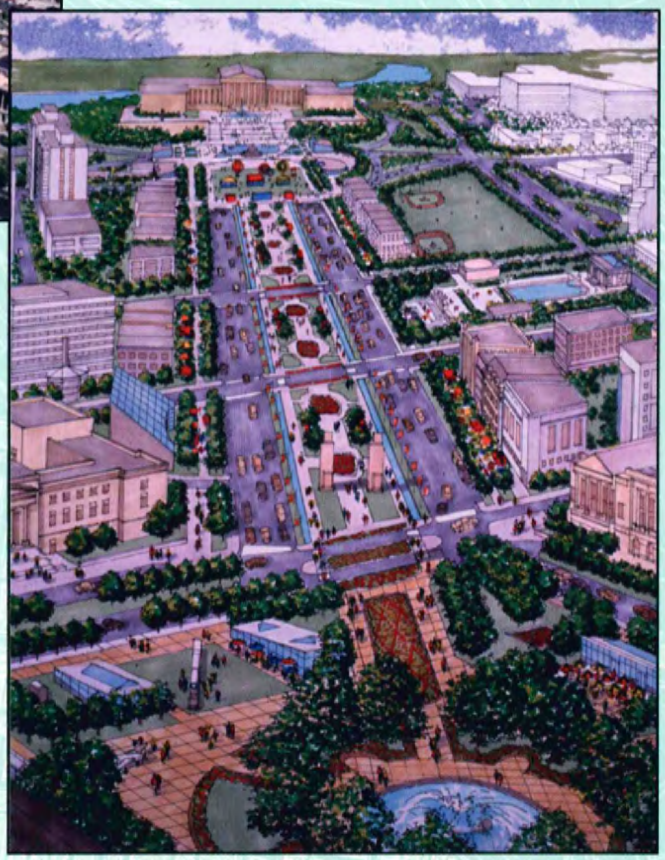
Completing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway



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Completing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

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CPDC

Introduction

Introduction

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway is the setting for many of Philadelphia's premier cultural institutions. Its fountains and vistas are some of the most popular attractions for tourists to photograph. The Parkway is a scenic route enjoyed daily by thousands of automobile commuters. It is a dramatic location for special events, festivals, movies and parades. It is a place to jog, bicycle and roller-blade, while the adjacent playing fields are well used by local residents. Ask any Philadelphian their opinion of the Parkway and they will describe it as one of their favorite places, often topping the list of destinations to show to out-of-town friends.

Yet, there is another way to view the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Although it is modeled on the Parisian Champs Elysées, the Parkway lacks the vitality and pedestrian amenities of its French counterpart. Inspired by the "City Beautiful" movement, the Parkway is the product of a philosophy of urban design that sought to segregate and cluster civic institutions.

But today, all these institutions have significant concerns about access, parking and the management of adjacent public spaces. The long, photogenic vistas between the Art Museum and City Hall give pedestrians the impression that these landmarks are close and walkable. The reality, however, is that the distance on foot can seem interminable because, particularly west of Logan Circle, large gaps exist in the urban fabric. There are few legal and safe crosswalks where the Parkway's design impels pedestrians to attempt to cross (for example, at Logan Circle and Eakins Oval). As a consequence, few strollers wander on impulse to the Art Museum, the Free Library or the Franklin Institute. Visits to each of these destinations must be intentionally planned. Questions must be posed about the availability of cabs or transit for return trips, or the cost, availability and safety of parking. In short, the physical location of these institutions and their relationship to the city is dramatically different from that of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum in New York City or the Public Library in Chicago. As a result, the institutions miss opportunities to attract visitors, while Philadelphia does not fully realize the impact those visitors could have on the economy of the city. *(See charts below.)*

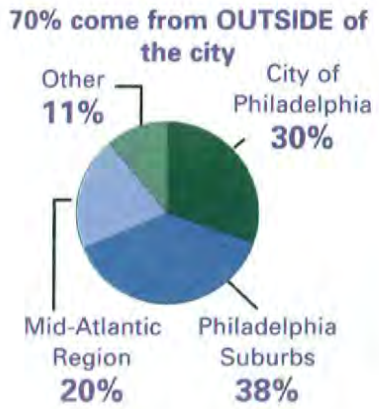
Indeed, probe a little deeper and you will discover that most Philadelphians enjoy the Parkway primarily through the wind-

Visitors to the Parkway Institutions – Unrealized Potential

In 1998 Parkway Cultural Institutions Attracted 2.7 million visitors

Annual Income of Visitors

Home Zip Code



Length of Visitor Stay

Affluent visitors from outside the city rarely stay overnight or spend much in local restaurants and shops.

shield of an automobile and walk there only during special events when the roadway is closed to traffic. This isolation of the Parkway from the life of the city has led one noted planner to conclude:

> *"[T]he Benjamin Franklin Parkway became a monumental axis: green, filled with motor vehicles, but devoid of people. Its symbolic purpose, connecting a palace of the arts with a palace of politics, may have made geometric sense but had little effect on the daily lives of downtown workers or neighboring apartment dwellers...."*[1]

The problem is much deeper than urban design. The responsibility for managing the public environment and for providing services to the Parkway is fragmented. The Streets Department handles traffic operations and regulations, viewing the Parkway as an important arterial link to the Schuylkill Expressway and the river drives. Carrying over 38,000 vehicles per day, the Parkway is a critical component of rush hour traffic patterns. Thus, for example, a traffic light and a direct pedestrian crossing from the Washington statue on Eakins Oval to the eastern steps of the Art Museum, which seems sensible to pedestrians and to the managers of the Museum, are viewed by the Streets Department as an impediment to smooth traffic flow. In the absence of centralized management, there is no mechanism to evaluate and balance these competing objectives.

SEPTA has operated both the 76 bus and the Phlash bus tourist loop along the Parkway. On-street parking meter rates and regulations are the purview of the Philadelphia Parking Authority. Some off-street parking is controlled by cultural institutions, though employees and all-day commuters consume many spaces. Other lots are on land managed by Fairmount Park. But no single entity has the authority and responsibility for assessing and balancing the parking, transit and traffic needs of the area as a whole.

Landscape maintenance, litter and graffiti removal are handled by the Fairmount Park Commission. But the Parkway must compete with 8,900 other acres of parkland in an agency whose operating budget, adjusting for inflation, has decreased by 28% since 1983. The Mayor's Office and the Office of the City Representative plan special events. Until recently, however, the institutions along the Parkway were not included in planning for events and parades, even though these activities often inhibit access to their facilities.

To respond to these challenges, in the spring of 1998, Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC), with a generous grant from the William Penn Foundation, assembled a Philadelphia-based project team to recommend design and management improvements for the Parkway. The design team included:

David Slovic Associates, Lead Designer
Urban design and planning

Olin Partnership
Landscape architecture and design

Urban Engineers, Inc.
Civil engineering

Orth-Rodgers & Associates, Inc.
Traffic engineering

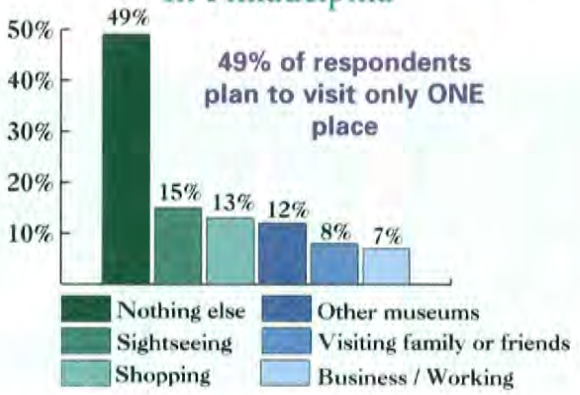
Grenald Waldron
Lighting design

George Thomas, Ph.D.
Historian

Alison Mori, CPDC
Project Manager

The project was initiated with a visioning session on April 28, 1998, in which numerous stakeholders including representatives from the cultural institutions, major apartment buildings, property owners, and hotels managers joined with City representatives, Fairmount Park Commissioners and staff, plus other interested parties. To provide ongoing advice, a steering committee was established to meet and discuss the project

Other Activities of Visitors While In Philadelphia



Eshelman & Townsend Visitor Preferences Survey, 1998
917 visitors to cultural institutions

[1] Alexander Garvin, *The American City: What Works, What Doesn't.*

throughout all its stages. Chaired by Paul Hanle, President of the Academy of Natural Sciences, the group included the directors of the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Franklin Institute, the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Please Touch Museum, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The design process commenced with extensive research on the history of the Parkway, as well as traffic studies, pedestrian interviews, aerial photography, and the review of underground utilities. The team met with representatives of cultural institutions, elected officials, the adjacent neighborhood associations, apartment building owners and tenants, hotel managers, architects and developers, as well as other stakeholders on the Parkway. Detailed discussions were held with the Fairmount Park Commission, the Fairmount Park Art Association, the Historical Commission, the Department of Streets, and the Planning Commission, as well as with other city agencies. Formal presentations were made to the Boards of the Fairmount Park Commission, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, the Free Library, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Board of the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation.

Overall, the design team held 150 meetings and conducted three public forums, culminating in a major public presentation of the preliminary plans on April 27, 1999, attended by over 400 individuals at the Academy of Natural Sciences. That evening, all of the major Philadelphia television stations ran feature stories on the Parkway initiative. Significant portions of the plans were reproduced in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* the following day and the entire proposal was placed on CPDC's website where it has been seen by over 2,500 individuals as of this printing. Preliminary plans were also mailed to over 14,000 city residents, workers, businesses and civic leaders. During the summer of 1999, a "traveling road show" of the plans visited four sites in Center City including Liberty Place, the Bourse, the Shops at the Bellevue and Mellon Independence Center. At each site, the plans were viewed and discussed by hundreds of individuals.

Articles and letters about the Parkway project have appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer, Daily News, Philadelphia Business Journal, Tri-State Real Estate Journal, The Philadelphia Architect,* and the *Weekly Press.* As a result of outreach efforts and press coverage, CPDC received more than 100 detailed letters, emails and phone calls regarding the project. A representative sample of these comments can be found beginning on page 51. As a result of these comments, we have modified early proposals to incorporate many suggestions.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of Philadelphia's grand diagonal boulevard, CPDC is pleased to present a new vision of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway for the 21st Century.

Paul R. Levy
Executive Director
Central Philadelphia Development Corporation

Visioning Session at the Top of the Tower in the Bell Atlantic Building; April 1998.

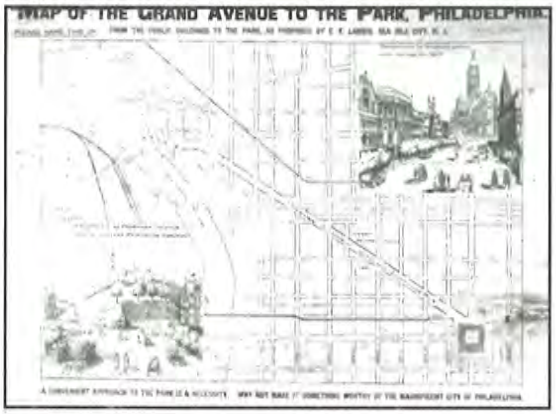
Model of an early proposal shown at the Public Forum at the Academy of Natural Sciences; December 1998.

Traveling exhibit at the Shops at Liberty Place; August 1999.

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway:
An Unfinished Place

From Promise to Highway: 1884 – 1930

Fig. 1.



"A convenient approach to the Park is a necessity. Why not make it something worthy of the magnificent City of Philadelphia?"

- Charles K. Landis, 1884

The idea for a grand diagonal avenue in Philadelphia emerged after the Civil War. The construction of a new City Hall on Center Square and the development of Fairmount Park along the Schuylkill River prompted Philadelphians to look beyond the William Penn plan that had served the city for nearly two centuries. By the 1880s, Philadelphia was many times larger than the city envisioned by its 17th-century planners. It was clear from the time construction started on the new City Hall in the center square, that the business district would move west from the Independence Hall area and become more centrally located. Most of the buildings that line South Broad Street below City Hall today were built in the years just after the opening of the new City Hall.

The area immediately west of City Hall (currently the location of Penn Center, West Market Street and JFK Boulevard) was dominated by the elevated tracks and train yard of the Pennsylvania Railroad's downtown station. At the same time, much of the area north of City Hall had evolved into a dense manufacturing and residential zone. North Broad Street might logically have become a grand avenue and entrance to the city center but for the presence of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, which anchored an immense industrial district in the vicinity of Broad and Spring Garden streets.

The Parkway is but one of many grand avenues that were designed to enhance cities throughout history. Earlier avenues, such as the great diagonals through Rome of Pope Sixtus V, the Champs Elysées of Paris, the park drive through central London undertaken by John Nash for the English Regent, or the great diagonals of L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C., were expressions of royal or central government power. By contrast, the grand avenues of the 19th century were driven by the newly wealthy, manufacturing barons and created by the steam-powered machinery of the Industrial Revolution. Constructed to make cities more manageable, grand avenues through cities such as Prague and Barcelona sought to transform the urban experience with magnificent vistas and civic architecture that contrasted with the banality of the industrial city. Prompted, as well, by the Chicago Exposition of 1893, these great avenues became the hallmarks of the American City Beautiful movement that reached maturity in the early 20th century.

The idea of linking the new city center and the new attraction of Philadelphia's vast Fairmount Park with a diagonal avenue cutting across the grid gained a wide following by the end of the 19th century. Beginning in 1871, Philadelphians proposed numerous designs for a great boulevard that would bisect the drab industrial quarter between City Hall and the park. When the early advocates of a more beautiful city proposed to connect a plaza at City Hall with the city's new municipal art museum on Fairmount, the combination of Parkway, Museum, and Plaza produced a critical mass that captured public attention. By 1907, bricks were flying as demolition began and the Parkway was on its way to becoming a reality.

Fig. 2.

Diagonal boulevards of Paris, France, 1900.

Fig. 3.

Carriages on the Champs Elysées, Paris, 1903.

Fig. 4.

Chicago World's Fair, 1893.

The Parkway: 1884 – 1930

Fig. 5. Reyburn Plan Model, 1911

"I walked down the Parkway yesterday morning visualizing that splendid emptiness of sunshine as it will appear five or ten years hence, lined with art galleries, museums and libraries, shaded with growing trees, leading from the majestic pinnacle of the City Hall to the finest public estate in America.... The Philadelphia of the future, as some citizens have dreamed it, will be able to hold up its head with the greatest. I like to think of a Philadelphia in which the lower Schuylkill would be something more than a canal of oily ooze ... and would be reclaimed into one of the world's loveliest riverside parks, and in which the Parkway will stretch its airy vista from the heart of the city, between stately buildings of public profit, out to the sparkling waters of Fairmount."

— Christopher Morley, "The Parkway," 1921

But the Parkway that was envisioned was very different from what was eventually built. Its initial promoters were drawn from the world of real estate and transportation and saw the opportunity to create a rich urban center characterized by the grand avenues of great cities in Europe and the United States. These boulevards might vary in width from Barcelona's relatively narrow La Ramblas or grand Paseig St. Joan, but they were typically bordered by monumental offices buildings, apartment houses, institutions and churches that enhanced the vista. In the case of Philadelphia's Parkway, the portion closer to the downtown was envisioned as a major urban street, tightly framed by relatively tall commercial buildings. The second half, beyond Logan Circle, was portrayed as a generously scaled, divided and landscaped boulevard, framed by mid-rise apartment buildings and public facilities, such as the Free Library and the Family Court, and focused on the Museum of Art.

Augmenting the Parkway plan was an act first passed in 1907 and enacted again in 1913 that permitted municipalities to control all land use within 200 feet of any park. Prohibited were saloons and restaurants, retailing, and other forms of commerce, and generally agreed-upon nuisances such as stables, garages, manufacturing buildings, as well as billboards. From this end of the 20th century, the aim of these acts, passed in a time before zoning codes, seems to have been to banish the discordant elements of urban life. But the long-term effect was to eliminate all commerce, including restaurants and cafes, from the Parkway, while giving control of the boulevard and its long-range

Fig. 6. Windrim Plan, 1892

Fig. 7. 1909 Plan

Fig. 10. McCauley Plan, 1902

Fig. 8. 1911 Plan

Fig. 9. Proposed great plaza northeast of City Hall, with a "Palace of Justice" on the site of the Municipal Services Building

Fig. 11.

View of the proposed boulevard superimposed upon the city grid, 1905.

Fig. 12.

View of the Parkway, 1920's.

Fig. 13.

Greber Perspective, 1919.

development to the Fairmount Park Commission, an organization whose mission was exclusively focused on parks. With the Commission in charge, a new master plan was prepared by Jacques Greber which proposed less density and a more formal design. In the place of apartment blocks were more institutions or free-standing homes.

Work on the Parkway slowed during World War I, and when construction resumed after the war, it was guided by a very different vision. While construction was under way on commercial buildings close to City Hall, anticipated development had not occurred along the outer half of the Parkway. Greber had envisioned a grand civic center, a sort of "Avenue of the Arts" that would complement the great museum under construction on the hill overlooking the Parkway. Sites were provided for new buildings for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Museum School, the School of Fine Arts of the University of Pennsylvania, the Franklin Institute, the College of Pharmacy, the Board of Education, as well as an orchestra hall, small museums for the Rodin and the Johnson collections, and a new building for the American Philosophical Society. There were to be sites as well, for several important churches, the grandest of which would be the Episcopal Cathedral. Other civic institutions, including the Masons, were projected along the outer avenues. However, only four were built — the Rodin Museum on the Parkway itself, the Franklin Institute fronting on Logan Square, the Board of Education, and the "Temple of Youth" of the Boy Scouts on Race Street — and none were built on the Parkway. The six additional proposed institutions were never built at all.

In either case, whether as the residential neighborhodd or the Avenue of the Arts envisioned in the 1920s, the Parkway would have been far richer if it had been filled with buildings that contributed to the life of the city.

Fig. 14.

Proposed Performing Arts Center, 1932 — *Not built.*

Fig. 15.

Proposed Philosophical Society, 1925-1926 — *Not built.*

Fig. 16.

Fig. 17.

Jacques Greber Plan, 1919.

The Triumph of the Automobile: 1930–1976

The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, Nov. 13, 1949. Temple University Urban Archives.

"From the wide esplanade that steps down from the Museum, one has a magnificent view of the central skyline of Philadelphia, but apart from the view, this piece of outmoded planning... has done more damage than good. The very width of the Parkway defeated its main aim, which was to provide an axial civic center lined by public buildings; crossing its multiple lanes, especially at focal points like Logan Circle, is difficult, not to say hazardous for the pedestrian and the institutions that moved to the Parkway have proved to be neither central nor convenient."

— Lewis Mumford, *The New Yorker*, 1956

The Depression effectively ended most of these plans and when activity returned to the Parkway after World War II, cities were being shaped by different technological, social and aesthetic goals and interests. The Parkway had become one of the principal automobile routes into the city, linking the river drives to Center City.

In 1933, traffic lights were added for the first time. Nonetheless, the rotaries and circles, which had been designed with horse-drawn carriages still in mind, had become some of the most dangerous intersections in the city. At the same time, the new director of City Planning, Edmund Bacon, conceived of a major highway along the Schuylkill River that would enter the city by a cross-town link at Vine Street, which was to be depressed so as to separate it from the regular city traffic. To make this possible, a trench was cut across the city that required the World War I monuments near Logan Square to be moved and which undercut the unity of the Parkway district. The Board of Education and the Boy Scouts building were separated from the Parkway, while the northern neighborhoods were cut off from the office district to the south. In the 1960s, Greber's plan was altered further as the Washington statue and the two fountains of the museum plaza were incorporated into a new Eakins Oval to solve traffic congestion from Spring Garden Street and the river drives. These changes gave the Parkway two new functions. First, it served as a forecourt to the Museum, offering powerful formal vistas from City Hall. But, second, the Parkway also functioned as one of the city's principal highways with most people experiencing it at 35 miles per hour through the windshield of a car.

Moreover, some of the new institutions that were placed on the Parkway after World War II did not contribute to its vitality. Proposed structures that might have found a more popular audience, such as a proposed aquarium, were rejected as too commercial. Most remarkable was the decision to add a young offenders' prison, euphemistically called the Youth Studies Center (presumably to get around the prohibition of prisons in the 1913 Act). Shortly after, the Park Towne Place apartments were constructed between the Parkway and the river. But the Park Towne Place design turned the buildings away from the Parkway, making little effort to connect to the grand diagonal boulevard. At the opposite end, the broad expanse of Reyburn Plaza was carved into a park and fountain with underground parking and the site for the Municipal Services Building. No

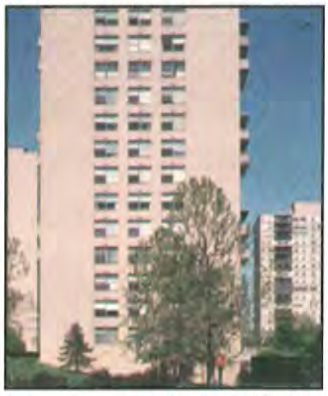
Traffic circulation had become a major concern by 1949. *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 13, 1949.

The Schuylkill Expressway added even more traffic to the Parkway in the 1950s via the Spring Garden Street bridge.

In the 1950s the Vine Street Expressway cut canyons through Logan Square.

The Architectural Archives, Univ. of Pennsylvania.

In 1936, the City Planning Commission depicted a new Penn Center office district, early-modern buildings along the Parkway, and new river drives.



The Youth Study Center and Park Towne Place apartments, both buildings added to the Parkway during the 1960s, turned their backs to the boulevard, leaving blank walls fronting the Parkway.

longer did the Parkway end in a public square framed by City Hall and Broad Street Station; instead it was visually interrupted by the new John F. Kennedy Plaza while its roadway was diminished to small side streets and garage ramps as if its great throughway had fallen into a sinkhole. Cut into bits in Center City, transformed into a highway along its length, and cut off from Fairmount Park and the Art Museum by a reconfiguration of Eakins Oval, the Parkway was far removed from the vision of its founders.

The construction of Penn Center along Market Street, on the site of the elevated tracks and terminal of Broad Street Station marked the shift of the energy of the city away from the grand urban gesture of the Parkway to the needs of the modern city. That shift had been clear at the onset of the Depression when the Pennsylvania Railroad constructed Suburban Station and proposed to build a row of monumental office buildings stretching out to 30th Street Station and in the triangle between the Parkway and Market Street. But, unlike the 1930s scheme of early-modern buildings that made the Parkway an asset with additional cultural institutions and housing, the 1950s planners turned the new buildings' backs to the Parkway, facing the new construction toward City Hall and Market Street. This relegated the Parkway to a precinct for cultural institutions and a grand highway entrance to the central business district. The availability of so much open space and the excess capacity of the roadway led to its role, beginning in the 1970s, as a site for public events.

What had been conceived as a monumental community, and then reconceived as a setting of classical grandeur for public institutions, became a linear amphitheater, an open-air marketplace, a parade ground, and a festival site. But unlike the market squares and plazas of historical cities, it had none of the infrastructure necessary for human comfort. Though the Bicentennial caused a relaxation of the rules about restaurants and bars along the lower Parkway, and the construction of the Four Seasons Hotel added a new civic amenity that has made the boulevard more successful, the present Parkway remains an unfinished opportunity that holds promise for the city's future.

George E. Thomas, Ph.D.

Left: Greber's design for Eakins Oval, planned prior to the dominance of the car. *Right:* Eakins Oval today, transformed in the 1960s to a part of the highway system.

Rush-hour congestion causes long traffic back-ups.

An unfinished opportunity.

The Parkway Today

Calder Sculpture in the Swann Fountain

A Place of Opportunity...

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway is one of Philadelphia's most valued public places. It is the setting for many of the region's finest cultural institutions, magnificent sculptures, and frequently photographed vistas.

Left unfinished, the Parkway is also a place of extraordinary contrasts. It is a place where families and children come to learn, play and be entertained. But it is also a place where youth are incarcerated. There are beautifully maintained azalea gardens and broken, uneven sidewalks. During special events, more than a million people can fill the boulevard. At other times, it can be a lonely and intimidating place. At rush hour, traffic slows to a crawl, while off-peak, empty seas of asphalt isolate cultural institutions. It is a location where students gather on lawns and sketch the public fountains, while major homeless encampments exist only one block away.

With individual, private maintenance endowments, the Swann Fountain, the Binswanger Triangle and the Azalea Garden have all set a standard for what public spaces on the Parkway can become. The Please Touch Museum and the

World-Class Institutions of the Parkway

Academy of Natural Sciences

Franklin Institute

Free Library of Philadelphia

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Rodin Museum

Please Touch Museum

...And Contrasts

Franklin Institute have demonstrated how to create exciting outdoor play areas for children. Through improved restaurant facilities and public programming, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Academy of Natural Sciences and the Free Library have demonstrated an ability to draw new audiences at different times of the day and evening. All of the cultural institutions are working on expansion plans and new exhibits. The apartment buildings adjacent to the Parkway are enjoying high occupancy rates.

The opportunity thus exists to build on this success and to complete the Benjamin Franklin Parkway as the vibrant and diverse destination that was originally envisioned.

Peak Demand and Empty Asphalt

Evening rush-hour traffic backs up approaching Eakins Oval.

Off-peak, there are empty stretches of asphalt.

A Challenging Place for Pedestrians

Crumbling sidewalks

Running to enjoy the central vista.

Running to avoid traffic.

Sidewalks that end in oncoming traffic.

Unsafe crossings and lack of legal access.

Open Space: Uneven Quality

Swann Fountain

Logan Square

Odd-shaped parcels created by Vine St. Expressway.

Homeless encampment at JFK Plaza.

Completing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

David Slovic Associates, Faux Real

Design Philosophy

Great public spaces define the images and shape our memories of cities. Think of Rockefeller Center in New York City, Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, the Piazza San Marco in Venice, or the Ramblas de Catalunya in Barcelona. Successful public spaces generate excitement, pleasure and a sense of pride in cities that have created them and committed to maintain them. Easier to recognize than to reproduce, extraordinary spaces enrich the life of a city, bringing people together in a wide range of shared activities.

Successful urban parks, squares and boulevards have certain qualities which recur consistently. First, they are places where very diverse people feel safe and comfortable enough to walk or sit in a casual manner. Second, they are destinations to which people are drawn, to see and be seen by other people and to enjoy well-maintained public amenities such as fountains, landscaping, beautiful vistas, play areas and cafes. To have sufficient people, successful spaces are usually adjacent to dense office districts, strong cultural attractions, neighborhoods that provide 24-hour activity, or some combination of all these attributes.

Third, they are places that enable chance encounters or unplanned activities, like window shopping, sitting at a table or bench, watching an event. Fourth, successful public spaces are easy to walk to and are accessible by public transit or conveniently located parking garages. But walking, not driving, is essential to a successful public space. People in cars are on their way quickly to somewhere else, enclosed in their own music or air-conditioning. Those enjoying public spaces move more slowly and have chosen to be among other people.

Finally, good public spaces have visual boundaries which physically define the space and the feeling of being there. Buildings, trees, walls or a combination of these create a comfortable sense of enclosure. Interesting architecture, inventive lighting, unique features like fountains, statues or carousels can animate the space. The relationship between the height of the enclosure and width of the space determines whether the place will be an intimate park or a grand boulevard.

The simple measure of a successful public space is the number of people who use it. An active space draws more activity. It is a self-supporting situation. More people attract new uses, new shops, new institutions and the desire to be there. This is the goal for the Parkway: to draw more residents and visitors to this extraordinary destination and to engage them in the life of the city.

The Parkway stretches 1.2 miles from City Hall to the base of the steps leading to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. From an urban design perspective, we conceived it as six different places positioned and linked along a grand diagonal between two monumental buildings.

- JFK Plaza
- East Parkway from 16th Street to 18th Street
- Logan Circle
- West Parkway from 20th Street to 24th Street
- Eakins Oval
- The crossing to the Art Museum

After extensive analysis and discussions with project stakeholders, we sought to make each of these unique and special places, to reinforce the visual diagonal of the Parkway, while making the entire length safe and pedestrian friendly. At the same time, we recognized the importance of the Parkway as a major highway artery and sought to improve its efficiency during rush hour, while calming traffic at off-peak hours. But our overall aim is to transform the Parkway into an active, memorable and great public space.

David Slovic

The Goals for a New Parkway

1) The Parkway as an Enhanced Cultural Boulevard

- Increase the visibility and accessibility of the Parkway institutions
- Provide for the expansion of the existing institutions
- Strengthen the Parkway as a cultural destination by identifying sites for additional institutions

2) Improved Public Spaces Along the Parkway

- Increase the amount of usable, active, well-managed public space
- Preserve the view corridor from City Hall to the Art Museum
- Increase the number of play areas for children and families
- Decrease the number of parades and special events on the Parkway
- Decrease traffic congestion and provide additional off-street parking
- Transform the Parkway into a well-lit, pedestrian-friendly destination

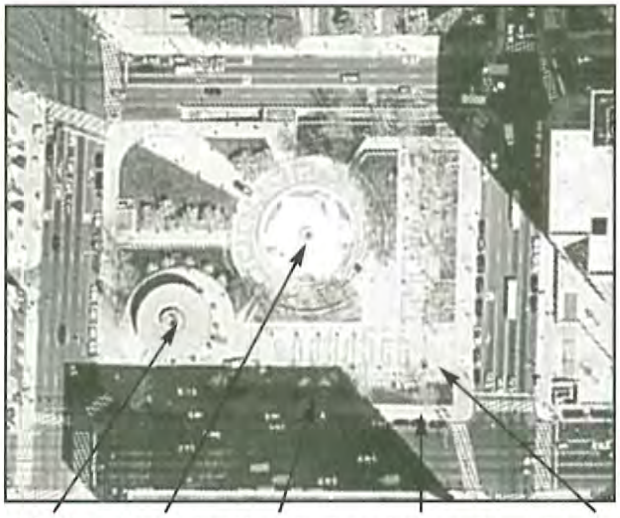
3) Development and Management of the Parkway

- Restore the fabric of the city, reconnecting neighborhoods on either side of the Parkway
- Create a vibrant mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhood for 3,000 to 4,000 new residents
- Establish a new Parkway management organization with a dedicated revenue base to manage, maintain and promote the Parkway

The New Vision: Public Spaces

JFK Plaza

Existing Conditions



ADR Mapping

Visitors center will be closed in 2000

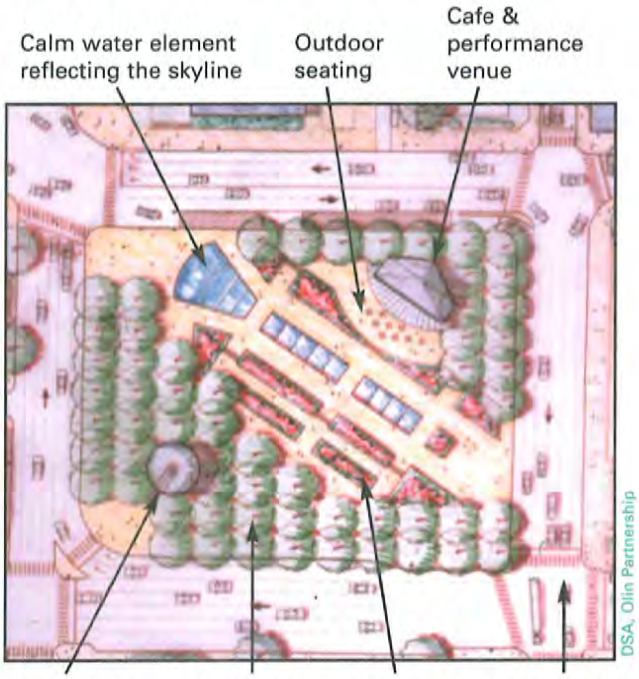
Fountain often sprays pedestrians

Closed elevator shafts

Massive granite walls limit visual access and are unnecessary for structural support

Excess hard surfaces are unwelcoming

The New JFK Plaza



DSA, Olin Partnership

An Urban Park

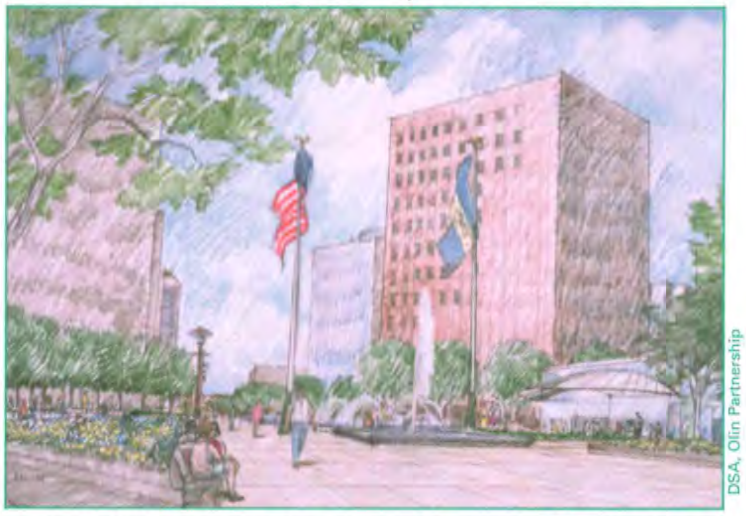
Located in the heart of Center City, surrounded by office buildings, the existing park is an unfriendly hardscape that is underutilized by the general public. Instead it is often dominated by skateboarders and homeless encampments. The Plaza sits on the cover of a municipal parking structure with over 800 spaces. The elevators to the garage have been closed for years and the stairways from the street are narrow and forbidding. The central fountain often over-sprays passersby and is turned off more than it is on.

The new Plaza will retain the existing traffic patterns and signals, pedestrian connections and garage access for vehicles. The cover, however, is transformed into a green gathering place like Commerce Square in Philadelphia, Bryant Park in New York City, or Post Office Square in Boston. The new design recognizes the axis of the Parkway, drawing the eye along the perspective to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. A central, reflecting fountain falls in multiple cascades along the Parkway diagonal. In the northeast corner, a restaurant, the "Love Cafe," terraces out to face the Center City skyline, where noontime concerts drift through the air, as part of a regular series of events programmed by a new Parkway management organization. In the southwest corner, a grove of trees creates a shady canopy over a grass lawn punctuated by small seating areas and gardens. A new stairway creates a welcoming point of arrival for commuters exiting from the garage below and from the new connection to the regional rail lines in Suburban Station.

JFK Plaza becomes a pleasant oasis with greenery, trees, gardens, water, a performance place, a restaurant/cafe and a spectacular view of the skyline and the Parkway.

Olin Partnership

Commerce Square in Center City Philadelphia



DSA, Olin Partnership

New JFK Plaza looking toward the Art Museum — A new cafe on the right, new reflecting pools and fountain in the center.

Terraced outdoor seating areas, a performance venue for noontime concerts, and cafes will bring office workers and visitors to JFK Plaza. A welcoming, enjoyable urban space is created.

Reinforcing the Urban Fabric

The Parkway was designed to link City Hall with Fairmount Park. In 1987, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission envisioned the ground floor of City Hall animated with new galleries, cafes and a relocated visitors center. All these uses could animate City Hall and its surrounding plazas day and night, creating a memorable starting point for Philadelphia's grand boulevard.

Phila. City Planning Commission

Left: Phila. City Planning Commission's plan for an animated ground floor of City Hall.

Below: The site plan for the area between JFK Plaza and Logan Circle.

DSA, Olin Partnership

In the area between JFK Plaza and Logan Square, the axis of the Parkway is reinforced with the planting of trees and landscaping. New buildings and activities can enliven the sidewalks and continue the urban experience, linking JFK Plaza with the new Logan Square. At Logan Square, a new Parkway Visitors Center can provide information about the city, current exhibits and events.

Post Office Square –
Above: Today, a well-used urban square.
Right: Before, a parking garage

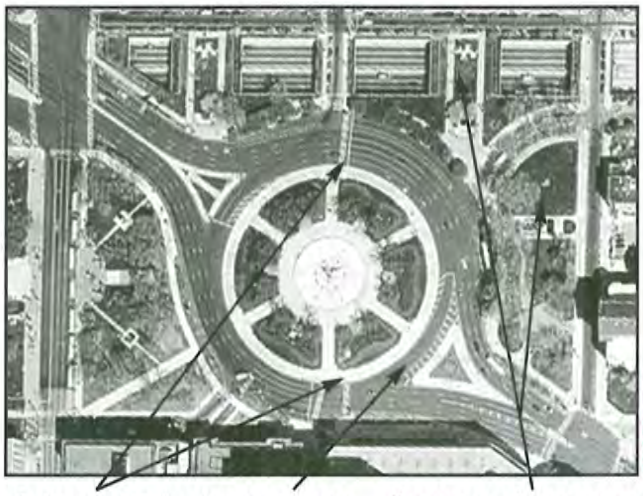
An Urban Park Success Story

Post Office Square, Boston

Once the site of a parking garage, Post Office Square was developed as a public park with underground parking in 1992. The project was financed and constructed by local property owners and tenants. Maintenance is paid for through revenue from the underground parking garage. The park is now filled with lush plantings and with office workers enjoying the lunch-hour sun.

Logan Square

Existing Conditions



ADR Mapping

Only two legal crosswalks provide access

Traffic speeds around circle

Fragmented open space is created and institutions are isolated by the Vine Street Expressway cuts

The New Logan Square

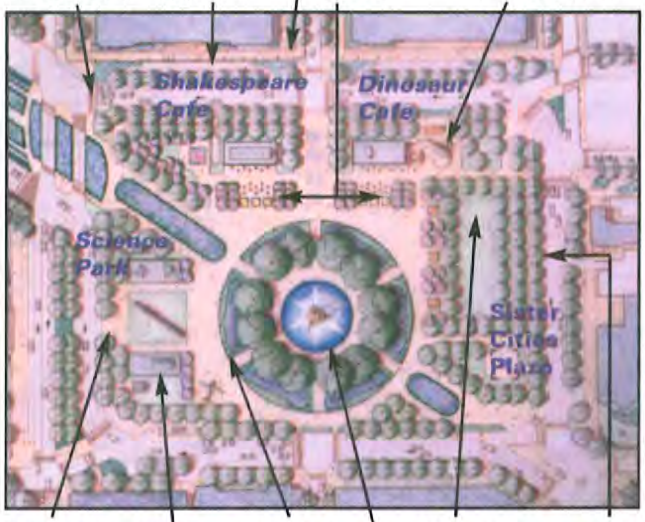
Protected drop-offs for institutions

New, safe marked crosswalks

Vine St. Expressway covered

Outdoor seating areas

Outdoor sculpture comes into the park



DSA, Olin Partnership

Underground parking garage

Outdoor Exhibits

Playground & free-play lawn area

New trees & other plantings

Exhibit pavilions & cafes animate the park

Swann Fountain remains untouched and becomes the focal point of the new Square

A New Cultural Square

Located midway between City Hall and the Art Museum, Logan Circle is the setting for the main branch of the Free Library, Municipal Family Court, the Franklin Institute, the Academy of Natural Science, Moore College of Art, the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Four Seasons Hotel. The recently restored and privately maintained Swann Fountain forms the extraordinary centerpiece.

But since it is surrounded by six lanes of traffic, the Fountain is enjoyed primarily through the windshield of fast-moving automobiles. There are only two safe, legal approaches for pedestrians, both from 19th Street, and neither is along the Parkway diagonal where people want to walk. Pedestrians thus routinely run illegally across moving traffic.

The land immediately outside the traffic circle is fragmented and undefined. Some areas are used by school children, but most are used for homeless encampments. The open trenches of the Vine Street Expressway create unfriendly and noisy barriers in front of the Library and Family Court buildings.

The new design covers the Vine Street Expressway. Roadways are relocated from around the fountain to the outer edges of the square, similar to Rittenhouse and Washington Squares, and as originally envisioned by William Penn. Disparate pieces of open space are unified into a new, ten-acre park which surrounds the preserved and majestic Swann Fountain, the circle in the square.

With four vehicular lanes, traffic will continue to move at the same pace as during current rush-hour peaks. Off-peak, it will be significantly calmed and pedestrians will now have six safe, accessible pedestrian crossings with traffic signals. Along the edges of the square, dedicated areas will be created for passenger loading and short-term parking at the front door of each institution.

The new ten-acre park takes its character from the surrounding cultural institutions as exhibits and events from inside the buildings come out into the park as themed pavilions. Serving as exhibit, dining and information centers, the pavilions are a means for the institutions to reach a larger public and to animate the park. Imagine having lunch at the Dinosaur Cafe, visiting the Baldwin Locomotive Science Plaza, watching art students at work, and seeing original illustrations, like those from *Alice in Wonderland*, at the Free Library's book and coffee shop.

Laurie Olin, Olin Partnership

New Logan Square looking toward the Art Museum — Outdoor exhibits and pavilions animate the Square. The Swann Fountain remains untouched and becomes the focal point of the Square.

DSA, D.L. Carruthers

View of the well-landscaped Square from above.

DSA, Faux Real

The Baldwin Locomotive becomes an interactive outdoor exhibit within the themed Science Park area of the Square.

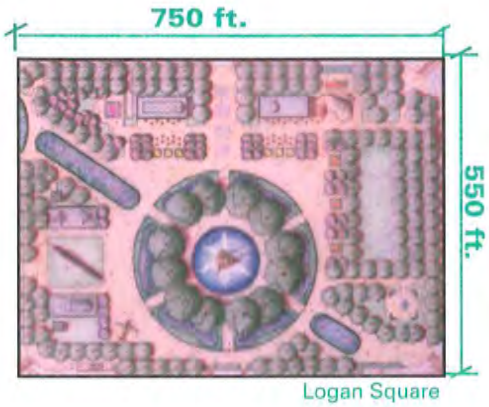
The design of the new Logan Square does not change Swann Fountain at all, but it reinforces the diagonal of the Parkway and surrounds the fountain with cultural attractions and green sitting areas. The new Square is large enough to accommodate the existing park monuments and new interactive sculptures, lawns, playgrounds, flower beds and places to sit under the trees.

Hidden below part of the Square is a parking garage for 800 cars, easily accessible to nearby offices and institutions. Logan Square becomes the cultural organizations' outdoor living room, a unique destination to be enjoyed by residents, office workers and visitors alike.

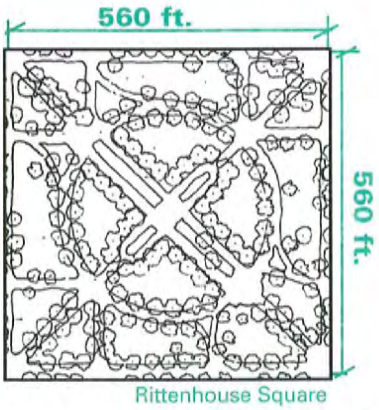
The Restoration of Logan Square

"When the Schuylkill expressway was joined to Vine Street in Center Center by means of a sunken highway ... it opened gigantic holes in the landscape of Logan Circle. These seemed to cut the ground from under the feet of the School Administration Building, the Boy Scouts Building, and the Municipal Court.... Thus did the city sacrifice the unimpeded Parkway vista and the generously proportioned public square that had cost so much effort and money fifty years before."

— David Brownlee, *Building the City Beautiful*, 1989



Logan Square



Rittenhouse Square

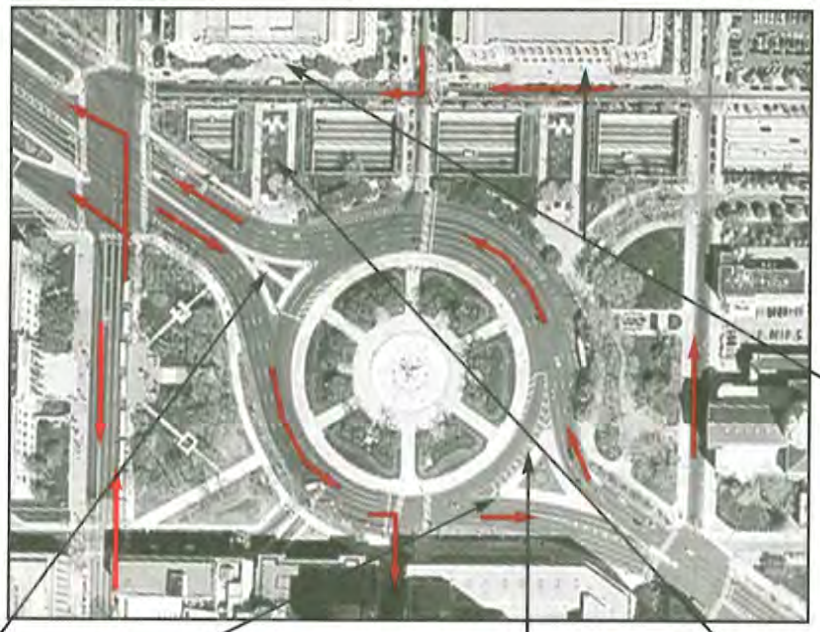
Tom Crane Photography.

Rittenhouse Square

Logan Square: Existing Conditions

Existing traffic patterns

Four to six lanes surround the Circle, depending on location. Traffic moves counter-clockwise around the Circle at rapid speeds during non-rush hours and slows during peak commuting time. 20th Street traffic moves in both directions and serves as a major thoroughfare for bus routes.



"The fourth of Penn's squares has been whittled to a small traffic island.... The circle is adorned with a great soaring fountain and beautifully maintained planting.... It is difficult to reach on foot and is mainly an amenity for those speeding by."

— Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961

Poor connections — The Vine Street Expressway isolates institutions, slicing through the fabric of the city.

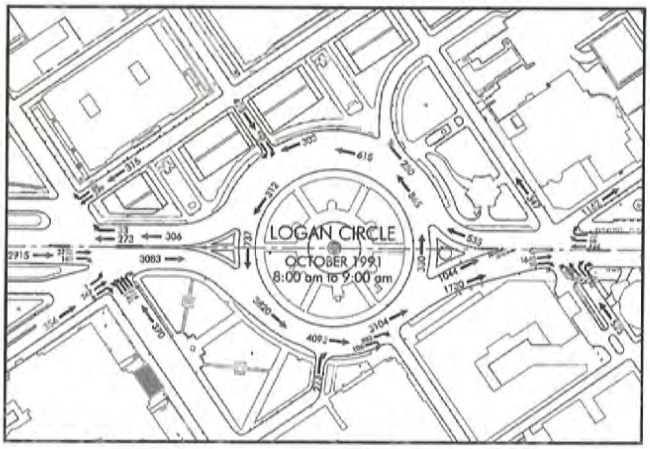
Pedestrian conditions — With only two legal crossings, people, even with young children in their arms, race across traffic, crossing illegally.

Unsafe crossings — The existing design and pavement materials lead pedestrians to cross illegally through traffic.

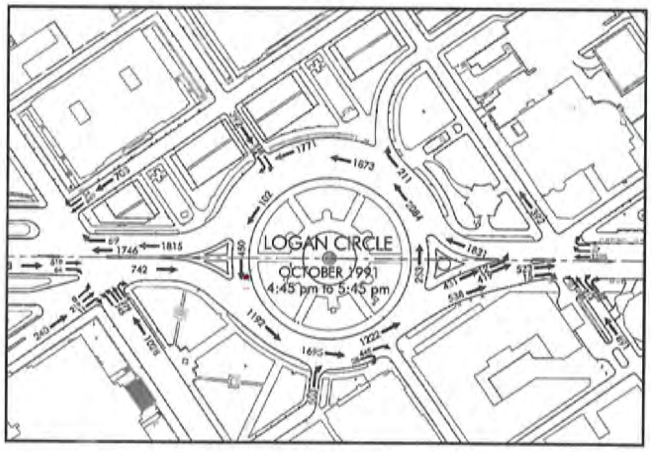
Underutilized open space — The Vine Street Expressway has created isolated spaces that have become homeless encampments

Existing Traffic Counts

Morning Peak



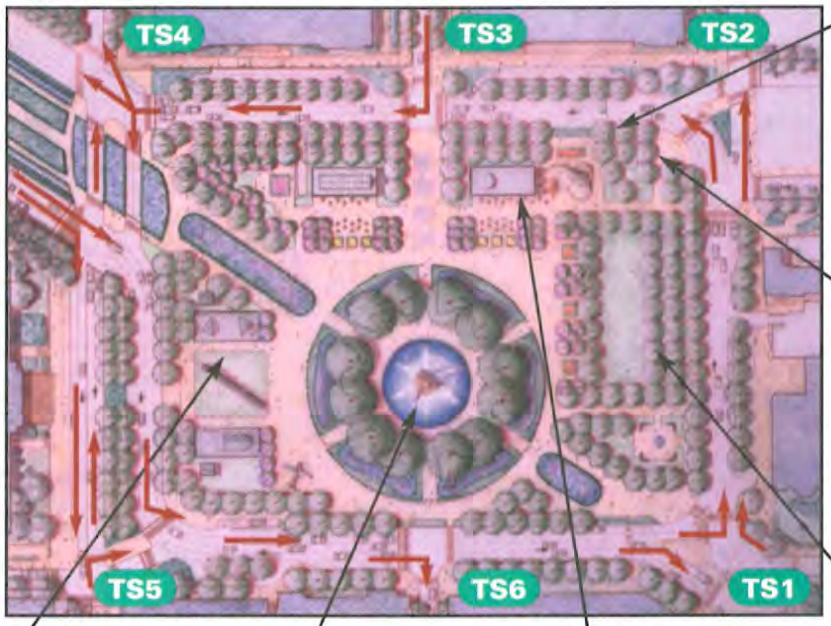
Evening Peak



The New Logan Square

New traffic patterns

Four lanes of traffic move around the Square in a counter-clockwise fashion. Traffic will be calmed during off-peak hours and will continue at the same flow rate during rush hours. 20th Street traffic will still flow in both directions, and a planted median will separate traffic.



By placing interactive outdoor exhibits, the institutions can animate the Square and create a unique Philadelphia experience.

Much needed playgrounds for neighborhood residents and visitors to the institutions can be added to the Square.

Themed pavilions and areas, such as the Franklin Institute Science Park, enliven the park and can draw more visitors to exhibits inside the institutions.

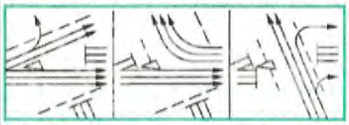
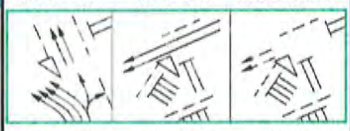
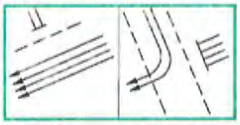
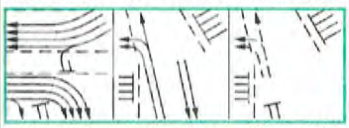
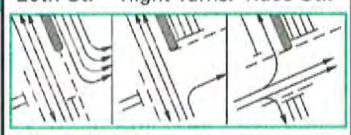
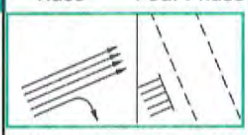
Circle in the Square — The Swann Fountain remains untouched and is the focal point of the Square.

Outdoor dining can bring patrons to the park, adding life and generating revenue for public space maintenance.

New plantings and lawn areas — Greenery will enhance the park atmosphere. Grassy lawns will provide new play areas.

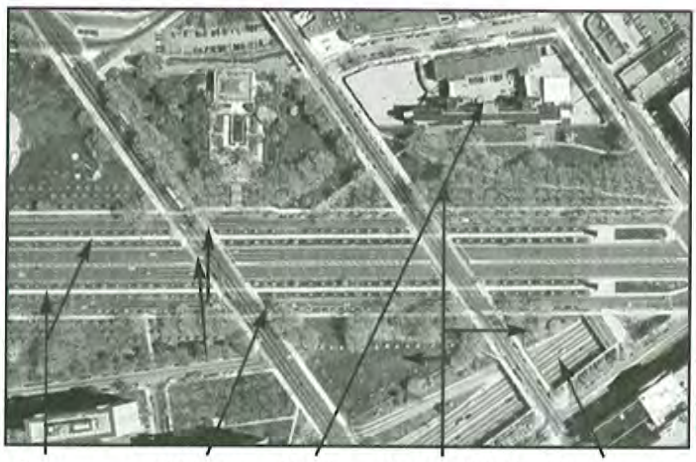
New Traffic Signals (TS)

The following diagrams note the red and green phases of six signalled intersections.

TS1 Parkway, 18th St. & Race St.	Race St.	Parkway	18th St.
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
TS2 18th St., Vine St. & Clearance	18th St.	Vine St.	Clearance
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
TS3 Parkway & 19th St.	Vine St.	19th St.	
	Phase I	Phase II	
TS4 Vine St., Parkway, 20th/19th St. & Clearance	Vine/Pkwy	20th/19th.	Clearance
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
TS5 20th St., 20th St. Turns, & Race St.	20th St.	Right Turns.	Race St..
	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
TS6 Parkway, 19th St.	Race	Ped. Phase	
	Phase I	Phase II	

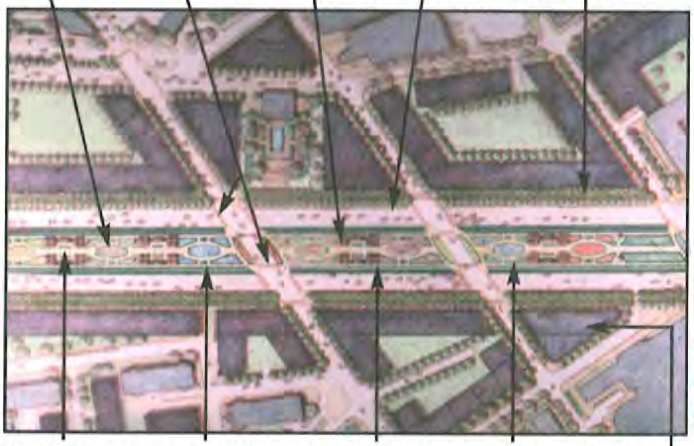
The Promenade

Existing Conditions



ADR Mapping

The Promenade



DSA, Olin Partnership

View of the Promenade looking toward the Art Museum — Flowering trees, gardens, kiosks and an active recreation path create an animated public spaces.

Philadelphia's Grandest Boulevard

The West Parkway, between Logan Square and Eakins Oval, is the most empty and isolated part of the Parkway, except during special events. Mostly, this half-mile stretch functions as a highway, with 5 lanes of traffic in each direction, divided by mid-lane islands which cause dangerous traffic conditions and lead those who walk on them into dead ends that face oncoming traffic. Joggers use these spaces, but most roller-bladers choose the smoother surface of the street. There are thus few activities for pedestrians in these areas that function more as a pleasant green vista for the driver. Difficult to cross, devoid of activities, the Parkway creates a vacuum between city neighborhoods.

By consolidating the existing islands in the center of the boulevard, the new design creates a broad 130-foot wide promenade. Traffic lanes, shifted to each side, are more efficient and can be reduced to 4 in each direction and still carry the same volume of traffic. Dangerous weave movements are eliminated and rush hour traffic congestion is reduced. The new configuration gives the center back to pedestrians and creates a linear park along the Parkway diagonal and new tree shaded walkways on each edge.

Along the central axis of the Parkway on the Promenade pedestrians can enjoy the broad vista as they stroll all the way to the Art Museum among flowering trees, themed gardens, kiosks, cafes and outdoor exhibits. Separate paths for joggers, roller-bladers and bicyclists continue the recreational connection to Fairmount Park. Pedestrians are buffered from the cars with edge plantings and continuous streams of water. Numerous marked crosswalks allow easy pedestrian access to the Promenade from Logan Square and from the adjacent side streets. Allees of trees reinforce the diagonal and offer shade along the boulevard's edges while new uses, such as cultural institutions, restaurants and shops, animate the sidewalks.

By gradually sloping the walkways west of 20th Street, pedestrians on the new Promenade, whether in the center or along the edges, are able to cross over traffic directly to Eakins Oval while cars pass through short underpasses.

Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, Massachusetts — A central promenade creates a well-used linear park running through the Back Bay.

Laurie Olin, Olin Partnership

View from the Promenade looking towards the Art Museum — People will be able to stroll directly along the axis of the Parkway and enjoy the vistas.

Laurie Olin, Olin Partnership

New plantings and trees will shade the Parkway sidewalks. New institutions, cafes, restaurants and ground-floor public spaces will enhance the pedestrian experience.

What Will the New Promenade Be Like?

The new central pedestrian park will be as wide as South Broad Street or Market Street from building line to building line.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY

BROAD STREET
(Overlaid upon proposed Parkway Promenade)

MARKET STREET
(Overlaid upon proposed Parkway Promenade)

DSA, Graf-X

During the planning phase, the design team gave serious consideration to an alternative scheme in which the two outer roadways would be consolidated in the center and sidewalks on the edges would be dramatically widened. This option had the advantage of concentrating all pedestrian activities out the outer edges of the Parkway, adjacent to any new buildings.

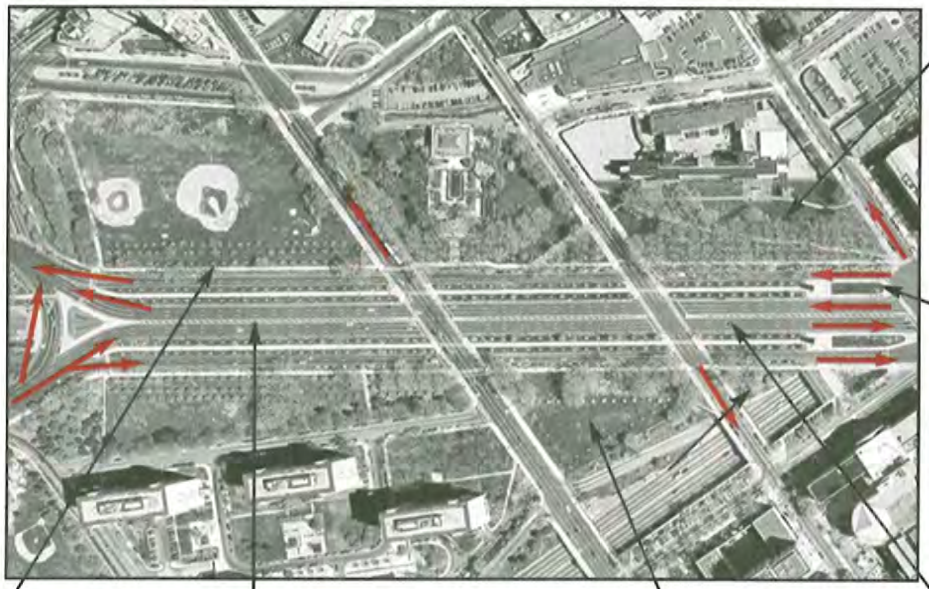
The central roadway consolidation and sidewalk extension option was not selected because it would create a difficult-to-cross, eight-lane highway that would be a challenge to illuminate without giant, expressway-style light fixtures that would disrupt the vista.

The new central pedestrian park will be as wide as South Broad Street or Market Street from building line to building line. The central promenade park also has the advantage of giving the grand vista of the Parkway back to pedestrians.

The Promenade: Existing Conditions

Existing traffic patterns

The outer traffic lanes were designed as service and access roads to buildings that were never built.



The Youth Study Center turns its back to the Parkway.

Merging traffic creates extensive traffic back-ups during rush hour.

Crumbling sidewalks pose a hazard to pedestrians.

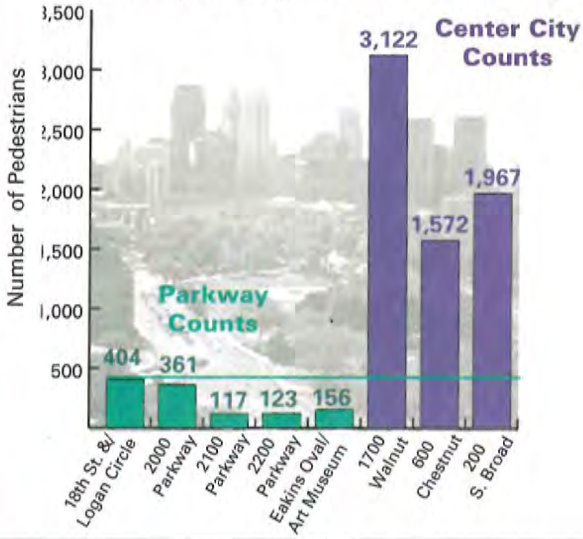
People often use the center of the roadway to avoid broken sidewalks and to enjoy the central vista.

The Vine Street Expressway creates fragments of isolated open space.

During off-peak hours, institutions are surrounded by a sea of asphalt and cars race by at high speeds.

Pedestrian Counts

Hourly Average Counts

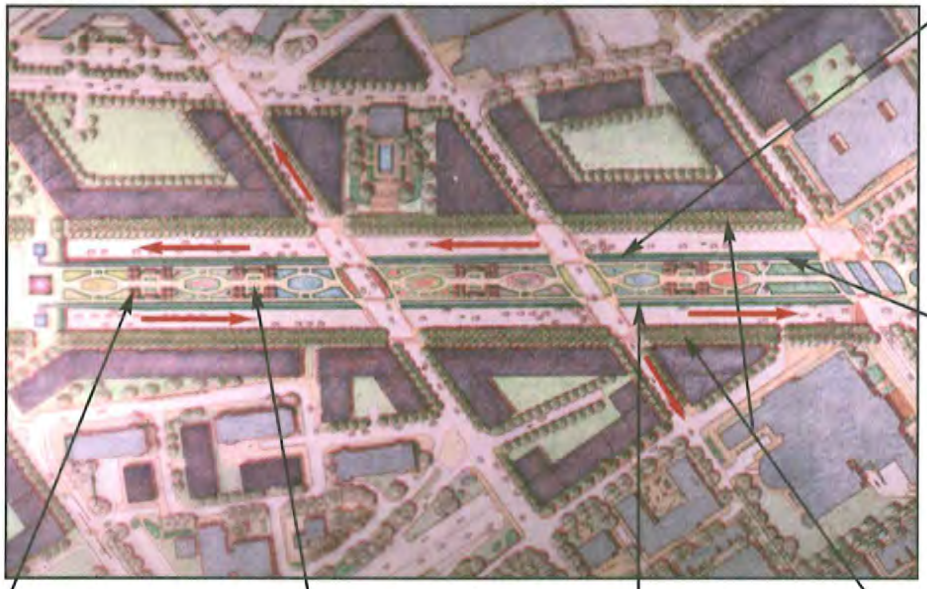


Average Number of Pedestrians Per Hour

The success of a street can be measured by the number of people who choose to walk there. In December 1998, pedestrian counts were taken at four separate locations along the Parkway over a three-hour period and averaged. The average counts for the Parkway were then compared with others taken at the same date and time in other areas of Center City.

On average, Parkway sidewalks only have 9% of the volume of pedestrians found in more vibrant parts of Center City.

The New Promenade



New traffic patterns

By moving the existing small islands together to create the central Promenade, traffic lanes can be condensed and rationalized, reducing merging difficulties. Traffic can flow along the outside of the central pedestrian park without diminishing the road capacity.

Special gardens provide attractions for strollers.

Dedicated recreation paths will attract roller-bladers, bicyclists and joggers to the Promenade.

Small kiosks located within the Promenade can offer limited food, bicycle/skate rental, and other amenities.

The Promenade can offer outdoor seating to enjoy a meal or snack.

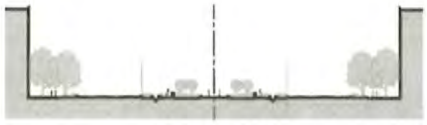
A calm stream of water will buffer the pedestrians from cars.

Outdoor cafes animate the Parkway's sidewalks.

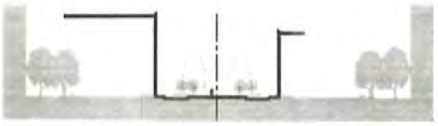
Barcelona, Spain

Ramblas de Catalunya

The Ramblas de Catalunya in Barcelona is a much smaller version of a central pedestrian promenade in Barcelona, Spain. With the adjacent residential and commercial uses, the Ramblas de Catalunya is one of the most successful and well-known public spaces in Spain.



PROPOSED
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY

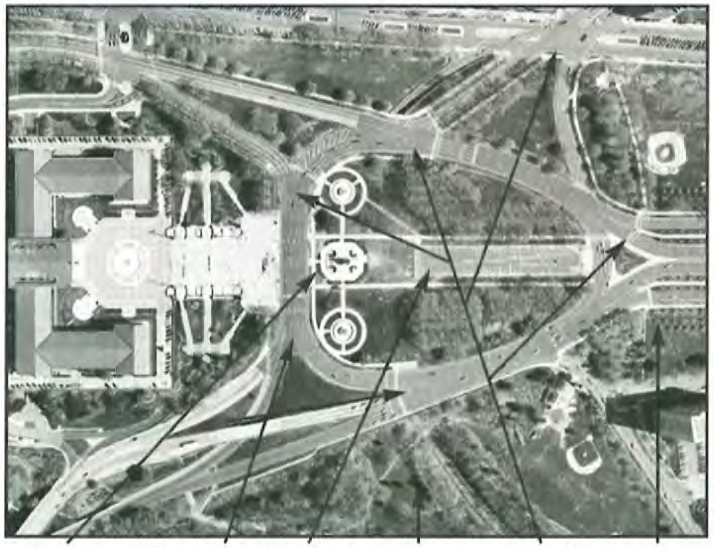


RAMBLAS DE CATALUNYA
(Overlaid upon proposed Parkway Promenade)

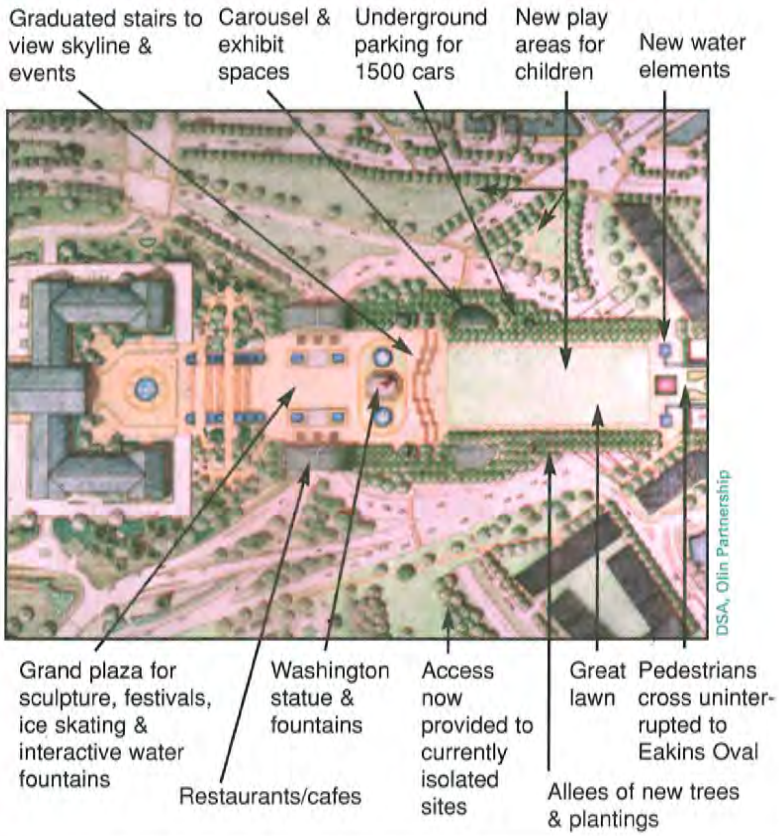
Ramblas de Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain offers a central promenade for pedestrians.

Eakins Oval

Existing Conditions



Eakins Oval



A New Public Plaza

Eakins Oval is a complex traffic circle that can be quite intimidating for the uninitiated. It connects high speed traffic heading East into the city from the Schuylkill Expressway, West Philadelphia and the two river drives and it allows connections to the Vine Street Expressway and Spring Garden Street. It carries 38,000 cars per day through many weaves and merges.

The original Oval was a design from the pre-automobile age. The earliest drawings show pedestrians walking through its center directly to the Art Museum stairs. Clearly, approaching the Art Museum along the Parkway's axis was the intention of the original plan. But as automobiles took over, the Oval became a bottleneck, jammed everyday at rush hour. In the mid-1960s, to solve this condition, the Oval was reconfigured to its present form and was linked with the expressway ramps. Although these changes improved traffic efficiency, they turned the Parkway into a major traffic artery while making it unpleasant and dangerous for pedestrians.

The current Oval consists of approximately nine acres enclosed by a minimum of five lanes of traffic on all sides. Legal pedestrian access is provided by three signaled crossings that are not located along the main access of the Parkway. The result is that most crossings are made illegally. Within the Oval is a poorly maintained surface parking lot.

In the new design, pedestrians connect directly from the Promenade without having to cross traffic, transforming Eakins Oval into an inviting gateway to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Fairmount Park. The existing, isolated parking lot is placed underground and enlarged from 250 to 1,500 parking spaces, to ensure an ample number of spaces for even the largest events. The cover over the garage provides the opportunity to create open, easily accessible public plazas. Several options were studied. One creates a simple great lawn filled with public sculptures. In a second option, in addition to the lawn, the edges are defined and this great plaza is brought to life by galleries, cafes and restaurants, book stalls, a carousel, concerts, small festivals, art fairs, an interactive water fountain and/or winter ice-skating. Eakins Oval is transformed into a series of accessible public plazas, safely separated from cars, restoring to the public the gathering place originally envisioned as the entrance to the Museum of Art.

Laurie Olin, Olin Partnership

View from Eakins Oval looking towards the Art Museum - A grand public space is created.

DSA, Faux Real

View from Eakins Oval looking towards the Center City skyline — New museum galleries can animate the edges.

Lighting the Parkway

The Benjamin Franklin Parkway should be a vibrant and enjoyable place, both day and night. After dark, new lighting can create an exciting, comfortable urban environment by illuminating building facades, planting beds, roadways, sidewalks, fountains, sculptures and monuments.

Special dramatic lighting can be added to highlight the Philadelphia Art Museum and City Hall. Other prominent buildings along the Parkway to be illuminated include the Franklin Institute, the Free Library, the Academy of Natural Sciences and the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul.

Public walkways should be lit with decorative glowing pole lights to provide definition for public spaces and provide a sense of orientation. Pedestrian-scale lights should frame the squares of JFK Plaza and Logan Square, and line the Promenade. They can provide light on major walkways and light under tree canopies, adding pedestrian scale and safety.

Features throughout the Parkway such as sculptures, monuments, landscape and the water elements should be carefully and specially lighted. Among these dramatic accents, internally lighted pavilions, museum annexes, cafes and parking garage head houses will be warm and inviting. All building entrances along the Parkway should be lighted in a similar manner.

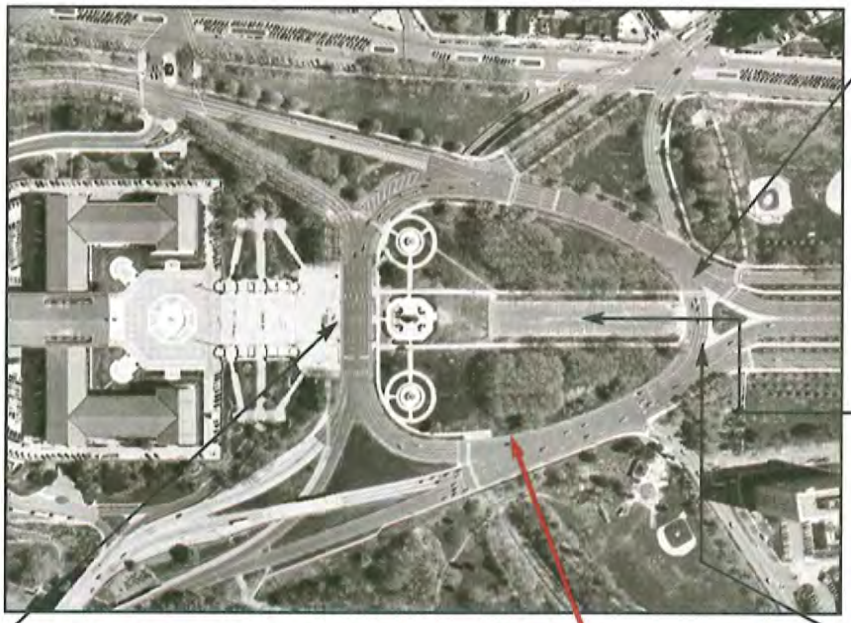
Since the 1950s, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway has evolved into an expressway and it has been lit only to meet highway standards. The new design recognizes the needs of both motorists and pedestrians, animating an exciting new urban space and extending its usability late into the night.

— Ray Grenald

Tom Crane Photography

Pedestrian-scale lights installed by the Center City District have doubled or tripled lighting levels throughout the downtown.

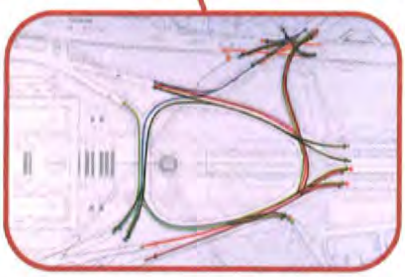
Eakins Oval: Existing Conditions



Cars are severely backed up during rush hour, but traffic moves at very high speeds in off-peak hours.

Eakins Oval is currently occupied by an unsightly surface lot.

Instead of using the marked crosswalk, pedestrians routinely run through traffic from Eakins Oval to the Art Museum.

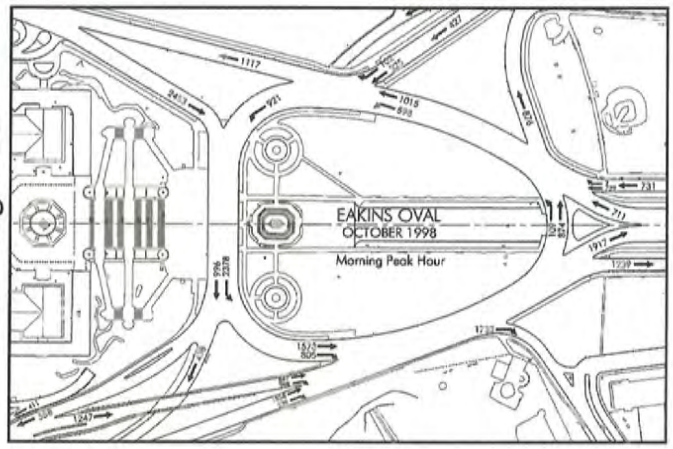


Existing traffic patterns -
The roadways surrounding Eakins Oval enable complex merging patterns and movements.

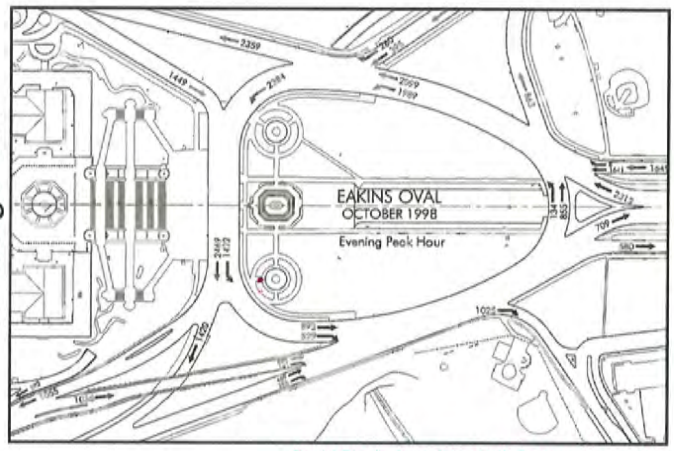
Sidewalk to nowhere: Some walkways lead pedestrians into oncoming traffic.

Existing Traffic Counts

Morning Peak



Evening Peak



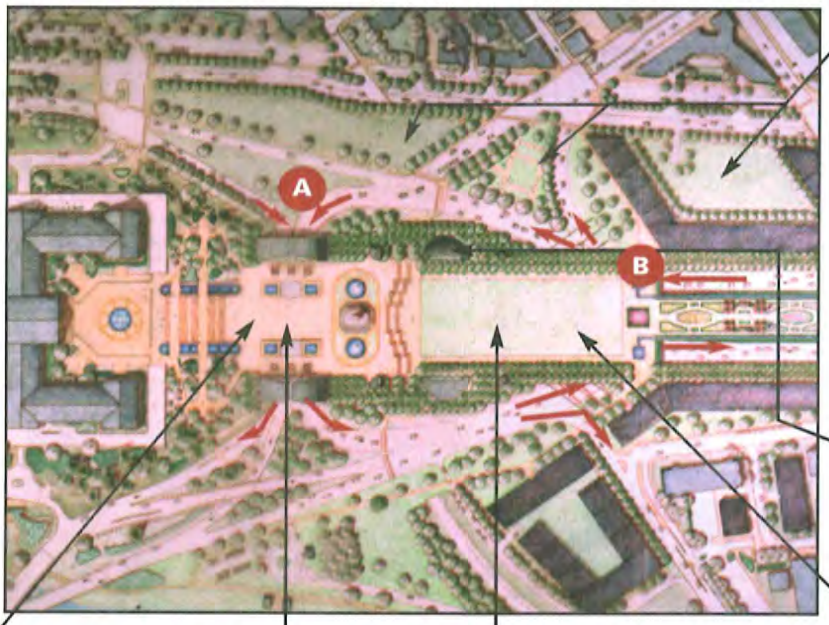
David Slovic Associates,Orth Rodgers Associates

The New Eakins Oval

New traffic patterns,

A Traffic passes under a new public space that allows pedestrians to cross directly to the Art Museum.

B Traffic dips slightly and briefly goes under the new public plaza, allowing pedestrians to cross uninterrupted.



Ball fields and play areas have the power to reconnect the fabric of the city and activate underutilized open spaces.

Eakins Oval is animated with family oriented activities such as a carousel and carousel museum.

Ice skating and other seasonal events can enliven the plaza during Winter months.

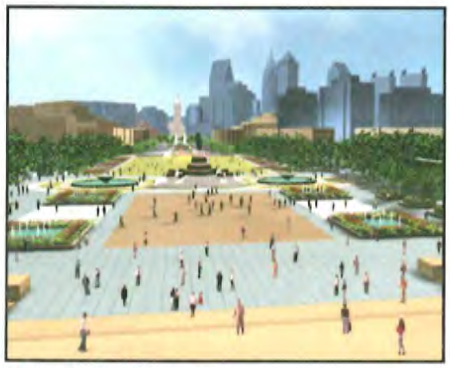
Elements can be included in Eakins Oval for summer use such as interactive water fountains.

Adding cafes and new galleries to the area will serve both area residents and visitors, and will activate the space during the evening hours.

The great lawn and public plaza can serve as a setting for both permanent and temporary public art exhibits.

What Will the New Eakins Plaza Look Like?

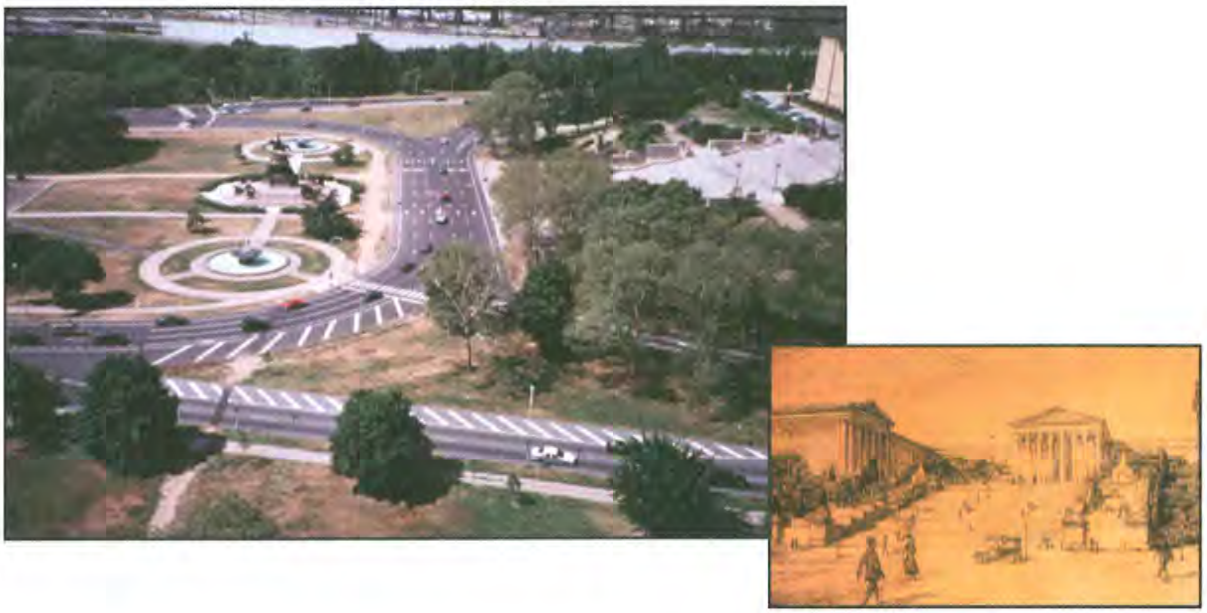
Tuileries, Paris, France



New Eakins Plaza

Along a powerful, linear vista, great public plazas can be given form, boundaries and a sense of intimacy through public sculpture and plantings. Along either side of the new plaza proposed for Eakins Oval, small buildings could provide restaurants and additional gallery space for the Museum of Art, activating the space and extending the Museum's presence into the plaza.

Crossing to the Museum of Art



Greber, 1917-1918.

Currently, Eakins Oval is separated from the base of the Art Museum stairs by five lanes of fast moving traffic. As a consequence, the Museum's ceremonial front entrance that faces Center City is used far less than its auto-oriented rear door. However, pedestrians repeatedly ignore the remote traffic signal since they are compelled by the powerful visual axis of the Parkway's design to run directly across traffic from the Washington statue to the base of the steps of the Museum of Art. Pedestrians counts performed on a December afternoon noted 90 pedestrians crossing illegally at this point in just one hour. By contrast, only 48 chose to cross at the legal, marked crosswalk at the northeastern edge of Eakins Oval.

To deal with this dangerous condition, the design team examined a variety of alternatives. The primary goal for each was to enable pedestrians to walk directly on the diagonal to reach the Museum. First, numerous road options were explored to re-route traffic and eliminate the need for the road itself *(see page 33)*. A series of Y and T roadway configurations were developed but none succeeded in retaining all of the existing highway connections nor in adequately moving traffic at rush hour. The design team also tested alternatives for diverting traffic away from the Oval. Each of these alternatives, however, had what were judged to be unacceptable impacts on adjacent residential areas.

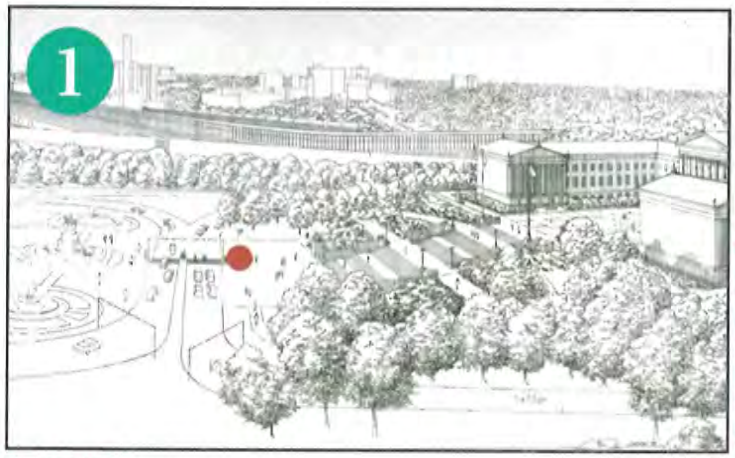
The design team then concluded that the traffic volumes that had been added by the Schuylkill Expressway created a traffic circle that was inextricably linked to the area's highway network. The design objective thus shifted to finding ways to separate pedestrians from the traffic.

Four alternatives were developed, each of which allows pedestrians to safely avoid the traffic and some of which place limits of automobile flow. During the final stages of the planning process, a fifth option was suggested by the Philadelphia Museum of Art to restore the original Greber plan for Eakins Oval and to slow traffic through the area.

Following are each of the alternatives, with advantages and disadvantages noted on the diagrams.

Connection Alternatives

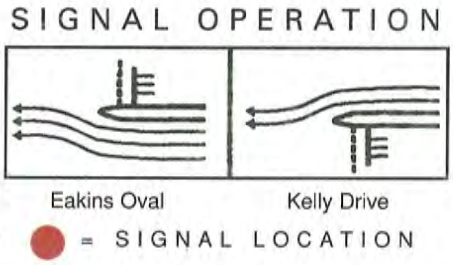
Following are five diagrams representing alternatives for connecting Eakins Oval to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The diagrams shown are conceptual in nature and are not meant to suggest actual design of structures.



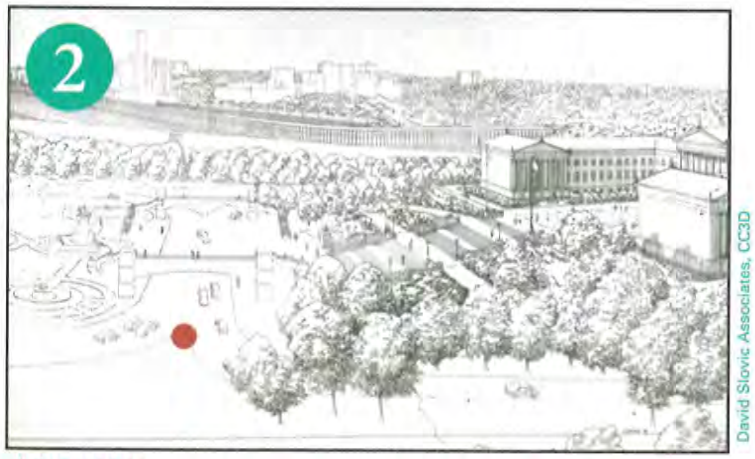
Advantages
+ Pedestrians can cross directly from Eakins Oval to the Art Museum
+ Minimal expense

Disadvantages
- Pedestrians will be forced to wait on a narrow island and will be surrounded by traffic
- Auto weave time is greatly reduced and might be unsafe — Overhead highway signs may be needed to direct merging traffic thus disrupting the vista
- Vehicular flow will be reduced

1) Traffic Signal with Pedestrian Island



In this alternative, pedestrians cross to the Art Museum at a two-phase traffic signal placed directly in front of the Art Museum stairs. The first phase allows pedestrians to cross and wait on a small island and then continue across to the base of the Art Museum stairs in the second phase of the light. Because of the relocation of the light, cars no longer have the same distance of roadway to merge and cross. As a result, overhead highway signs might be necessary to direct the traffic and could interrupt the existing central vista.

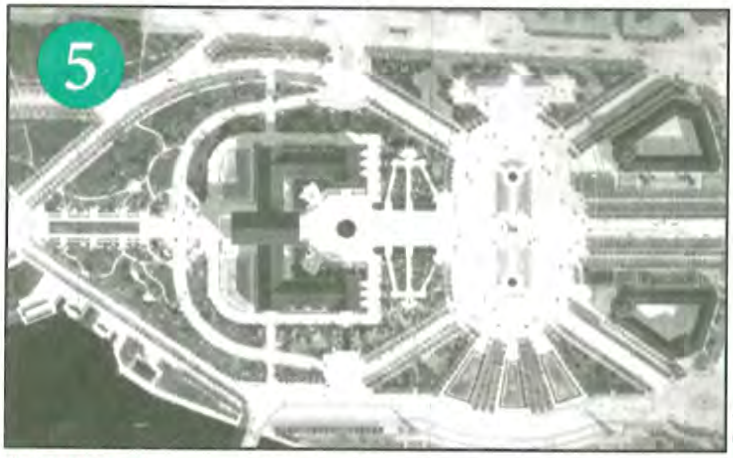


Advantages
+ Pedestrians can cross directly from Eakins Oval to the Art Museum
+ Capacity of vehicular flow will not diminish

Disadvantages
- Bridges will disrupt vista
- Bridges must be high to meet clearance requirements for motor vehicles passing below and must meet all ADA requirements (with either ramps or elevators)
- Pedestrians will be isolated on the bridges

2) Pedestrian Bridges

The second alternative shows footbridges carrying pedestrians over the roadway to the base of the Art Museum stairs. The pedestrian bridges need to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and must therefore contain either elevators or ramps. The bridges must also be substantial in order to meet clearance requirements and intrude on the existing central vista.



Greber

Advantages
+ Creates new building opportunities
+ Could provide new access to Waterworks development

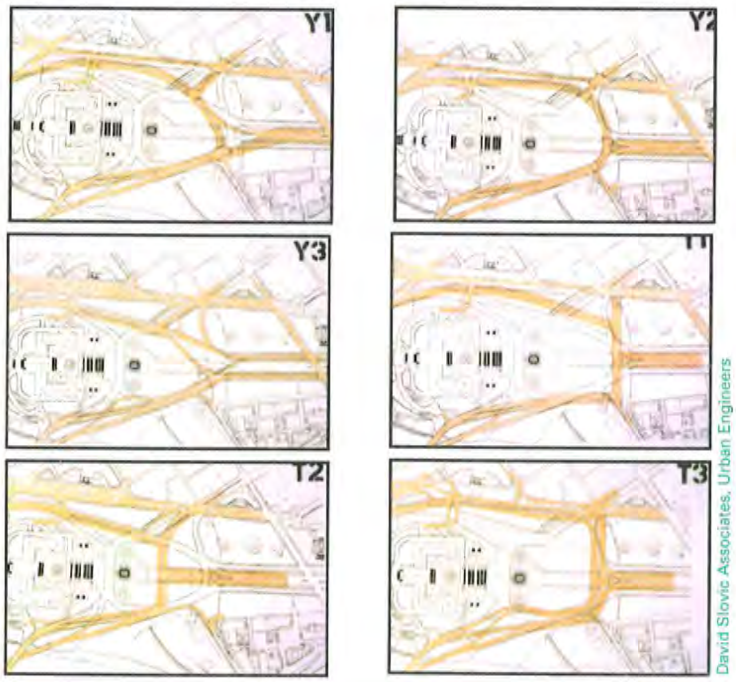
Disadvantages
- May diminish pedestrian access to the Museum
- May cause the diversion of traffic into adjacent areas
- Rush hour traffic could become more congested
- Expensive option

5) Greber's Original Design

MULTIPLE SIGNAL OPERATION

In the 1960s, when new on- and off-ramps from the Schuylkill Expressway added large volumes of traffic onto the Parkway, Greber's original plan was altered to create a traffic circle at Eakins Oval. In this option, the original oval is restored, creating a new public plaza surrounded by roads. On the right, the buildings originally contemplated by Greber could now be realized. This plan might compound the challenge for pedestrians and will probably require that traffic be diverted away from the Oval. But if Greber's orginal river road were built, it could provide new access to the historic Waterworks. West River Drive traffic could also be placed on a new road adjacent to the proposed Schuylkill River Park, passing under Vine Street and connecting to 23rd Street. This option would also eliminate the possibility of a direct pedestrian connection from the Promenade to Eakins Oval and from Eakins Oval to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Other Roads Not Taken...



David Slovic Associates, Urban Engineers

Failed Alternatives

During the analysis process, the design team attempted to configure the road system in order to eliminate the need for any traffic directly in front of the museum. Given the current volumes of traffic, each of these efforts seriously failed and were rejected as viable alternatives.

To the left are six of the rejected schemes reviewed by design team architects, planners, engineers and the staff of the City of Philadelphia Streets Department. The design team explored and dismissed over ten alternatives due to severe traffic failures and difficulties with underground utilities.

Capital Improvements: Budget and Possible Funding Sources

Public Spaces

The cost of making the physical improvements to the Parkway varies depending upon which alternative is selected for crossing to the Art Museum.

Listed below are cost estimates prepared by Urban Engineers, Inc. and the Olin Partnership. Each of the public spaces has been listed independently since the overall project can be separated into distinct phases. For example, the renovations to JFK Plaza can happen before work to the Promenade or Logan Circle takes place.

Cost Estimates for Public Spaces

JFK Plaza	$2,900,000
Logan Square	
Covering the Vine Street Expressway	$12,065,000
Park improvements	$911,000
Promenade (w/roadway changes & landscaping)	$20,000,000
Eakins Oval	$18,340,000
Connection to Art Museum	
Traffic light with pedestrian island	$7,105,000
Pedestrian footbridges	$6,040,000
Plaza with traffic submerged	$22,510,000
Pedestrian underpass	$20,775,000
Parking at Pennsylvania Avenue	$3,500,000
TOTAL:	$65,000,000 - $80,000,000

DSA, Olin Partnership

Parking Garages

Parking garages can serve as revenue generators, particularly if added development occurs on the Parkway. These facilities therefore can be financed and managed by a for-profit business with portions of the revenue being dedicated to the management and maintenance of the Parkway. Urban Engineers, Inc. has estimated the construction cost of the garages to be as follows:

Cost Estimates for Parking Garage Construction

Logan Square Garage	
550 - 800 spaces, bus drop-off & parking	$21,000,000
Eakins Oval	
1,500 spaces, bus and car drop-off	$45,200,000

Possible Funding Sources

- Transportation Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21)
- Tax Increment Financing
- Private contributions for dedicated areas
- State appropriations
- City Capital funding

Reconnecting the Fabric of the City

Improving Access

Underground Parking Garages

1,500 underground spaces at Eakins Oval

DSA, Graf-X

550 underground car and bus spaces at Logan Square

New Access Roads and Walkways

ADR Mapping

The Schuylkill River waterfront is isolated by the Spring Garden St. bridge, Vine St. Expressway, and off-ramps

DSA, Graf-X

Pennsylvania Avenue Parking

Unnecessary railroad grates

Parking is surrounded by traffic making access difficult and dangerous

ADR Mapping

New trees and plantings

Parking is shifted towards the apartments and is safely buffered by trees. Pedestrian crossings are significantly shortened.

David Slovic Associates, Olin Partnership

Parking, Connections & Access

Surveys conducted by CPDC indicate that the majority of attendees to special events on the Parkway arrive by car. A study conducted jointly by the cultural institutions found the same results for their visitors. Not surprisingly, residents in adjacent neighbors list parking and traffic as the primary problem along the Parkway.

The new Parkway plan proposes an underground garage at Logan Square providing 550 spaces plus a bus loading and waiting area. Since the institutions surrounding the Square experience peak visitor attendance during the day, spaces in the garage could be available for use by neighborhood residents and restaurant patrons in the evening and during weekends. Access will also be improved with the addition of protected roadside pull-offs in front of the institutions on the north, east and west sides of the Square.

Parking has long been a problem for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Currently, there are only 260 spaces in the area surrounding the Museum, while the surface lot at Eakins Oval provides an additional 250 spaces. Much-needed parking for visitors can be provided by a new, underground 1,500 car garage beneath Eakins Oval. Visitors will also get the added benefit, as they leave the garage, of entering the Museum through its main, ceremonial entrance while enjoying the extraordinary views of the downtown.

Currently, diagonal parking is centered in the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue, where it encourages unsafe, mid-block crossings and creates a wide expanse of busy roadway for residents to cross to get to the park. By removing the grates that are no longer needed to ventilate the train tunnel and by relocating the existing parking immediately adjacent to the apartment buildings on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, safe, landscaped lots can be created for the residents and their visitors. The crossing distance for families and children can also be significantly reduced.

Other sites along the Parkway are unused because there is no automobile or pedestrian access. The eight-acre triangular parcel of land immediately northwest of Park Towne Place apartments is extremely isolated. Cut off by the Spring Garden Street bridge off-ramp to the north, the on-ramp to the Vine Street Expressway to the east, Schuylkill River to the west, and dissected by active railroad tracks, this area is empty and unsafe, except when a local football team practices. To increase access and activity, the new plan provides a series of access roadways and sidewalks that will allow people to drive and walk through the site, connecting directly to the Schuylkill River Park and the restored Waterworks. Through traffic will be able to access either the Vine Street Expressway or reconnect into the Center City street grid at 24th Street.

Mass Transit: Parkway Loop

The Phlash tourist loop.

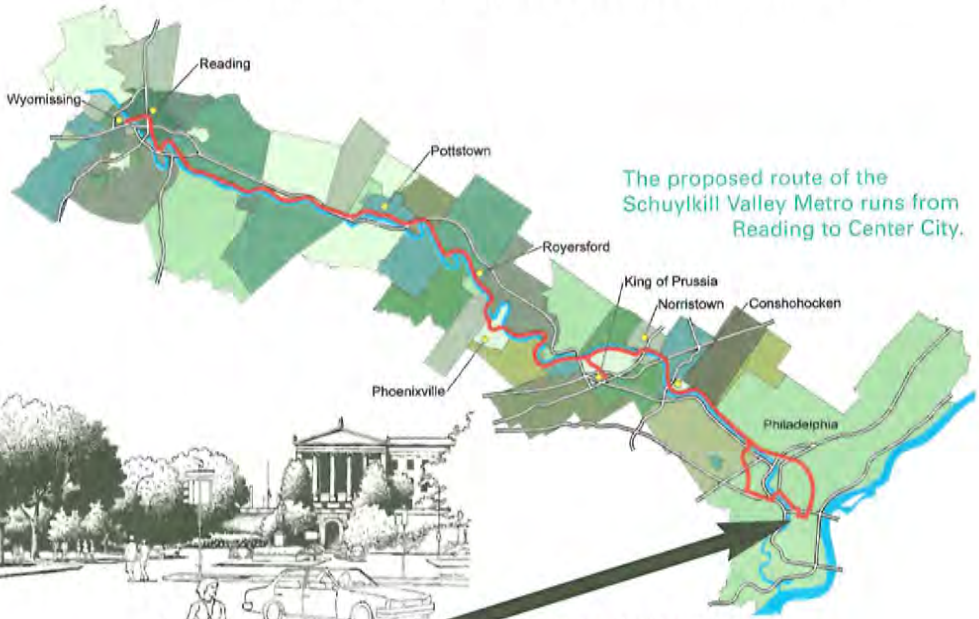
SEPTA and the Parkway cultural institutions have discussed increasing the frequency of the Phlash, a Center City circulation route for tourists. Transit can help link the institutions along the Parkway with each other as well as connecting the Parkway with the rest of the city and the region.

A dedicated Parkway transit loop could bring downtown office workers to the institutions and restaurants during the lunch hour and after work. A transit loop could also link the regional rail system at Suburban Station and proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro stops with institutions and new parking facilities.

Mass Transit: New Regional Light Rail

SEPTA is currently in the design and evaluation phase for a new light rail route that could connect the Center City office core, the Parkway, the Philadelphia Zoo and Manayunk with stops in Valley Forge, King of Prussia and Reading, PA.

This Schuylkill Valley Metro line would primarily serve commuters between the city and suburbs during the week providing an alternative to highway congestion. But it could also act as a vital link for local and regional tourism. Attractive light rail cars could be easily accessible to Parkway visitors with above-ground Parkway station entrances.



The proposed route of the Schuylkill Valley Metro runs from Reading to Center City.

Urban Engineers, Inc.

A proposed new rail station at 25th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

ADR Mapping

The Parkway separates neighborhoods.

DSA, Graf-X

Playgrounds for families and children animate open space.

Students at the Friends' Select School gave the design team their ideas for great playgrounds to be located along the Parkway.

Reconnecting Neighborhoods

When design team members met with adjacent community groups during the planning process, it became clear that the Parkway creates a chasm between bordering areas. Residents described the difficulty of walking from the Logan Square neighborhood to the Fresh Fields supermarket. Multiple lanes, turning cars and short traffic light green cycles, make it almost impossible to cross the Parkway safely in one continuous movement. Others described their lack of comfort walking from work in winter months on north and south bound streets devoid of other pedestrians. Fairmount neighborhood residents mentioned the absence of safe play areas for children and difficulty crossing Pennsylvania Avenue to reach the existing ball fields.

While the design team had focused initially only on the Parkway diagonal, these discussions broadened the study's perspective to include a north/south orientation and a new objective: *Reconnecting the fabric of the city.*

The Parkway for Families and Children

A new Parkway can achieve this goal in a modest way by adding new recreation areas and playgrounds, by reducing the width of roadways and by adding access roads and new pedestrian paths to previously isolated sites.

Accessible playgrounds and ball fields for children and well-maintained and animated open spaces for adults are essential if we are to retain families and attract new residents to the city. For example, a 1997 CPDC survey of 3,300 Center City workers found that 44% of suburban residents who would consider moving to Center City said that access to parks, playgrounds and recreation is "very important" or "important" as a factor in neighborhood selection.

Repopulating the Parkway and the City

Repopulating the Parkway and the City

Over 40 years ago, Jane Jacobs made a fundamental observation about urban parks in *Death and Life of Great American Cities.* Contrasting the round-the-clock vitality of Rittenhouse Square with the quiescence of Washington Square and the squalor of Franklin Square, she suggested that successful parks depend on the density of surrounding apartment and office buildings to provide patrons throughout the day and evening. Without "customers" within easy walking distance, many cities are left with empty and forlorn places, inhabited only by homeless encampments. Safe urban parks, she noted, like safe urban streets, require continuous use and activity.

Cities can suffer from surplus open space. The northern blocks of Independence National Historical Park are a case in point. There are simply not enough adjacent buildings filled with people seeking open space to support all the parkland in Washington Square, Franklin Square and the three blocks north of Independence Hall. The recent decision to place both a new visitor and Constitution center on the Mall is recognition of this fact.

The Parkway design team came to a similar conclusion about the three million square feet of open space along the Parkway. One-third is well used. For example, Swann Fountain in Logan Square is a place with extraordinary attractions within close walking distance of cultural institutions, office buildings, two schools, two hotels and a residential community. Another third, like Von Colln ball fields, is seasonally used by families in the adjacent neighborhoods. But there are at least one million square feet of remote and barren spaces, like the edges of the Vine Street Expressway on the south side of the Parkway. Other places are populated only with homeless encampments, like the fragments of park in front of the Free Library, which is adjacent to the noisy chasm created by the Expressway, or the tree grove in front of the Youth Study Center. Many sections lack sufficient neighboring activity to generate a steady flow of pedestrians. Even one of the most vital sections, the corner of 18th Street and Logan Square, has only 12% of the number of pedestrians per hour as a comparable corner of Walnut Street at Rittenhouse Square. Our design team therefore recommended reconfiguring and consolidating the open space to create at least 2.4 million square feet of viable park land in more contiguous parcels that could benefit from patrons from adjacent cultural institutions, hotels, restaurants, neighborhoods, apartment buildings *and from new development.*

During the planning process, about 10% of respondents raised a concern about *any* development on the Parkway, characterizing it as the destruction or commercialization of the natural environment. But the Parkway is not a remnant of the wilderness first encountered by William Penn. It is a man-made place, cut out of the fabric of the city by demolishing 1,300 houses, factories and warehouses with the intention of replacing them with new civic buildings. Even more, most urban parks were rarely intended for the passive enjoyment of undisturbed nature. The movement to create parks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was driven by the need to provide alternatives to the dense streets of the industrial city. Parks were designed to be used by people for picnics, ball games and strolling. When people enjoy themselves, they produce litter and wear and tear on the landscape. For a park to be successful, it also needs ongoing funding for staff and routine maintenance.

Unfortunately, the history of Fairmount Park for the last 30 years has been a tale of declining budgets. Since 1970, the Fairmount Park Commission's staff has been cut from 570 to 225 positions, a reduction of 61.5%. In 1983, the Commission's budget was $10.5 million; in 1999, it was $13 million. Adjusted for inflation, this represents a 28% cut in funding. Nothing is more demoralizing to the civic spirit than seeing a park, two days after a major event, with its trash cans still unemptied and overflowing. This neglect conveys a broader message about government's inability to manage public affairs.

Was there once a golden age when city leaders cared about civic spaces and generously funded the maintenance of public

parks? Clearly, there have been moments and mayors who understood the importance of parks in retaining residents and attracting visitors. But generally, history suggests otherwise. The founder of American landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted, continuously complained about public officials trimming his construction budget for Central Park and reducing the maintenance staff. When it came time to design Mount Royal park in Montreal, he learned his lesson, proposing an adjacent residential neighborhood and the sale of 270 lots for housing to help pay for the park he was commissioned to design.

The earliest plans for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway do not portray a passive landscape. The design by Paul Cret lined the Parkway with buildings. Even Jacques Greber's unfinished plan mixed buildings and park. Further, these original plans justify the investment in public space in terms that sound strikingly like contemporary tax-increment financing. An August 1909 publication of the City of Philadelphia, outlining plans for a new Parkway to link City Hall and Fairmount Park notes: *"The amount of taxes paid into the City Treasury each year from the [wards adjacent to the Parkway], over and above the amount of money expended in these wards by the City of Philadelphia, amounts to sufficient to pay for the Parkway in ten years. Moreover, after the completion of the Parkway, the assessments of properties in these wards would be greatly increased, giving a new and perpetual income to the City."*

In the following year, in his annual message, Mayor Reyburn was quite explicit about the relationship between park development and real estate development:

"To promote the greatest economic value from the development of this section of the City, whereby the return to the City will be measured not only by the enhanced real estate values immediately adjacent thereto, resulting in increased taxation, but whereby the whole City will be benefited, the undertaking must be along lines that will secure the highest class of structures...developed in a semi-commercial way, such as hotels, theaters, clubs, and high-class stores, ... public and semi-public institutions ... [and] large private residences and apartment houses."

In 1935, when the cultural and civic buildings we know today, except the Family Court, were all in place, the newly formed Philadelphia City Planning Commission took stock of what had been accomplished and what remained.

The year 1935 finds the Parkway but little more than half-completed, and with a total investment of more than $36 million. With this in mind, it would seem obvious that before any additional land is acquired, it would do well to review the scheme for ultimate development.

Noting that the Greber plan, which *"was never officially approved,"* had created numerous traffic problems and difficult to develop triangular parcels, the Planning Commission recommended reconfiguring Greber's plan to provide *"ample, regularly shaped sites for monumental buildings, which doubtless will be built on the Parkway."* Though the country and the city were in the midst of the Depression, the Commission still looked forward to building the American Philosophical Society, a Temple of Music, an Academy of Fine Arts, a school of Industrial Arts, and an Art Club Pavilion.

To the eyes of planners in 1935, the Parkway was still an unfinished place, like a contemporary suburban subdivision with roads and utilities, but devoid of buildings. But the Depression lingered and was followed by war. In the years that ensued, the trees continued to grow, but the buildings were forgotten.

Paul R. Levy

Construction of the Parkway required the demolition of 1,300 houses, warehouses and factories.

As late as 1936, the City Planning Commission still envisioned six additional buildings on the Parkway.

Today's Parkway remains an unfinished place.

Options for Animating the Parkway

Elkman Advertising

Expansion Space Needed by Existing Cultural Institutions

- Academy of Natural Sciences
  Current space: 270,000 sf
  Expansion space needed: **180,000 sf**
- Franklin Institute
  Current space: 440,000 sf
  Expansion space needed: **100,000 sf**
- Free Library of Philadelphia
  Current space: 300,000 sf
  Expansion space needed: **225,000 sf**
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
  Current space: 630,000 sf
  Expansion space needed: **200,000 sf**

The Parkway as a Cultural Destination

The Parkway is the setting for some of the region's finest cultural institutions, many of which are located in buildings that were designed over 70 years ago. Today, most have significant expansion needs. For example, the working laboratories of the Academy of Natural Sciences are carved out of former atrium spaces, subdividing rooms, leaving stairways that lead only to ceilings. Portions of the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art can not be shown for lack of exhibit space. The Free Library, home to many exquisite early editions of books and illustrations, is unable to share these treasures due to a lack of exhibit space. The Parkway cultural institutions already draw 2.7 million people each year. The institutions also employ over 2,000 individuals, 76% of whom are Philadelphia residents. With expanded facilities and new state-of-the art exhibits, they could make an even greater educational and economic impact on the city.

Following the Greber vision for the boulevard, new institutions could be added to the Parkway. A number of ideas emerged during the planning phase, such as the relocation of the African American Museum in Philadelphia, the building of a Calder Family Museum, a proposed Museum of Contemporary Art and a relocated Carousel Museum.

Cultural institutions could be added in a number of ways and at varying levels of density. Existing sites could be re-used. There is general consensus, for example, that the Youth Study Center is not an appropriate use for Parkway land. If the functions in the Youth Study Center were combined with related activities in the Family Court, Philadelphia could create a new Juvenile Justice Center in another location off the Parkway. Without increasing density levels, both of these sites could then be reused for cultural institutions. Cultural institutions could also be built on currently vacant sites, or as part of mixed-use developments .

OPTION 1: Adding New Institutions

If a new juvenile justice center is built elsewhere, cultural institutions could re-use existing sites like the Youth Study Center and the Family Court building.

OPTION 2: New Institutions & Cafes

Restaurants and cafes adjacent to, or as part of, cultural institutions could further animate the Parkway.

Creating a New Urban Neighborhood

The Parkway is an ideal setting to build upon downtown's extraordinary residential growth. Center City is already home to 75,000 moderate and upper-middle income residents. Due to concerted public and private efforts over the last three decades, Center City is one of the few areas of Philadelphia where the population has steadily grown, increasing by more than 20% since 1960, even as the city has experienced a population loss of almost 30%. During this same period of time, the median value of owner-occupied property in Center City has increased from $15,600 to $196,200, expanding the tax base of the City. Philadelphians too often take for granted the significant asset we possess with such a large number of downtown residents, the third largest in the country, behind only Manhattan and Chicago.

Retaining and increasing residents should be a central objective for a number of reasons. First, continuing population loss means a further erosion of political power and influence for Philadelphia in Harrisburg and in Washington, D.C., and a corresponding decrease in levels of state and federal support. Second, strengthening neighborhoods where individuals can quickly and conveniently walk to work, supports efforts to maintain and attract both employers and a qualified workforce. Living downtown also promotes energy conservation and reduces pollution and traffic congestion.

Finally, increasing the population of Center City adds customers and patrons for Center City's retail, restaurant and cultural facilities, enhances public safety by adding more people to the streets during evening hours, and reinforces efforts to build a strong, job-generating hospitality industry in Philadelphia. New residents also contribute significantly to the tax base.

As Center City's housing market has steadily improved, the demand has been growing for new residential construction. With its extraordinary amenities and views, the Parkway is an ideal location to meet this demand. The Parkway area could be developed to accommodate up to 3,000 to 4,000 new residents, bringing added life, activity and safety along the Promenade.

Diverse apartment buildings of similar height line Boston's Commonwealth Avenue.

Public uses animate the ground floors of apartment buildings in Paris.

Four story town houses line Pine Street, Center City Philadelphia.

Design Guidelines

If new buildings are to be allowed on the Parkway, design guidelines should ensure that the unique qualities of the Parkway are preserved and enhanced.

Preserve the View Corridor

View to City Hall

View to Art Museum

Option 1: The existing 200-ft setback

Option 2: Allow development with the same setback requirements which exist on the Champs Elysées in Paris and Commonwealth Avenue in Boston.

Option 3: Create a setback requirement between existing boundaries and those of the Champs Elysées. The set back shown is about 52 feet from the curbline.

DSA

The views looking towards the Philadelphia Museum of Art and those looking back down to City Hall are essential aspects of the Parkway. But the actual view corridor that the public enjoys, defined by light poles, banners and and existing trees, is actually much narrower than the current legally required setback of two hundred feet.

DSA, Faux Real

Height Limits

Any new buildings that front on the Parkway should respect the 80-foot high cornice lines of the Free Library and the Franklin Institute. Buildings could then increase in elevation as they moved back from the Parkway, so long as they preserved the skyline views from adjacent apartment buildings on the northern side of the Parkway.

Materials and Use Guidelines

Any new building should adhere to a palette of approved colors and materials that respect the extraordinary quality of existing buildings.

All buildings that front on the Parkway should avoid curb cuts for driveways and have animated ground-floor uses, such as public institutions, galleries, restaurants, or the lobbies of apartment buildings. Controls should also be established for permitted ground-floor retail uses, lighting standards and building signs. Service retail establishments, like dry-cleaners, bank branches, and copy centers, for example, should be allowed only on north/south-oriented streets.

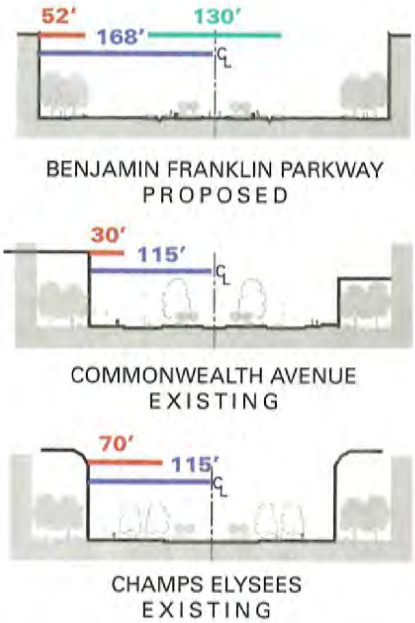
A Sense of Place

With the suggested setback requirements, walkways along the Parkway will be fifty-two feet wide, more than three times the width of Walnut Street sidewalks. This will allow generous space for pedestrians, plantings and for sidewalk cafes.

The diagrams on the right compare the new proposed building set backs and height limits for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway with those of Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, Massachusetts and the Champs Elysées in Paris, France. The building lines are marked in black and are overlayed upon the proposed Parkway profile, shown in grey.

Currently, buildings must be set back 200 feet from the Parkway curbline. Under the new proposal guidelines, buildings will be set back 52 feet enabling new development to define the edges of the Parkway as a dramatic and memorable place.

For example, new low rise buildings could be placed in front of Park Towne Place and in front of the ball fields. Cultural institutions, hotels, offices or housing could be placed on underutilized vacant sites.



DSA, Graf X

Distance to curbline
Distance to center line
Width of Promenade

Density

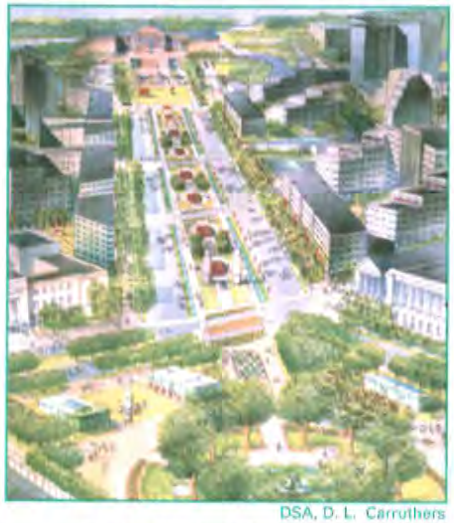
In addition to setback and height controls, basic decisions choices need to be made about appropriate levels of density for any new buildings on the Parkway.

Low-Density: New buildings could be added that occupied only a small portion of specific sites, creating generous parks, plazas and open space.

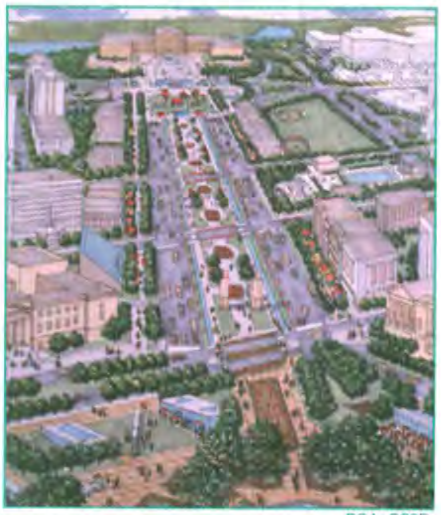
High-Density: Respecting appropriate height and set-back controls, buildings and institutions could fully occupy a new development zone, creating a defined edge along the Parkway.

Mixed-Density: Ball fields and open space could be preserved by developing different blocks at differing levels of density.

ADR Mapping



DSA, D. L. Carruthers



DSA, CC3D

Managing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Managing the New Parkway

DSA, D. L. Carruthers

New public spaces should only be created if a Parkway management organization is established to maintain walkways and landscaped areas, manage the use of public spaces, better coordinate municipal services, promote the cultural institutions, and plan for future development.

The various plans for the Parkway prepared in the first fifteen years of the 20th century all contained commercial development as a major component. In 1913, however, when demolition was nearly complete, the Pennsylvania state legislature passed laws giving all cities the right to control construction within two hundred feet of park land. Philadelphia City Council responded by voting to annex the Parkway to Fairmount Park. In 1917, the Fairmount Park Commission drafted height and land-use controls for the Parkway, effectively giving the city its first zoning regulations.

Skeptical of commercial development, the Commission hired Jacques Greber to create a new master plan for the Parkway. While Greber adopted many aspects of earlier plans, he was able, notes David Brownlee, "to change one of the fundamental characteristics of the earlier scheme, converting the parkway from an urban boulevard into a green wedge of park, reaching inward toward the congested center of the city."[1] Reacting against the congestion, noise and pollution of the industrial city in an era before zoning, Greber described his work as "the opening of the very heart of the city to the sanitary breezes of Fairmount Park."[2]

Nonetheless, Greber's plan called for the construction of a series of civic buildings west of Logan Square. It was the Depression that brought most of these plans to naught. However, in the 1920s a suit was filed that challenged the right of a higher level of government to dictate land-management decisions to a lower level of government. In 1927, in *Philadelphia v. Spangler* the 1913 Act of the Commonwealth was found to violate the provision of the Constitution of Pennsylvania that provides: *"The General Assembly shall not delegate to any special commission, private corporation or association any power to make, supervise or interfere with any municipal improvement...."*[3] The court ruled that the city might validly bring the Parkway under the care of the Fairmount Park Commission for management and policing of the park, but it could not transfer ownership and control. Title to the Parkway land thus remained with the City of Philadelphia.

But it was not until 1961 that City Council finally acted to formalize the management responsibility for the Parkway, *"vesting the Fairmount Park Commission with certain jurisdiction over this area."* With zoning regulations now in place citywide, local government could regulate land-use and density without resorting to special Pennsylvania laws to protect park land.

The language of the November 1961 ordinance, however, was curiously tentative, as if local leaders deliberately wanted to leave open the possibility for a future, alternative option. Section 2 of the Ordinance, as signed by Mayor Dilworth, reads: *"Until Council shall otherwise provide, the Fairmount Park Commission shall have the care and management of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway."*

Today, the problem for Philadelphia is not industrial congestion and pollution, but job and population loss, resulting in large tracts of vacated land. Parks are clearly a vital component of any strategy to attract residents and visitors. But today, the Parkway suffers from large expanses of unused space and the inability of a financially strapped Fairmount Park Commission to maintain it all. Only where private contributors and non-profit corporations have raised additional money — the Azalea Garden, the Binswanger Triangle, and Swann Fountain — is the Parkway maintained in a first-class manner.

Further, the overlapping jurisdictions of a half dozen city departments make it difficult to reconcile conflicting needs and to implement coordinated solutions. Therefore, CPDC recommends

[1]David Brownlee, Building the City Beautiful, p. 29

[2]Brownlee, page 31

[3]Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Article III, paragraph 20. *Legal research donated by Wolf-Block, Schorr and Solis-Cohen.*

the creation a new management entity for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway district. This management entity can be a single point of responsibility and authority for public space management, maintenance, events production, development, and for the promotion of the district and its cultural institutions.

A new management entity should prepare and oversee new development guidelines that balance open space requirements with the need to repopulate the city and animate the Parkway. Because the Fairmount Park Commission has a mission to manage park land, it should be an important member of this organization. But the new management organization would have a broader mission in which it would review and approve the design of new buildings within the district, coordinate municipal services, and program and manage festivals as well as events. It would also have power to assess or charge fees to cafes, restaurants, parking lots and facilities, and buildings fronting on the Parkway to insure a dedicated revenue stream for the maintenance, security and marketing of the Parkway.

This management entity could be a non-profit agency like the Penn's Landing Corporation, or municipal authority similar to the Center City District, or a hybrid of the two. An act of City Council, signed by the Mayor, would be necessary to authorize the creation of a Parkway management district, designate its authority and responsibilities, methods for governance and funding, and to transfer responsibility for the Parkway to the new management entity.

By law, City Council and the Mayor have the authority to designate a method for selecting the Board of Directors for this management entity, but it is suggested that this Board include, at the least, representatives from the Parkway's cultural institutions, the Fairmount Park Commission, adjacent property owners, neighboring residential groups, as well as representatives from the architectural and business community. This is exactly the governance structure that was created for the Friends of Logan Square, the organization that successfully raised funds to restore Swann Fountain.

One of the first tasks of the Parkway management district would be to prepare design, development and use guidelines for the Parkway district to supercede all existing public controls. This master plan can provide a framework for new cultural institutions and other buildings and can create a single point for design review within the Parkway district.

Annual Estimated Maintenance Budget

- *7 DAYS per WEEK of maintenance service*
  - — Manual & mechanical sidewalk sweeping
  - — Graffiti removal
  - — Pressure washing of sidewalks & plazas

  subtotal = $1,500,000

- *Landscape maintenance*

  subtotal = $ 400,000

TOTAL: $1,900,000*

Possible Revenue Sources

- Fairmount Park
- Private contributions
- Assessments on cafes & restaurants
- Assessments on new private development fronting the Parkway
- Dedication of revenue from new parking garages
- Fees from special events

**Source: Center City District, Philadelphia Horticultural Society*

Managing Events on the Parkway

GPTMC

The Parkway has become the setting for an increasing number of parades, fairs, athletic competitions and races. In 1998 alone, 33 events involved either the partial or full road closure of the Parkway. Some of these events, such as Unity Day and the Fourth of July Fireworks, drew over 800,000 people, creating parking problems for adjacent neighbors, difficult access for the cultural institutions, and a great deal of stress on Parkway plantings and trees.

While signature events should remain on the Parkway, consideration should be given to moving many others to alternative locations. Parades, for example, could help animate the downtown on weekends, creating new business for restaurants and shops. With dispersed parking and greater use of mass transit, traffic congestion could be significantly reduced, while the economic impact of events could increase.

Larger gatherings that require a great deal of setup, tents and stages, might be better situated at true fairgrounds like Memorial Hall in Fairmount Park or FDR Park in South Philadelphia, originally designed for Centennial and Sesquicentennial celebrations.

For those events which remain on the Parkway, centralized management is key. It is important that one entity evaluate the impact of proposed events on the cultural institutions and adjacent neighborhoods, coordinate traffic circulation, parking and access and handle communications and marketing.

List of Events on the Parkway Involving Partial or Complete Road Closure in 1998

Unity Day
Sunoco Welcome America!
Parkway Nite Out
AIDS Walk
First Union Championship Bike Race
St. Patrick's Day Parade
Pulaski Day Parade
Puerto Rican Day Parade
Von Stueben Day Parade
Thanksgiving Day Parade
Breast Cancer: A Race for the Cure
Mini Grand Prix
A to Z Run
Philadelphia Marathon
Memory Walk
First Union Community Bike Race
Memorial Ceremony for Armenian Martyrs
Philadelphia Distance Run
Multiple Sclerosis Walk
First Union 5K Run
Organ Transplant Run
AIDS Candle Lite Vigil
Walk Against Hunger
Walk America
Great Strides: A Walk to Cure Cystic Fibrosis
Special Olympics Torch Run
National Tap Dance Day
Walk for Success
Red Cross Disaster Walk
DEC Walk-a-thon
Asian American Parade
Philippines Independence Parade
Labor Day Parade

Public Comment

Public Comment: *1902*

Groundbreaking for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, 1907.

The suggestion that Philadelphia should have a diagonal Boulevard from City Hall to Fairmount Park is an excellent one. Fairmount Park is...the finest park in America...and this fact would become more widely known if there were a beautiful and appropriate parkway which would make access to the Park from the city an easier and pleasanter matter than it is today.

Edward Bok, Editor, *Ladies Home Journal*, 1902

From the time that the Parkway was first proposed, shortly after the Civil War, until the roadway was finished after the First World War, over forty years elapsed. As David Brownlee recounts in *Building the City Beautiful*, for advocates of the Parkway it was a saga of recurring approvals, setbacks, revised proposals, and more defeat, until construction finally started in 1907.

In 1902, when plans were once again rejuvenated after an eight year hiatus, The Parkway Association — composed of prominent leaders like Justus Strawbridge, Edmund Stotesbury and P.A.B. Widener — published a pamphlet, which assembled the editorials and the testimonials of the day. There is no better way to put present concerns in context than to listen to the debate from almost a century ago.

The only reason why we have not had a fine wide Boulevard from City Hall to Fairmount Park before, is simply that the people of the city have not understood what it means to the prosperity of the city, and to the comfort and happiness of the people.

Russell H. Conwell, Pastor of the Baptist Temple,
Founder of Temple University, October 30, 1902

The proposition to create a Boulevard from the City Hall to Fairmount Park has been too long before the people of Philadelphia to need explanation at this late date...The Boulevard is one of those things of which it may be said, that when it does come the people will only wonder why it did not occur long before it did.

The Evening Bulletin, June 13, 1902

Just as old fogies argued against the introduction of gas and afterwards electricity; against asphalt paving and clean smooth streets; against every enterprise of public merit, so they are today antagonizing the proposed Boulevard from the City Hall to Fairmount Park.

Listen to them and smile while they are saying that we can not stand the expense; that anywhere from eight to twenty millions will have to be shouldered by the taxpayers indiscriminately, while the direct benefit will accrue only to a very small number...

The curse of Philadelphia has always been the objection to anything new by the Don't-Know class.... The Boulevard would not only beautify the city, but would attract visitors...It would benefit the poor and rich alike...It would add to the value of property; and those who should purchase land along its line and build fine houses would really pay the expenses...As a matter of fact, the Boulevard would be a business investment in which the city would engage at a continuous profit to itself.

Philadelphia Inquirer, June 25, 1902

As was expected, the boulevard plan is met by the old objections. It would cost too much; the city has not the money, or needs it money for other things...If the work were to be done all at once, this would be a valid objection. The fine pictures that have been drawn by imaginative architects are only dreams of the far distant future.... It is not extravagance that burdens Philadelphia, but inefficiency. The big things that the city has done have always been the most profitable things – Fairmount Park, the Reading Subway, the water filtration system...Bringing the Park into connection with the heart of the city, there is an opportunity to do for posterity what posterity will not be able to do for itself, except at a cost compared with which the present cost is trifling.

The Philadelphia Sunday Times, June 16, 1902

Public Comment: *1999*

Between the unveiling of the preliminary plans in April 1999 and by the end of September, CPDC received 100 emails, letters, and phone calls about the project. The correspondence falls into six categories:

- **Totally opposed to any change**
- **Opposed to the plan, but recognize the need for change**
- **Supportive** – *Some are very supportive of the plan overall, but do not like a specific components of the plan. A few suggestions were given for additional alternatives and ideas., some of which were incorporated into this document*
- **Fully supportive**
- **Ball fields** – *These emails/letters are concerned about the need to maintain ball fields in the area, mostly focused on Von Colln Field. These are all single issue in nature and take no position on the plan as a whole.*
- **Other** – *These correspondence talk about related historical facts and offer services without giving an opinion.*

Members of the public view Parkway plans at Mellon Independence Center, July 1999.

"Fully supportive" and "Supportive" emails/letters comprise 65% of the correspondence. "Opposed to the plan, but recognize the need for change" and "Totally opposed" emails/letters represent 9% of the total. "Ball field" emails/letters make up 12% of the total while "Other" emails/letters comprised 14% of all correspondence.

Totally Opposed

As a lifelong resident of Philadelphia and more specifically the Fairmount area I am writing to you in protest of the further development of the Parkway. As it stands traffic is a horrendous problem along the Parkway and by cutting down lanes and adding venues, this problem will only increase. The Parkway is an example of a natural and beautiful aspect of city life. It is both aesthetically pleasing and financially sound just the way it is. Venues currently on the Parkway are easy to access from anywhere in the city and are currently very cheap to visit. With this project these venues will become overcrowded, lost in the shuffle, and subsequently overpriced. Please understand that I fully support beautifying our city but there are other areas which need more help than our lovely Parkway. Our tax money would be better spent repairing the many dilapidated houses found in our neighborhoods. Or cleaning up drug infested areas. In short, please do not further any work on this project. It is unnecessary and sure to do more harm than good.

The idea of trying to turn Logan Circle into Logan Square is extremely unfortunate. It may sound cute, smart and clever on its surface. Underneath it is total destruction of the integrity of one of the greatest civic undertakings of this century, the Philadelphia Parkway. Logan Circle is the only example in Philadelphia of a beautifully designed open space in which all of the architecture surrounding it is modulated to enhance the unity of the total composition. To sprinkle huge miscellaneous objects through it indiscriminately, such as the airplane shown on the drawing and the rumored dinosaurs and trains, clutters up the simple harmony of the open space and negates a century of coordinated effort and cooperation.

As a lifelong resident of Fairmount, I have strolled down the Parkway more times than I can count. Please, leave Eakins Oval alone. A carousel, restaurant/cafe and other so-called improvements would just be a distraction from the natural beauty that already exists.

Opposed But Recognize the Need for Change

The way in which "The Parkway" is now defines Philadelphia. It does need to be cleaned up and yes, maybe a few new things can be added. If anything is going to be taken away from the Parkway I would like to see that hideous Youth Study Center imploded.

I think that the Parkway is fine as is with perhaps some minor cosmetic changes. Why tamper with success? If it works (which it does) don't fix it! Why not spend the money that presumably is to be made available for this dubious project on something more worthwhile like restoring trolley car service to Center City?

Supportive, With Reservations

The Parkway

The Champs Elysees

I for one am very positive about the proposed changes shown on your website, especially the improvements to Logan Circle and the promenade. Right now the only time the Parkway is used as it should be is when it is closed for a special event. Otherwise it is a beautiful no man's land. Walking to the Swann Fountain is taking your life in your hands. The promenade should be inviting to pedestrians, and your design looks good. But I can't tell if its going to be easy to cross the parkway, to get to the Rodin Museum and Library. etc. I think that is just as important. It should be both a destination AND an inviting means to walk to restaurants and cultural attractions.

On the Art Museum options, I think it is a bad idea (and probably too expensive) to build a submerged traffic route. People in cars want to see the magnificent museum front too, and having a signaled cross-walk seems perfectly adequate for pedestrians. It will give everyone a moment to pause and look at the view. Also, don't do anything to take away or reduce those famous steps!

If the Parkway is Philadelphia's Champs Elysées, then the connection between the Oval and the Philadelphia Museum of Art's steps should be similar to that of the Arc de Triumphe. That is, have an underground pedestrian walkway. It could serve as a beautiful introduction to the Museum's collection if it is decorated in an elaborate and interesting manner. Examples abound in the Parisian or London metro stops. I am no architect or public designer, and this option may prove more difficult or expensive than an above-ground walkway. Whatever is done, however, it should be wonderfully embellished to fit this inspiring space.

I love the thought of improving the Parkway, making it the truly grand Parkway it has the potential to be. In particular, I think that private construction of apartment buildings and offices along the Parkway, from the Art Museum to 17th Street, would be the best and most effective means of making the Parkway more like its more successful cousin in Paris. With apartments, offices, stores and cafes lining the street, the Parkway would become THE place to live, work and visit as it would be enlivened and become Philadelphia's central point of interest. Some of the open space there now does nothing for the Parkway aside from adding to the deserted feeling present in that section of the city.

In addition, I think your idea of submerging traffic at the Art Museum steps under a promenade leading from Eakins Oval to the steps is fantastic. Eakins Oval should be a grand and inviting entranceway to one of the world's best museums, not a deserted parking circle, as it is now. The promenade leading to America's most famous steps could potentially make the Art Museum steps the tourist attraction the Spanish Steps are in Rome. The Logan Circle reconfiguration seems exciting as well.

The only concern I would have is what would happen come 5 p.m. each evening as thousands of cars head out of the city. Currently, traffic is bad enough....

Finally, of greatest concern to me is your plan to create a central promenade where the middle lanes of the Parkway now exist. While the vistas to pedestrians would be spectacular and the grandeur of the space would be unparalleled, I am not sure that removing the center lanes is a good idea or even necessary.... It has been hard enough to develop (with apartments, stores and cafes) the outer lining of the Parkway. An inner promenade may take away from the total mass that could form on the outer sidewalks of the Parkway.

I think your ideas are a great and bold start to hopefully making the Parkway all it can and should be. Your ideas, coupled with private development along the outer edge and sidewalks of the Parkway, should help make that vision a reality.

Fully Supportive

I am a student who is currently enrolled at Drexel University and will be living at Park Towne Place right off the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. As a person who was born and raised in Philadelphia, I feel that any improvements to this city are a great opportunity to enhance our reputation as one of the world's great cities. However, as a person who has visited Paris and has walked on the Champs Elysées, I see no resemblance between the two. The Champs Elysées is lined with many shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues that bring the city to life.

As a college student, believe it or not, Philadelphia is known as a dull place. Adding such improvements as cafes, restaurants, etc. can only liven up the city and help us get rid of this "dull" tag that Philadelphia has become known for. Remember people go to Paris to visit the Champs Elysées, people don't come to Philadelphia to visit the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

I think it is absolutely wonderful what you are planning!!!

This city longs for a public access area with cafes and music and gardens that helps tourists and citizens alike to "flow" from JFK Plaza to the Art Museum.

I have traveled all over the world.. I love this city for many reasons.. One thing it lacks is a beautiful cafe landscaped area. Paris has that..Boston has that and San Francisco has that ... get the people outside! Center City all but shuts down at night. Give people a reason to come into town and enjoy the area! There is a trend towards improving sidewalk cafe life in this city. It is evident in the permits that are springing up around Rittenhouse Square as well as coffeeshops which are so popular to the "outsiders." We need MORE!

Last weekend, I was in Amsterdam. What an awesome place and do you know why? Because you could walk the entire city and it "flowed." You didn't run into any desolate areas ... nor did you have a lack of outdoor cafes. Get the people to sit outside and the city will liven up. Please don't ignore the need for cafes on that Parkway. I've had too many guests in this city over the years who have brought that issue up to me. Imagine the possibilities. It'll be packed on a Tuesday night! All will come to enjoy. Look at all the runners/bikers/skaters along Kelly Drive. They need somewhere to end their workout and drink and eat. It's perfect! I was also along that wonderful strip in Paris (the Champs Elysées). I imagined the Parkway like that, with people, people and more people! They need a reason to come.... This is a long time coming ... but I'm excited!

I am absolutely enthralled by the proposed changes to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and surrounding area. Thank you for the important work you are doing.

As a resident of Fairmount, I have often despaired at how pedestrian-unfriendly much of the Parkway actually is, and how little there is for the casual stroller to do while walking. It was obviously meant to be a place much more akin to the Champs Elysées — with a myriad of cafes, shops, and easy and safe pedestrian access. I walk frequently down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and have had some truly heart-stopping near misses with cars zooming perilously toward Logan Circle. The lovely Swann Fountain is practically unreachable without a death-defying trot across four lanes of speeding traffic.

Your proposed changes to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway are exactly what this city requires to make it world-class — not only a destination for Revolutionary American history buffs, but a place to eat, shop, exercise, or merely take an elegant stroll. With your plans to combine water, greenery, retail stores, and convenient (and thankfully hidden!) parking, Philadelphia may be restored to its rightful place as America's Parisian twin. I especially like the plan to create a raised promenade to the Art Museum — perhaps it will eventually look a little less "imposing" and a little more "awe-inspiring" in days to come.

Swann Fountain at Logan Circle.

Sidewalk cafes on the Champs Elysées.

Von Colln Fields

"My brother and I currently play baseball at Von Colln Field. Our family has been involved in baseball there since 1996. The fields are used for much more than baseball. Soccer practices are held there. Children can come down whenever they want and play ball. It is in a great location and easily accessible. Hundreds of kids play baseball there every year. Please keep the fields where they are. They are a major part of Fairmount. It provides many fun times for the children."

One of the dense development scenarios, released as part of the preliminary plans in April 1999, showed buildings fronting on the Parkway between 22nd and 23rd streets. These drawings, and a subsequent article in a local neighborhood newspaper, prompted a significant number of letters and emails from concerned families in the adjacent Fairmount neighborhood about the possible loss of the baseball fields on this site. This was also a major subject of discussion at one of the presentation meetings held in the Fairmount neighborhood.

The challenge for the design team was clear. If more buildings are to be added to the Parkway, the 2200 block is an ideal site. Its prominence was recognized by Greber, who placed a large cathedral at this location in one drawing. To animate the sidewalks and to create a continuous pedestrian experience between the Rodin and Art Museums, ground floor uses would be essential at this site.

But given the importance of recreational areas and the heavy, seasonal use of these ball fields, the design team initially proposed to relocate the fields to the south side of the Parkway, in a new recreational area to be built on unused land adjacent to the Schuylkill River. With the improvements proposed for Eakins Oval, pedestrians could reach these ball fields without having to walk across a street. Further, with the proposed improvements for Schuylkill River Park, this recreation area could also be easily reached by residents of Center City neighborhoods.

The problem from the neighborhood perspective is two-fold: given the large barrier that the Parkway currently creates between the Fairmount neighborhood and the Schuylkill River, the proposed site is remote and inaccessible. Second, many families expressed concern that a likely scenario would be that development would eliminate the fields, and their replacement would fail to occur. Without one organization charged with the responsibility for overseeing a master plan for public improvements and private development, the neighborhood concerns are entirely legitimate.

There are three options: (1) no development whatsoever occurs on the 2200 block; (2) three to four story development occur fronting only on the Parkway preserving the ball fields and their view of the downtown skyline and/or (3) a master plan is adopted, alternative ball field sites are located, and a Parkway management organization is created with the authority and funding to keep the promises it makes. This type of Parkway management organization is discussed in greater detail on pages 48–49.

If new four-story buildings fronted on the Parkway, the ball fields could be preserved along with the extraordinary view of the downtown skyline.

A computer image of the view from Von Colln Fields with new low rise buildings fronting on the Parkway, shown in light grey.

Conclusion

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Philadelphia Historical Commission.

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After 18 months of planning and extended public dialogue and comment, Central Philadelphia Development Corporation's final recommendations can be summarized simply:

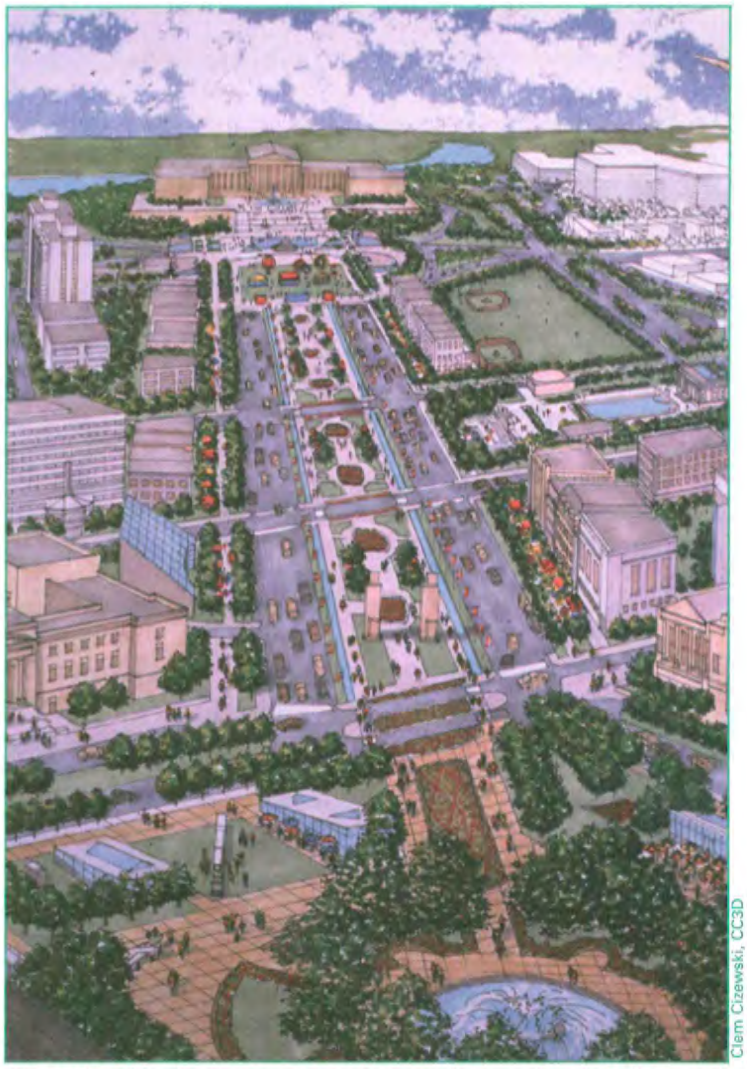
Enhance Public Spaces: By reconfiguring walkways and parks, and by making them safer and more pedestrian-friendly, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway can become a premier regional destination, an animated setting for Philadelphia's cultural institutions, a vital recreational area for families and children, and an enjoyable and memorable place to walk.

Repopulate the Parkway and the City: The original plans for the Parkway, published in multiple versions between 1871 and 1919, all envisioned a far more vibrant and densely built boulevard than exists today. But the Depression, World War II, suburbanization, disinvestment and population loss have left us with an unfinished landscape and speeding cars. After so many decades, most Philadelphians today suffer from a kind of collective amnesia about the history and true purpose of the Parkway. In a city that vitally needs to add jobs and population, the Parkway provides an extraordinary setting for new cultural institutions, apartments, offices or hotels.

This plan offers several options for completing the Benjamin Franklin Parkway: expanding existing cultural institutions, attracting new institutions, adding restaurants and retail, or by creating a new neighborhood downtown. With any of these scenarios, the Parkway can draw more residents and visitors, generate new jobs, and enhance Philadelphia's image and economy.

When our design team began this process, we described the Parkway as a *"semi-sacred place."* We understood that if we were to propose changes to the design, use and governance of such a prominent and familiar public space, we would generate enthusiasm in some quarters and concern or alarm in others. The experience of the National Parks Service in rethinking Independence Mall was fresh in our minds. In retrospect and perhaps a bit surprisingly, the majority of the criticism was directed not to the development proposals, but rather to the ideas for Logan Square and some of the alternatives for crossing to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Many of those suggestions have been incorporated into this final document. But there was nearly unanimous support for proposals to add high-quality buildings, cafes and restaurants to enliven the Parkway, so long as scenic views and favored open spaces were protected.

Management is Key: In an environment of constrained public resources, it is not realistic to expect that budgets for park improvement and maintenance will be dramatically increased in the near future. But if we are to attract new tourists and residents and balance the competing needs of neighbors and institutions, cars and pedestrians, then we need to create a management organization with a permanent and independent funding base so we can raise the entire Parkway to the standards that have been established by the Azalea Garden and by the Swann Fountain.



Clem Cizewski, CC3D

New cultural institutions, apartments, town houses, hotels, offices and cafes can complete the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, animating attractive and well-maintained public spaces.

Next Steps: Knowing the long and varied history of the Parkway and the multiple proposals made before construction actually commenced, it would be folly to suggest that this document represents a final plan for a new Parkway. More public discussion and debate should still occur. It is the purpose of this report to prompt and inform that discussion.

One image, however, should endure: the Parkway is an unfinished place. Ninety-two years ago, 1,300 properties were demolished to make way for a grand boulevard of civic institutions and fine homes. Like too much urban renewal of the 1960s, the demolition was done, but not the redevelopment. As we start a new century, it is time to update and complete the original plan, answering Charles Landes' original challenge from 1884:

"A convenient approach to the park is a necessity. Why not make it worthy of the magnificent city of Philadelphia!"

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Notes from Illustrations, History of the Parkway, Pages 3 - 5.

Fig. 1. Building the City Beautiful, p. 16. Charles K. Landis, Map of the Grand Avenue to the Park. Plan and two perspectives, April 29, 1884. Lithograph with letterpress text. Collection of Mrs. Joseph Carson, Philadelphia.

Fig. 2. Plan of Paris, c. 1900. After the construction of Baron Haussman's diagonal boulevards.

Fig. 3. The Champs Elysées, Approach to the Bois de Boulogne, Paris, *The Philadelphia Parkway Project*, Philadelphia, 1902.

Fig. 4. Chicago Columbian Exposition Court of Honor, 1893. *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893: The World's Columbian Exposition*, Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing, The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1992.

Fig. 5. Department of Public Works, City of Philadelphia, Comprehensive Plan 1911. Photo of lost original, City Archives of Philadelphia.

Fig. 6. The Fairmount Parkway, Fairmount Park Art Association, Philadelphia, 1919.

Fig. 7. The Fairmount Parkway.

Fig. 8. City of Philadelphia, Comprehensive Plan 1911, p. 24.

Fig. 9. The Philadelphia Parkway Project, Philadelphia, 1902. City of Philadelphia.

Fig. 10. The Philadelphia Parkway Project, William K. McCauley Plan, Philadelphia, 1902, p. 22.

Figs. 11-12. Building the City Beautiful, p. 25, p. 31.

Fig. 13. Greber perspective, 1919.

Figs. 14-17. Building the City Beautiful, pp. 113, 82, 37 and 37.

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