed Parkway can aim to achieve both Cret's and Greber's original visions for it.





### OPEN SPACE ASSETS

The Parkway is the gateway to Fairmount Park. The entire Parkway (from the Philadelphia Museum of Art to City Hall) consists of 85 acres of green space, primarily characterized by cultural and civic uses. This analysis of the existing open space assets highlights more than 17 underutilized acres of the Parkway between Logan Square and the Art Museum. These areas create major voids that divorce the Parkway from its surrounding neighborhoods.





## 1.1

**DRAW UPON THE 70,000 PHILADELPHIANS LIVING WITHIN A TEN-MINUTE WALK OF THE PARKWAY**

More than 70,000 residents live within a ten-minute walk of the Parkway—equal to the population of a small city like Lancaster, PA. A significant number of these residents could use the Parkway on a daily basis, as over 60 percent of the surrounding population walks, bikes, or takes public transit to work. In addition, the Schuylkill River Trail—the popular pathway for hundreds of thousands of runners, walkers, and bikers per year—provides direct access to the Parkway.<sup>8</sup> These populations represent an audience of individuals poised to incorporate the

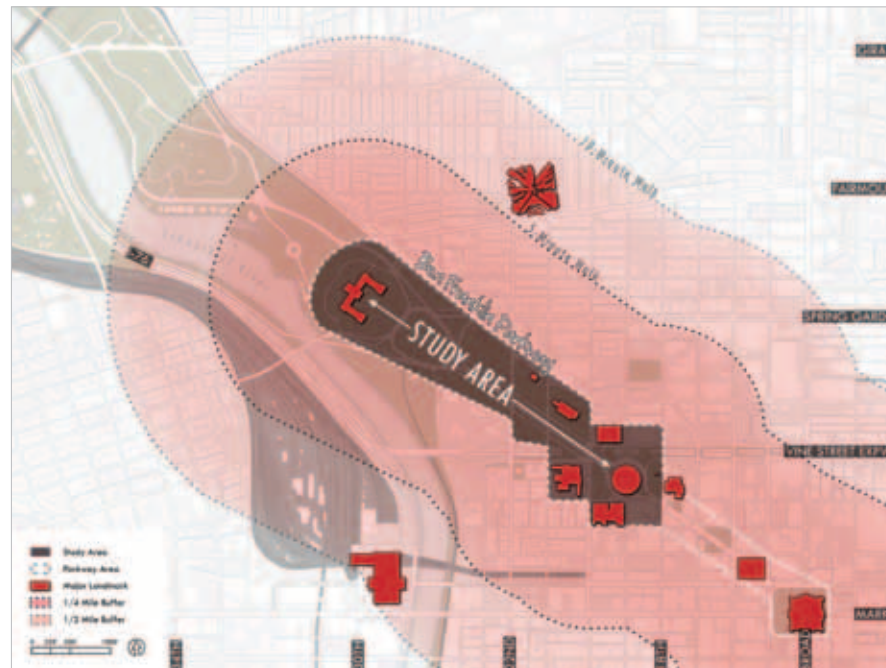
Parkway into their daily routines. These Philadelphians also represent potential champions who could support the revitalization of underutilized spaces into high-quality parks. Responding to the needs of these audiences is the key to overcoming the Parkway's chronic daily underuse.

In the design of new park spaces, PPR should consider the needs of the wide range of people who use the Parkway—from near neighbors and tourists to those who attend special events. At the same time, positioning the Parkway for the population that would use it daily sets the foundation for a thriving district that is connected to the adjoining neighborhoods.

Near right: This map highlights the Parkway's role as the center point between Fairmount Park and neighboring communities.

Center top: The *Iroquois* site is one underutilized area lining the Parkway. The 2-acre area features a grassy lawn but few benches and little shade.

Center bottom: A beautiful allée of trees defines the green space fronting Park Towne Place apartments, but there are few other features besides the trees to make this an inviting place to stop.





*This action plan recommends concentrating efforts on improvements to Eakins Oval, the site across from The Philadelphian with Mark di Suvero's Iroquois statue, the edges of Von Colln Memorial Field, and the open space in front of Park Towne Place Apartments.*



## 1.2

### CAPITALIZE ON THE LARGE, UNDERUTILIZED OPEN SPACES THAT ARE ADJACENT TO NEIGHBORHOODS

To attract near neighbors, it is essential to: (1) rethink the more than 18 acres of underutilized open spaces that line the Parkway; (2) create high-quality parks with a variety of amenities and offerings that can attract people on a daily basis; and (3) build on the existing strengths of the Parkway, such as world-renowned public art and recreation facilities. Augmenting these existing assets will bring city life onto the boulevard.

The Open Space Assets Map (featured on page 16) highlights nine underutilized sites lining the Parkway. This action plan recommends concentrating efforts on improvements to Eakins Oval, the site across from the Philadelphian with Mark di Suvero's *Iroquois* statue, the edges of Von Colln Memorial Field, and the open space in front of Park Towne Place Apartments. The four sites present approximately 13 acres of park space and create opportunities to complement the existing architecture, landscape architecture, and public art of the Parkway as well as benefit from the built-in audiences of nearby seniors, young families, and sports leagues. By designing high-quality parks on these sites, PPR would successfully mingle community desires and cultural assets, bringing to the Parkway a balance of civic grandeur and neighborhood charm.

## 1.3

### CREATE INVITING, PEOPLE-FRIENDLY PUBLIC SPACES

As the Parkway became more automobile-oriented, it became more difficult to find inviting spaces for people to gather. PPR could transform the underutilized spaces along the Parkway into people-friendly spaces, creating opportunities to carve out parks from places between buildings that are active, comfortable, and socially amenable.

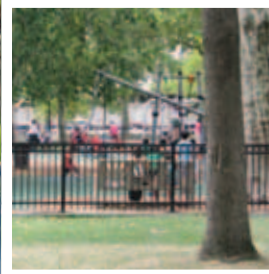
This action plan re-envisioned Eakins Oval—a central, but underused fulcrum between the adjoining neighborhoods as well as the two sides of the Schuylkill River—as a flexible, civic-focused space. The plan augments the recreational activity of Von Colln Memorial field and carves out active and passive recreation spaces for seniors, toddlers, and young adults from spaces in front of Park Towne Place Apartments and around Mark di Suvero's *Iroquois* statue. Additionally, these sites can invite activity with bike rentals, places for yoga and Tai Chi, creative playgrounds, and areas for games such as volleyball, chess, ping pong, and bocce. A goal of this action plan is to bring people together and help to strengthen the community around the Parkway. People feel safer in well-maintained places with good lighting, moveable furniture, public art, opportunities for sitting in both sun and shade, and protected areas for young children.

## 1.4

INTEGRATE PUBLIC ART INTO  
CIVIC LANDSCAPES

The public art collection in Philadelphia is widely celebrated, and a large portion of the collection is centered on the Parkway. The Association for Public Art has done much to promote the collection, hosting a flashlight mob at the *Iroquois* statue, leading bicycle tours, and creating the “Museum Without Walls” smartphone application. Their recent *Open Air* installations by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer—a dynamic public art piece—demonstrated the unique capacity of the Parkway to host cutting-edge temporary public art displays. This kind of outdoor, accessible art is an asset that future programs should highlight and enhance. There are many opportunities to incorporate new public art, both permanent and temporary, along the Parkway as a way to extend the cultural amenities that define the Parkway into the neighborhood and provide a framework for a renewed landscape surrounding neighborhoods that promotes cultural and civic pride.

Philadelphia, thanks in part to the work of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), is world-renowned for its commitment to innovative horticulture. For decades, PHS has been partnering with the City and Parkway institutions on renovating the civic landscapes along the Parkway such as the Azalea Garden, the East Court of the Art Museum, the Rodin Museum gardens, and Logan Square. The projects have brought renewed life to these elegant urban landscapes. The Parkway, in its role as a green wedge connecting city and park, can capitalize on this tradition and continue to invest

CASE  
STUDY

## FRANKLIN SQUARE

Franklin Square was one of five public squares created as part of William Penn’s original plan for Philadelphia in the 17th century. Beginning in the early 20th century, Franklin Square went from being the centerpiece in one of Philadelphia’s more fashionable neighborhoods to an afterthought amidst a barren urban landscape. Cut off from the city in the 1920s by the automobile access to the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, the park became Philadelphia’s Skid Row. The creation of the Vine Street Expressway further isolated the square, and with the decline both in park activity and the city’s maintenance capacity, by the late 20th century the park had become an encampment for homeless individuals. However, the opening of the National Constitution Center in 2003 drew eyes back to Franklin Square, and Governor Ed Rendell supported a redesign of the park space. In 2006, the park was refurbished by Historic Philadelphia, Inc., in partnership with the Fairmount Park Commission, and rededicated, complete with the Philadelphia Park Liberty Carousel, a miniature golf course featuring local Philadelphia landmarks, new playgrounds, concessions, a gift shop, restrooms, a restored 19th-century marble fountain, and around-the-clock security.<sup>9</sup> Despite the lack of adjacent residential population, the urban character, the density of street life, and the previous stigma as a homeless encampment, the revitalization of Franklin Square has been a success. It is estimated that Franklin Square hosts 700,000 visitors annually, making the park one of the top-ten-most-popular attractions in Philadelphia, and developers are now using Franklin Square as a marketing draw when promoting adjacent properties.<sup>10</sup>





in high-quality horticulture, gardens, and landscapes. Together, the combination of public art and high horticulture will create a visual and experiential landscape that places the Parkway at the nexus of civic energy in Philadelphia.

Creating world-class landscapes that merge art with horticulture should be an underlying principle for all improvements along the Parkway. Both the one-acre Anne d'Harnoncourt Sculpture Garden and the Sol Lewitt Garden at the Philadelphia Museum of Art are excellent recent examples of the marriage of contemporary public art and landscape design.

## CONCLUSION

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway is an iconic civic space and a stunning backdrop for first impressions of the city. It is important to capitalize on the public enthusiasm for the sense of place that is associated with the Parkway. However, for the Parkway to thrive as an urban park, it is essential that it evolves in response to community needs and become fully integrated into the daily life of the city. Designing high-quality parks for Philadelphians in areas that are currently underutilized injects energy into the Parkway and makes it a place that is even more beloved by Philadelphians and visitors alike.

Top: The Anne d'Harnoncourt Sculpture Garden is accessible to local residents and devoted art lovers.

Bottom: *Open Air*, by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, was Philadelphia's largest crowd-sourced public art project. The Association for Public Art chose the Parkway to help redefine the space as accessible for public use.

# PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR DESIGNING HIGH-QUALITY URBAN PARKS

## **E** EAKINS OVAL

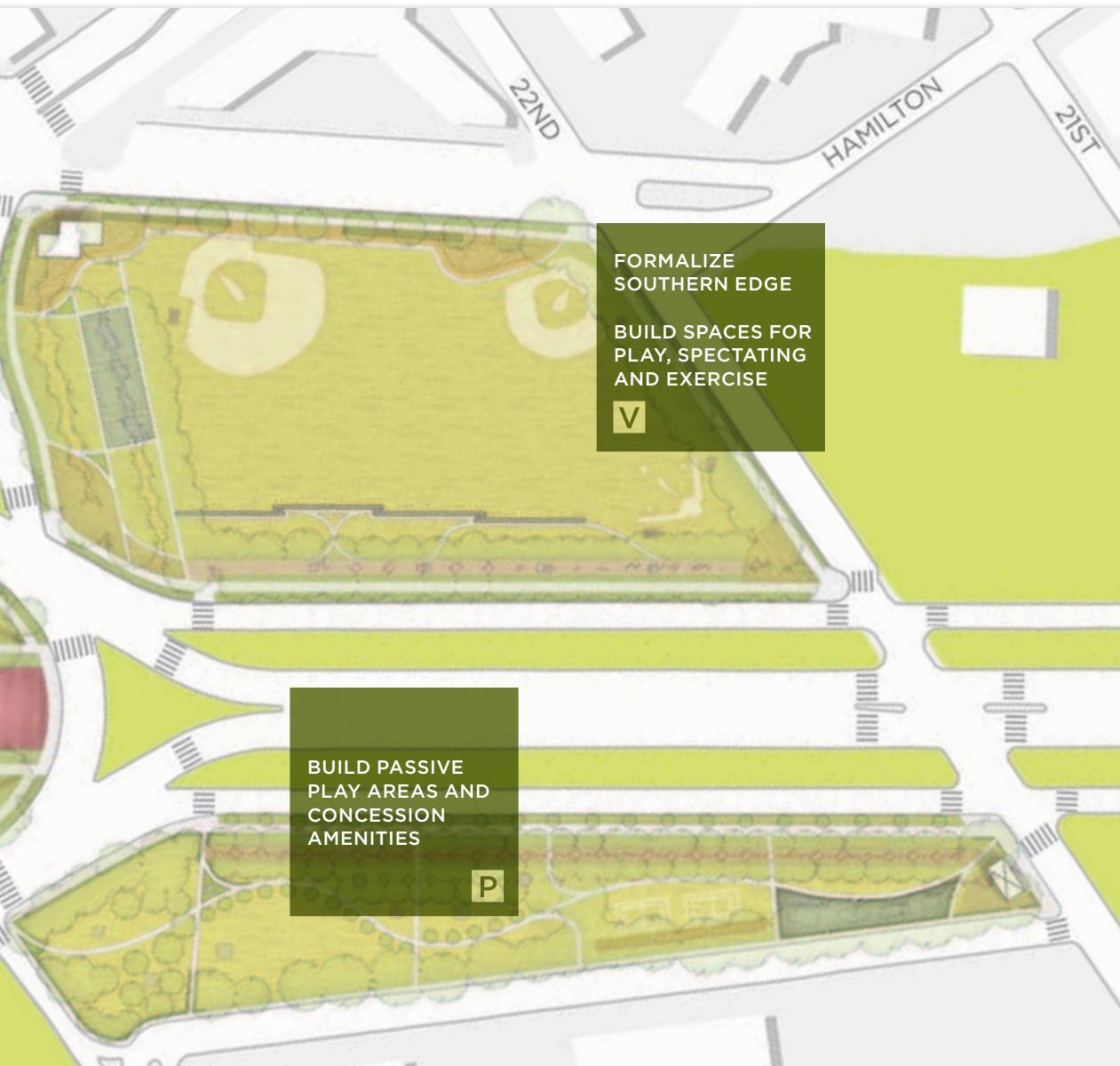
Eakins Oval is currently a high-volume traffic circle that separates neighborhoods and cultural institutions. And yet, it could be a key civic node between Center City, West Philadelphia, East and West Fairmount Park, and the neighborhoods surrounding the Parkway. By removing the surface parking, this area becomes a seven-acre flexible civic space. Temporary public art installations, temporary horticulture projects, concerts for various audiences, moveable chairs and tables, pop-up dining venues, and restrooms would help make Eakins Oval a people-friendly locus at the heart of a revived Parkway.

## **I** IROQUOIS SITE

The treatment of the city's edge has a decisive influence on life in city spaces.<sup>11</sup> It is precisely at this edge that city life and the vibrancy of Fairmount seems to stop. Reconsidering the *Iroquois* site as a neighborhood park with walking paths and a gated play area for children







would reclaim this overlooked space for the community. This new outdoor room would accommodate large gatherings for Parkway events and honor Mark di Suvero's dramatic piece of public art. The site creates a two-acre, human-scaled park in the midst of the surrounding apartment and museum buildings and includes space for dynamic, revolving public art installations.

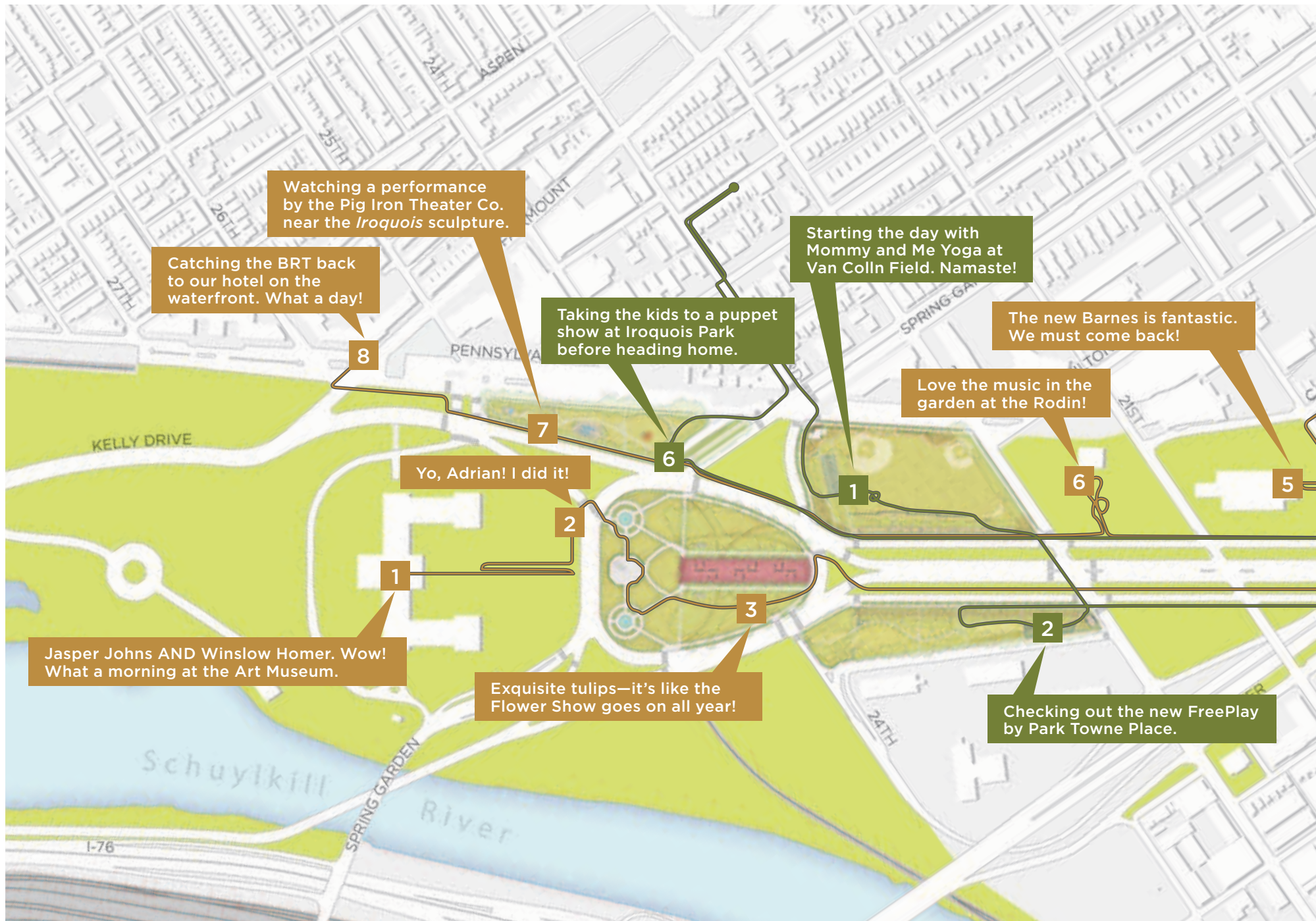
### **V** VON COLLN MEMORIAL FIELD

Von Colln Memorial Field is an important community asset and recreation hub. The vision for the perimeter of the fields features nearly two acres of enlarged sidewalks and creates space for children's play, spectating, and adult exercise. Along the Parkway's edge, a beautifully landscaped boundary separates the fields from the more formal aesthetic of the Parkway itself. The western side of the field becomes a northern gateway between Fairmount and Eakins Oval, with areas for food, play, and informal gathering.

### **P** PARK TOWNE PLACE

The plan reimagines the space to the north of the Park Towne Place apartments as a series of outdoor rooms that break up the length of this existing three-acre green space. A walking path, public art, bocce and volleyball courts, chess tables, and an enclosed play area would be designed for use by the local community. A food kiosk at the eastern corner would establish this as a place to linger and meet friends. The activation of this site offers a respite from the bustle of the Parkway.











2

# ENSURE SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS

2.1

COMPLETE THE  
TRAFFIC CALMING  
PROGRAM ALONG  
THE PARKWAY

2.2

LINK THE  
PARKWAY TO  
ADJOINING  
RIVER TRAILS

2.3

COMPLETE  
THE BIKE LANE  
NETWORK ALONG  
THE PARKWAY

2.4

REDUCE THE WIDTH  
OF PENNSYLVANIA  
AVENUE AND  
CREATE NEW  
PARKING AREAS

2.5

PROVIDE RELIABLE  
AND DEPENDABLE  
PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION  
TO AND FROM  
THE PARKWAY



**NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED PLANS, INSTITUTION-BASED PLANS, AND CITY-BASED PLANS ALIKE HAVE CLEARLY HIGHLIGHTED THE MANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF VEHICLES ON THE PARKWAY, PARTICULARLY FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS.**

Without fail, every plan that touches the Parkway addresses the need for significant reconfiguration of roadways, revised vehicular circulation, and traffic calming interventions.<sup>12</sup> This action plan is no different. The approach centers on “pushing back” the boundary of the highway style design so it is closer to I-676 and I-76, and reclaiming surface intersections and streets as safe, multi-functional urban spaces that will transform the Parkway into a fully integrated component of the city’s urban fabric.

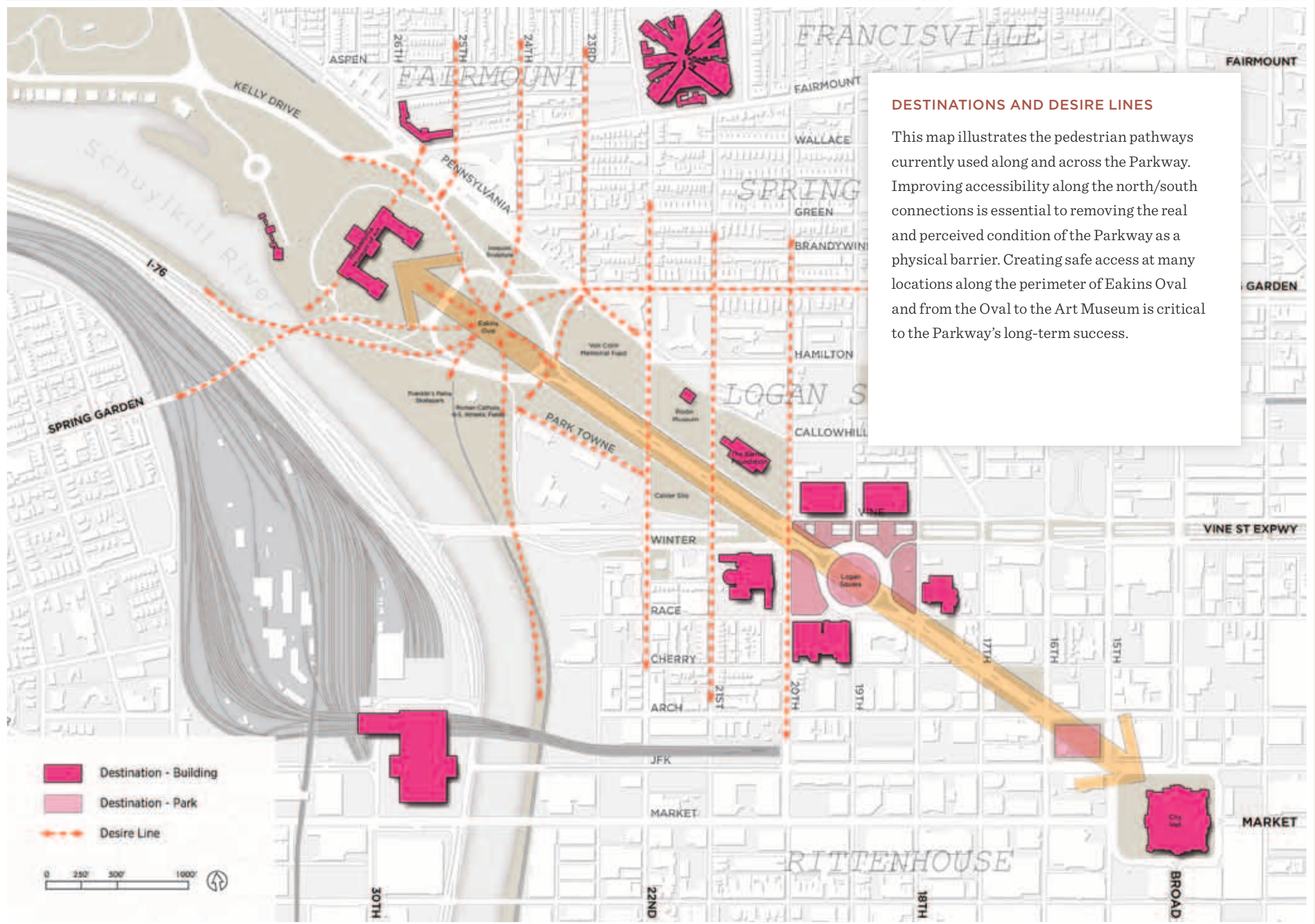
Two essential near-term remedies for improving access and connectivity in and around the Parkway address the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. First, the comfort and safety of pedestrian movements along and across the Parkway is the foremost issue, given the growing levels of pedestrian activity within and through the area. While there has been significant improvement to the pedestrian realm within the past eight years, there are still a number of major breaks in the continuity and atmosphere of pedestrian system, where narrow sidewalks, long crosswalks, high-speed turns, and poorly maintained amenities—including sidewalks, curbs, and crosswalks—detract from the pedestrian’s overall

experience. Many of these breaks occur on the desire lines this action plan illustrates. Second, while bicycle facilities on the Parkway have been improved as a part of the 2011 streetscape improvement project, there still remain a number of gaps in the bicycle network where the Parkway fails to connect with other portions of the city’s bicycle network.

Improving traffic around the Parkway is not without precedent. The 2005 Logan Square project and recently completed 2011 streetscape improvement project have successfully enhanced pedestrian conditions, had minimal impact on traffic capacity, and, most importantly, established a built-in framework for community buy-in. A lively Parkway is strengthened when more people are invited first to walk and bike and then, ultimately, to stay in new, high-quality spaces.<sup>13</sup>









**ACCESSIBILITY OPPORTUNITIES**

There are a number of specific locations along the Parkway corridor that exhibit sub-standard (unsafe or uncomfortable) conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. These represent priority locations for near-term safety improvements.

The map displays the Parkway corridor from Kelly Drive in the north to Market Street in the south. Key landmarks include the Schuylkill River, Spring Garden, and various parks and fields. The map also shows the location of PennDOT proposed improvements, indicated by black star symbols, and opportunities to enhance pedestrian access, indicated by red hatched circles. A legend at the bottom left explains these symbols and includes a scale bar (0 to 1000 feet) and a north arrow.

There are a number of specific locations along the Parkway corridor that exhibit sub-standard (unsafe or uncomfortable) conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. These represent priority locations for near-term safety improvements.





## 2.1

## COMPLETE THE TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRAM ALONG THE PARKWAY

Traffic calming is the foundation for the re-urbanization of the Parkway. The recently completed and planned traffic improvement and streetscape projects around Logan Square and along the Parkway between 16th and 22nd Streets have paved the way for the revival of the Parkway between Love Park and Eakins Oval. However, in order to extend this same level of success and activation further along the Parkway, it will be essential for the City to tackle additional traffic-calming initiatives between Logan Square and the Art Museum. The current Eakins Oval represents a free-flowing, highway-style traffic-distribution system that prioritizes cars over all other uses; only a conversion back to its urban origins can truly reestablish the area as pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly. However, any such transformation would be expensive and, to a degree, controversial—meaning it is not likely that it could be achieved in the short term. Therefore, the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation (PPR) should apply basic short-term “quick-fixes” to Eakins Oval to address critical safety issues. The following represent

Near upper left: A photograph of the southern edge of Eakins Oval reflects the auto-centric character of this section of the Parkway.

Near lower left: A closeup of the original Greber Oval from 1919 illustrates the idea of a “green wedge” of park reaching towards the center of the city.

ideas and desires that came out of the civic process and interviews with various city agencies:

- Removing surface parking from Eakins Oval to reclaim it as a new civic space
- Adding sidewalks around the entire outer edge of Eakins Oval
- Formalizing bumpout areas that are currently striped, creating places for new plantings and areas of pedestrian refuge
- Tightening or urbanizing the turns at Spring Garden and 23rd Street
- Clarifying lane arrangement at the entrance to the Spring Garden Bridge.

[Note: detailed drawings related to all traffic calming recommendations are included in the addendum, accessible online at <http://planphilly.com/benjamin-franklin-parkway-action-plan>]

Two additional recommendations would require significant adjustments to traffic patterns around Eakins Oval but represent long-term fixes that would successfully re-urbanize the Parkway:

- Creating an on-axis pedestrian crossing from the center of Eakins Oval to the base of the Art Museum steps
- Creating an additional signalized pedestrian access point to Eakins Oval at the 25th Street entrance to I-676.

To ensure safe access to parks and institutions, traffic calming measures must also be extended the length of the Parkway between Eakins Oval and Logan Square.



The 2011 streetscape improvement project has laid the groundwork for restoring the Parkway as a place hospitable to both pedestrians and vehicles. Recent improvements include widened pedestrian-refuge islands, bumpouts, and tighter corners. This action plan recommends building on the improvements that have already begun, namely:

- Modification of striping to demarcate parking lanes more clearly
- Addition of off-peak, on-street parking to the inner lanes of the Parkway
- Transformation of further parking along the outer lanes into permanent parking; this will encourage a greater share of traffic to use the inner lanes and thus lessen the “weave, merge, and diverge” issues at Eakins Oval.



Though the area has benefited from recent traffic-related improvements, people continue to perceive the Parkway as largely inaccessible to pedestrians and as a barrier between neighborhoods. The actions the plan recommends will continue the momentum that has already begun; helping to make the Parkway and its surrounding assets—parks, institutions, and neighborhoods—accessible and fully integrated into the life of the city.

Upper Left: Existing parking conditions along Pennsylvania Avenue between 23rd and 25th Streets.

Upper Right: The new entrance to the Schuylkill Banks at Martin Luther King Drive.

Lower Left: Existing bicycle conditions around Eakins Oval.



## 2.2

## LINK THE PARKWAY TO ADJOINING RIVER TRAILS

In recent years, Philadelphia and the surrounding region has made significant investments in developing a connected trail system. Within Philadelphia, the Schuylkill River Trail is well used and connects neighborhoods from Center City to the western suburbs. Additionally, the East Coast Greenway will provide a cross-city connection along Spring Garden Street. Together these routes and trails offer alternative, safe, and pleasant ways to traverse the city and region. However, while they come within a half-mile of one another, the two routes do not currently connect. Eakins Oval is located at the narrowest point between each route. Therefore, the Parkway becomes an important juncture and presents an opportunity to link with the larger, regional trail networks. This action plan re-envision Eakins Oval as a civic space featuring new pathways and walkways. The Oval becomes a new community and regional focal point, a keystone park providing improved linkages and connectivity to neighborhoods and the regional trail network known as the Circuit.

Currently, the Philadelphia Museum of Art is designing an exciting pedestrian connection between the adjoining neighborhoods and the Schuylkill River Trail. An unused walkway on the lower level of the museum provides a direct, off-road connection between Pennsylvania Avenue and the Schuylkill River Trail. Opening this walkway to the public presents a new

opportunity to link West Philadelphia communities with Fairmount and the Kelly Drive recreational options. Making this walkway public would also make important step in using the Parkway a vital link to a series of local and regional parks and trails.

*This action plan re-envision Eakins Oval as a civic space featuring new pathways and walkways. The Oval becomes a new community and regional focal point, a keystone park providing improved linkages and connectivity to neighborhoods and the regional trail network known as the Circuit.*

## 2.3

## COMPLETE THE BIKE LANE NETWORK ALONG THE PARKWAY

Bicycle facilities on the Parkway have been improved—as part of the 2011 streetscape improvement project—to include widened, clearly visible bicycle lanes along the full length of the Parkway between 20th Street and Eakins Oval. Yet a number of gaps and unresolved shifts remain, where the Parkway fails to connect with other portions of the city's bicycle network. The Parkway should clearly delineate the network and provide

important and safe access to parks and institutions. Additionally, park spaces along the Parkway at Von Colln Memorial Field and Park Towne Place are well positioned for bike rental facilities and bicycle sharing programs in the future.

This action plan proposes:

- Two dedicated bicycle lanes around the inside and outside of Eakins Oval. This will accommodate the multiple routes that intersect the Oval.
- Complete coloring of bicycle lanes so they are distinct and visible along the roadway.

## 2.4

## REDUCE THE WIDTH OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE AND CREATE NEW PARKING AREAS

This action plan focuses on opportunities at the edges of the Parkway in addition to along the Parkway itself—opportunities that will encourage the reconnection of the Parkway to nearby communities. One important border is Pennsylvania Avenue. Built over the former Reading Railroad tracks, Pennsylvania Avenue is an extra-wide street and marks the boundary between the Fairmount and Spring Garden communities and the Parkway. It is at this point that the vibrancy of the neighborhood dissipates and the underutilized nature of the Parkway takes over. Therefore, establishing the urban connection between the Parkway district and the neighborhoods hinges on softening this edge and redesigning Pennsylvania Avenue as the link—not the barrier—between community and civic space.

Top: A Phlash tourist vehicle makes a stop in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Bottom: Las Vegas' "Strip & Downtown Express" is a rapid transit connection between Downtown Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Strip. The bus route features rail-like vehicles and dedicated transit lanes.



Recommended improvements include shifting the travel lines to the south, narrowing crossings for pedestrians, landscaping, and creating dedicated parking corrals. The Center City District estimated that these design interventions will increase parking from 361 to 457 spaces.<sup>14</sup> Implementation of these proposed improvements is critical to ensuring safe pedestrian access to parks, institutions, and neighborhoods to the north.

## 2.5

### PROVIDE RELIABLE AND DEPENDABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE PARKWAY

Currently, the Parkway district represents a large gap in the region's transit service map. A mixture of public, private, and semi-private routes service the Parkway, many of which are redundant and inefficient and do not adequately address the needs of residents and visitors. Access to transit is a core criterion for the continued evolution of a thriving residential district and tourist district. With 70,000 people living within a ten-minute walk of the Parkway, twenty-four special events attracting more than 600,000 people a year, and eight cultural institutions attracting over three million visitors annually, robust public transportation is key to ensuring that the Parkway remains a thriving tourist district.

In the near-term, changes to the Phlash transit system could improve upon an existing service and accommodate both tourists and residents. Currently, the Phlash's limited season, limited hours, and

tourist-oriented vehicles deter non-tourist users. Yet if the Phlash's role were to expand beyond its current tourist-only approach, the resulting diversification of users could help justify future upgrades as well as service and infrastructure enhancements, which would reinforce its expanded role as a key transit resource for tourists and locals alike. A critical component of the transformation of the Phlash would be the selection of a new vehicle type that continues to project a distinct image but appeals to a wider range of potential users. The expansion of the users could also support changes or extensions of the current route. While the present route focuses solely on tourist attractions (including the Convention Center, Penn's Landing, and Eastern State Penitentiary as well as the Parkway), a multifunctional route could include other major destinations and, more importantly, interchange points with SEPTA. Upgrades to the Phlash vehicles and current route are small-scale interventions that, with stakeholder cooperation, would be implementable in the near-term.

While a broadened Phlash system could alleviate some transportation issues, bus rapid transit (BRT) would provide a quicker, more reliable service that appeals to a market larger than just tourists. Implementation of BRT would require the conversion of parking lanes in the outer sections of the Parkway to bus lanes, or the addition of bus lanes along the inner section of the Parkway—depending on station locations and operational considerations. Each design option presents its own challenges and benefits, but overall this degree of upgrade would provide vastly improved service to and



A blue bus is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The destination sign on the front of the bus displays 'SL5 SILVER LINE' in orange lettering. The bus is parked on a street with trees and a building in the background. A white rectangular box with the text 'CASE STUDY' is overlaid on the right side of the bus.

## CASE STUDY

### WASHINGTON DC CIRCULATOR AND BOSTON'S SILVER LINE

An example of a minimal transportation intervention is the Washington DC Circulator. The Circulator was initiated in 2005 and functions as a daily, inexpensive shuttle service with a predictable fixed route and schedule. Today, the shuttle has five routes that run between the city's main cultural, entertainment, and business destinations as well as District neighborhoods. Its distinctive red buses serve to complement the existing transit services found throughout the region.

In terms of a more robust transportation intervention, Boston's Silver Line is that city's foray into bus rapid transit (BRT). It was completed as a part of a public-private revitalization effort to enhance the city's Seaport District and Washington Street Corridor. Some reports estimate that, since the Silver Line BRT was introduced, there has been over \$571 million in investment along the Washington Street Corridor, the tax base grew by 247% compared to a city average of 146%, and that ridership has continuously grown, reaching 15,000 average weekday boardings by 2008.<sup>15</sup> The buses travel in exclusive bus lanes, freeing it from the traffic that limits the advantages of other surface bus operations. The high quality stations are equipped with information booths, fare vending machines, waiting areas, and route and system information. Importantly, the Silver Line is fully integrated into the regional rail network.

Both the DC Circulator and the Silver Line achieve a level of service far beyond that of typical surface bus routes. And Washingtonians and Bostonians have responded well, integrating the Circulator or the Silver Line into the daily commute.

through the Parkway for a variety of users, and would “fill the gap” in the existing regional transit network.

The City Planning Commission is currently exploring BRT for the Parkway district in its central district planning effort, which is a part of the Philadelphia 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The City is considering opportunities to utilize the below-grade City Branch Corridor (below Pennsylvania Avenue) or the roadway itself to bring expanded transit options to the Parkway. Iconic transit shelters created by leading architects for the new transit line would support the identity of the Parkway as a world-class cultural district.

### CONCLUSION

An important civic value of this action plan calls for more parks and less roadway. The negative impacts of vehicular traffic are evident, and it is essential to resolve the issues of how people get to and around the Parkway before the district can become a thriving, connected part of the city. Rethinking the existing public spaces and how pedestrians access those spaces will unlock the Parkway's untapped potential.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR ENSURING SAFE ACCESS TO PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS

### **E** EAKINS OVAL

Improved crossings along all sides of Eakins Oval are the first step in establishing the Oval as the connector between communities, institutions, river trails, and a newly imagined, premier civic gathering space. Crossings provide direct access to neighborhoods, other institutions, and recreational trails. A dedicated bicycle and pedestrian path through the Oval connects the East Coast Greenway and the Schuylkill River Trail. The addition of a sidewalk along the outer edge makes the entirety of Eakins Oval a civic space that can become the keystone of this revitalized district.

### **I** IROQUOIS SITE

To ensure that the vibrancy of the Fairmount neighborhood spills onto the Parkway, it is essential to narrow Pennsylvania Avenue and reconfigure the existing parking. The new configuration would produce a net gain in parking—helping to offset some removed from Eakins

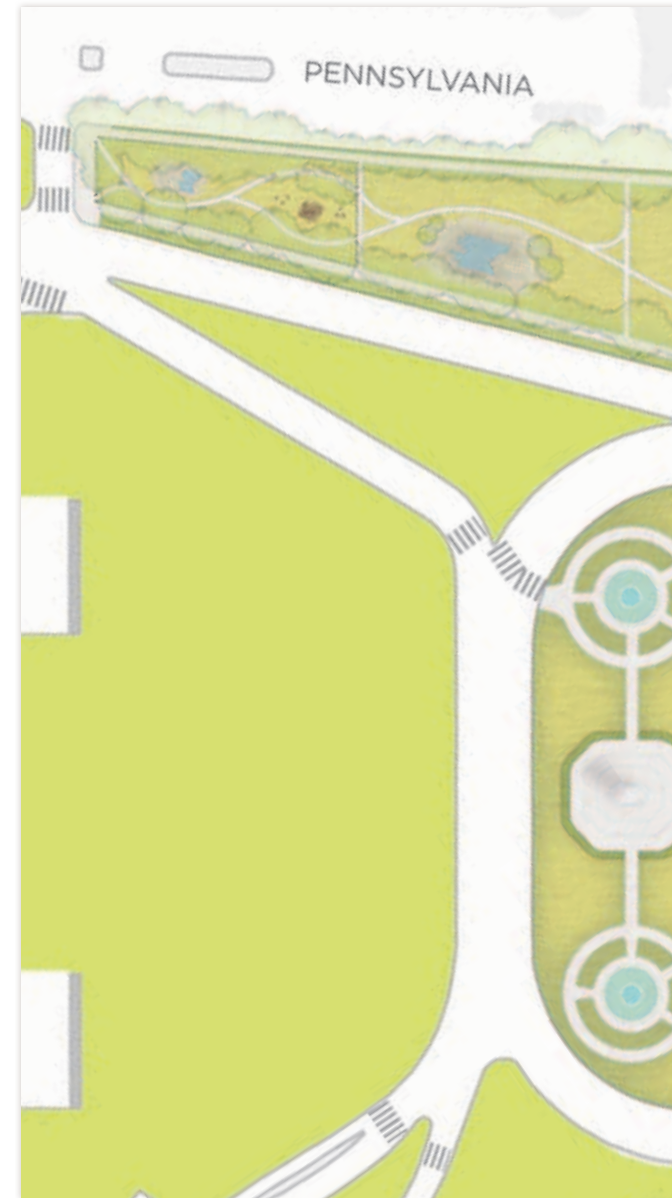
Oval. By clearly defining travel lanes and parking areas, the new park at the base of the *Iroquois* statue becomes easily accessible, blurring the boundary between neighborhood and Parkway.

### **V** VON COLLN MEMORIAL FIELD

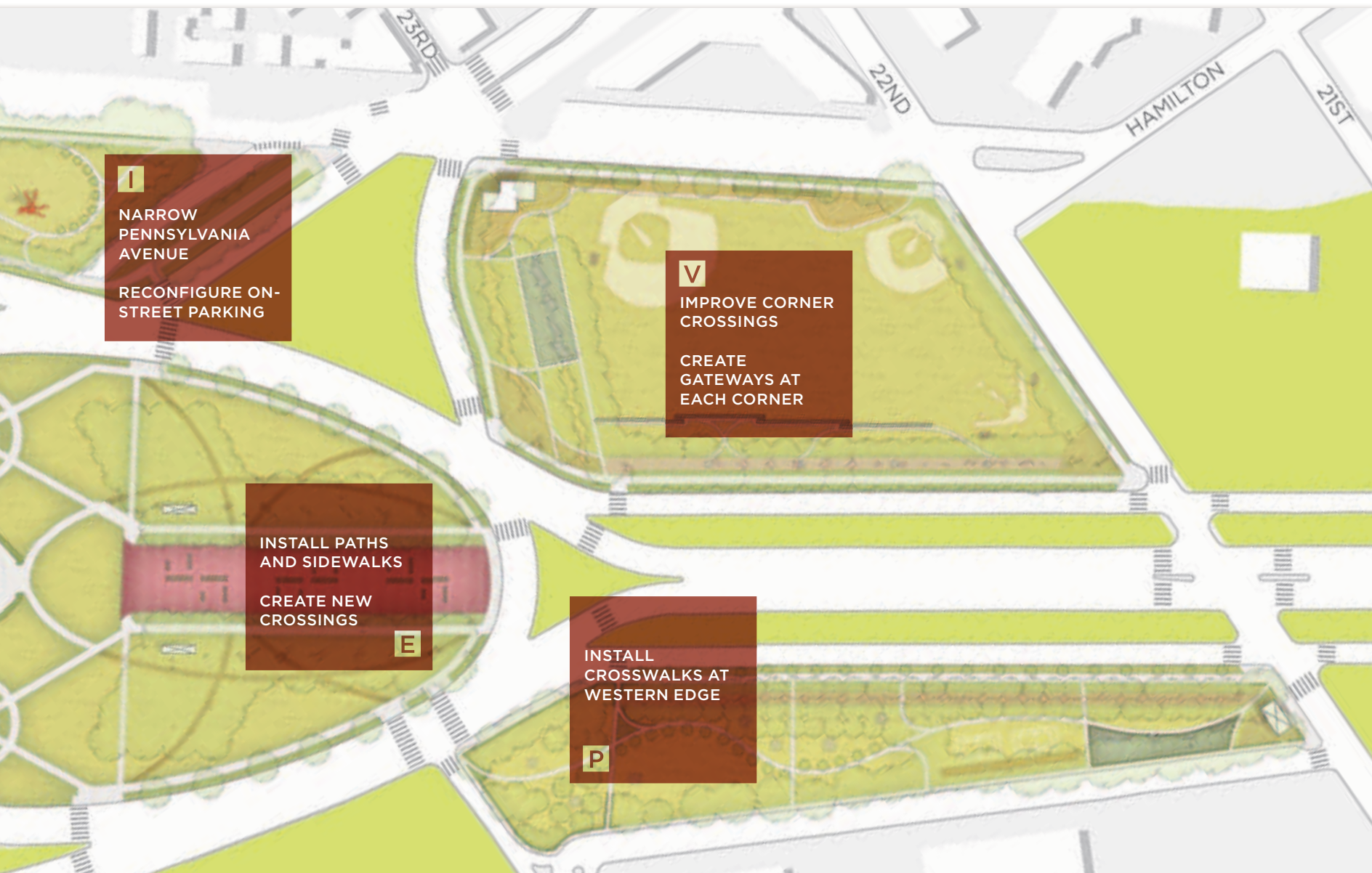
Von Colln Memorial Field, the recreational hub for the Fairmount and Spring Garden communities, is presently quite difficult to access at 23rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Improved crossings at each corner—Parkway side and neighborhood side—combined with redesigned corner gateways would help to integrate the field into the daily life of the residents living near the Parkway. The redesign of the Parkway edge of the field would incorporate public art and horticulture projects. This helps to provide an improved visual link to the cultural institutions located further down the Parkway.

### **P** PARK TOWNE PLACE

A walk along the Parkway today is characterized by long stretches of underutilized green spaces. Creating a more formal park space that houses public art and recreational amenities would help to minimize the perceived distance between the Art Museum and the institutions around Logan Square. New crosswalks at the western edge of the park space would allow for a new access point to Eakins Oval.















Great poetry reading  
at Shakespeare Park.

These pedestrian islands  
make it so easy to cross  
the Parkway!

# THE PARKWAY ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN JUNE



LITTLE  
LEAGUER



SENIOR

0 250' 500' 1000'





3

# PROVIDE A VARIETY OF AMENITIES

3.1

FILL IN THE GAP  
IN AMENITIES  
BETWEEN  
LOGAN SQUARE  
AND THE  
ART MUSEUM

3.2

PROVIDE HIGH-  
QUALITY,  
DEPENDABLE  
PROGRAMMING

3.3

PROVIDE FOOD  
AND PUBLIC  
CONVENIENCES





**THE PARKWAY IS PHILADELPHIA'S ICONIC PUBLIC SPACE, BUT IT HAS YET TO LIVE UP TO ITS POTENTIAL AS A DAILY PUBLIC DESTINATION.**

This action plan begins with designing high-quality parks, but a design will not succeed if it is neither accessible nor activated. Therefore, a variety of amenities along the Parkway is the core ingredient that will help increase urban vibrancy on the Parkway.

The Project for Public Spaces defines great public spaces as the front porch of public institutions and the place where celebrations are held—an apt description of the Parkway.<sup>16</sup> In 2011, the Parkway was host to over 24 large-scale special events that resulted in the partial or complete closure of the boulevard. While the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation (PPR) and the City have taken steps to limit special events on the Parkway by shifting events to other park locations, the 2011 Parkway Council Foundation report, “Increasing Cultural Activity” highlighted that the abundance of special events remains a concern.

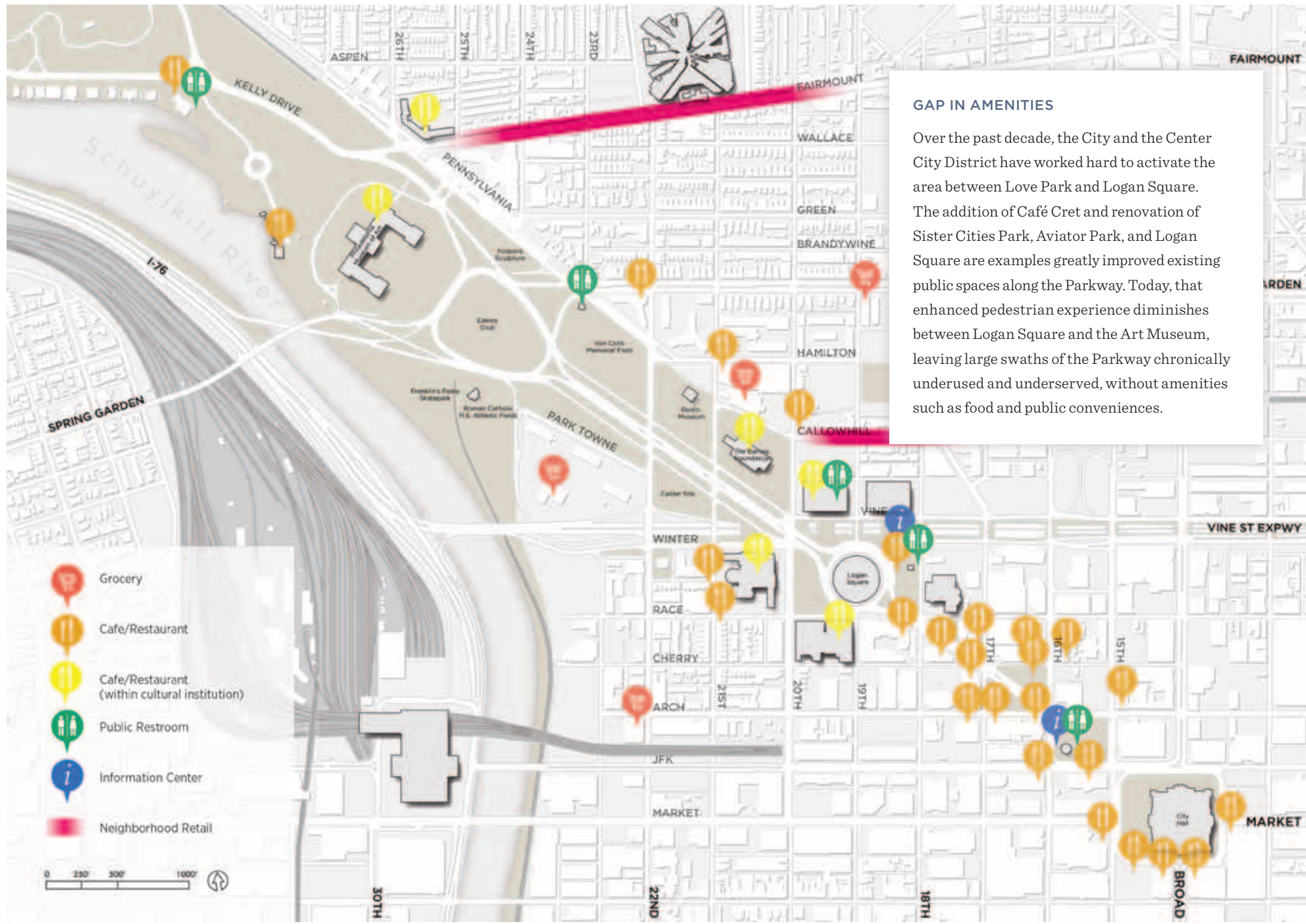
In large part, special events limit opportunities for the Parkway to become a venue where friends meet, cultures mix, and people interact with one another on an informal basis. To augment the urban vitality of the Parkway and take the steps necessary to make it a more successful place throughout the day and year, it is essential that people have a variety of things to do and experience on the Parkway.

Bringing more amenities to the Parkway, along with curated cultural events, will bring people together, build social capital, and reconnect both visitors and residents to this often underutilized civic space.

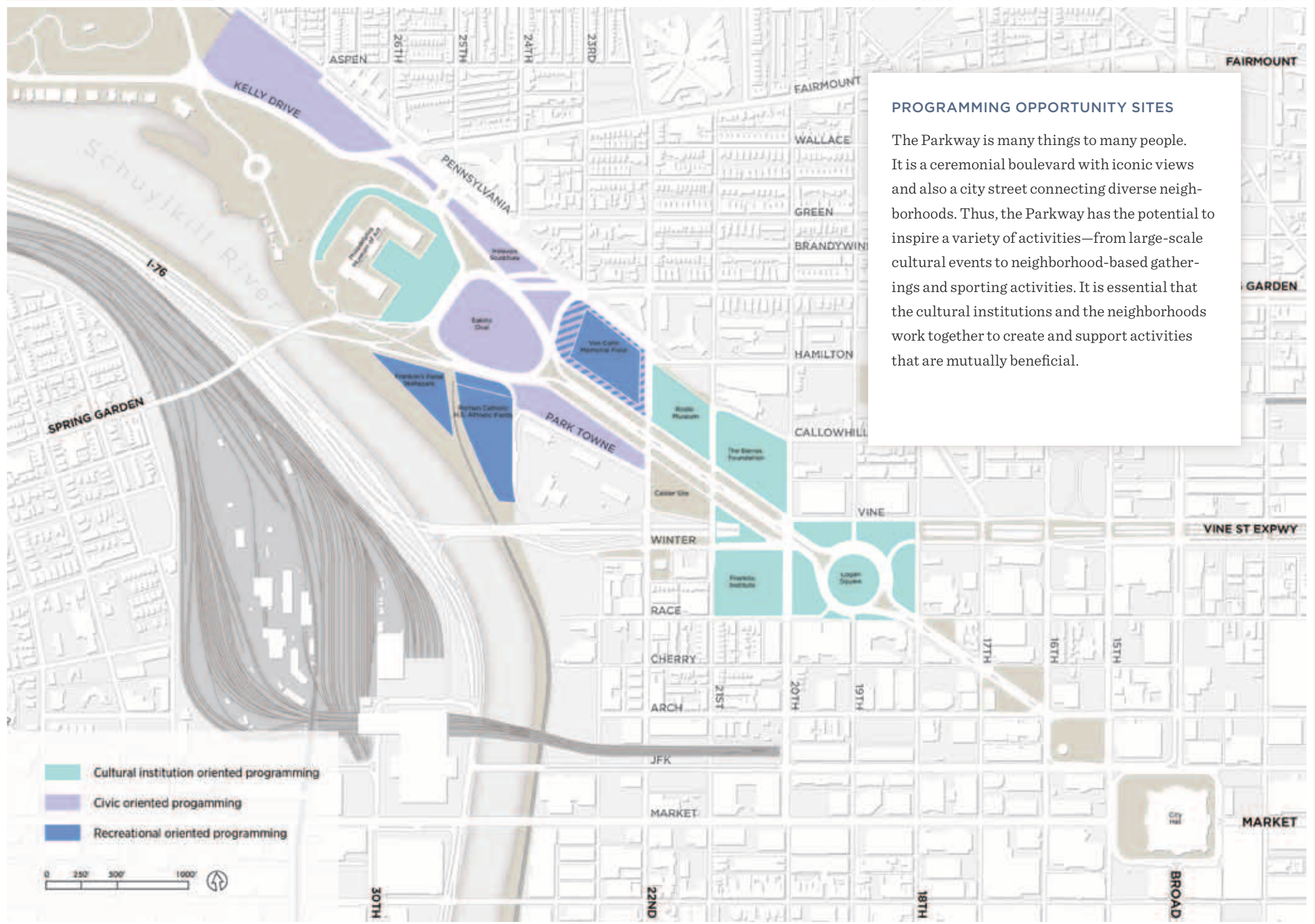
For the future, great programming should celebrate the unique qualities of this district, bringing the treasures of the cultural institutions and the energy of the neighborhoods into the park spaces on the Parkway.













## 3.1

## FILL IN THE GAP IN AMENITIES BETWEEN LOGAN SQUARE AND THE ART MUSEUM

A place succeeds in attracting people when there are a variety of things to do in one area. The Parkway between Love Park and Logan Square is currently more successful than the portion from Logan Square to the Art Museum, because it is better integrated into the city. There are apartment buildings, hotels, institutions, restaurants, and park spaces that ease the transition from Parkway to city. However, moving west from Logan Square, large gaps between activities and destinations predominate and contribute to an overall sense of the Parkway as an underutilized asset and a barrier between communities.

West of 22nd Street, the Parkway offers sites—both public and private—that are ideal focal points for new activities and programs. Within the public realm, relatively quick and inexpensive design interventions (such as comfortable seating, new lighting, and plantings) combined with a dependable schedule of activities (such as movie nights, yoga, concerts, puppet shows and pop-up markets) have the potential to transform underutilized areas like Eakins Oval, the *Iroquois* statue site, the edges of Von Colln Memorial Field, and the green space in front of Park Towne Place into amenity-rich zones that will ultimately ensure that the Parkway district becomes integrated with the adjoining neighborhoods.

Within the private realm, investments in enhancing ground-floor, accessible amenities would help the Parkway more fully merge with the surrounding neighborhoods. For instance, if Park Towne Place invested in







Top Left: Sister Cities Park, located at 18th and the Parkway, opened in 2012 and was an instant hit. The park features a children's discovery garden, café, visitors center, and public plaza.

Top Right: Schenley Plaza in Pittsburgh, PA features a robust programming schedule including group yoga sessions.



Lower Left: Bryant Park in New York City is well known for its movable chairs and pétanque courts—amenities that keep crowds coming year-round.

Lower Right: Jamison Square in Portland, OR, a one-acre pocket park, features an interactive fountain, boardwalk, and public art. When the fountain is on, the park is a place for play. When the fountain is off, the park is a shady plaza ideal for special events.

grade-level retail along its Parkway frontage, that edge of the Parkway would become more dynamic, attract a wider audience, and encourage the evolution of the nearby park spaces. Indeed, the recent announcement that Whole Foods will move to a site at 22nd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue bodes well for the transformation of Von Colln Memorial Field as a gathering place in nice weather. Additionally, the cultural institutions have amenities within their facilities and are important destinations that serve as major attractions. Should the institutions shift to be more outdoors-focused, they would take important strides towards playing a larger role in the public life of the Parkway and contributing to the Parkway's evolution as both a regional destination and a neighborhood center.

### 3.2 PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY, DEPENDABLE PROGRAMMING

Events and activities bring people together and help to create a true sense of identity and connection to place. The Parkway already has a terrific framework, in that the district is home on a daily basis to many interesting programs, exhibitions, festivals, and special events. However, the vast majority of the existing programming on the Parkway happens during the day, inside cultural institutions, and in many cases requires an entrance fee. As a result, much of the cultural activity taking place on the Parkway is neither visible nor easily accessible.

In this action plan, making the Parkway into a vibrant urban place hinges on (1) bringing more programming

outside of the institutions and onto the public spaces that line the Parkway, and (2) providing new, high-quality programming in the new park spaces. The plan contends that, in order to succeed, these public spaces must become real community assets that reflect the needs and desires of the surrounding neighborhoods. This can be achieved by activating once-overlooked spaces with high-quality, dependable programming. The key is to group activities together so the community knows that there is always something happening on the Parkway. For example, creating opportunities for bicycle rentals, space for fitness and yoga groups, reliable Wi-Fi, and access to public courts for volleyball, bocce, or ping pong would provide non-cultural reasons to visit the Parkway daily. Seasonal activities such as puppet shows, circus events, public concerts, outdoor movie screenings, and outdoor cafes offer even more variety and will attract crowds of varied ages, genders, races, and classes. Highly regarded Philadelphia performing arts institutions such as the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe could play an important role in providing cutting-edge cultural programming that is uniquely Philadelphia.

The Project for Public Spaces writes that, when public spaces become a part of daily life, they are forever linked with personal and collective milestones, and this is how public spaces succeed and strengthen the community.<sup>17</sup> Thus, making the Parkway into a center of civic life in Philadelphia requires that it become a daily, seasonal, and cultural destination through high-quality and dependable programming.

## 3.3

## PROVIDE FOOD AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Philadelphia benefits from a robust food and dining culture. High quality, innovative, affordable food is a distinctive part of the Philadelphia “flavorhood”<sup>18</sup> experience and could be more fully promoted and honored as authentically Philadelphia. In the past year, PPR has taken some steps to support creative food-centric events along the Parkway. In August 2012, a portion of Eakins Oval was closed so that PPR could host the winners of the Vendy Awards as well as Six Point Brewery. Three hundred people visited Eakins Oval for this event. Following the Winners Oval Vendy Night, PPR supported the first annual Dinner en Blanc event, at which over 1,300 people arrived at Logan Square to participate in a communal picnic. By all accounts, the event was a success and brought life to Logan Square in previously unimaginable ways. Together, these events served to highlight the fact that food and art brings people together and fine and fun dining experiences need not be tied to brick-and-mortar structures. That said, permanent fixtures such as Café Cret and Milk and Honey Café in Sister Cities Park—both offering refreshments and restrooms—have transformed key

Near left top: The 2012 Winners Oval Vendy Night at Eakins Oval.

Near left bottom: Sister Cities Park has become an important destination along the Parkway. The Park offers a café and restrooms plus added attractions such as an interactive fountain for children.





## CASE STUDY

### THE PORCH AT 30TH STREET STATION

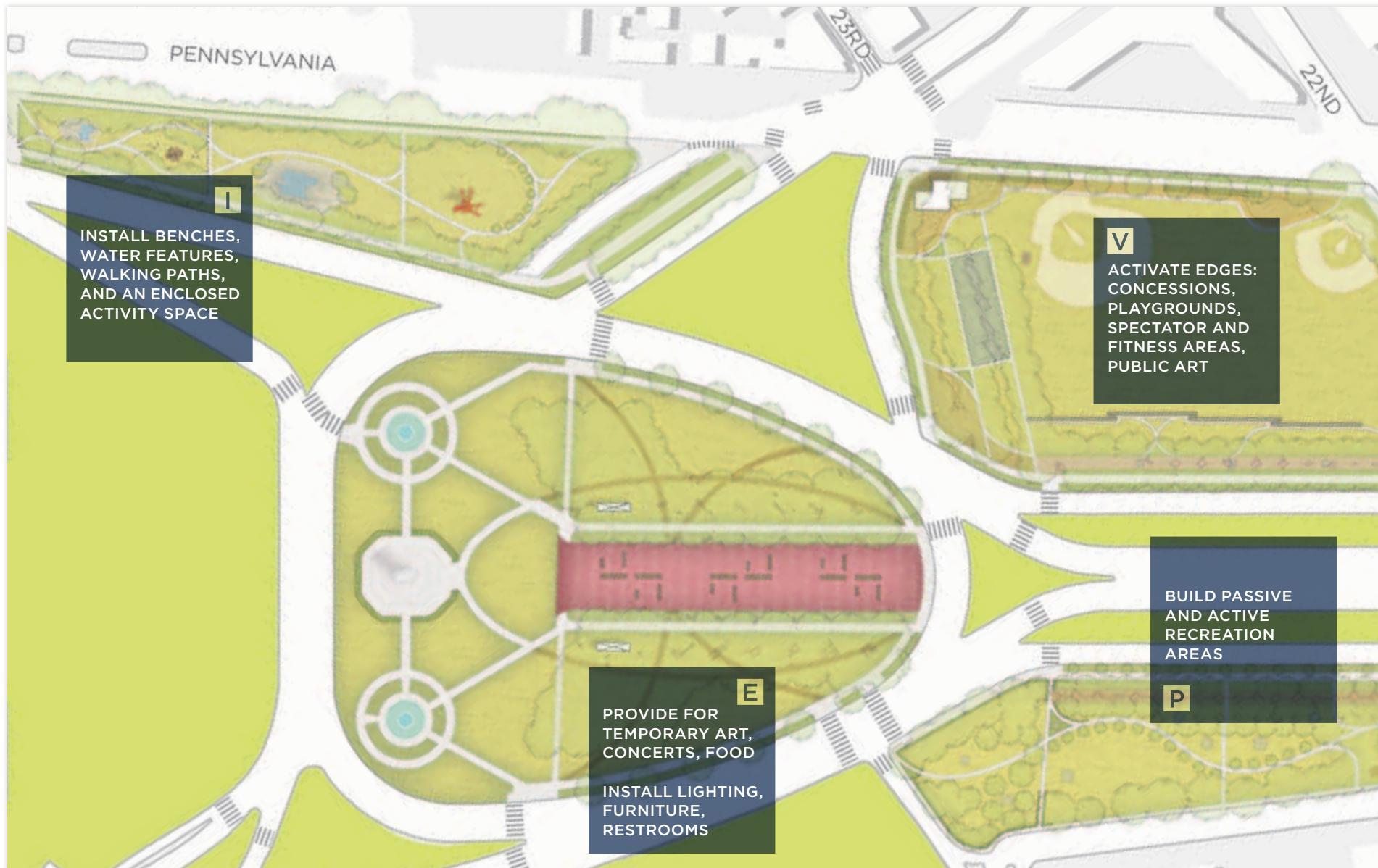
The goal of programming an urban park is to attract people. Recently, the trend in park programming has emphasized regular, low-impact programming that can adapt quickly to visitor use and feedback. Across the country, the most successful (and most repeated) elements of park programming are: food kiosks/restaurants, interactive water features, various levels of music performance, movie nights, and educational or fitness classes. Right here in Philadelphia, The Porch at 30th Street Station has become a successful implementation of this trend.

In 2010, recognizing an opportunity to carve out a new public space in front of 30th Street Station, the University City District (UCD) worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to occupy an existing concrete median and create an outdoor waiting room. Working with few capital dollars (\$275,000), UCD adopted the “Lighter Quicker Cheaper” approach to public space—one that advocates claiming public spaces through small, incremental, and experimental steps. Since opening The Porch, UCD staff has provided robust and innovative programs that have helped to define The Porch as a destination. During the summer of 2012, The Porch was home to a weekly farmers’ market, regular music and dance performances, fitness, mini-golf, a beer garden, food trucks, etc. The popularity of The Porch continues to grow, as more people become aware of the space as well as the amenities it offers on a daily basis.

(formerly overlooked) segments of the Parkway. They help to make the eastern portion of the Parkway a daily destination for nearby residents as well as the population of workers from Center City. Unfortunately, the area between Logan Square and the Art Museum lacks access to food and public restrooms. Yet, there are opportunities to co-locate food, farmers markets, and public conveniences at important community gateways, such as at 23rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and at 22nd Street and Park Towne Place. Populating the Parkway with these conveniences will improve the overall comfort for residents and visitors and will help to define the Parkway as a meeting place and center of social activity.

### CONCLUSION

This action plan seeks to outline a framework to guide the implementation of the next generation of Parkway improvement projects. For the Parkway to become a thriving district, it is imperative that the area must be enlivened and supported by cafes, kiosks, public art, performance art, and public conveniences. The idea is that if you build it, provide access to it, furnish it, and program it, Philadelphians will come. A first step toward closing the gaps along the Parkway could be experimental and flexible programming initiatives. Establishing a series of small wins will help to build momentum and support for larger, long-term projects.







## PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR PROVIDING A VARIETY OF AMENITIES

### **E** EAKINS OVAL

Eakins Oval represents the great void but also the great potential of the Parkway. Removing the surface parking lot is an essential first step in transforming this space as a canvas for new amenities. A reconceived Eakins Oval could include a public art installation in the paved area, a stage for concerts and performances, overhead lighting, well-designed portable or permanent public restrooms, moveable chairs and tables, places for food and drink, areas for dancing, and a rotating horticultural exhibit. Eakins Oval then becomes an ideal flexible space for artistic performances and other pop-up events.

### **I** IROQUOIS SITE

This plan envisions the *Iroquois* site as a new park that bridges the Parkway and the community. Already anchored by an acclaimed work of contemporary public art, this space is reconfigured to complement the existing art work and provide quiet, contemplative, passive spaces.

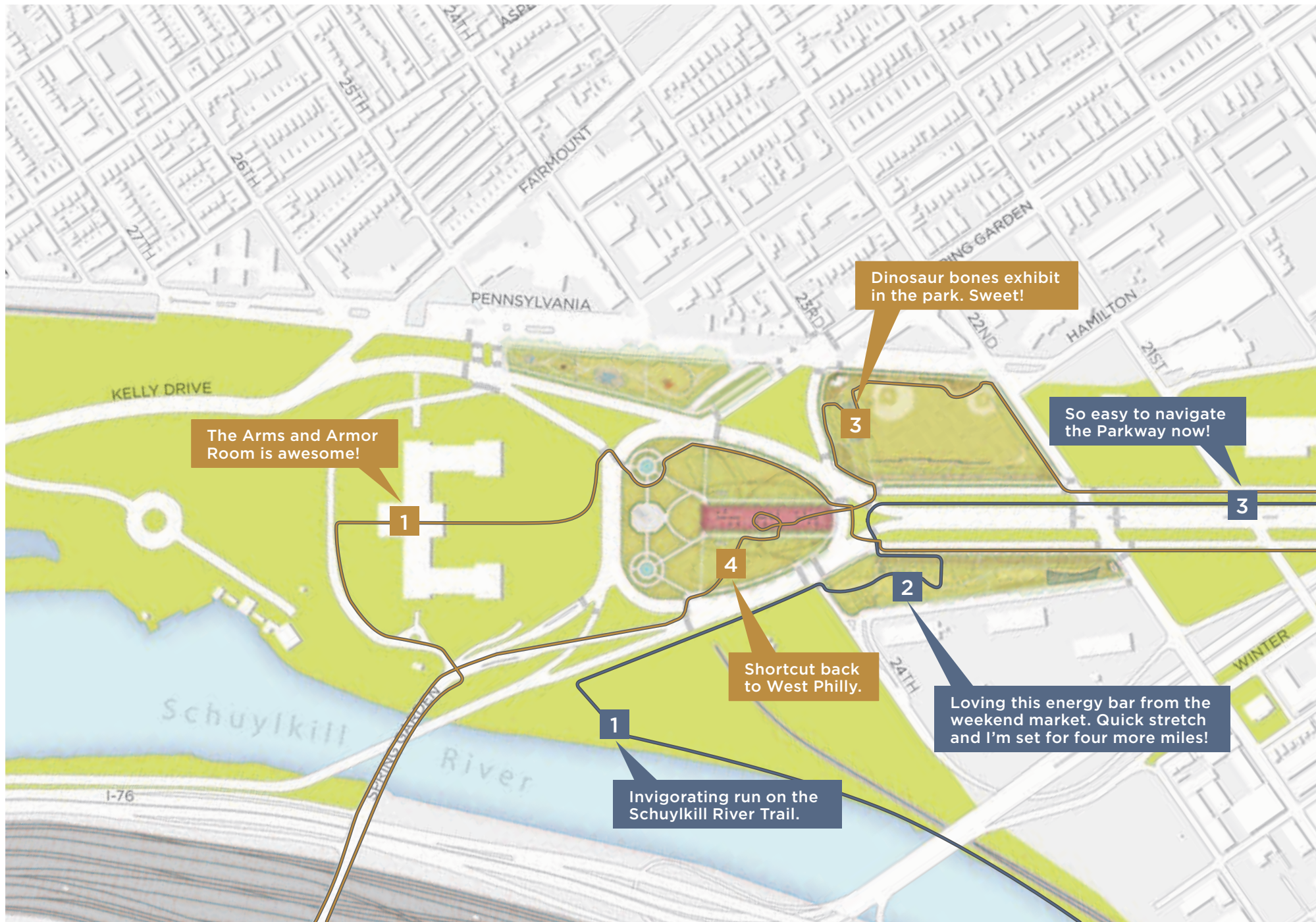
New benches, water features, and walking paths would serve as amenities and help to define the space. A small, enclosed playground with space for special activities like puppet shows would provide the community with much-needed play space and gathering space for young children.

### **V** VON COLLN MEMORIAL FIELD

The plan reactivates the northwestern edge of Von Colln Memorial Field—an important gateway into the Fairmount and Spring Garden neighborhoods—with food and beverage concessions that can serve the community and the fields. The southernmost edge of the field would feature functional, well-landscaped public art and serve as a formal boundary to the Parkway. The field would be surrounded by new spectator viewing areas, a state-of-the-art playground, a children's splash park, and adult fitness areas.

### **P** PARK TOWNE PLACE

The plan re-envision the green space in front of Park Towne Place Apartments as both an active and passive park. The western edge is more passive, with new public art, chess tables, and pleasant sitting areas beneath the existing allée of trees. The center of the park would offer active amenities such as space for volleyball and bocce. The eastern edge would feature an enclosed play area suitable for hosting programs like FreePlay or other children's events that nearby institutions could initiate. At 22nd Street and Park Towne Place, a kiosk café and rental facility would provide refreshments and equipment rental.





# THE PARKWAY ON A SATURDAY MORNING IN OCTOBER



TEEN



JOGGER

2

I'm inside the  
giant heart!





4

# CREATE A FOCUSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

4.1

CREATE A PARKWAY  
DISTRICT FUNDING  
STREAM

4.2

DESIGN AND  
BUILD THE  
NEW PARKS

4.3

PROGRAM THE  
OPEN SPACES

4.4

MANAGE THE  
CONCESSION-  
AIRES

4.5

MAINTAIN THE  
PARK SPACES





## **GREAT PUBLIC SPACES ARE WELL-MANAGED PUBLIC SPACES.**

For the Parkway to reach its potential as a flagship park—beloved for its celebrated views, cultural institutions, and neighborhood-focused amenities—establishing a focused management structure is essential. A management structure that concentrates on Parkway programming and shared maintenance will help to lead, coordinate, and support a wide range of activity that can come to define the Parkway for the future and build and maintain the Parkway brand.

Management of public spaces entails many tasks: designing and building new parks; providing moveable chairs and lounge furniture; managing concessions; attracting artists for events and exhibits; hosting concerts, dances, community meals, and social events; developing partnerships with existing institutions and performance art organizations; notifying local communities about upcoming events and street closures; fundraising; providing security; and maintaining the public realm at a high standard.

Good management is nimble: able to respond to changing needs and conditions, take risks, and keep the spaces and programs fresh and authentic. A public-private management organization, such as a Parkway conservancy or a non-profit that partners with the City, would ensure that the

Parkway will continue to receive high-level management and oversight despite changes in political administrations.

The Project for Public Space sums up the importance of a strong management structure: “About 80% of the success of any public space can be attributed to its management. No matter how good the design of a space is, it will never become a true place unless it is cared for well.”<sup>19</sup>

## 4.1

**CREATE A PARKWAY DISTRICT FUNDING STREAM**

Securing sustained and consistent financial support for parks is a universal challenge affecting cities across the United States. Parks are finding themselves increasingly more dependent on funding collected from outside revenue sources. Thanks to the Parkway's coveted position as a premier events space, its central role in Philadelphia's public space consciousness, and the presence of strong institutions with vested interest in the Parkway's long-term health and prosperity, opportunities exist to raise revenue for a dedicated funding stream.

The Parkway is home to over 24 special events throughout the year, ranging from small festivals and parades to large, one-off gatherings such as September 2012's Made in America Festival. Such large, high-profile events have the benefit of presenting Philadelphia in its best light before an international audience. However, the downside of the large-scale event is the negative impact on the quality of life within the adjoining neighborhoods and attendance at Parkway institutions. PPR can explore assessing increased impact fees attributed to some of the larger events. Capitalizing on these events and the associated spin-off concessions would help the City garner funding that could be targeted toward creating or improving park spaces and supporting more consistent programming within a revived Parkway district.

In many cities, parks are dependent upon funding from tax revenue assessed through entities such as park



improvement districts (PIDs), which are similar to Philadelphia's Center City District business improvement district (BID). Surrounding businesses benefit from the positive effects on visitation, spending, and increased real estate values when park spaces are well managed. Along the Parkway, the non-profit cultural institutions are the key stakeholders, and they are strong potential partners for raising funds for Parkway management and programming. We have seen the success of voluntary non-profit institutional donating to quality-of-life organizations such as West Philadelphia's University City District. Dedicated funding from the institutions would help to ensure that the district operates at a high standard of design, maintenance, cleanliness, and security. The impact would be that visitation—and the bottom line—would increase, because patrons and citizens would feel more comfortable traversing the Parkway.



Parking on the Parkway has been a source of concern for decades. However, rethinking the approach to parking along and around the Parkway can work to alleviate some concerns for institutions and neighbors and can also work to garner additional funding for the district. Parking is generally scattered all along the Parkway and on adjacent streets, with several nearby parking lots and garages supplementing the on-street parking supply. In order to make parking more efficient (and potentially profitable), it is imperative first that access to parking information is improved. A baseline approach is to establish a static wayfinding system that steers visitors to parking spaces that are clearly identified as "Parkway District" parking. Though it is more expensive and more complex, real-time parking information can be used for garage, surface-lot, and on-street parking. In addition, thinking of the Parkway as a "park once" district, rather than as a collection of self-contained, isolated destinations, presents an opportunity to better integrate





Left: The annual July 4th celebrations often begin with a free screening of *Rocky* on the Art Museum steps. With dedicated funding for the Parkway District, programs such as FreePlay, *Le Grand Continental*, and movie nights can become regular occurrences.

Center: The Imagination Playground is an interactive space that uses giant foam blocks to teach children to create their own play space. It was the inspiration behind FreePlay on the Parkway.

Right: Choreographer Sylvain Emard's *Le Grand Continental* took place on the Art Museum steps. The line dance, performed during the 2012 Fringe Festival, involved about 200 volunteer dancers.

parking—making it more convenient and accessible. Ultimately, improving the management of the parking system within the Parkway district could enable the City to create a dedicated funding stream based on parking fees collected from the district.

## 4.2 DESIGN AND BUILD THE NEW PARKS

The four underutilized sites outlined in this action plan present opportunities to design new park spaces that will reconnect neighborhoods to the Parkway, reassert the Parkway's role as a gateway to Fairmount Park, and demonstrate the best of contemporary park design. Typically, one of the major costs in creating new parks is land acquisition. However, because the City owns the land along the Parkway, PPR is well positioned to begin

the steps necessary to design and build new park spaces. As always, costs associated with developing parks present a challenge. Cost estimates for park development account for the size of the site, site conditions, and proposed design. In 2008, the City of Minneapolis worked with the Trust for Public Land to outline funding methods for downtown parks. The report estimated that the costs for creating a new park could range from \$500,000 per acre with no land acquisition and few features to over \$10 million per acre for a park with a wide range of features including performance venues.<sup>20</sup> These costs present a broad spectrum of possible design interventions, but without question they still present a challenge for PPR. Some recommendations for designing and building new parks in the near term include:

- Duplicate the Project for Public Space's Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC) model. The LQC approach is low-risk, low-cost, and capitalizes on the creative

energy of the community to generate new uses and revenue.<sup>21</sup> With a concentration on adaptive reuse and temporary structures, this type of project is an alternative to large-scale capital investments. In Philadelphia, the University City District proved the success of this model with The Porch at 30th Street Station, which has become a gathering space and is beginning to redefine the western gateway into Center City. A similar intervention could go far towards reclaiming Eakins Oval as the epicenter of the Parkway district and the surrounding communities.

- Partner with the existing non-profit Fairmount Park Conservancy to raise and manage funds for the capital costs necessary to create a series of signature parks along the Parkway. This would require the conservancy to target donations for the implementation of specific Parkway programs. The conservancy and PPR would work together to prioritize projects along the Parkway.
- Develop a public-private partnership, such as a Parkway Conservancy, in which the City takes the lead in renovating the Parkway's public spaces, but the non-profit manages the private revenue-generating operations on site. In this scenario, the revenue would go directly back into maintenance and programming of the Parkway instead of into the City's General Fund.

The goal in designing and building new parks is to ensure that stakeholders consider the long-term sustainability at the outset.

## 4.3

## PROGRAM THE OPEN SPACES

Citizens want dependable, yet spontaneous, programming on the Parkway. Programming public spaces on a regular basis requires significant investment of time, effort, and money. Hiring a local producer would help to bring a standard level of vibrant, high-quality programming to the Parkway. The Parkway Council Foundation could play an important role in ensuring high-quality programming.

In terms of programming, partnerships can serve as a valuable resource. With the artistic masters housed in our art museums and important scientific discovery showcased in our science museums, utilizing the Parkway as a canvas for local artists to experiment in a variety of media—music, print, sculpture, film, or dance—would bring an entirely new type of culture to the Parkway. Other city neighborhoods have begun to undertake similar initiatives; for instance, the American Philosophical Society recently commissioned a successful temporary public art installation in Society Hill that evocatively recreated the old Dock Creek.

Philadelphia is home to many creative organizations, such as the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe, and if such an organization were engaged to produce outdoor programs along the Parkway, the district could also become known as a home for friendly, local, cutting-edge performance art and theater. Supporting a robust season of programming, produced by well-seasoned Philadelphia cultural organizations would support the local creative economy and introduce new audiences to the Parkway.

## 4.4

## MANAGE THE CONCESSIONAIRES

Concessions—kiosks, food trucks, push carts, stores, and recreational services—are an important factor in revenue generation for new park spaces along the Parkway. For example, in 2002, New York City Parks estimated that 500 concessions generated more than \$60 million in revenue, equivalent to almost 25% of the City's funding of its parks.<sup>22</sup> While concessions can be lucrative, they can also be contentious, especially when they overly commercialize public spaces. Thus, as PPR begins to reconceptualize the public spaces along the Parkway, finding the balance between park space and concessions will be key to the successful long-term management of new park spaces.

It is imperative that the City captures revenue from the concessionaires and then spends the earned income within the Parkway district. Concessions within park spaces, when managed properly, create a win-win situation: The concession provides the park with much-needed services, improves security, and helps with ongoing maintenance; the park space, when properly maintained and operated with support from the concessions, offers a special setting that attracts visitors. PPR should build on the city's foodie culture to explore opportunities to help local culinary entrepreneurs expand into park-based concessions.

## 4.5

## MAINTAIN THE PARK SPACES

There is always greater political will for park building than for park maintenance, but it is the long-term maintenance that comes to define the character of the park.<sup>23</sup> In an environment of limited funding and resources, maintaining new and existing park spaces requires careful and creative consideration. For the short term, PPR has made a commitment to kickstart the next phase of the renewal of the Parkway. However, operating and maintaining a park is a costly endeavor. PPR estimates that operations and maintenance cost an average of \$2,095 per acre of parkland. Considering this figure for the long-term, it is imperative that a Parkway management entity, either public or private, has the ability to attract continuous funding, so that it can sustain the recommended improvements and programming along the Parkway at the highest quality.

Options for long-term operations and maintenance of new park spaces along the Parkway include:

- Empowering government agencies with funding and staff to concentrate on fully developing the Parkway as the city's premier civic space.
- Establishing a non-profit management organization, such as a foundation or conservancy, that is equipped in terms of capacity and expertise to manage, maintain, and program the Parkway.
- Forming an improvement district that is under contract with the City to manage and maintain the Parkway district.





## CASE STUDY

### PROSPECT PARK ALLIANCE, BROOKLYN, NY

Like the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Brooklyn's Prospect Park plays two roles: It is cited as "Brooklyn's Jewel," highlighting its importance as an iconic landscape, and it is referred to as "Brooklyn's Backyard," highlighting its other role as a community

gathering place. So, like the Parkway, Prospect Park faces similar challenges—namely how to manage its dual nature. The solution that has helped Prospect Park thrive was the establishment of a dedicated non-profit management entity, the Prospect Park Alliance.<sup>24</sup> The Alliance was established in 1987 in response to what the community saw as a need to become more involved with park programming and maintenance in light of decreases in City funding. Today the Alliance supplements Prospect Park's basic operating budget with private funds. With these funds, the Alliance has supported renovations and improvements to the zoo, playgrounds, walking paths, and lawns. The Alliance has also served as an important advocate for the park, boosting public awareness of its assets and gaining support from donors and volunteers. In all, the Alliance has been instrumental in increasing the number of visitors by almost 300% and in making critical improvements to the park lands and historic structures.<sup>25</sup> Through its financial support and activism, the Alliance has brought Prospect Park back from the fringe, restoring its role as "Brooklyn's Jewel" and renewing its role as the community's "backyard" gathering space. While PPR can learn from the Alliance's success in boosting the profile of Prospect Park, this strategy also contains a cautionary tale. After 25 years of Alliance support, the park has lost its identity as a part of New York City's Department of Parks and Recreation, the entity that is ultimately responsible for the land.

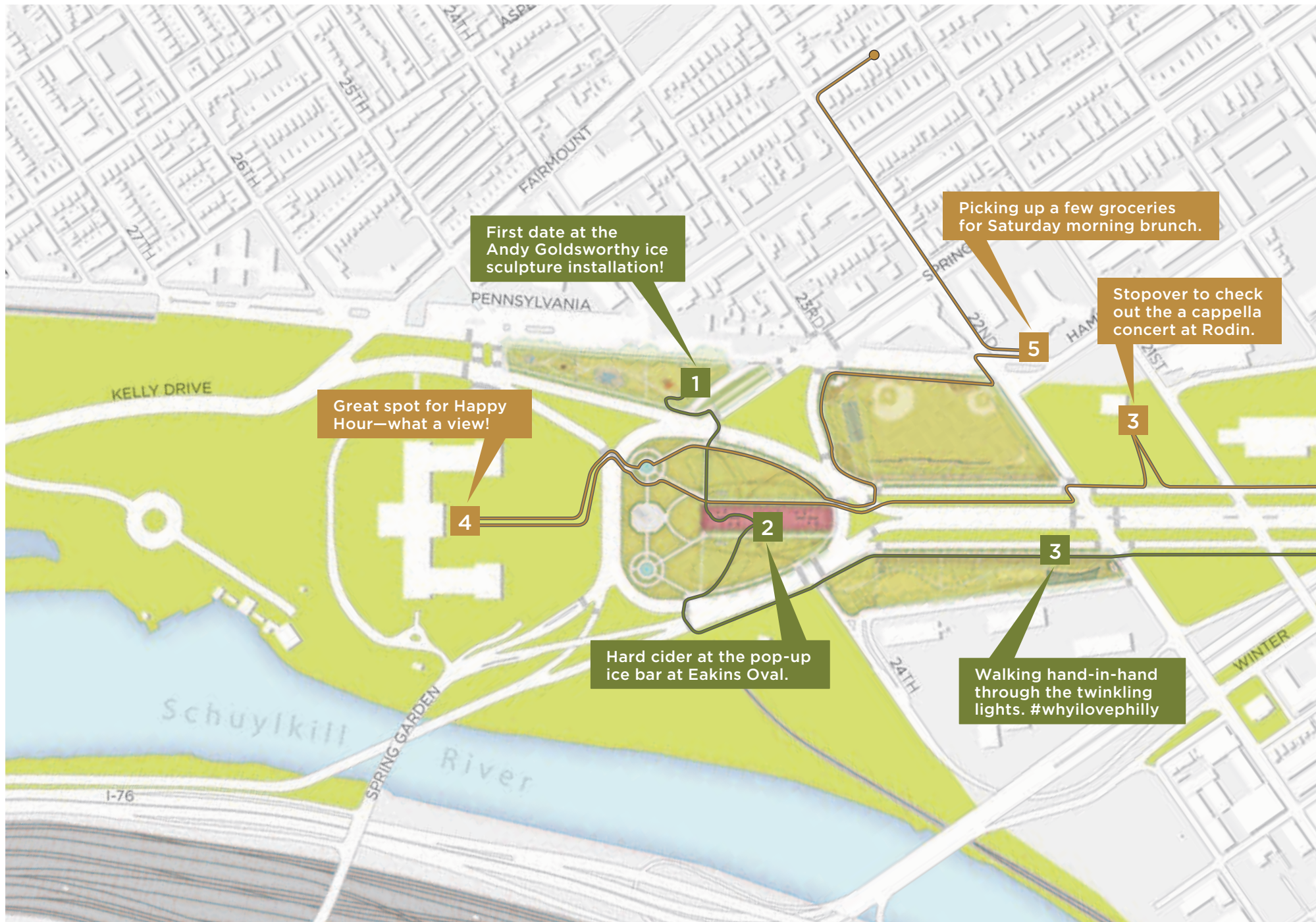
- Cultivating a public-private partnership in which each entity has clearly defined roles and a strong working relationship. A public-private partnership allows for a maximization of support from a wide variety of sources.

Natural partners such as the City, institutions, and neighborhoods should work together to maximize the ability to raise public and private funds in an effort to make the Parkway a welcoming gathering space for a multitude of audiences. A focused management structure will work to ensure that the Parkway district is able to attract the funding required to preserve the integrity of the Parkway as a cultural and neighborhood asset.

### CONCLUSION

Ensuring the long-term success of the Parkway depends on establishing an enduring management plan. The success of any public space is intimately tied to the effectiveness of a management entity that can work to respond to changing needs and ensure the continued use of the space. When effectively managed, the Parkway will assume its position as a place of pride and focal point for both large-scale civic events and smaller-scale community activities.

ACTION 4: CREATE A FOCUSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE









# NEXT STEPS

**THIS ACTION PLAN IS INTENDED TO GUIDE PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (PPR) AS IT TAKES IMPORTANT STEPS TO INCREASE URBAN VIBRANCY ALONG THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY.**

The plan recommends priority near-term projects that can help build the momentum essential to achieving the long-term vision for the Parkway as the nexus between the community and the city's primary cultural corridor.

## **NEAR-TERM APPROACH (WITH IMPLEMENTATION BY 2015)**

- Coordinate streetscape and roadway improvements—specifically traffic calming—with the anticipated PennDOT Parkway project, scheduled to begin in 2015 and be completed by 2020.
- Begin with small wins. Stake a claim on Eakins Oval by removing the surface parking and reclaiming this as public space. Install moveable chairs and planters, host pop-up festivals and dining events, and sponsor temporary art exhibits on Eakins Oval to build support to establish support for the Oval as the epicenter of culture and community. Simultaneously, work to improve pedestrian crossings to the Oval.
- Build off the work currently underway at Von Colln Memorial Field and concentrate on improving its edges—focusing first on 23rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue to improve connections between the nearby neighborhoods and the Parkway. Creating gateways at each corner, providing amenities for spectators,



and upgrading the play equipment are quick hits that would transform this space. Earmarking an area for temporary food operations around the western edge at Pennsylvania Avenue and 23rd Street would bring new refreshment options to the field and neighborhood. Any work along the northeast corner at 22nd Street should be coordinated with the future Whole Foods development planned for 22nd and Pennsylvania Avenue.

- Cultivate a partnership with Aimco, property manager for Park Towne Place Apartments. With Aimco investing in upgrading their property, there might be opportunities to urbanize this Parkway boundary and activate the green space in front of the apartment complex.
- Work with the Parkway Council Foundation to align near-term improvements with the Parkway's 2017–2018 Centennial celebration.
- Improve communication with cultural institutions and the community. Utilize technology to alert key stakeholders to the status of Parkway events, and invite all stakeholders to participate.
- The recommended traffic and transportation improvements came out of the civic process as well as a series of conversations and meetings with key City departments. The suggested improvements represent ideal desires. For the most part, consensus has been reached on the majority of the recommendations, representing a step forward in traffic and transportation planning in and around the Parkway District. However, implementation of

proposed traffic and transportation improvements around Eakins Oval and along Pennsylvania Avenue and the Parkway must be coordinated with PPR, the Planning Commission, the Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities, the Streets Department, and the nearby institutions.

#### **LONG-TERM APPROACH (2015 AND BEYOND)**

- Establish a management entity to advocate for new park development, coordinate events, fundraise, and manage revenue generation for new amenities on the Parkway.
- Develop new park spaces: *Iroquois*, Park Towne Place, and the Parkway edge of Von Colln. These park spaces will require leading-edge landscape designs and may include investments in permanent public art.
- Work to improve pedestrian access around Eakins Oval, at the entrance to I-676 and the axial approach to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This will require significant adjustments to traffic patterns around the Oval, but the proposed changes will dramatically improve accessibility and effectively connect the Oval to the civic life of Philadelphia.
- Support and advocate for new bus rapid transit options to service the Parkway district.
- Support initiatives to redesign Eakins Oval, Pennsylvania Avenue, and the intersection at

25th Street/Pennsylvania Avenue/Fairmount Avenue. The proposed interventions in this action plan maintain the current alignment of the Oval and limit permanent changes, so as to preserve the possibility of a future redesign that would restore the Oval to Jacques Greber's 1917 vision.

Philadelphians have been envisioning and re-envisioning the Parkway for over 140 years. The 19th century saw a desire to link Fairmount Park with the industrial city. The 20th century imagined a green cultural boulevard between the park and City Hall. The 21st-century vision for the Parkway must seek to balance cultural, community, and commuter needs. Thoughtful planning, design, implementation, and sustained high-quality management will enable the Parkway to become a vibrant cultural, social, and community center supporting neighbors, residents, and visitors alike.

## ENDNOTES

1. David Brownlee, *Building the City Beautiful* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 31.

2. Email from Judi Rodgers of the Parkway Council. Received April 5, 2012. Note that the 2011 attendee counts do not include The Barnes Foundation, as the opening of its new building occurred in the spring of 2012.

3. OLIN Partnership in conjunction with Brown and Keener, Alan Jacobs, and Frank Jaskiewicz. Public Improvements and a New Design Framework for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Submitted to the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation. 2003.

4. Email from Mark Focht and Barry Bressler, Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation (PPR). Received April 6, 2012. Data reflects the sum of the average number of attendees at special events held on the Parkway in 2011.

5. An impressive inventory of Parkway projects has been completed in the past ten years: pedestrian and roadway improvements around Logan Square and along the Parkway between 16th and 22nd Streets, installation of a lighting program for buildings and sculptures, improved signage, renovation of Aviator Park, restoration of Logan Square, conversion of the Art Museum's Perelman Building into gallery space, restoration of the Rodin Museum gardens and gallery, completion of the Art Museum's underground parking and sculpture garden, the addition of the seasonal FreePlay on the

Parkway, the opening of Café Cret, expansion projects at The Franklin Institute and the Art Museum, renovation of Sister Cities Park to include a children's garden and café, increased investment into the infrastructure and grounds of Park Towne Place, renovations to the interior of the Free Library and the improvements to the Shakespeare Garden, and the opening of the Barnes museum.

6. Brownlee, *Building the City Beautiful*, ix.

7. OLIN Partnership, *Public Improvements and a New Design Framework for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway* (2003). 40.

8. Email from Joe Syrnick. Executive Director, Schuylkill Banks. Received November 28, 2012.

9. Zoe Tillman, "A Walk in the Park That Wasn't Always," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (July 31, 2009).

10. Kellie Patrick Gates, "Hot Debate over Proposed Old City Hotel Project," *PlanPhilly* (November 23, 2010). Accessible at: <http://planphilly.com/hot-debate-over-proposed-old-city-hotel-project>

11. Jan Gehl, *Cities for People* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010).

12. OLIN Partnership, *Public Improvements and a New Design Framework for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway* (2003); Kise Straw & Kolodner, Logan Square Neighborhood Parkway Plan (2009); Econsult in conjunction with JzTi, Wallace Roberts & Todd, and Portfolio Associates, *Reconfiguring Key Intersections: Eakins Oval and Intersections of Kelly Drive/Pennsylvania Avenue/Fairmount Avenue/25th Street*

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13. Gehl, *Cities for People*.

14. Center City District. "Presentation: Pennsylvania Avenue Redesign." Date Unknown.

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16. Project for Public Spaces and Metropolitan Planning Council. "A Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking in Chicago." Date unknown.

17. Project for Public Spaces. "11 Principles for Turning Public Spaces into Civic Spaces." Accessible at <http://www.pps.org/reference/11principles/>; Project for Public Spaces and Metropolitan Planning Council. "A Guide to Neighborhood Placemaking in Chicago." Date unknown.

18. This term was coined by James Timberlake during Kieran Timberlake's work on the Master Plan for the Central Delaware. Completed for the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation by Cooper, Robertson & Partners et al. October 2011.

19. Project for Public Spaces. "11 Principles."

20. The Trust for Public Land. *Downtown Parks: Funding Methods, Management Structures, and Costs. A Report for the City of Minneapolis*. April 1, 2008. All figures have been adjusted for inflation.



21. Project for Public Spaces. “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper: Transform Your Public Spaces Now.”

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22. New Yorkers for Parks. “Supporting Our Parks: A Guide to Alternative Revenue Strategies.” June 2010.

23. New Yorkers for Parks. “Supporting Our Parks.”

24. New Yorkers for Parks and Ernst and Young.

“How Smart Parks Investment Pays Its Way.” 2002.

Accessible at: <http://www.ny4p.org/research/other-reports/or-smartinvestment.pdf>

25. Prospect Park Alliance. Accessible at: <http://www.prospectpark.org/about/alliance>

## RESOURCES (CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

### Neighborhood Plans/Studies:

- *Fairmount Community Plan*. Completed for Fairmount Community Development Corporation by Wallace Roberts & Todd, 2003.
- *Mantua Neighborhood Plan*. Completed by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 2005.
- *Moving Francisville Forward*. Completed for the Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation by Interface Studio, 2007.
- *Logan Square Neighborhood Parkway Plan*. Completed for the Logan Square Neighbors and the Philadelphia Planning Commission. Prepared by Kise Straw & Kolodner, 2009.

- *Brewerytown Neighborhood Plan*. Completed for the Greater Brewerytown Community Development Corporation and the Fairmount Community Development Corporation by Interface Studio, 2010.
- Philadelphia City Planning Commission Central District Plan (in process)

### General Reports about the Parkway:

- Brownlee, David. *Building the City Beautiful*. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1989.
- *Public Improvements and a New Design Framework for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway*. Completed for the Center City District by The Olin Partnership in conjunction with Brown and Keener, 2003.
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- *Center City: Planning for Growth, Benjamin Franklin Parkway*. Prepared by the Center City District and the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation. May 2008.
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Wallace Roberts & Todd, and Portfolio Associates, January 2011.

- Brownlee, David. “Still Imagining the Parkway,” *Context*. Fall/Winter 2011.
- Center City Reports (publications for the Center City District):
  - *Completing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway*, 1999.
  - *Benjamin Franklin Parkway, 2001-2005*.
  - *Leading the Way: Population Growth Downtown*, September 2011.
- Fairmount Park Art Association map of public artwork [http://www.fpaa.org/fpaa\\_map.html](http://www.fpaa.org/fpaa_map.html)

## PHOTO CITATIONS

Photographs in this report were taken by PennPraxis staff members Andrew Goodman, Bridget Keegan and Christine Lee with the exception of the following:

Pages 2–3: B. Krist for Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation.

Pages 12–13 (detail), 55: “Sylvain Emard’s *Le Grand Continental*.” Available from Jacques-Jean Tiziou / [www.jjtiziou.net](http://www.jjtiziou.net)

Page 21: “Anne d’Harnoncourt Sculpture Garden, September 2009.” Courtesy of Elise Geyelin, The OLIN Studio; “Rendering of Open Air by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.” Source: Association for Public Art.

Page 31: From *Building the City Beautiful* by David Brownlee (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 36.

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