

# PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION

## **Bartram's Mile**

*Design Workshop*

*Civic Engagement Recap*

*November 10, 2012*

The workshop was divided into three groups according to the geography along Bartram's Mile: the northern section (Grays Ferry to 52<sup>nd</sup> Street), central section (through Bartram's Garden), and southern section (56<sup>th</sup> Street through 58<sup>th</sup> Street). Each group spent one hour brainstorming and one other coming up with one cohesive vision for their section.

### Northern Section (Harris, Patty)

#### Idea Brainstorm

- Canoe/fishing potential
- Lookout/great views
- Connections to Center City and West Philadelphia
- Connections to students in University City (particularly USciences, which is just two blocks away)
- Balance natural/rural feel with industry (active and historic)
- Connection to Schuylkill River Trail
- Bridge connections across the river
- Importance of the look and feel of the western landing of the Schuylkill Banks "swing bridge" that will take pedestrians and cyclists across the river
- Union of post-industrial land and the natural process of taking over those lands
- Streets Department facility along Botanic Avenue as a destination/nexus ("49<sup>th</sup> Street Terminal")
  - Site comes right up to the river!
- Draw of the water: educational, aesthetic links
- "North Woods" as naturalistic site to be preserved
- Respect the needs and priorities of Southwest Philadelphia residents
- View of the city skyline/access north of Grays Ferry Avenue
- Historic Civil War connections
- Create a new relationship between the river and its neighboring industry
- Stormwater management
- Complete "The Circuit" bike trail
- Relationship between trail as recreation and transportation
- Access to the river
- Industrial archaeology
- Combine the naturalized edge with river access for recreation

### Central Section (Jose, Stephanie)

#### Idea Brainstorm

- Access to Bartram's Garden core vs. protection of the historic resources
- Where should the trail go? Maybe have portions as pedestrian only (i.e. not for bikes)

# PHILADELPHIA **PARKS & RECREATION**

- People should have the opportunity to experience the river. Foot path?
- Control the wetlands area. More bike racks to visitors can park their bikes and walk to certain areas.
- Questions
  - How to manage the movement of the “Mile” through Bartram’s Garden?
  - What other activities do we want to see?
  - Where are the potential conflict points?
  - Are there commercial opportunities here?
- Trail activity should be self-contained. Required amenities should be developed and not depend on Bartram’s Garden resources. Each activity should be self-supporting.
- How do we engage new users? What does the trail look like when it meets the Garden? Right now, just meets the parking area...not a very signature entrance.
- What about creating a space near the river where people can sit and enjoy the view?
- Mown path in certain areas of the meadow with interpretation.
- Integrity of the historic house and garden is paramount.
- Using the river
  - Fishing
  - Kayaking
  - Bird watching
  - Educational programs
  - Bike rental station
- Strengthen/promote the Bartram’s Farm (community and professional)
- Keep the spirit of Bartram’s Garden throughout the mile
- Engage educational institutions (college, high school, etc.) with the restoration of the landscape, especially the meadow, forest, wetland, and farm.
- Signage: directional as well as historical.
- 24/7 trail access: significant issue because Bartram’s Garden is not 24/7
  - Maybe two alternate paths?

## Design Concept

- Access to the existing boat and fishing dock
- Three paths through Bartram’s Garden property
  - Pedestrian access through meadow/historic core Gateway
    - Observation area
    - Interpretation area
    - Contemplation area
  - Multi-use trail
  - River’s edge trail/boardwalk
- Signage throughout
- Connections linking all these paths together on site
- Observation areas in the naturalized settings. Maybe boulders for seating.
- Benches along paths
- Alternate access for site after Bartram’s Garden regular hours

# PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION

- Shown outside of Bartram's Garden property, using a bridge across the freight rail cut.
- Wetland area
  - Boardwalk that takes you through the wetland (educational opportunity here)
  - Manage the vegetation along the 56<sup>th</sup> Street edge for views of the wetland and boardwalk access from the southwest
  - Bike racks
  - River access

## Southern Section (Andrew, John)

### Idea Brainstorm

- The riverfront open space in this section begins with its two potential neighborhood links: 56<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- 56<sup>th</sup> Street: the only existing link, needs to be enhanced.
  - Preserve the amazing view at the river's edge at this corner
  - Create unique community link
- 58<sup>th</sup> Street: link back to 58<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway
  - Doesn't exist on PIDC site, but likely is a paper street.
  - Do we push for at-grade crossing over CSX tracks, or bridge over the tracks? Can you use the existing hill to make an easy connection over?
- Signage, visual cues to attract people to Mile and Garden: views from trolley stops, other neighborhood links
  - Think of the Race Street Connector on the Delaware riverfront
  - Art/focal point to guide people
  - Each perpendicular link has some appealing to draw people in
- Seating, benches
- Boat dock access: kayak, motor, paddle, etc.
- Active entertainment center: put further inland to preserve river's edge
  - Potential to fit with the change in topography at 58<sup>th</sup> Street?
- Fitness trail: free exercise opportunities for kids and adults
- Non-traditional play equipment: rocks to climb on
- Create a varied landscape: not just 100 foot width, different widths and conditions to make it interesting
- Since this is the flattest portion of the Mile, put recreation space here
- Public safety, lighting, etc.
- Design for all ages, abilities, walks of life
- Fishing
- Create a transit link: trolley, Regional Rail
- Incorporate art and poetry into the design: High-Line-esque use of different levels, views, planters, etc.
- Interpretive signage: educational, historical
  - For example: show the former Bartram's Garden site boundary and how big it used to be?

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- Recreator vs. commuter entrance to Bartram's Garden along the trail: using existing service road vs. a boardwalk across the PHL wetland
- Esplanade that leaves river open with more natural interpretation at 58<sup>th</sup> Street

## Design Concept

- "Expansion landscapes" (i.e. beyond 100 feet) along 56<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Streets: create grand entrances
- 56<sup>th</sup> Street
  - Parallel parking for boaters
  - Meadow, multi-purpose field, and day-lit creek to the south
  - Signature art installation and plaza at the river
  - Boat launch (location still TBD)
  - Visual links with Bartram's (i.e. less dense forestation along 56<sup>th</sup> Street edge)
  - Celebrated pedestrian entrance
- 58<sup>th</sup> Street
  - "pumped up" 58<sup>th</sup> Street Greenway (i.e. grade separated bike path)
  - Nature-themed play equipment
  - Rocks on the river
  - Naturalized edge where bulkhead goes away
  - Performance stage/entertainment center?
  - Access to PIDC development site on 58<sup>th</sup> Street
- Riverfront Trail
  - Separate paths for bikes and peds
  - Boardwalk across PHL wetland *and* service road
  - Boardwalk/esplanade condition
  - Café/concessions/paid recreation activities on PIDC side of the development that is well integrated with the riverfront public space
  - Sloped seating/river wall at 56<sup>th</sup> Street using existing slope to get people close to the river