

THE NEW FAIRMOUNT PARK

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This interactive PDF allows you to choose your own adventure as you learn about East and West Fairmount Park. Click the buttons on each page to go to the section that most interests you. Jump from section to section. Use the arrows on the bottom right of each page to move forward or backward one page at a time. Click on icons and hyperlinks for more information. The HOME button will take you back to the table of contents.

Please read this PDF using Adobe Acrobat®. If you use another program, you may not be able to see all of the interactive features.

GO!

Clean, safe and well-managed park
develop new stewardship, a united community voice

Redesign I-76
bring the park under the highway

New grandstands and footbridge
offer better access to Peter's Island

Signature Horticultural Center
offer a botanical garden in West Fairmount Park

Reroute Belmont Avenue
create a quieter, safer park experience

New park-within-a-park
expand neighborhood access to park landmarks

Community engagement
devise programming at the park edges to bring near neighbors into the park

New public boat house
engage more citizens with the Schuylkill

Roadway dieting and traffic calming
encourage fewer cars, more people

Resident access
develop safe, attractive entrances to the park

Well-connected trail system
offer complete access for walkers and bikers

Overlooks
provide incomparable views of the park

New pedestrian crossing
rail-with-trail on Columbia Rail Bridge

New pedestrian bridge
help users connect to the park without a car

Tame the speedways
install pedestrian-activated traffic signals on busy roads

This improvement plan is the culmination of a year-long research, engagement and planning process that aims to give all Philadelphians easier access to East and West Fairmount Park—ensuring that it will thrive for generations to come. East and West Park is the heart of our park system, and its health is a reflection of our health. Seven million people use the park each year, and 1.1 million people receive water from the park, while neighborhoods from Wynnefield to Brewerytown struggle every day with issues of park access.

PennPraxis based the recommendations in this Improvement Plan on input from over 1,000 citizens, with particular emphasis on park users and residents from nearby communities. An 86-organization Advisory Group of park and community leaders provided leadership and guidance throughout the process.

This map summarizes our key long-term and transformative recommendations, which include:

- Make it easy for citizens to get to, into and through the park
- Create opportunities for citizens to enjoy nature and water
- Offer new ways to use the park
- Give pedestrians and cyclists priority over motorists
- Engage citizens in the long-term care and support of the park.

WHILE PHILADELPHIANS LOVE FAIRMOUNT PARK—AN EXTRAORDINARY 2,050-ACRE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESPITE DEEP IN THE HEART OF THE CITY—WE CAN MAKE IT A BETTER PARK FOR CITIZENS TO USE AND ENJOY.

[GO TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

THE NEW FAIRMOUNT PARK

WHY EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK

East and West Fairmount Park is the undisputed heart of Philadelphia's prized park system. Although its splendor has been compromised over time, its value to neighbors and all Philadelphians is at an all-time high. However, like any working infrastructure, East and West Park must adapt in order to maintain that value to the city.

INTRODUCTION

ONE OF A KIND

OUR DRINKING WATER

7 MILLION USERS

DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN

GETTING IN

MANY PARKS

CIVIC SUPPORT

THE BIG VISION

East and West Fairmount Park is an essential resource for neighbors and the city as a whole, but it can be so much more. After extensive input from citizens, the PennPraxis project team proposes short- and long-term strategies for improvement that focus on restoring park-wide public access, preserving natural resources meeting community needs for recreation and strengthening park management and stewardship.

INTRODUCTION

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

TAME THE ROADS

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MORE THINGS TO DO

MAPS AND APPS

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FIRST STEPS

To maintain the great gifts that East and West Fairmount Park provides, we must nourish and support this park for new generations of Philadelphians to enjoy. Here are the project team's early recommendations for making East and West Fairmount Park a great 21st century park for neighbors near and far.

INTRODUCTION

PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

NEXT ACTIONS

BUILD ON EXISTING MOMENTUM

ALIGN WITH PARALLEL PLANNING

FOCUS AREAS

The project team analyzed five "focus areas" that have the opportunity to restore key park access to adjacent neighborhoods, link seemingly disparate portions of the park together and get residents back to the water. We frame our recommendations around the creeks that flow through these portions of the park, providing users with direct public access and opportunities to learn about water quality.

INTRODUCTION TO FOCUS AREAS

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

Letter from the Executive Team

How We Engaged

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

May 2014

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

We are pleased to present *The New Fairmount Park*. The report draws from the voices of more than 1,000 Philadelphians who participated in a yearlong civic engagement and planning process: neighbors and recreational users who are passionate about this massive park that is nestled deep in the heart of Philadelphia's northern and western neighborhoods.

East and West Fairmount Park stretches over 2,050 verdant acres along the Schuylkill River from the Fairmount Water Works to East Falls. To many, the park is synonymous with Philadelphia. From its incomparable vistas, deep shaded glades, capacious playing fields and broad expanses of river, the park is a gift of unparalleled 19th-century foresight.

East and West Fairmount Park was never envisioned as a unified urban park. Rather, it evolved as an ad hoc collection of summer estates and landscapes that were acquired over time, to ensure safe drinking water to the rapidly growing industrial city. As a result, the park never developed a singular identity. Indeed, East and West Park remains to this day an aggregation of many parks, each with a different identity to a different user group, which means there is no overarching volunteer group charged with maintaining it in its entirety.

And yet, as the irreplaceable heart of Philadelphia's esteemed park system, East and West Fairmount Park remains vital to the health of the city and its citizens. Although usage of the park is at an all-time high, City resources for the park are stretched thin. Incursions have degraded the park over the years. In the mid-20th century the Schuylkill Expressway was built and the elegant river drives became high-speed commuter routes. A plethora of streams and tributaries have been placed underground and regional-scale events overwhelm neighborhood-scale activities along the park's community edges.

The central questions of this study are: How might we imagine and reinvigorate East and West Fairmount Park for the 21st century? How do we ensure its viability for the next 150 years? What investments are required to bolster its use and enable more people to use the park in more ways? What role can the park play in meeting the sustainability goals of the City of Philadelphia?

East and West Fairmount Park is our ultimate democratic meeting space, bringing together Philadelphians from all walks of life under its green sheltering bower. While cities around the world compete to reclaim lost waterfronts, we have inherited a remarkable treasure. But if the park is to forever continue to nurture new generations of Philadelphians, we must nourish it, support it, and make it newly relevant to city life in the 21st century.

We are grateful to the William Penn Foundation, which generously underwrote this project and has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to parks and rivers in Philadelphia.

Michael DiBerardinis

Deputy Mayor, Environmental and Community Resources
Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Mark A. Focht, PLA, FASLA

First Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Kathryn Ott Lovell

Executive Director, Fairmount Park Conservancy

Harris M. Steinberg, FAIA

Executive Director, PennPraxis



EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK:

ONE OF A KIND

OUR DRINKING WATER

7 MILLION USERS

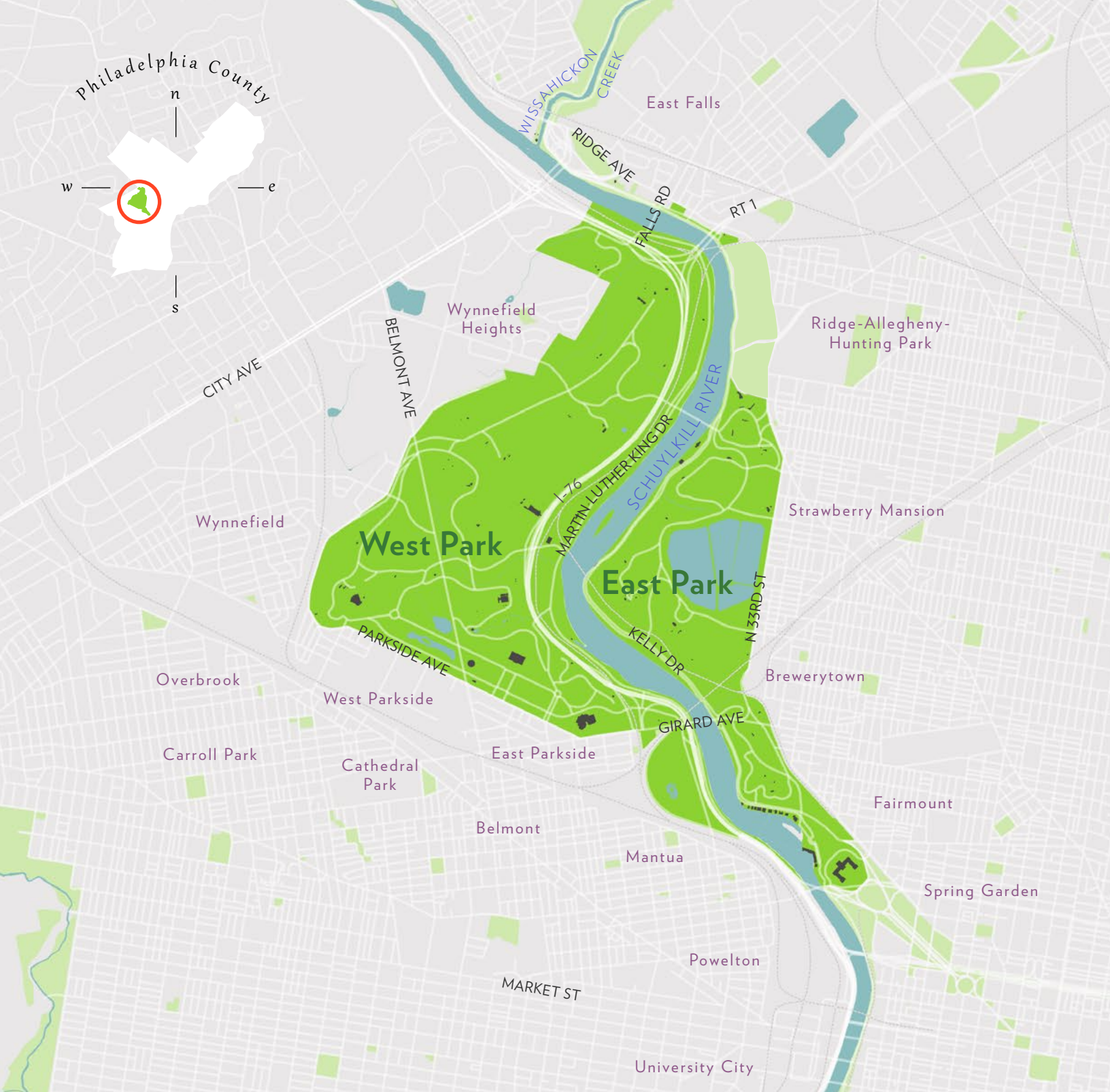
DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN

GETTING IN

MANY PARKS

CIVIC SUPPORT



EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK IS AN UNPARALLELED URBAN PARK BUT IS ALSO UNIQUELY PHILADELPHIAN. NO OTHER PARK IN THE COUNTRY CAN MATCH ITS SIZE, CENTRAL LOCATION IN THE CITY AND VALUE TO THE HEALTH OF THE RESIDENTS IN ITS REGION.

- 7 million** annual visitors
- 340,000** members of park organizations and institutions
- 1.1 million** customers source water from here
- 54** designated trail miles
- 2** performing arts centers
- 5** cultural institutions with more than 100,000 visitors each per year
- 16** creeks
- 43** sculptures
- 18** historic houses
- 5** police districts
- 4** playgrounds
- 70,000** adjacent residents within a half-mile walk
- 33** community organizations

2014 Pennsylvania River of the Year

- ONE OF A KIND
- 7 MILLION USERS
- ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN
- MANY PARKS
- OUR DRINKING WATER
- DIVERSE LANDSCAPES
- GETTING IN
- CIVIC SUPPORT

CONCEIVED AS A MONUMENTAL WORKING LANDSCAPE TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT PHILADELPHIA'S DRINKING WATER, EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK IS ONE OF THE CITY'S GREATEST RESOURCES.



Fairmount Water Works from Columbia Bridge

The park we know today is the result of a pioneering effort to guard the nearby edges of the Schuylkill River from pollution. The result was a state-enabled land assembly effort for green space conservation, a Fairmount Park Commission in charge of its oversight and a water source for the largest municipally run water network of its time. This water supply allowed Philadelphia to reach new heights in development and population.

Throughout its early development, the Water Department designed components of the water supply system—in the same vein as other public buildings of the era—as works of civic art conveying the importance of water to daily life. Philadelphians from all walks of life toured the grand filtration halls of the Fairmount Water Works, the elegant pumping stations, drew clean water from the 75 springs fed by 16 creeks and streams, strolled the tops of reservoir basins and climbed paths to various vantage points with views of the park and the city. Indeed, nowhere else in the world was there such a remarkable, deeply embedded fusion between public water, public nature and public life.



Former Spring Garden Waterworks (Kelly Dr & Brewery Hill Rd)



East Park Reservoir in Strawberry Mansion



Fairmount Water Works



Belmont Rapid Sand Filters

ONE OF A KIND

7 MILLION USERS

ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN

MANY PARKS

OUR DRINKING WATER

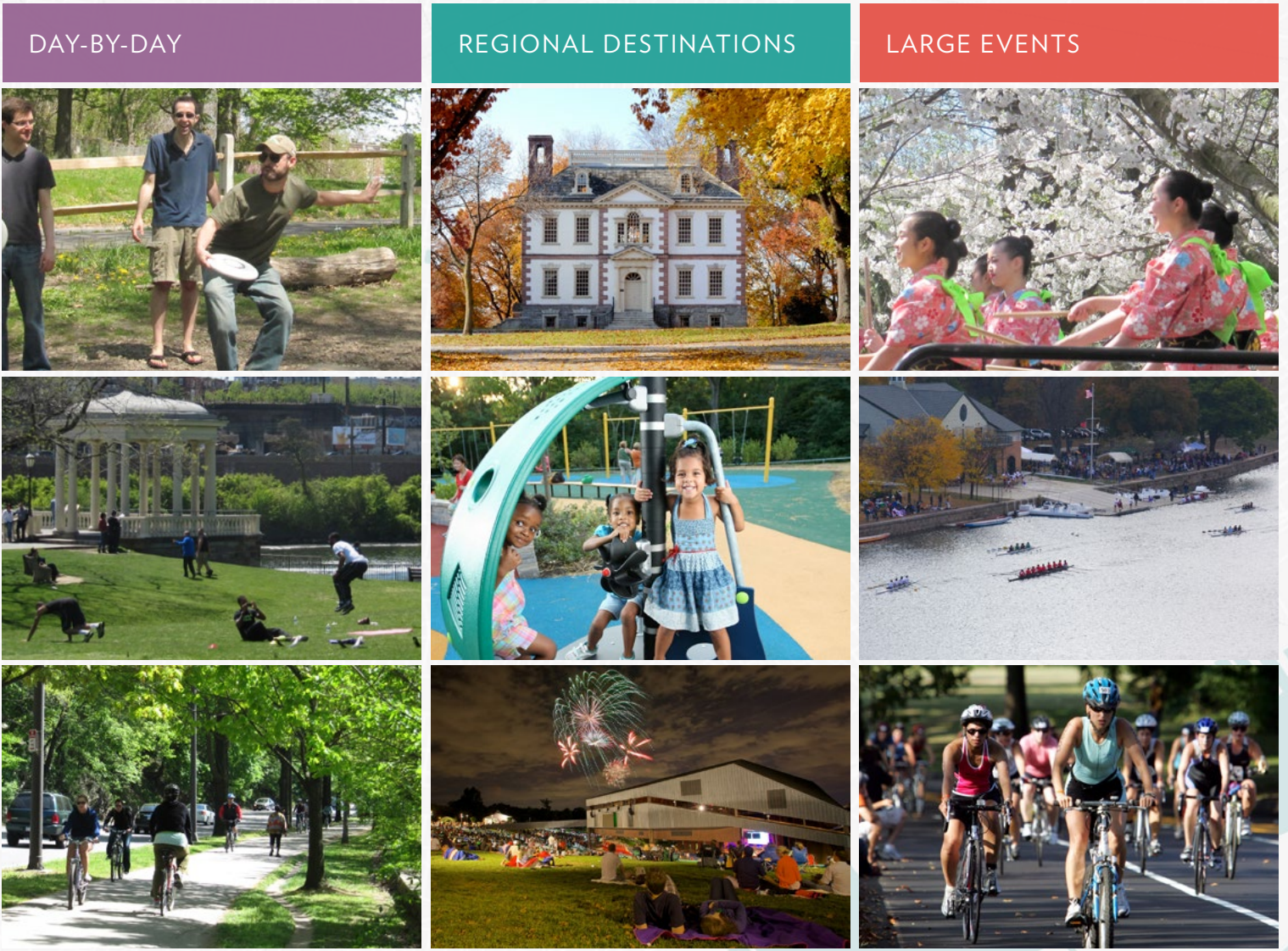
DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

GETTING IN

CIVIC SUPPORT

MORE THAN EVER, CITIZENS WANT ACCESS TO THE PARK.
SEVEN MILLION PHILADELPHIANS RELY ON THE PARK AS A PLACE TO
BRING THEIR FAMILIES, HOLD EVENTS AND RECREATE EVERY YEAR.

Chamounix Mansion Hostel
Boating
Horseback riding
INVISIBLE RIVER
Laurel Hill Cemetery
March for Babies
Parx Casino Philadelphia Cycling Classic
Race for the Cure
Walk Against Hunger
Strawberry Mansion
Cricket
Ultimate Frisbee
Nature activities
Head of the Schuylkill Regatta
Strolling
Dell Music Center
Underground Railroad Museum
Belmont Mansion
Spectating
Strawberry Mansion Day
Swimming
Belmont Plateau
Boxers' Trail 5K Run/Walk
Undy 5000 Exercising
Picnicking
Aberdeen Dad Vail Regatta
MLK & Kelly Drive Trails
Philly Pump Track
Mann Music Center
Playgrounds
Horticulture Center
Navy Day Hiking
Mount Pleasant Mansion
Shofuso Japanese House & Garden
Smith Playground
Disc golfing
Relaxing
Independence Dragon Boat Regatta
Please Touch Museum
Fairmount Park Holiday House Tours
Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival
Sports fields
Family events
Stotesbury Cup Regatta
West Park Arts Festival
Tri Rock Philadelphia Triathlon
Barbequing
Biking
Philadelphia Zoo
Jogging
Lemon Hill Mansion
Boathouse Row
Socializing
Educating
Philadelphia Museum of Art



- ONE OF A KIND
- 7 MILLION USERS
- ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN
- MANY PARKS
- OUR DRINKING WATER
- DIVERSE LANDSCAPES
- GETTING IN
- CIVIC SUPPORT

EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK IS THE FIRST MUNICIPALLY PROTECTED WATERSHED PARK IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS ALLOWS FOR A RARE CONNECTION TO NATURE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY.



42% TREE CANOPY
859 acres



1.6% MEADOW
33 acres



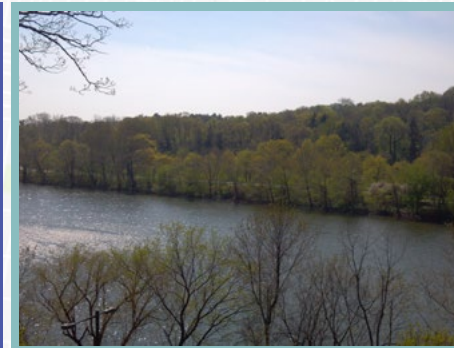
22.4% RECREATION FIELDS
461 acres



4.6% LAWN
95 acres



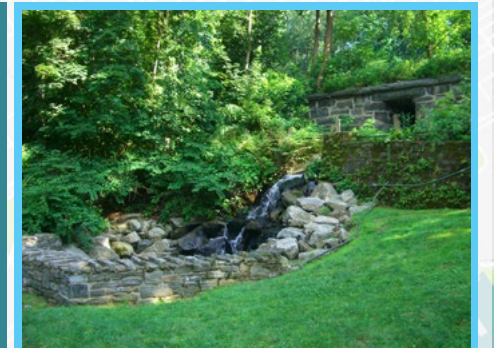
0.3% GREEN STORMWATER PROJECTS
5.8 acres



SCHUYLKILL RIVER
400 acres



3.3% LAKES AND WETLANDS
67 acres



5.7% CREEKS
118 acres

ONE OF A KIND

7 MILLION USERS

ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN

MANY PARKS

OUR DRINKING WATER

DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

GETTING IN

CIVIC SUPPORT



ASSEMBLED OVER MANY DECADES, THE PARK IS USED AS MANY SMALL PARKS AND NEEDS BETTER DESIGN TO ALLOW THE USER TO EXPERIENCE THE WHOLE. THIS IMPROVEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDS DESIGN CHANGES THAT WILL ALLOW THE PARK TO BETTER SERVE RESIDENTS.

Creation

Unlike Prospect Park or Forest Park, which are 19th-century parks fashioned whole-cloth to stimulate the real estate market, East and West Fairmount Park was never “designed,” in terms of how a user would experience the whole. Rather, it was conceived as working landscape that evolved as the city government acquired many summer estates along the Schuylkill River. It was Philadelphia’s counter to Manhattan’s Central Park, providing respite from what was then Philadelphia’s denser, more industrial urban core.

Today

As a result of never having been cohesively “planned” as a park, Philadelphians, visitors and stakeholders continue to use and develop East and West Fairmount Park on an ad hoc basis to this day. Trails do not connect to one another. Few gateway or visitor services are available. Complementary institutions often toil in isolation. Communities feel disconnected from the park. Old infrastructure such as the road network from the Centennial Exposition and the right-of-way from the former Park Passenger Railway trolley causes fragmentation.

ONE OF A KIND	7 MILLION USERS	ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN	MANY PARKS
OUR DRINKING WATER	DIVERSE LANDSCAPES	GETTING IN	CIVIC SUPPORT



IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE SAFE, ATTRACTIVE ENTRANCES TO THE PARK FOR SURROUNDING RESIDENTS AND CITYWIDE VISITORS ALIKE. Late 20th-century disinvestment in the city led to disinvestment in the park. As a result, we have lost touch with what makes East and West Fairmount Park so unique.



PHYSICAL BARRIERS
Expanded road infrastructure has severely limited public access



STRUGGLING ASSETS
Beautiful moments in nature are now boxed in



MISSING LINKS
Entire neighborhoods cannot walk to a park just mere blocks away



EVENT TERRITORY
Large events take over the park and limit day-to-day use

- ONE OF A KIND
- 7 MILLION USERS
- ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN
- MANY PARKS
- OUR DRINKING WATER
- DIVERSE LANDSCAPES
- GETTING IN
- CIVIC SUPPORT



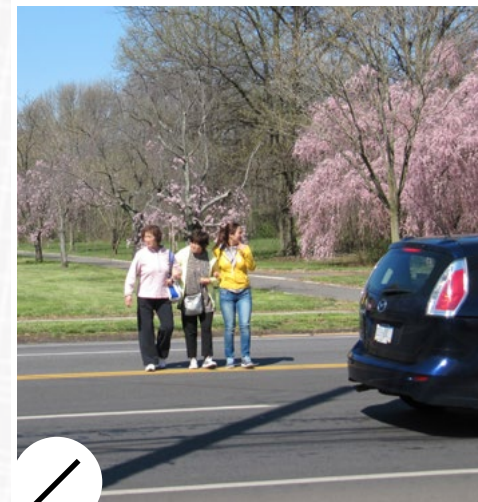
LARGE VOLUME AND HIGH-SPEED ROADWAYS, RAILROAD TRACKS AND NATURAL CLIFFS DIVIDE EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK INTO SEPARATE PARKS SERVING DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES.

54 miles of roads in the park

19 miles of rail track

400 acres of West Park removed for Schuylkill Expressway

11% roads



Many park roads have limited sidewalks and safe crossings



Freight rail separates uplands from the river



Steep slopes create great views but limit walking access

ONE OF A KIND

7 MILLION USERS

ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN

MANY PARKS

OUR DRINKING WATER

DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

GETTING IN

CIVIC SUPPORT

LARGE PARKS ARE PRECIOUS RESOURCES THAT REQUIRE CARE IN ORDER TO OFFER RESIDENTS AND VISITORS A RANGE OF RECREATION, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT.

PROSPECT PARK BROOKLYN, NY

The Prospect Park Alliance and the City of New York partner to improve and maintain Prospect Park.



ACRES	585
ANNUAL VISITORS	10 MILLION
CITY BUDGET (2012)	\$4 MILLION
CITY STAFF	20
CONSERVANCY REVENUE (2011)	\$9.8 MILLION
CONSERVANCY STAFF	80
VOLUNTEERS HOURS	26,065

EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK PHILADELPHIA, PA

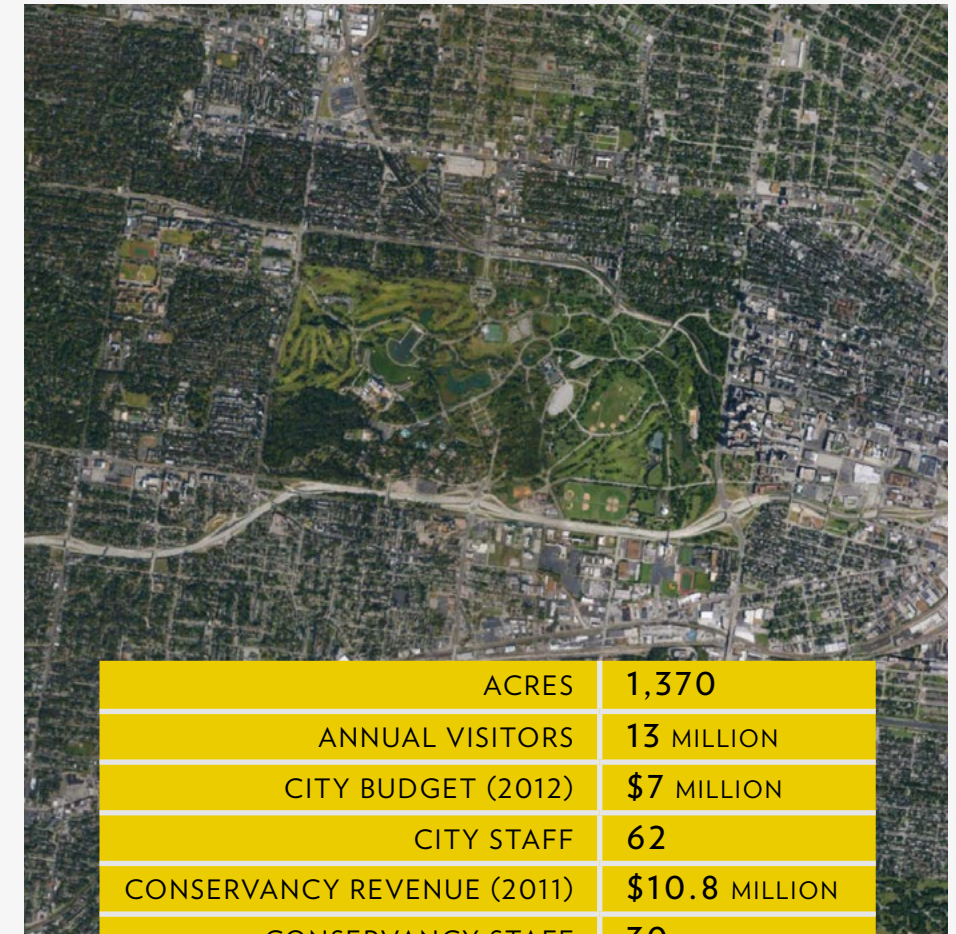
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and the Fairmount Park Conservancy support the complete Philadelphia park system. Budgets below are estimates for East and West Fairmount Park, which represents 19% of that system.



ACRES	2,050
ANNUAL VISITORS	7 MILLION
CITY BUDGET (2012)	\$8.7 MILLION
CITY STAFF	20
CONSERVANCY REVENUE (2011)	\$2.2 MILLION
CONSERVANCY STAFF	11
VOLUNTEER HOURS	5,071

FOREST PARK ST. LOUIS, MO

Forest Park Forever works with the City of St. Louis to restore, maintain and sustain Forest Park.



ACRES	1,370
ANNUAL VISITORS	13 MILLION
CITY BUDGET (2012)	\$7 MILLION
CITY STAFF	62
CONSERVANCY REVENUE (2011)	\$10.8 MILLION
CONSERVANCY STAFF	30
VOLUNTEER HOURS	11,500

ONE OF A KIND

7 MILLION USERS

ASSEMBLED, NEEDS DESIGN

MANY PARKS

OUR DRINKING WATER

DIVERSE LANDSCAPES

GETTING IN

CIVIC SUPPORT



AN IMPROVED EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK WILL ALLOW RESIDENTS OF ALL SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS TO SAFELY ENTER AND USE THE PARK, EXPAND THE ACTIVITIES PHILADELPHIANS CAN EXPERIENCE IN THE PARK, ACCOMMODATE WALKERS AND BIKERS OVER CARS AND ENGAGE CITIZENS IN ITS LONG-TERM CARE.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

MORE THINGS TO DO

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

MAPS AND APPS

TAME THE ROADS

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Clean, safe and well-managed park
develop new stewardship, a united community voice

Redesign I-76
bring the park under the highway

New grandstands and footbridge
offer better access to Peter's Island

Signature Horticultural Center
offer a botanical garden in West Fairmount Park

Reroute Belmont Avenue
create a quieter, safer park experience

New park-within-a-park
expand neighborhood access to park landmarks

Community engagement
devise programming at the park edges to bring near neighbors into the park

New public boat house
engage more citizens with the Schuylkill

Roadway dieting and traffic calming
encourage fewer cars, more people

Resident access
develop safe, attractive entrances to the park

Well-connected trail system
offer complete access for walkers and bikers

Overlooks
provide incomparable views of the park

New pedestrian crossing
rail-with-trail on Columbia Rail Bridge

New pedestrian bridge
help users connect to the park without a car

Tame the speedways
install pedestrian-activated traffic signals on busy roads

THIS MAP SHOWS THE TOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING THE PARK A MORE INVITING AND COHESIVE DESTINATION FOR PHILADELPHIANS FOR YEARS TO COME.

The rest of this chapter organizes more detailed recommendations in key categories based on input from citizens. Click on the **+** icon in this chapter to read more detailed information about particular recommendations. This document does not address some key issues that the project team feels need more analysis before it can make conclusive recommendations. Find out more about those issues in the "Unfinished Business" section of this chapter.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chamounix Creek & Roberts Run
 the only two creeks that begin in residential communities. Restoring, marking, and engaging these would draw residents into the park.

Greenland Creek

Ridgeland Creek

Skuttens Run

Belmont Glen Creek

Belmont Valley Creek

Montgomery Creek

Lansdowne Creek
 “learning landscape” from George’s Hill to the Horticulture Center +

Warner Creek

Sweetbriar Run

Strawberry Mansion Creek
 a direct connection for North Philadelphia neighborhoods

Randolph Creek
 an early opportunity to connect Strawberry Mansion to the Schuylkill

Mount Pleasant Creek

Harrison Creek

Glendinning Creek

THE PARK’S 16 CREEKS
 NATURALLY RUN WHERE PARK
 USERS GENERALLY CANNOT.

They begin close to neighborhoods and end in the river, a movement that is otherwise difficult for park users to follow because of natural and manmade barriers. Restoring these creeks to their original splendor will make them the ultimate community connectors, linking neighborhood residents directly to the park and to the river.

Creeks feed the Schuylkill, our drinking water source.

Creeks connect uphill trails to downhill trails.

Creeks are the total package: offering public access to nature, acting as neighborhood unifiers and providing teaching tools about water quality and volunteerism opportunities.

Creeks are segmented. Restoring them and opening the culverts when practical would express them fully. +

Creeks provide opportunities to partner with the Philadelphia Water Department to restore creeks in areas with major runoff contamination issues and animal waste.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS	BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER	CONNECT WITH TRAILS	MORE THINGS TO DO	LEGION OF CHAMPIONS
FOLLOW THE CREEKS	TAME THE ROADS	BUILD NEW ENTRANCES	MAPS AND APPS	UNFINISHED BUSINESS



Extend riparian buffers

Improve the health of the river by extending riparian corridors and addressing erosion issues along the river drives.

Showcase the historical pieces

of water-related infrastructure to better tell the story of the park. A few are marked here.

Showcase the water

Install treated edges around creek outfalls and inlets, especially Belmont Intake along King Drive.

Allow swimming

Bring another swimming pool into the park (staff, utilities and location permitting).

Improve Concourse and Centennial Lakes

Complete restoration to create a signature landscape that provides direct access for neighbors to water. Features could include a fishing pier, outdoor classroom and kiosk with fishing equipment, chairs and concessions. +

Get people in the river

Identify opportunities to create more public boating access to the river.

Establish “blue streets”

Bring neighbors into the park by linking people from community nodes while also managing stormwater.

Pursue stormwater management with PWD

Explore opportunities in the park on North 33rd Street and Parkside Avenue.

Tell the water story

Begin a modern education campaign with PWD about water quality by activating the area around the Waterworks Interpretive Center and extending it to the East Park Reservoir and Discovery Center at Strawberry Mansion Lake.

LET’S RESTORE THAT CONNECTION BETWEEN WATER AND DAILY LIFE IN THE CITY. WATER IS WHAT MAKES THIS PARK SPECIAL—IT’S THE SOURCE OF OUR DRINKING WATER. HOW MANY PHILADELPHIANS KNOW THAT?

Make water fun again.

Erase the 20th-century attempts to hide the water.

Bring water back in old ways, such as creeks, fountains and springs.

Bring the water back in new ways, such as spraygrounds, wading pools and other water features.

Keep improving the river’s health.

Manage more stormwater in the park.

Formalize a partnership between Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) around coordinated capital and programming initiatives to encourage park visitation and education about water quality. +

Consider the park as the “demonstration ground” to teach people about *Green City, Clean Waters*, the Water Department’s revolutionary plan to address citywide stormwater runoff issues through green infrastructure.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Connect the park under I-76

When the expressway is re-built, create openings under the highway to re-connect western neighborhoods to the Schuylkill River via restored creek paths. +

Reroute Belmont Avenue

Re-route a 1/3 mile stretch of Belmont Avenue in West Fairmount Park to reduce speeds, give a new address to the Mann Center and open up more green space for a restored Centennial Lake and Lansdowne Creek. +

Make drives safer to cross

Improve safety along Kelly Drive, MLK Drive and Parkside Avenue through increased signalized pedestrian crossings and additional bicycle infrastructure that link trail systems, park assets and park neighborhoods.

Monitor the road network

Conduct a park-wide traffic study to identify key ways to bring more multi-modal access into the park, including removing South Concourse Drive and installing a two-way cycletrack along MLK Drive.

Sustainable roads

Rebuild roads using pervious paving to minimize runoff in the park.

Bridges and ramps

Re-configure existing bridges to improve neighborhood access to the park at its most difficult points. Such improvements include:

- 1 re-configuring of the deck of the MLK Drive Bridge,
- 2 developing new bicycle, pedestrian and transit prioritization on the Girard Avenue Bridge,
- 3 building new ramps to connect trail users to the Strawberry Mansion Bridge, and
- 4 commissioning a study on how to increase bike and pedestrian capacity on the Falls Bridge.

Install pedestrian bridges

Construct footpaths over large infrastructure at key points near communities, including over I-76 to 34th Street and over SEPTA and CSX tracks to connect Brewerytown to Glendinning Rock Garden.

THE PARK OFFERS MORE THAN A VIEW FROM THE WINDOW OF A SPEEDING CAR. WE MUST ADAPT OUR ROADS TO FIT THE USES OF THE PARK, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

Create safe connections that encourage people to enjoy the park.

Treat the park as a destination, not a shortcut.

Identify road redundancy.

Downsize in a good way: remove, re-route and narrow. +

Start with basics: curbs, sidewalks, drainage and bike lanes.

Designate space now reserved for cars to pedestrians, bicyclists and nature.

Fewer drivers means the need for fewer parking spaces.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Regional trail network

Make East and West Fairmount Park the hub of The Circuit, with improved links to the Wissahickon Gateway, the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, Schuylkill Banks and the Mantua Greenway.

“Trolley” trail

Give improved access for the park’s western neighbors by creating a continuous “Trolley” trail that follows the pathway of the scenic trolley that ran through the woods of West Fairmount Park in the early 20th century.

“Creek” trails

Provide that connective tissue between the uphill trails and the downhill trails.

River trail

Strengthen the trails along the river. Where space is available, separate bicycle and pedestrian uses on the Kelly Drive trail by constructing parallel paths and move the trail to the river side when it conflicts with parking lot driveways. Fully rebuild the MLK Drive trail with an alignment closer to the river and a two-way cycle track along the bridge from Schuylkill Banks.

“Rim” trails

Give new life to the Boxers’ Trail and Centennial Loop, by extending the “Rim” trails to the full extent of East and West Fairmount Park, by linking to other trail networks, such as those within Laurel Hill Cemetery.

New river crossings

With new east-west cross-river trail access, via the Columbia Rail Bridge and a new pedestrian bridge that begins around the Fountain Green Drive intersection with Kelly Drive, provide walking access between Smith Playground and Please Touch Museum® in less than one mile.

“Ridge” trails

Tie nearby neighbors to the uplands of the park, in many cases using roadways or running alongside rail lines.

AN INTERCONNECTED TRAIL NETWORK IS ESSENTIAL TO MAKING THE PARK ACCESSIBLE TO MORE PEOPLE. THE KELLY DRIVE TRAIL CONNECTS TO VALLEY FORGE, YET IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET TO SMITH PLAYGROUND.

Start with neighbors and work in: most communities surrounding the park do not have marked trails nearby. +

Create five trail networks: river, rim, ridge, trolley and creeks.

Provide accessibility for all: bicycles, pedestrians, youth and those with limited mobility. +

Connect the many fragments that already exist. +

Use these primary trails to connect to smaller trail links in the park that are not shown on this map. +

Pair trails with signs, maps and trailheads to get information into the park.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Prioritize gateway improvements

Focus short-term improvements on areas where community access, neighborhood businesses and activity centers already exist: 33rd and Oxford, 33rd and Diamond, 41st and Parkside and 52nd and Parkside.

Create 360° views of the park

Identify areas in the park where visitors can see its full expanse. Overlook locations include George's Hill, Lemon Hill, the Discovery Center and behind the Horticulture Center.

Enter through the park

Animate the park entrance at 34th Street and Girard Avenue to mark an important gateway into West Fairmount Park. Configure Lansdowne Drive such that both lanes of traffic flow under one arch of the Amtrak bridge, while the space under the other arch is dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle use.

Build pedestrian-friendly entrances

Pair gateway treatments with road dieting where appropriate, such as at Diamond Street, Reservoir Drive, 41st Street and Neill Drive.

Make SEPTA access easier

Improve shelters, the placement of transit stops, signage, and trail connections at park entrances along SEPTA lines, including Girard Avenue between 33rd Street and the Girard Avenue Bridge.

Develop new visitor centers

Bolster the offerings of Lloyd Hall and look to the Parkside Edge project to provide a counterpart visitors center in West Fairmount Park.

CREATE SAFE, ATTRACTIVE GATEWAYS ALONG PARK EDGES AND WITHIN THE PARK TO DRAW MORE NEARBY RESIDENTS AND CITYWIDE VISITORS TO PARK LANDMARKS AND ACTIVITIES.

Give the park a series of “front doors” that provide visitors with everything they need to find their path.

Provide information at key community nodes and intersections for nearby residents to learn about what there is to see and do in East and West Fairmount Park.

Create different gateways for different reasons. Scale gateways at key edge intersections depending on the particular needs of the community, such as:

- information
- recreation
- landscaping/stormwater management
- facilities and amenities
- visibility/public art
- more inviting transit access

Create new “vistas” that showcase the park’s existing natural beauty, such as by removing chain fences, extending lighting and providing overlooks.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

New places to eat

Pair new park restaurants with areas of high programming activity. Potential sites include near the Mann Center or Smith Playground.

Use what we have

Fill in programming and amenity gaps using existing structures. Require all buildings in the park to have public “open house” hours and signage describing their history.

Introduce a new horticulture center

Re-brand the Horticulture Center as the Fairmount Park Arboretum. Increase its exhibition function, organize an annual festival, boost visitation and expand catering to include more regular hours.

Redefine MLK Drive for water

Create a water recreation destination along the Schuylkill River, punctuated by a new multi-purpose community boathouse at the bend in the river along MLK Drive. This will bring public life to the side of the river with the capacity to receive it. Install grandstand seating on Peter’s Island with a footbridge that provides great views for regatta spectators as well as the general public. +

Focus on youth

Bring a more balanced series of opportunities for youth to enjoy both sides of the park. This includes reviving closed park landmarks (i.e., carousels, playgrounds and playhouses) as well as recreation, employment and education programs.

Give the historic houses a new identity

Re-think the role of the historic houses for visitor services and park interpretation. Add facilities such as bathrooms, water fountains and bike racks. Revive active uses such as concessions and performances to attract more visitors.

Do long-term community building

Support new programming staff at community “anchors” around the park to create long-term programming that engages nearby residents and builds the next generation of park stewards.

Public art

Use public art—temporary and permanent—to tell the unique story of East and West Fairmount Park and provide a reason for visitors to return to the park.

MAKING THE PARK BEAUTIFUL ISN'T ENOUGH TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO THE PARK. PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES TO CREATE “A PARK FOR ALL USERS.”

Once they are in the “front door,” give citizens a progression of activities that give them multiple experiences in the park.

Provide bathrooms, water fountains and ice cream stands. Sometimes it’s that simple.

Engage adjacent neighbors first as the next generation of nearby stewards.

Pay special attention to areas in the park that are not 100% public: fenced facilities, closed buildings and open facilities that do not actively promote themselves. Require all existing buildings in the park to have “open house” hours and signage describing their history.

Prioritize youth: consider employment opportunities, ranger apprenticeships, junior ambassadors, green corps and summer camps.

Coordinate events that bring park institutions and neighborhood groups together. Arrange for free or significantly discounted access to park attractions, and heavily promote these programs. +

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS	BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER	CONNECT WITH TRAILS	MORE THINGS TO DO	LEGION OF CHAMPIONS
FOLLOW THE CREEKS	TAME THE ROADS	BUILD NEW ENTRANCES	MAPS AND APPS	UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Reinforce the idea that information is power

Place digital information kiosks at key sites within the park that allow: (1) users to curate information to their individual needs, and (2) Parks and Recreation staff to automatically synchronize edits and data from other sources.

Get people's attention

Create iconic art at important intersections inside and outside the park that animate the entrance and draws people to the park's attractions.

Animate park edges

Consider opportunities to interpret lesser-known facts about the park as well as the history of the neighborhoods across the street.

Follow the activity

Focus early efforts on making information available at key gateways and neighborhood nodes, for users and neighbors alike.

Give people direction

Mark and sign all trail networks within the park.

EMPOWER THROUGH INFORMATION. IMPROVE HOW WE PROVIDE TOOLS TO HELP PEOPLE ENJOY THEMSELVES IN THE PARK.

Provide information in many different formats: map, app, calendar and website. +

Keep citizens informed about the good and the bad: Communicate to them the park's diverse offerings as well as the disruptions in the park due to large events.

Engage neighborhood partners so that information can spread further than Parks and Recreation could do on its own.

Institutionalize cross-marketing and promotion between Parks and Recreation, park organizations and park neighborhoods.

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Take the message citywide

Launch a citywide campaign for renewed investment in East and West Fairmount Park. Make the case for the park's importance to the city as a whole. Both St. Louis and Mexico City provide examples on how to generate support citywide. +

Generate new revenue

Explore ways to get more funding for ongoing park maintenance, including concessions and revenue from large events.

Impose limits on the park

Fix the number of permit events for 2016 in East and West Fairmount Park. Acknowledge that such an important natural system has a "capacity." Prioritize events with a direct goal of engaging citizens with the park.

Make the park an extension of neighborhood

Allow improvements within the park to aid in economic development outside the park. Carefully devise a strategy with neighborhood organizations and the City of Philadelphia Commerce Department to encourage job creation for adjacent neighbors that connect to park destinations.

Put safety first

Create a distinct police district for East and West Fairmount Park and the Wissahickon, to provide a more visible security presence in the park.

Reward those most loyal to the park

Forge new partnerships with local long-standing user groups who demonstrate a commitment to park stewardship in exchange for multi-year permit agreements.

Bring back the rangers

Bolster the existing Park Rangers corps to provide necessary "ambassador" support such as education, guidance and uniformed visibility.

IT'S NOT FLASHY, BUT IT'S NECESSARY: GET CREATIVE ABOUT HOW TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR THE PARK.

Build institutional leadership for East and West Fairmount Park, within Parks and Recreation as well as the Fairmount Park Conservancy. Explore the "park administrator" model in New York City.

Use City Council offices as launch pads for engagement.

Launch a citywide campaign for renewed investment in East and West Fairmount Park. Make the case for its importance to the city as a whole.

Give the people what they want: cleanliness, safety and maintenance.

Learn lessons from neighbors: Reinforce the idea that supporting the park takes engagement, participation and elbow grease. +

Build upon existing community leadership to form a coalition for change in the park. +

Use the existing constituency that's ripe for change: Leverage 7 million annual visitors and over 340,000 members of park organizations. +

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Determine needed layers of transit?

Assess the opportunity for transit to benefit adjacent residents, neighborhood economic development, the tourist population, day visitors from throughout the region, daily use and park employment. +

Create more programming?

Determine whether visitation is strong enough to justify bringing more activity back into the park. Look to sites of previous generations, such as Playhouse in the Park at Belmont Grove and the Strawberry Mansion Music Pavilion.

Remote parking?

Parking in less-used areas of the park, or outside the park altogether, might help solve the congestion issues during large events. +

New park closures?

New bathhouses and recreation along MLK Drive could justify moving the warm-weather weekend recreational closure to Kelly Drive.

Find vending opportunities?

Find creative solutions to barriers that traditionally limit earned-income opportunities in the park, such as seasonal use and structures that require expensive capital renovations.

Conduct a park-wide traffic study?

The first traffic study in East and West Fairmount Park would definitely determine which roads can be narrowed or removed.

WE NEED MORE ANALYSIS AND EXPERTISE TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE MORE COMPLEX ISSUES THAT KEEP FAIRMOUNT PARK FROM FULLY SERVING RESIDENTS.

The following should become the next areas of study in the process of fully realizing this 21st-century vision for the park.

- Traffic and auto connectivity
- Public transportation
- Parking capacity: large events and day-to-day behavior
- Park design guidelines
- Park accessibility guidelines for those with limited mobility
- Lighting
- Ecology, hydrology and botany
- Event permitting
- Historic preservation
- Programming mix +
- Facilities and concessions
- Public art

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

BRING PEOPLE TO THE WATER

CONNECT WITH TRAILS

MORE THINGS TO DO

LEGION OF CHAMPIONS

FOLLOW THE CREEKS

TAME THE ROADS

BUILD NEW ENTRANCES

MAPS AND APPS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS



A LOT CAN BE DONE IN THE SHORT TERM TO MAKE
EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK A GREAT
21ST-CENTURY PARK FOR NEIGHBORS NEAR AND FAR.

PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

BUILD ON EXISTING MOMENTUM

NEXT ACTIONS

ALIGN WITH PARALLEL PLANNING

HERE ARE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MOST IMPORTANT STARTING POINTS TO IMPLEMENT THE VISION, FOCUSING ON WHERE WE CAN CREATE LOCAL BENEFITS WHILE BUILDING THE CASE FOR LONGER TERM INVESTMENT.

Prioritize improvements to community recreation centers in the park: Mander on the east side and Parkside-Evans on the west side.

Devise restoration strategies for key creeksheds.

Commission a park-wide traffic, transportation and parking study. Pair this with an acoustical study, if the city chooses to pursue re-routing Belmont Avenue.

Commission important studies for the future health of Concourse and Centennial Lakes: a de-watering study for Concourse and a dredging study for Centennial.

Build the Parkside Edge project to give East Parkside residents a series of new experiences in West Fairmount Park.

Partner with rowing enthusiasts to develop a feasibility study for a community boathouse along MLK Drive.

Encourage the Streets Department to paint a demonstration bike lane along the MLK Bridge, before the deck is rebuilt, to ensure safe bicycle access.

Launch a park-wide trail master plan to identify crucial missing trail segments, and then build them with a mix of Act 89 and philanthropic funds.

Work with the local business community to write a management and maintenance study for the park.

Install a pedestrian-activated traffic signal at Kelly Drive and its intersection with Randolph Creek, to ensure connection from Strawberry Mansion to the river.

Beautify the berm around the East Park Reservoir to dissolve a significant psychological barrier to park access at Strawberry Mansion.

Partner with the Discovery Center to create a vibrant park entrance for visitors and near neighbors at 33rd and Oxford Streets.

Launch an "awareness" campaign for Fairmount Park that includes new resources for park users, paper maps, online applications and a web-based engagement tool.

Organize a "Find Your Path" calendar for East and West Fairmount Park in 2014 that introduces the department's new brand and mission in the park. Place special emphasis on events that showcase longtime park organizations (at discounted rates, when possible) and engage adjacent neighbors.

Create staff capacity at Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR) and the Fairmount Park Conservancy to facilitate coalition and constituency building in the park. Bring groups from the east and west sides together to interact, share information and engage around common interests. Create a PPR "primer" for park organizations on the department and its various responsibilities.

Partner with the Association for Public Art to develop vibrant gateways at key park edges.

Launch an ArtPlace-like competition that encourages new public art and placemaking initiatives within Fairmount Park, specifically at key vistas and areas with historic assets that could be made more visible.

PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

NEXT ACTIONS

BUILD ON EXISTING MOMENTUM

ALIGN WITH PARALLEL PLANNING

STARTING TO IMPROVE EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK WILL NOT COST HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. SOME ADDITIONAL “EARLY ACTIONS” THAT ARE MODEST IN SCALE AND COST-EFFECTIVE INCLUDE:



Commission a park-wide communication, information and signage study to create a cohesive identity for the park.

Apply for a federal TIGER grant for a feasibility study to restore pedestrian access to the Columbia Rail Bridge.

Study how to balance large events, small events and neighborhood park use, as well as economic development strategies for using old park structures like concession stands and restrooms.

Provide small Conservancy grants for members of East and West Park coalitions to program and steward the parks, similar to the existing Friends group model.

Partner with the Philadelphia Water Department to create rain gardens on neighborhood edges of 33rd Street and Parkside Avenue and to identify the restorative improvement potential of key creeks.

Organize a hackathon around how technology can better disseminate information and encourage stewardship in East and West Fairmount Park.

Enliven the “out buildings” at Mount Pleasant and Woodford Mansions to create new uses that appeal to a wide variety of park users.

Engage youth directly with the future of the park. Devise lessons about the park in local schools. Bring the ideas into classrooms on tablets. Coordinate annual opportunities for youth in the park such as green corps and ranger apprenticeship programs.

Clear brush and remove tall fences when possible to provide better visual access to park destinations.

Following a traffic study, proceed with signal plans for new pedestrian-activated crossings along Kelly Drive, MLK Drive and Parkside Avenue.

Coordinate with the Water Department so that portions of future State Act 13 impact fee funds are dedicated to East and West Fairmount Park: the source of drinking water that this legislation aims to protect.

Open, sign and promote hidden trail segments that provide new ways for citizens to experience Fairmount Park, including:

- 1 The steps at Girard Avenue to Lemon Hill.
- 2 Off-road links from the river drives to the uplands, where no option currently exists.
- 3 A trail link between the Philly Pump Track at Parkside-Evans Recreation Center and the mountain biking trails maintained by the Belmont Plateau Trails Alliance in Chamounix Woods.
- 4 The “cross country trails” in West Fairmount Park east of Belmont Plateau
- 5 The trail along Chamounix Creek that links Ford Playground and Wynnefield Heights to some of the hidden historical artifacts within West Fairmount Park

Bolster fundraising efforts directed at East and West Fairmount Park. Consider non-traditional mechanisms and the potential for collaborative giving from the business community.

Enroll coalition members in the Friends of the Wissahickon Volunteer Crew Leader program to bring skills and expertise from other watershed parks into East and West Fairmount Park.

Advocate for the first phase of the Philadelphia Bike Share program to include East and West Fairmount Park, to encourage more day-to-day use of the various trails.

- PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS
- NEXT ACTIONS
- BUILD ON EXISTING MOMENTUM
- ALIGN WITH PARALLEL PLANNING

THERE ARE MANY PROJECTS ALREADY UNDERWAY IN THE PARK THAT DEMONSTRATE A MOMENTUM FOR IMPROVEMENT THAT WE SHOULD LEVERAGE WHEN MOVING INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE VISION.

- Pedestrian safety and traffic calming improvements at 33rd Street and Girard Avenue.
- The partnership between Audubon Pennsylvania and Outward Bound Philadelphia on The Discovery Center at Strawberry Mansion Lake.
- New pedestrian accessibility at Laurel Hill Cemetery: garden entrance, stairway and pedestrian island at Kelly Drive and Hunting Park Avenue, as well as a “gateway” on the river side of Kelly Drive.
- The restoration of the Italian Fountain and enhancement of green space and terrace on park land between the Water Works and Lloyd Hall.
- The creation of Parkside Edge, an inclusive play space for youth of all ages next to Kelly Pool that engages neighborhood kids in West Fairmount Park.
- The restoration of the Welsh Fountain and beautification of adjacent green spaces in front of the Please Touch Museum®.
- A 52-unit mixed-use senior housing development called Centennial Village at 52nd Street and Parkside Avenue.
- The replacement of the eastern basin of the East Park Reservoir with concrete storage tanks.
- The first pump track—a small dirt course designed for BMX and mountain bikes—at Parkside-Evans Recreation Center.
- Early implementation of PPR’s Parkland Forestry Management Framework: food forests at the Horticulture Center and orchards at Strawberry Mansion and Carousel House.
- Stormwater retention areas and curb replacement installation along Kelly Drive between the Columbia Rail Bridge and the Strawberry Mansion Bridge.
- The restoration of the Letitia Street House in West Fairmount Park.

- Stormwater management and facility improvements at the SEPTA Route 3 bus turnaround at 33rd Street and Cecil B Moore Avenue.
- The planned restoration of the East Park Canoe House to provide a new home for Temple University’s rowing programs and new public facilities along this portion of the Schuylkill River.
- Restoration of the sculptural and masonry elements of the Catholic Total Abstinence Fountain.
- Renovations to the SEPTA Wissahickon Station on Ridge Avenue.
- A new boat dock in East Falls just north of the Falls Bridge (*proposed*).
- New football fields for Strawberry Mansion High School and the Parkside Saints pop warner team (*proposed*).
- A partnership between PPR and the Conservancy to help restore many of the trails through the West Fairmount Park woods using funds raised by early registration for the Broad Street Run.
- A partnership between PPR and the Conservancy to help improve, sign and maintain the “cross country trail” network through the West Fairmount Park woods, using funds raised through registration fees for the Broad Street Run.
- Installing anti-skid pavement surfaces and temporary traffic safety measures on Kelly Drive.
- A new 6ABC ZooBalloon, animal trail and 683-space parking garage at the Philadelphia Zoo.
- New public access, visitor center and tree planting as part of the Shofuso Master Plan.
- Major facility restoration and gateway improvements at Smith Playground.
- The Schuylkill Navy’s efforts to dredge the river north of the dam in front of Boathouse Row.
- Additional seating areas, picnic tables and gateway facilities along Reservoir Drive off 33rd Street.

PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

NEXT ACTIONS

BUILD ON EXISTING MOMENTUM

ALIGN WITH PARALLEL PLANNING

THE PROJECT TEAM ALIGNED THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN WITH NUMEROUS PLANNING STUDIES FOR VARIOUS PORTIONS OF EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK.

While none look at the park as a whole, each focuses on areas that are important to the long-term future of the park.

Our priority actions, as well as our more detailed recommendations, include many recommendations from these plans. They should be part of conversation going forward on how to advance the future of the park. These planning studies include:

Brewerytown Neighborhood Plan
Interface Studio

The Bridge to Bridge Master Plan
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
and Schuylkill Navy

The Centennial District Master Plan
Fairmount Park Conservancy

Charting Our Future
The Schuylkill Navy of Philadelphia

City Branch Transit Feasibility Assessment
Delaware Valley Regional
Planning Commission

Creating Healthy Concessions
Fairmount Park Conservancy

East Falls Reconnects to the River
East Falls Development Corporation

**Fairmount Park System Natural Lands
Restoration Master Plan**
The Academy of Natural Sciences

**Green2015: An Action Plan for
the First 500 Acres**
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

GreenPlan Philadelphia
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Greenworks Philadelphia
Mayor's Office of Sustainability

Green City, Clean Waters
Philadelphia Water Department

**Improving Safety for All Users
of Martin Luther King Drive**
Delaware Valley Regional
Planning Commission

**Laying the Foundation for an
Age-Friendly Philadelphia**
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging

Lower North District Plan
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Parkland Forestry Management Framework
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Philadelphia Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Philadelphia Trail Master Plan
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Schuylkill Watershed Conservation Plan
The Academy of Natural Sciences

**The Schuylkill River Watershed
Source Water Protection Plan**
Philadelphia Water Department

**Strawberry Mansion Community Plan:
Strategies for Neighborhood Revitalization**
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

**Taming Traffic: Context-Sensitive
Solutions in the DVRPC Region**
Delaware Valley Regional
Planning Commission

Trail Master Plan for Fairmount Park
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Viola Street Neighborhood Plan
Viola Street Residents Association

**Water Loss Investigation at
Concourse Lake**
Fairmount Park Conservancy

West Park District Plan
Philadelphia City Planning Commission

PRIORITY SHORT-TERM ACTIONS

NEXT ACTIONS

BUILD ON EXISTING MOMENTUM

ALIGN WITH PARALLEL PLANNING



OVERVIEW

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



The lack of park-wide connectivity is the biggest challenge to Philadelphians fully using all that East and West Fairmount Park has to offer.

Overcoming the natural and manmade barriers—the escarpment on the east and the expressway and rail lines on the west—is crucial if people are to use or understand the park as a cohesive whole.

Instead of relying on expensive infrastructure, we can use nature—the 16 creeks that flow through East and West Fairmount Park—to help us clear many of these hurdles.

These creeks not only feed the Schuylkill; they also cut through the topography and provide a direct and relatively smooth descent from uphill to river. They follow the paths park users want to take, as many have “desire lines” etched alongside their creek beds. Restoring these creeks could address public access needs for nearby residents, tend to water quality needs and give residents from multiple neighborhoods new parts of the park to call their own.

The project team identified five “focus areas” that require a more detailed analysis. We framed our recommendations around their creeks. We showcase areas that meet the following criteria:

- They have adjacent communities with populations in need of park space but are impeded from fully accessing the park.
- They house numerous park destinations and organizations with complementary audiences but lack ways to connect physically.
- They feature park land that is divided, restricting the ways in which people can experience it.
- They feature the opportunity to provide accessibility at all levels of focus for this study: neighborhood, upland and river.



CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

Walking access to Randolph Creek is visible just a few hundred feet from Strawberry Mansion's main connection to East Fairmount Park, Joseph Mander Recreation Center.



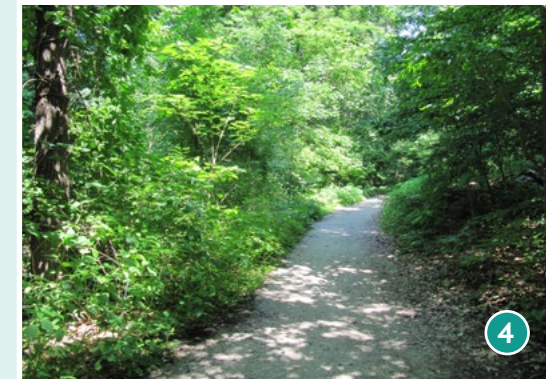
1 Creating gateway and access improvements in this area can go a long way toward better engaging a North Philadelphia community with nature.



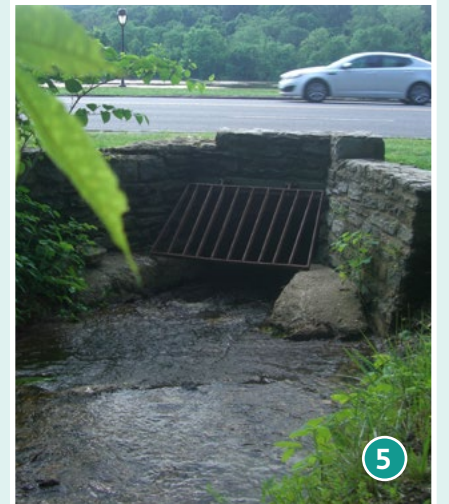
2 While many local residents experience the park through Mander, there is nothing to guide them to the beautiful slice of nature deeper within the park.



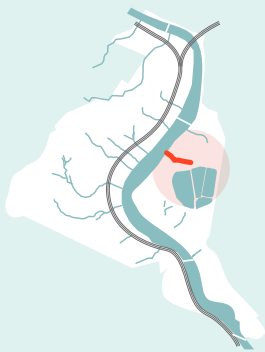
3 Randolph Creek begins in an understated manner, marked by a small wetland and limited pedestrian access.



4 A stretch of the Boxers' Trail hugs the creek but veers left before the Schuylkill River, as there is no way to safely cross the high-speed traffic and use the river trail.



5 Randolph Creek is channeled under Kelly Drive before it flows into the Schuylkill River.



MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

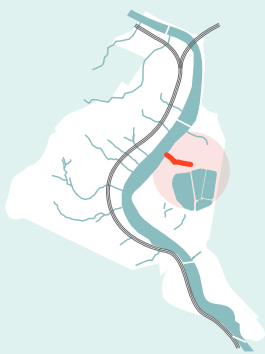
BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Integrate Mander Recreation Center more into East Fairmount Park through increased programming, water play and stormwater management.
- 2 Rename the Mander tennis courts to honor a Strawberry Mansion tennis legend: Miles Gray.
- 3 Partner with the Water Department to plant the slope along the East Park Reservoir with wildflowers and native species to beautify the edges of 33rd Street, Diamond Street and Reservoir Drive.
- 4 Establish Mander and the Reservoir as active gateways to the park and neighborhood amenities.
- 5 Improve the intersection of Reservoir Drive, Randolph Drive and Diamond Street and prioritize the safety and comfort of pedestrians over cars. Mark and celebrate the beginning of Randolph Creek.
- 6 Construct a new 1.7-mile trail around the East Park Reservoir to provide a new exercise loop for residents
- 7 Maintain the Boxers' Trail and allow patrons to enjoy the park's ravines and views.
- 8 Create a safe, signalized pedestrian crossing from Kelly Drive to Randolph Creek with a pedestrian-activated traffic light and crosswalk.
- 9 Install curb replacement and rain gardens to encourage better behavior and restore stormwater absorption along a stretch of Kelly Drive that sustains major damage caused by heavy event use.
- 10 Restore the East Park Canoe House to provide new amenities for trail users and a restored river wall for public boating access.
- 11 Position the park's historic mansions as park amenities, with guided tours, concessions, restrooms or community gardens or orchards tied to the adjacent neighborhoods, following the model of Woodford Mansion.



CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

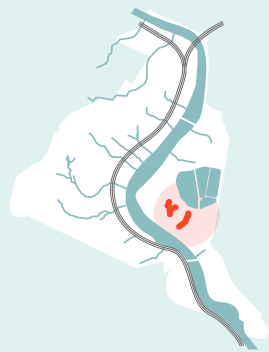
WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Improve Diamond and Dauphin Streets east of the park as key links for neighborhood residents to access East Fairmount Park.
- 2 Make Diamond Street into a shared-use entrance into East Fairmount Park. It would still provide car access for Mander events but can be closed to cars as needed to provide a dedicated neighborhood link into the park.
- 3 Leverage the short-term landscaping and public access around the base to create more long-term improvements to the East Park Reservoir. Encourage additional ways for the community to connect to the reservoir, and support its role as a landscape that can promote East Fairmount Park as well as Strawberry Mansion neighborhood history, as during the Philadelphia Jazz Walk.
- 4 Build a viewing tower at the edge of The Discovery Center at Strawberry Mansion Lake to allow the public to visit the nature center throughout the year, as well as gain an understanding of the size of East and West Fairmount Park.
- 5 Establish new trails through the interior of the Reservoir that allow patrons to engage with the Reservoir's unique habitat.
- 6 Reactivate the refreshment stands at Edgely Fields, and restore and re-open the restrooms.
- 7 Treat Kelly Drive as a bridge when it crosses Randolph Creek, which makes sense ecologically and also calms traffic.
- 8 Express Randolph Creek as it enters the Schuylkill River and create a clear trailhead to the Boxers' Trail.

CONTEXT SHORT-TERM VISION **LONG-TERM VISION**

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



There is a park entrance in Strawberry Mansion that leads to rich park history and present-day activities, but is unsafe and unengaging for neighbors and visitors alike.



This intersection gives Strawberry Mansion residents access to Strawberry Green Driving Range, Sedgley Woods Disc Golf and Smith Playground and, soon to come, The Discovery Center at Strawberry Mansion Lake.



Right now, what greet visitors are a wooden sign, a shut-off fountain, a seldom-used SEPTA bus turnaround, a fenced-off reservoir edge and a road with no continuous sidewalks or bike lanes.



Punctuated by the John Coltrane House and a series of murals, 33rd Street tells the story of North Philadelphia's jazz legacy.



The premature termination of the Boxers' Trail in front of Sedgley Woods Disc Golf, shy of the 33rd Street entrance to the park.



A waterfall created by Mount Pleasant Creek, one of two creeks that run through this area, mere feet away from the intersection of Kelly Drive and Fountain Green Drive.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Channel runoff from 33rd Street and the adjoining neighborhood into the open space where feasible near the corner of 33rd and Oxford Streets, which doubles as an active park edge with the potential for seating, athletic courts and playgrounds. Crosswalks and curb cuts would allow safe and easy crossings on 33rd Street.
- 2 Renovate the John Coltrane House and link it to East Fairmount Park's trails. The park's new gathering spaces could host jazz events at either 33rd and Oxford or Cecil B. Moore.
- 3 Make 33rd and Oxford Streets at Strawberry Green into a gateway to the park, with maps, enhanced transit shelters, new facilities and expanded recreational uses.
- 4 Design the edge of the reservoir leading up to the Discovery Center for active uses, offering opportunities for active outdoor learning and play.
- 5 Build the new Discovery Center to allow patrons to view the reservoir's unique habitat and provide educational opportunities and amenities. Trails along the reservoir would give access throughout the park's open hours.
- 6 Provide a new exercise loop for Strawberry Mansion residents with new 1.7-mile trail along the base of the reservoir.
- 7 Give Smith Playground a new gateway, with a sprayground and improved circulation. It would also mark the beginning of its two adjacent creeks: Harrison and Mount Pleasant Creek.
- 8 Put pedestrians and bicyclists first at the intersection of Fountain Green Drive and Kelly Drive. Allowing safe crossing of Kelly Drive on both sides of the intersection would create a highly visible link to both the northern and southern segments of the Boxers' Trail.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

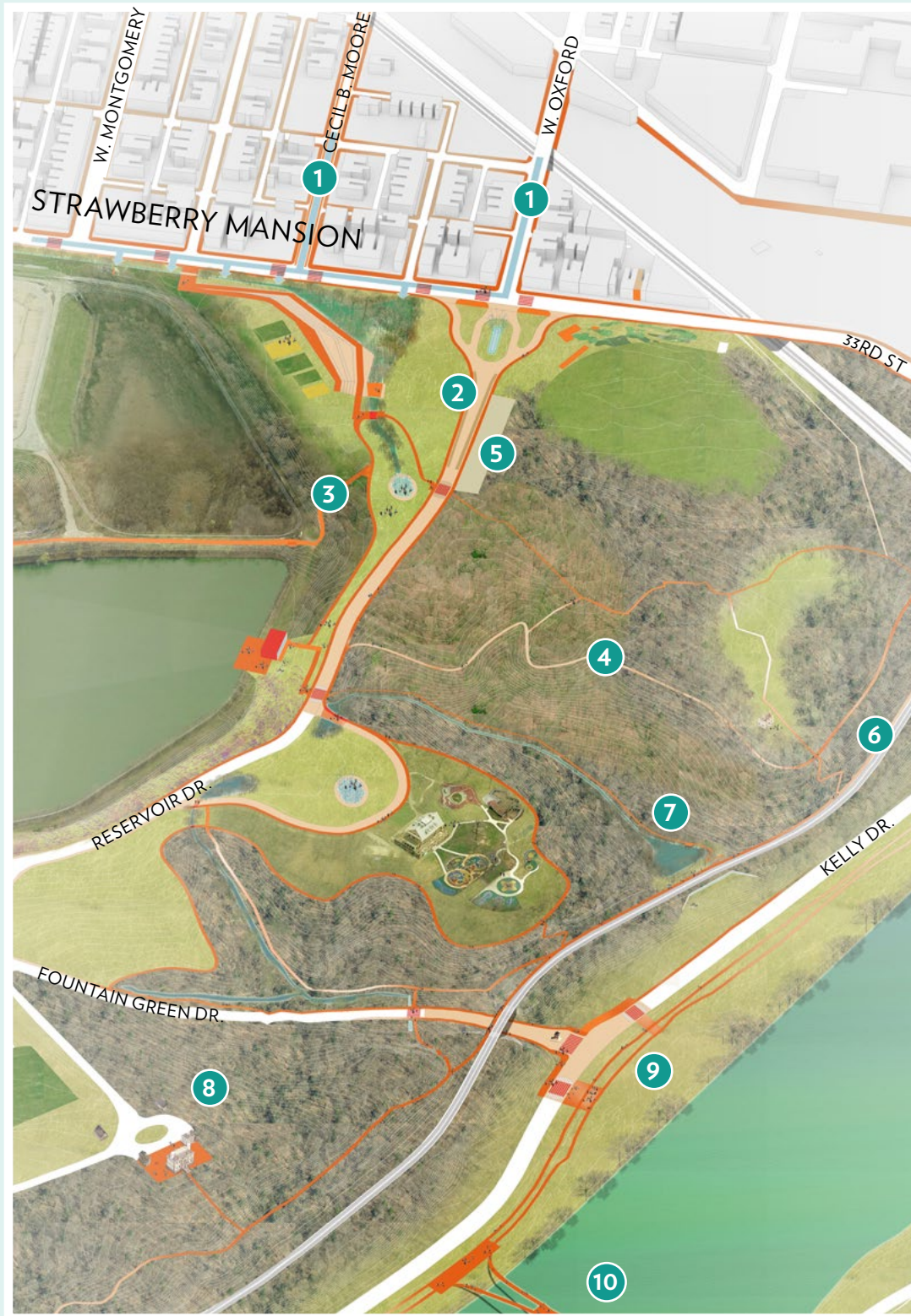
MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Improve Oxford Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue east of the park as key links for neighborhood residents to access East Fairmount Park. Add a bike lane to Cecil B Moore Avenue, to provide safe access for bicyclists between the Delaware Riverfront and East Fairmount Park.
- 2 Install speed bumps along Reservoir Drive to notify car drivers that they must drive slowly within the park. Treat Reservoir Drive as a park road, with limited speeds and parallel parking on either side. Restore the fountain so it welcomes patrons.
- 3 Devise new trails through the interior of the reservoir allow patrons to engage with the reservoir's unique habitat.
- 4 Extend the extended Boxers' Trail to allow hikers to experience Harrison Creek's and Mount Pleasant Creek's ravine. It would loop around Smith Playground, Sedgley Woods Disc Golf, the Discovery Center and the Cliffs meadow.
- 5 Consolidate parking lots to create shared infrastructure for Strawberry Green, Sedgley Woods, Smith Playground and the Discovery Center—to maximize available park land and encourage users to explore the park on foot.
- 6 Devise a trail alongside the CSX rail right-of-way to connect the existing Boxers' Trail to Boathouse Row.
- 7 Design the wetland currently created by Harrison Creek's culvert as a habitat with native riparian and wetland plants. Restore and celebrate the fountain marking it on Kelly Drive. Create a path along the creek that would allow park patrons to follow the creek, passing through Sedgley Woods Disc Golf.
- 8 Give Mount Pleasant Mansion an active role in East Fairmount Park, providing amenities, information and opportunities for visitors to engage with the park and learn its history.
- 9 Split the Kelly Drive trail into two paths when possible: one "fast" lane for bikers and roller bladers, and one "slow" lane for pedestrians.
- 10 Build a new signature pedestrian bridge near the base of Fountain Green Drive to connect residents to the attractions of East and West Fairmount Park including the Horticulture Center, Please Touch Museum® and the Zoo on the west side and Smith Playground and the Discovery Center on the east side.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

HOME

WHY EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK

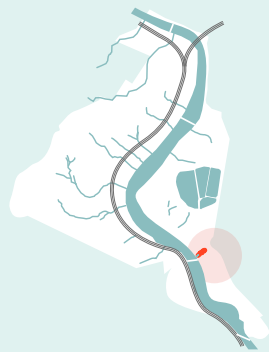
THE BIG VISION

FIRST STEPS

FOCUS AREAS

<

>



Brewerytown residents, though just two blocks away, are cut off from enjoying a beautiful part of East Fairmount Park. Glendinning Creek presents the opportunity to be this link for the neighborhood.



Brewerytown access to the rock garden is cut off by rail tracks.



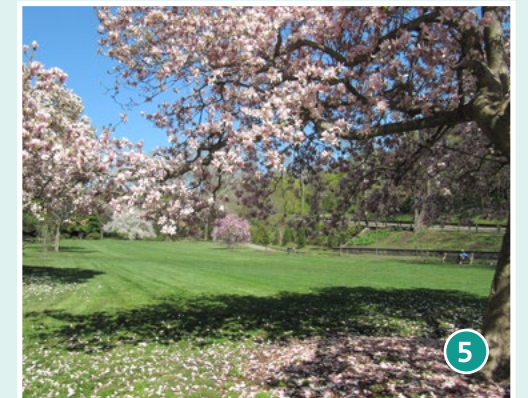
Glendinning Creek's path before it is culverted under Kelly Drive.



Tens of thousands of residents pass through 33rd Street and Girard Avenue every day with no sense of the beautiful park just a few feet away.



While stone steps and paths exist, the expansion of road infrastructure around it has dramatically limited pedestrian access.



The creek runs through Glendinning Rock Garden, a park gem that is boxed in by wide roadways and major rail corridors.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

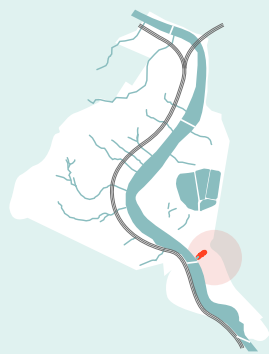
MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Channel runoff from the adjacent neighborhood into rain gardens created on vacant lots where feasible that also act as community green spaces.
- 2 Have Brewerytown gateway into the park double as rain garden and as neighborhood amenities (seating, shelter and deck), similar to Saylor's Grove in the Wissahickon.
- 3 Convert the right-of-way along Brewery Hill Drive to a bicycle- and pedestrian-only trail, for safe access from Girard Avenue to Glendinning Rock Garden.
- 4 Identify, map and improve an unmarked dirt path from Girard Avenue to Boathouse Row, to create one continuous "rim trail" experience that starts with the Boxers' Trail. Complete bike lanes and sidewalk on West Sedgley Drive for additional connectivity.
- 5 Facilitate access from Glendinning to the Girard Avenue Bridge with the restoration of the existing staircase on the south side of the bridge.
- 6 A new signalized pedestrian traffic crossing at Brewery Hill Drive and Kelly Drive makes the entrance from the riverfront trail to Glendinning Rock Garden safe. Make active the entrance to Glendinning Rock Garden and the space under the Girard Avenue Bridge, with food trucks, concessions, a rest stop and a map station.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

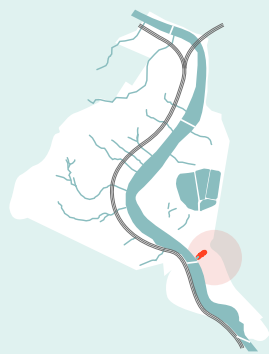
MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Build a pedestrian and bike crossing over the CSX lines to allow access to East Park from Brewerytown.
- 2 Create a new bike and pedestrian trail as an alternative to the roadside trail along Poplar Drive. It connects to Hatfield House and follows alongside the CSX rail right-of-way. It could potentially connect to the proposed City Branch project, either as a park connection and/or as a transit connection.
- 3 Program Hatfield House so that it is visible and accessible, emphasizing its role as a community center and park amenity.
- 4 Create the missing portion of trail connecting Boathouse Row to the Boxers' Trail along the CSX and Amtrak right-of-way. It allows pedestrian and bike connections between the northern and southern portions of East Park, and gives access to Smith Playground, Cliffs Meadow and Sedgley Woods Disc Golf.
- 5 Improve the sidewalks and bike lanes on 33rd Street.
- 6 Repurpose Brewery Hill Drive and replace it with a series of pedestrian terraces that overlook Glendinning Rock Garden, allowing a quiet retreat and overlook from Girard Avenue. Develop interpretive signage to inform park users of the site's former use.
- 7 Champion public transit as a means to access East and West Fairmount Park, with better trolley and bus stations that serve as gateways that are coordinated with trail access.
- 8 The Route 15 trolley includes a lawn strip along its tracks when it enters East Fairmount Park, also helping to calm the traffic of Girard Avenue.
- 9 Express Glendinning Creek as it enters the Schuylkill, and celebrate the Schuylkill itself with river terraces along its banks.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

HOME

WHY EAST AND WEST FAIRMOUNT PARK

THE BIG VISION

FIRST STEPS

FOCUS AREAS

<

>



In East Parkside, neighbors barbeque and School of the Future students play in the park with no sense of how close they are to MLK Drive.



With its location near existing neighborhoods, Warner Creek can act as an important linkage for East Parkside neighbors into West Fairmount Park.



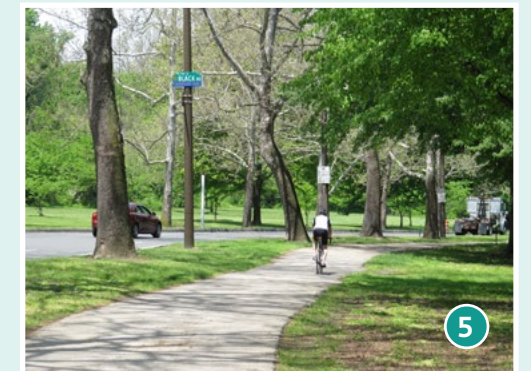
Barriers to park access facing East Parkside residents today include the high-speed Parkside Avenue, numerous unprogrammed lawns and the lack of a marked gateway for pedestrians.



Warner Creek has fallen on hard times – its headwaters are fragmented and a major portion of its path is cut off by the Schuylkill Expressway.



Once the beginning of a scenic walk to the river, these stairs leading to Warner Creek have since been grown over.



There is currently no safe way for residents to cross MLK Drive at Black Road to access the riverfront trail and green space.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

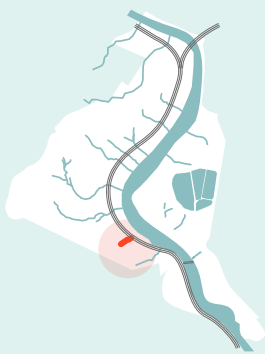
BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Consolidate trolley and bus stops into fewer but clearer park transit gateways that provide information on West Fairmount Park and align with trailheads.
- 2 Pending a park-wide traffic study, de-pave or remove 41st Street and South Concourse Drive to give pedestrian access priority into West Fairmount Park.
- 3 Design the edge along Parkside Avenue with spaces that neighbors will use: as a linear rain garden for Parkside Avenue’s stormwater runoff where feasible, but also as a series of actively programmed spaces for the adjacent community that could offer athletic courts, picnic areas, shade structures, community band stands, orchards and playgrounds.
- 4 Work with the Fairmount Park Conservancy to build the “Parkside Edge” project, the focal point of which is a new play space between Kelly Pool and School of the Future to provide new recreation opportunities for nearby youth of all ages.
- 5 Realign Lansdowne Drive to connect to Avenue of the Republic.
- 6 Celebrate the roundabout on Lansdowne Drive as a pedestrian gateway to the park. With a new water feature, it could advance the mission of East and West Fairmount Park to provide clean water, provide safe pedestrian crossings on Lansdowne to slow cars down and use legible signage to guide patrons to the West Fairmount Park “rim trail.”
- 7 Highlight and celebrate Warner Creek: Widen its headwaters into a larger wetland, create safe pedestrian access across Cedar Grove Drive and establish a walking path along it.
- 8 Give Black Road a sidewalk on its north side and a crossing at MLK Drive.



CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

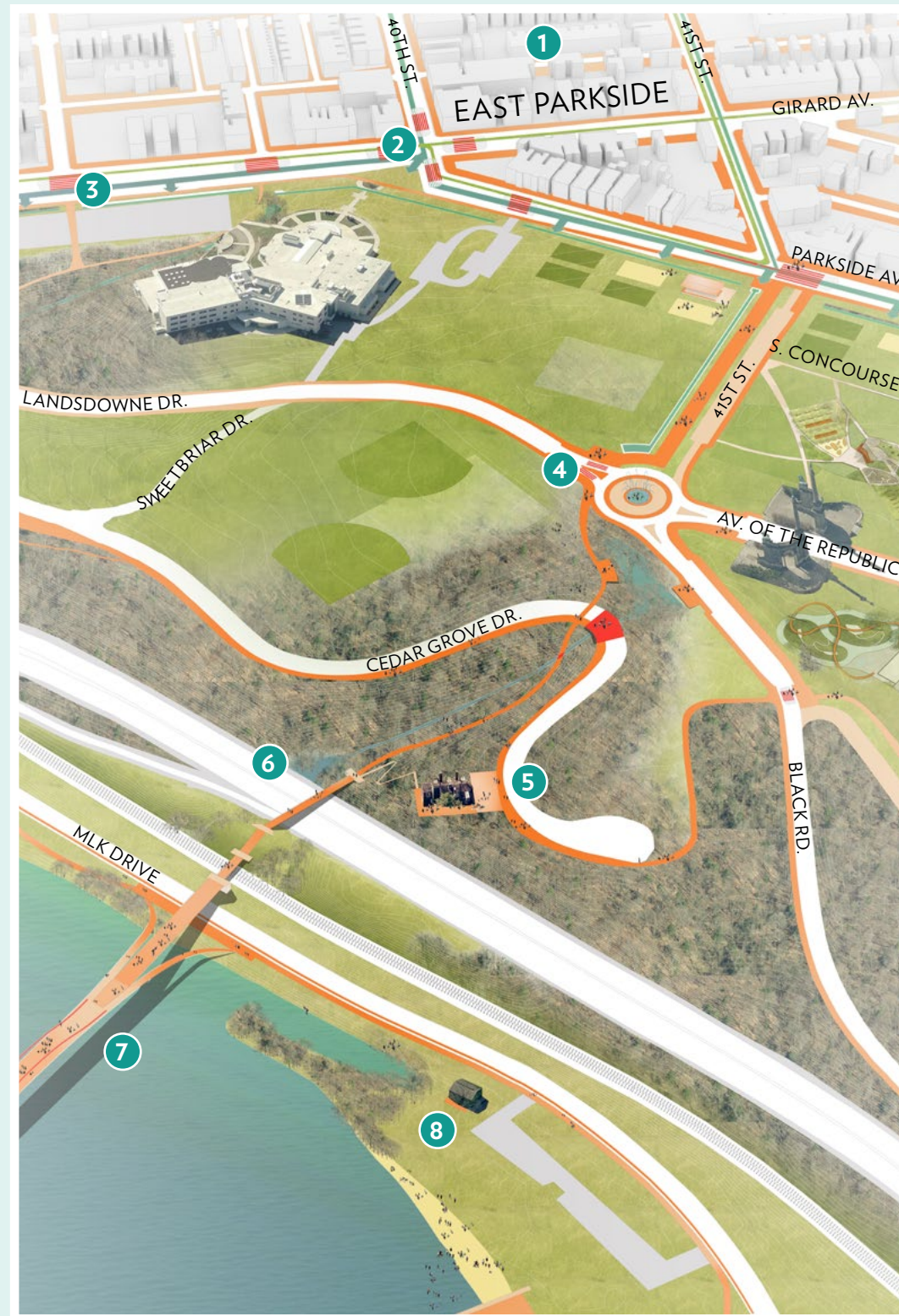
MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

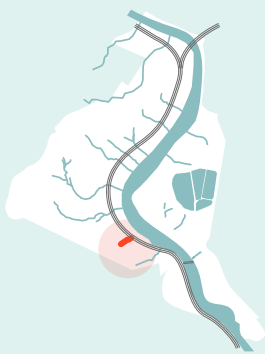
BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



- 1 Improve 40th, 41st and 42nd Streets south of the park as key links for neighborhood residents to access West Fairmount Park.
- 2 Convert the auto access from Girard Avenue to Parkside Avenue into a pedestrian island to provide safer access across multiple busy roads, for youth who need to access the School of the Future. This would become the northern terminus of the Mantua Greenway.
- 3 Build park gateways at the School of the Future and the Philadelphia Zoo parking lots along Girard Avenue to commemorate the beginning of Sweetbriar Run. A trail right-of-way through the parking lots would allow East Parkside residents to access Sweetbriar Ravine and the park.
- 4 Restore and highlight remnants of 19th-century stairs and fountains along Warner Creek, starting at the 41st Street roundabout. Widen and celebrate the wetland created by the cut-off stream where it is culverted under the Schuylkill Expressway.
- 5 Give Cedar Grove a clear address on the Creek Walk and expand its offerings to include park amenities and programming.
- 6 Develop a highway and railway overpass to restore public access from Warner Creek to the Schuylkill River and take advantage of the topography to bridge these two barriers.
- 7 Build a signature pedestrian-only bridge to connect East and West Fairmount Park across the Schuylkill River. Enable Kelly Drive and MLK Drive trail users to connect to the upper trails of the park. The bridge would allow easy pedestrian access between three of the park's large attractions: Please Touch Museum®, the Zoo and Smith Playground. These three become within walking reach of each other, and the new walking distance from Please Touch to Smith Playground is less than one mile.
- 8 The bridge allows park patrons to access the newly enlivened water recreation amenities along MLK Drive: Belmont Intake wetlands, boathouse and grandstands on Peter's Island.



CONTEXT SHORT-TERM VISION **LONG-TERM VISION**

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY **EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY** WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY



Flowing from George's Hill to the Schuylkill, Lansdowne Creek is long enough to connect West Parkside residents to the river and many of the best features in West Fairmount Park along the way.



Parkside-Evans Recreation Center is a key community anchor at 53rd Street and Parkside Avenue with limited access to the rest of the park.



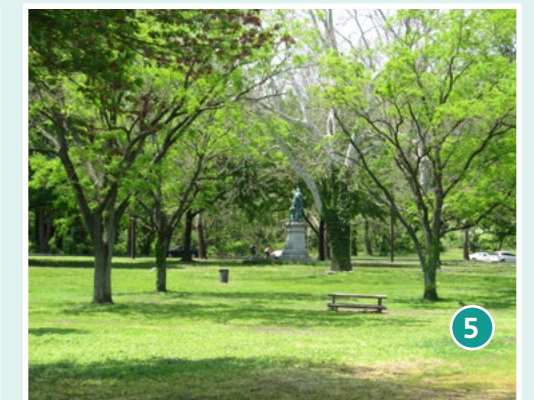
Lansdowne Creek feeds Centennial Lake, which periodically floods onto Belmont Avenue.



Belmont Avenue, shown here dividing the cherry tree allée between the Mann Center and the Horticulture Center, is one of the more pedestrian-unfriendly roads in the park.



Lansdowne Creek runs through some of the most beautiful moments of the park, including Shofuso Japanese House and Garden.



The creek provides an opportunity to link to West Philadelphia's verdant riverfront green space along MLK Drive.

CONTEXT

SHORT-TERM VISION

LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY

STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY

BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY

EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY

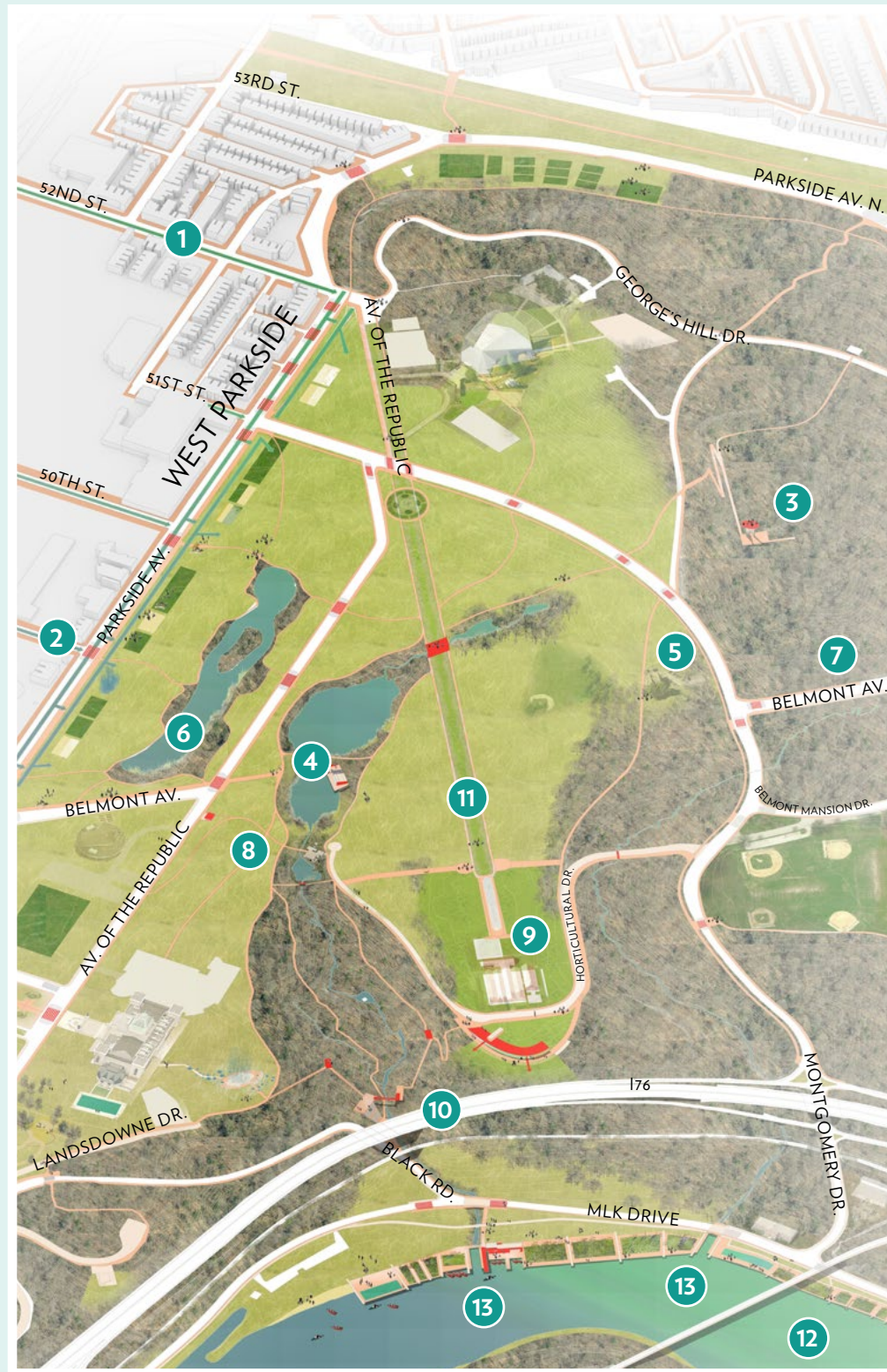


- 1 Convert the old trolley route to a bike and pedestrian trail connecting Parkside-Evans Recreation Center, the new Philly Pumptrack, West Parkside, Belmont Plateau and the woods near the Organic Recycling Center.
- 2 Link Wynnefield, Overbrook and Lower Merion to West Fairmount Park with a new extension of the Cynwyd Trail.
- 3 Convert a portion of Georges Hill Drive into a bike path.
- 4 Collect West Parkside's stormwater in rain gardens on the edge of West Fairmount Park where feasible, helping to frame the entrance to the park and provide runoff relief. Further augment the edge with neighborhood park amenities according to community input: game tables, playgrounds, barbecue areas and shade structures.
- 5 Give the more hidden West Fairmount Park landmarks (Horticulture Center, Ohio House, Shofuso, Chamounix Mansion, Work to Ride, etc.) the opportunity to have a presence on Parkside Avenue, to attract visitation.
- 6 Make Avenue of the Republic pedestrian friendly.
- 7 Restore the Abstinence Fountain to become a park gateway that celebrates East and West Fairmount Park's mission to protect and celebrate public water.
- 8 Improve Centennial Lake as a habitat reserve, and turn a portion of it into a fishing pond with supporting amenities.
- 9 Undertake studies to understand the impact of re-routing Belmont Avenue and removing South Concourse Drive—both on car traffic and on patrons' experiences of the park.
- 10 Add new pedestrian entrances to the Horticulture Center to begin to encourage more access by foot.
- 11 Implement the Fairmount Park Conservancy's Parkside Edge project, which activates the ground in front of the Please Touch Museum® and Kelly Pool, to offer reflective gardens, opportunities for outdoor play and ways for adjacent neighbors to engage with the park.
- 12 Create a sidewalk on the north side of Black Road and a signaled pedestrian-activated crossing at MLK Drive.



CONTEXT **SHORT-TERM VISION** LONG-TERM VISION

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY **WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY**



- 1 Improve Belmont Avenue, 50th Street and 52nd Street south of the park as key links for neighborhood residents to access West Fairmount Park.
- 2 Add signalized crossings at Parkside Avenue’s intersections with 49th and 50th Streets, to slow traffic and allow for a safer pedestrian connection to West Fairmount Park.
- 3 Make the site of the old George’s Hill Reservoir a hiking destination within a healthy forest. A viewing tower would allow visitors to gain a full vista of the park. Interpretive signage would explain the history of the site as a piece of early water infrastructure.
- 4 Restore the entire course of Lansdowne Creek, from its headwater meadow to its mouth, and render the creek continuous by re-routing a segment of Belmont Avenue.
- 5 Provide the Ohio House with a prominent position on Lansdowne Creek’s restored course.
- 6 Reconfigure Concourse Lake so it doubles as a stormwater overflow pond for the neighborhood’s stormwater runoff and also offers habitat, passive programming and educational signage.
- 7 Improve and widen the Belmont Avenue sidepath north of Montgomery Drive to allow for two-way wheelchair traffic, given its heavy use by those with limited mobility to and from Carousel House.
- 8 Make Shofuso more visible. Give it a visible entrance along Avenue of the Republic, on West Fairmount Park’s “rim trail” and on Lansdowne Creek’s water course.
- 9 Redesign and upgrade the Horticulture Center to become one of the park’s signature crown jewels, with spectacular views to the river and to the city. It would become connected to other park assets though the West side’s version of the Boxers’ Trail.
- 10 Give Lansdowne Creek room to breathe: Widening an underpass under I-76 and the rails would provide space for a pedestrian path. Leverage the Please Touch Museum® for outdoor play and education opportunities.
- 11 Restore the Cherry Tree Allée, connecting the Mann Center and Horticulture Hall across the new, continuous sweeping Lansdowne Creek landscape.
- 12 Make active the western bank of the Schuylkill: as a pre-intake wetland for Belmont Intake, as the site for a community boathouse and with new grandstands on Peter’s Island.
- 13 Make visible Lansdowne Creek and Montgomery Creek as they flow into the Schuylkill River.

CONTEXT SHORT-TERM VISION **LONG-TERM VISION**

MANDER REC CENTER GATEWAY STRAWBERRY MANSION GATEWAY BREWERYTOWN GATEWAY EAST PARKSIDE GATEWAY **WEST PARKSIDE GATEWAY**

HOW WE ENGAGED

Engagement Process

Throughout the visioning process, PennPraxis worked with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR), the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Fairmount Park Conservancy to engage park stakeholders and the public. To address a 2,050-acre park surrounded by 70,000 residents, the project team had to cover a lot of ground in a short time. We conducted outreach in the following phases:

- **Advisory Group:** PennPraxis convened this group three times during the project (July 29, 2013; December 9, 2013; May 1, 2014), to generate broad strategic thinking and foster connections among government officials, non-profit organizations, stakeholder groups and community organizations. This group had an average attendance of 60 stakeholders per meeting, and we would subsequently update many more via phone and email. For a complete list of Advisory Group participating organizations, see the [Acknowledgments](#).
- **Public Meetings:** We worked with the Penn Project for Civic Engagement to organize four public meetings that would bring citizens into the process so that we could benefit from their early input. We published the summary notes from each public meeting at www.planphilly.com/eastandwestpark. The dates, locations and attendance were as follows: September 24, 2013, Cornerstone Baptist Church, 33rd and Diamond Streets (49 attendees); September 25, 2013, John Anderson Cultural Center, 5301 Overbrook Avenue (30 attendees); September 30, 2013, Discovery Charter School, 4700 Parkside Avenue (80 attendees); and October 2, 2013, Lloyd Hall on the East River Driver, (88 attendees).

- **Interviews:** PennPraxis conducted over 130 one-on-one interviews with people directly involved or connected to work in East and West Fairmount Park, to benefit from their knowledge and experience.
- **Survey:** We commissioned The Melior Group to survey (in August and September 2013) various members of the public about how they use and would like to use East and West Fairmount Park. We published a summary of this survey data at www.planphilly.com/eastandwestpark. The survey included in-person interviews of 100 individuals within the park; in-person interviews of 100 individuals in adjacent neighborhoods; and a general online survey about the park that received 705 responses.

Guiding Principles

The input from the various outreach methods provided a rich base of information for our work. We summarized what we heard in the following five “Community Principles.” These principles guide the concepts and recommendations that we present in this document.

Community Principle 1:
Protect and enhance the park’s inherent beauty and natural features. East and West Fairmount Park is beautiful the way it is. Let’s make it easier for citizens to enjoy nature in the park. Do not build without considering the impact on nature and wildlife. Restore the creeks so that users can discover the water, but not overpower it. Maintain natural areas so that they can be educational opportunities.

Community Principle 2:
Get more people into the park—starting right across the street. Improve accessibility to and through the park on multiple levels: from the neighborhoods to the park, from the upper portions of the park to the riverside, and from one side of the river to the other. This includes improved conditions for walking, cycling, mobility aids, and public transit. Make park roads and parking areas more park-like in character; they should concede their extra space (when they have it) to multi-modal uses. Promote East and West Fairmount Park’s role as the hub of the regional trail network. Build upon the existing (and often underutilized) historic infrastructure such as stairs, trails along creeks, bridges over ravines and cliff walks. Use signage to guide and connect people to all the activities in the park. Improve the physical connections beyond the park edges and its adjacent streets, thereby connecting people to local destinations and transit stops.

Community Principle 3:
Making it pretty isn’t enough: give us something to do in the park. Promote and encourage a wide range of activities to create “a park for all users.” Create ways to introduce youth to the park through recreation, education and employment. Build on what already exists; restore creeks, water fountains, facilities and concession stands. Find ways to improve how large events are produced so we can minimize disruptions to day-to-day park use. Think of the park edges as extensions of the adjacent communities, and plan activities to build stewardship. Allow people to better enjoy the water. Create new water recreation activities in

the Schuylkill River and throughout the park. Do a better job of educating users about how East and West Fairmount Park continues its historic role of providing clean water to the city every day.

Community Principle 4:
Empower through information. The more citizens understand East and West Fairmount Park, the more comfortable they will feel using it. Demonstrate that the park is a park meant for users of all ages and walks of life. Provide clear and accessible information addressing: (1) the park’s diverse cultural and environmental attractions and recreational opportunities, and (2) disruptions caused by large events. Improve how citizens receive the information—in person and online—they need about how to enjoy themselves in the park. Create more welcoming entrances that encourage people to use the park.

Community Principle 5:
Support the park through community engagement and participation. Begin with cleanliness, safety, and maintenance. Then make the capital investment that this park needs to thrive. Use these five community principles to guide future improvements to the park. Engage community members from near and far as partners to form a united voice for the future of the park. The City cannot do it alone. Develop a model for what it means to be a “park stakeholder.” Ensure that these efforts are sustainable; find ways to bring dedicated revenue, staff and stewardship into the park—no small task.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PennPraxis

Harris Steinberg, Executive Director
Bridget Keegan Barber
Allison Gibson
Andrew Goodman
Agnes Ladjevardi
Graham Laird Prentice
Juan Felipe Visser

Consultant Team

Penn Project for Civic Engagement
The Melior Group
Whole-Brained Design, LLC
Alison Rooney Communications, LLC

Advisory Group Conveners and Participating Organizations

Michael DiBerardinis, Deputy Mayor for Environmental and Community Resources, co-convener

Mark Focht, First Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, co-convener

Access to Rowing and Paddling
Allegheny West Foundation
Association for Public Art
Audubon Pennsylvania
Belmont Mansion
Belmont Plateau Trails Alliance
Belmont Village Community Association

Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Centennial Garden Tenders
Chamounix Mansion International Hostel and Meeting Center
City Avenue Special Services District
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
East Falls Community Council
East Falls Development Corporation
East Park Revitalization Alliance
East Parkside Residents Association
Fairmount Civic Association
Fairmount Park Conservancy
Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust
Fairmount Waterworks
Father's Day Rally Committee
Friends of Chamounix Tennis Courts
Friends of East Park
Friends of the Japanese House and Garden
Friends of Lemon Hill
Friends of Lincoln Statue Park
Friends of Sedgley Woods Disc Golf
Friends of Strawberry Mansion
Greater Brewerytown Community Development Corporation
Inglis House
John Coltrane House
Laurel Hill Cemetery
Laurel Hill Mansion
Lemon Hill Mansion
Lemon Hill Neighbors

Mann Music Center
Mantua Civic Association
Office of Fifth District Councilman Darrell Clarke
Office of Fourth District Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.
Office of Third District Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell
Office of State Representative Vanessa Lowery Brown, District 190
Ormiston Mansion
Outward Bound Philadelphia
Parkside Association
Parkside Historic District Coalition
Parkside Historic Preservation Corporation
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Philadelphia Area Disc Alliance
Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Philadelphia Committee of the Garden Club of America
Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia Parks Alliance
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Commission
Philadelphia Police Department
Philadelphia Streets Department
Philadelphia Water Department

Philadelphia Zoo
Please Touch Museum®
Prior Cricket Club
Rockland Mansion
Ridge Allegheny Hunting Park Civic Association
Ridgeland/Cancer Support Community
Schuylkill Navy
Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
Strawberry Mansion
Strawberry Mansion Athletic Association
Strawberry Mansion Civic Association
Stawberry Mansion Community Concern
Strawberry Mansion Community Development Corporation
Strawberry Mansion Neighborhood Action Center
Urban Blazers
Viola Street Residents Association
West Girard Community Council
West Philadelphia Financial Services Institution
West Park Cultural Center
West Parkside Business Association
William Penn Foundation
Woodford Mansion
Wynnefield Heights Community Association
Wynnefield Overbrook Revitalization Corporation
Wynnefield Residents Association

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, CONTINUED

Interviews

Philadelphia

Kasim Ali, Philadelphia Streets Department
Bob Allen, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Joseph Aman, Prior Cricket Club
Kelly Anderson, Philadelphia Water Department
Kim Andrews, Friends of the Japanese House and Garden
Robert Armstrong, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Rick Atkins, Philadelphia Area Disc Alliance
Rhona Austin, Office of Fourth District Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.
Penny Balkin Bach, Association for Public Art
Jennifer Barr, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority
Justina Barrett, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Louis Belmonte, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Barry Bessler, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Karen Black, May 8 Consulting
Christopher Blackwall, Access to Rowing and Paddling
Christopher Boccella, CVM
Lauren Bornfriend, Philadelphia Parks Alliance
James LeRoy Brown IV, Parkside Historic Preservation Corporation
Jeannette Brugger, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
George Bur, St. Joseph's Preparatory School
Michael Burch, Viola Street Residents Association

Ed Bush, Belmont Plateau Trails Alliance
Paula Butler, Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation
Marty Cabry, Office of Third District Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell
Catherine Cahill, The Mann Center
Alethia Calbeck, Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation
Charles Carmalt, Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities
Morgan Cephas, Office of Fourth District Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.
Rosalie Cooper, Ridge Allegheny Hunting Park Civic Association
Byron Comati, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority
Paula Conolly, Philadelphia Water Department
Calla Cousar, East Parkside Residents Association
Stephanie Craighead, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Joanne Dahme, Philadelphia Water Department
Steven Dantonio, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority
Chuck Davies, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Susan Davis, independent public art consultant
Martine DeCamp, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Charles Denny, Philadelphia Streets Department
Andrew Denison, Parks and Recreation Commission
Andy Densko, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Anthony Desher, Philadelphia Police Department
Paul Dignam, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Eric Dolaway, Urban Blazers
Nora Dougherty, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Mark Elsasser, Belmont Plateau Trails Alliance
Madeleine Fausto, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Darren Fava, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
David Fecteau, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Terence Fernandes, Prior Cricket Club
Mark Focht, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Derrick Ford, Strawberry Mansion Athletic Association
Barbara Frankl, Laurel Hill Mansion
Tatiana Garcia-Granados, Common Market Philadelphia
Kiesha Garner, Allegheny West Foundation Neighborhood Advisory Council
Bill Goetz, CSX Transportation
Nancy Goldenberg, Parks and Recreation Commission
Tonnetta Graham, Strawberry Mansion Community Development Corporation
Laura Griffith, Association for Public Art
Alan Greenberger, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Heidi Grumwald, Philly Pumptrack
Mami Hara, Philadelphia Water Department
Gail Harrity, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Dan Hoffman, Outward Bound Philadelphia

Pete Hoskins, Laurel Hill Cemetery
Nicole Hostettler, Philadelphia Water Department
Fred Hubbard, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Lucinda Hudson, Parkside Association
Homer Jackson, Philadelphia Jazz Project
Lenora Jackson-Evans, Strawberry Mansion Neighborhood Action Center
Alma Jacobs, Laurel Hill Mansion
Suku John, East Park Revitalization Alliance
Gwen Kaminski, Laurel Hill Cemetery
Shirley Kitchen, Pennsylvania State Senate Third District
Lynn Klein, Lemon Hill
Christine Knapp, Philadelphia Water Department
Jeff Knowles, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Elizabeth Kowalchick, Strawberry Mansion
Gregory Krykewycz, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Larry Lane, Friends of East Park
Charles Lanier, Strawberry Mansion Neighborhood Advisory Council
Michelle Lee, Textizen
Meryl Levitz, Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation
Jennifer Mahar, Fairmount Park Conservancy
Betty Marmon, Inglis House
Betsy Mastaglio, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Will Maus, On Track America
Debra McCarty, Philadelphia Water Department

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, CONTINUED

Interviews, Continued

Maura McCarthy, Friends of the Wissahickon
Lynn McMaster, Please Touch Museum
Margaret Meigs, Schuylkill Navy
Bill Mellix, Synterra Limited
Andrew Meloney, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Tom Metz, The Mann Center
Paul Meyer, Morris Arboretum
Jason Mifflin, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Michael Miller, OLIN
Thera Martin Milling, Allegheny West Foundation
Elizabeth Milroy, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Martha Moffat, Woodford Mansion
Jon Morrison, CVM
Kevin Murphy, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Jim Murray, St. Joseph's Preparatory School
Richard Nalbandian, M.R. Nalbandian and Associates
Howard Neukrug, Philadelphia Water Department
Steve Niknam, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Jessica Noon, Philadelphia Water Department
Michael O'Brien, Horticulture Center
Kathryn Ott Lovell, Fairmount Park Conservancy
Katie Newsom Pastuszek, Outward Bound Philadelphia
Matthew Perks, Parks and Recreation Commission
Carolyn Pope, Bill Pickett Riding Academy
William Porter, Belmont Village Community Association

Simon Powles, STARR Restaurants Catering Group
Bilal Quayyum, Father's Day Rallying Committee
David Robertson, Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust
Judith Robinson, Strawberry Mansion Civic Association
Lori Salganicoff, Wynnefield-Overbrook Revitalization Corporation
Gina Snyder, East Falls Development Corporation
Lucy Strackhouse, Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust
Sarah Stuart, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Robert Thomas, Philadelphia Parks Alliance
Alie Vidich, Alie + the Bridage
Phil Wallis, Audubon Pennsylvania
Ken Weinstein, Weinstein Properties LLC
Brian Wenrich, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Veronica Wentz, Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation
Curtis Wilkerson, Office of Fifth District Councilman Darrell Clarke
Harry Wilson, Philadelphia Streets Department
Meg Wise, Smith Playground
Barnaby Wittels, East Falls Community Council
Kenneth Woodson, Philadelphia Zoo
Gail Young, Wynnefield Heights Civic Association
Page Zettlemyer, Inglis House

Other Cities

Ignacio Bunster-Ossa, Principal, Wallace Roberts and Todd LLC
Peter Harnik, Director, Center for City Park "Excellence, Trust for Public Land
Lesley Hoffarth, President and Executive Director, Forest Park Forever
Eric Landau, Vice President of Government and External Affairs, Prospect Park Alliance
Ellen Ryan, Kresge Fellow/Creative Place Making Program Director, Trust for Public Land
Michael Shiosaki, Director, Planning & Development Division, Seattle Parks & Recreation
Hank Webber, Executive Vice President for Administration, Washington University in St. Louis

Data Gathering Support

The project team has many people to thank for their assistance with data collection and for their active participation in this project.

Kasim Ali, Philadelphia Streets Department
Robert Armstrong, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Jennifer Barr, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
Barry Bessler, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Jeannette Brugger, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Stephanie Craighead, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation

Steven Dantonio, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
Nora Dougherty, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Darren Fava, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Nicole Hostettler, Philadelphia Water Department
Sean Lawrence, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Michelle Lee, Textizen
Adam Levine, Philadelphia Water Department
Jennifer Mahar, Fairmount Park Conservancy
Barbara McCabe, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Jason Mifflin, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Michael Miller, Belmont Plateau Trails Alliance
Vanessa Miller, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Elizabeth Milroy, Philadelphia Museum of Art
Sarah Clark Stuart, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Larry Szarek, Philadelphia Water Department
Robert Thomas, Philadelphia Parks Alliance
Harry Wilson, Philadelphia Streets Department

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Text Sources

“One of a Kind”

- Visitor data: Calculated from park landmarks that have publicly available visitor data, Kelly Drive recreational trail counters from 2013 courtesy of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, and estimated annual participants in permitted events, courtesy of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.
- Membership data: Calculated from park landmarks that have publicly available membership data, population counts of most adjacent neighborhoods and social media participation associated with those organizations that use the park.
- Water source data: Philadelphia Water Department, “The Schuylkill River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan,” January 2006, 4.

“Assembled, Needs Design”

- Map was compiled with assistance by Elizabeth Milroy, park historian and The Zoë and Dean Pappas Curator of Education, Public Programs, Philadelphia Museum of Art; and Robert Armstrong, Preservation & Capital Projects Manager, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.
- Historical Sources
 - Map of Farms and Lots Entered within the Limits of Fairmount Park as appropriated for public use By Act of Assembly from First Annual Report of the Fairmount Park Commission (1869). Fairmount Park Historic Resource Archives. City of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.
 - Laws, Ordinances and Regulations Relating to Fairmount Park and Other Parks under the Control of the Fairmount Park Commission (1933). City of Philadelphia Fairmount Park Commission.
 - Historic American Buildings Survey: Fairmount Park. HABS NO. PA-6183. National Parks Service, United States Department of Interior.
- Years correspond to when parcels were publicly dedicated to park use. Year of actual parcel acquisition and deed transfer often differed.

“Civic Support”

- ALL: data is from FY2012, unless otherwise noted.
- Prospect Park: Data courtesy of Eric Landau, Vice President of Government and External Affairs, Prospect Park Alliance; Prospect Park Alliance Annual Report; Forms 990 accessible on GuideStar.
- Forest Park: Data courtesy of Stephen Schenkenberg, Strategic Communications Director, Forest Park Forever; Dan Skillman, Commissioner, Parks Division, City of St. Louis Parks, Recreation, and Forestry; Forest Park Forever Annual Report; Forms 990 available on GuideStar.

- Fairmount Park: Data courtesy of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Fairmount Park Conservancy. Budget figures calculated by dividing system-wide numbers by Fairmount Park acreage (2,050). Philadelphia Parks and Recreation lists its system as 10,600 acres total. (www.phila.gov/parksandrecreation/history/departments/history/Pages/default.aspx). Exact budget breakdown is unknown because both the Department’s and Conservancy’s budget are distributed throughout the entire system. “City staff” figure is from PPR. The city staff breakdown includes three assigned to East Park, four assigned to West Park, one trash compactor operator for East and West Park, six Rangers and six program staff (Lloyd Hall, Mander and Parkside-Evans.) “Conservancy staff” figure is organization-wide. Volunteer hours: Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, 2013, and Fairmount Park Conservancy, 2012.

Photo Sources

Most photos were taken by PennPraxis staff: Andrew Goodman, Bridget Keegan Barber, Agnes Ladjevardi, Graham Laird Prentice.

Home page

“Belmont Plateau in sunset light,” Frederik Togsverd. Reproduced with permission.

“7 Million Users”

SheROX Philadelphia Triathlon. Photo by M. Kennedy for Visit Philadelphia™.

Smith Playground: courtesy of David Difuntorum and Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse. Reproduced with permission.

Schuylkill Navy: courtesy of Michael W. Murphy and the Schuylkill Navy. Reproduced with permission.

“Our Drinking Water” clockwise from the top:

- Philadelphia Water Department Historical Collection
- Philadelphia City Archives
- Philadelphia Water Department/Jay Snider Collection
- Philadelphia Water Department Historical Collection
- The Library Company of Philadelphia

“The Big Vision”

Fall Scenic view of Philadelphia city skyline with Schuylkill River in foreground,” Boris Hudak, courtesy of Dreamstime.com. Reproduced with permission.