

CONTACTS: Donna Schorr
(215) 599-0782, donna@visitphilly.com
Cara Schneider
(215) 599-0789, cara@visitphilly.com
Tweet Us: [@visitphillyPR](https://twitter.com/visitphillyPR)

THE RAIL PARK JOINS PHILADELPHIA'S GROWING NETWORK OF GREEN SPACES
Philly's Public Space Boom Continues With River-To-River Gems

PHILADELPHIA, June 15, 2018 – Each year, Philadelphia's urbanscape gets greener. In 2018, the city's verdant additions include phase one of the **Rail Park**, a much-anticipated elevated park along an old railroad line; **Cherry Street Pier**, a public space taking over a vacant riverfront pier; and the official return of **LOVE Park**, with more accessible public space and the centerpiece sculpture.

Such projects add to an already impressive list of public spaces for the city. Lively urban parks, reimagined recreational landscapes and spirited pop-up gardens have taken over once-overlooked patches of land and water. These transformations have inspired civic planners to reclaim inactive riverbanks, surplus lots and forlorn rail lines—and have renewed community pride.

Much of the action can be spotted in Center City and on Philadelphia's two rivers: the quiet, beautiful Schuylkill to the west and the shipping waterway of the Delaware 30 blocks to the east.

Delaware River:

The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC) spearheads much of the development along the city's eastern waterfront. As cities worldwide find new ways to bring activity to post-industrial ports and piers, the organization moves ahead with a master development plan that creates appealing public destinations every half-mile and truly connects the city to its waterfront from north to south and east to west:

- **Blue Cross RiverRink Summerfest** – One of DRWC's warm-weather fun spaces, first established in 2015, centers around an outdoor roller-skating rink, mini golf, boardwalk-style rides and games and an air-conditioned lodge outfitted with rocking chairs for relaxing and people watching. Food from the land and sea comes in the form of Chickie's and Pete's crab fries, ice cream and sweets from The Franklin Fountain and state-fair-style snacks such as fried scrapple and fried Tastykakes. Discounts for rink admission are offered to Blue Cross subscribers and TD Bank cardholders. Open through September 3, 2018. 101 S. Columbus Boulevard, (215) 922-2FUN, riverrink.com

-more-

- **Blue Cross RiverRink Winterfest** – In 2013, DRWC got people buzzing with the first installment of Blue Cross RiverRink Winterfest, a seasonal garden and village. During winter only, the riverfront space features Philadelphia’s largest outdoor ice-skating rink, a chalet-inspired lodge with food from local restaurateurs, festive winter drinks, roaring outdoor fire pits, twinkling lights, seasonal décor and activities in and outside of the lodge. 101 S. Columbus Boulevard, (215) 922-2FUN, riverrink.com
- **Delaware River Trail** – Cyclists, joggers, strollers and rollers employ the first 1,400-foot-long portion of the riverfront trail between Spring Garden and Ellen Streets. The next two phases of the long-term project are already underway—connecting Washington Avenue to Pier 70 Boulevard and continuing the SugarHouse Casino portion of the trail through Penn Treaty Park. Eventually, the completed multi-use trail will run from Oregon Avenue in South Philadelphia to Allegheny Avenue in the north, and it will be part of the East Coast Greenway and The Circuit Trails, a 750-mile network of bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the region. (215) 629-3200, delawareriverwaterfront.com
- **Great Plaza at Penn’s Landing** – It’s activity central at this large public space, where major events take place from April through October. Think festivals, outdoor concerts, cultural celebrations, movie screenings—all right on the water with incredible views of the Philadelphia skyline and the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. Columbus Boulevard at Chestnut Street, (215) 922-2FUN, delawareriverwaterfront.com
- **Pier 68** – On Pier 68 in South Philadelphia, recreational anglers and recreation-seekers can fish, relax, picnic and observe the tidal nature of the Delaware River from up close. This \$1.7 million project opened in 2015. During the summer months, anglers of all skill levels can learn how to fish through the free Fishing with Friends program. Columbus Boulevard & Pier 70 Boulevard, (215) 629-3200, delawareriverwaterfront.com
- **Race Street Pier** – In the shadow of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, the first project in DRWC’s Master Plan for the Central Delaware River opened in 2011. Race Street Pier features two levels for recreation. The upper terrace, dubbed the Grand Sky Promenade, rises 12 feet toward the bridge and is paved with Trex, a sustainable, synthetic decking material made out of reclaimed plastic and wood. A multi-tiered seating area—perfect for watching the tide roll in—connects the promenade to the lower terrace. DRWC and Aetna sponsor free yoga classes seven mornings a week from April through November. Columbus Boulevard at Race Street, (215) 629-3200, racestreetpier.com
- **Spruce Street Harbor Park sustained by Univest** – This spring-into-fall destination attracts impressive crowds with bocce and lawn games, tree-slung hammocks and colorful lights, floating barges with over-the-water seating, a boardwalk with a variety of food options and a beer garden serving craft beers, draft cocktails and frozen beverages. The park is programmed throughout the season with a variety of free events that are open to the public. Open through September 30, 2018. Columbus Boulevard & Spruce Street, (215) 922-2FUN, sprucestreetharborpark.com
- **Washington Avenue Pier** – Following the enthusiastic reception of the permanent Race Street Pier, DRWC debuted South Philadelphia’s Washington Avenue Pier in 2014. Visitors can climb an artistic beacon created by artist Jody Pinto, take in river views from an elevated boardwalk and follow markers that relate the site’s history as a major immigration hub and the nation’s first navy yard. S. Columbus Boulevard & Washington Avenue, (215) 629-3200, delawareriverwaterfront.com

-more-

Schuylkill River:

Long a labor of love for citizens who live in the western part of Center City, the Schuylkill River Trail is well on its way to connecting the lower part of the river to trails that wind through Manayunk all the way to Valley Forge and beyond.

- **Schuylkill Banks Trail** – Segment by segment and trail extension by trail extension, the Schuylkill River Development Corporation is getting closer to realizing its vision for an off-road, multi-use trail along the Schuylkill River between the Fairmount Water Works and Bartram's Garden. Taking the paved riverfront trail, runners, bikers, bladders and outdoor types can cruise along the river from Christian Street to Kelly Drive and beyond, passing the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Fairmount Water Works, Paine's Park skateboard park, Lloyd Hall and bike and Segway rentals near Boathouse Row. Bartram's Mile, a 1.1-mile greenway that debuted in 2017, expands riverfront access on the other side of the Schuylkill, in Southwest Philadelphia from Grays Ferry Avenue to 56th Street. (215) 309-5523, schuylkillbanks.org
- **Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk** – Philadelphia has its own permanent boardwalk in the form of a 15-foot-wide, 2,000-foot-long, ADA-compliant concrete path that juts out above the Schuylkill River. Part of the Schuylkill Banks Trail, the 2014 addition provides runners, bikers and pedestrians with a trail connection between Locust Street and the South Street Bridge. Those who want to take in the scenery can do so at any of the four overlooks offering city and waterfront views. Schuylkill River (near 25th Street) at Locust Street, (215) 309-5523, schuylkillbanks.org
- **Venice Island** – The Philadelphia Water Department partnered with Parks & Recreation and residents of Manayunk to turn a municipal project into an island-sized children's attraction. The utility built a four million-gallon underground water tank and a pumping station with a green roof. On top of the tank went a 250-seat performing arts center devoted primarily to kids' theater, an outdoor amphitheater, a basketball court, a sprayground and lots of park space with stunning sunrise and sunset water views. Main & Cotton Streets, (215) 685-3583, veniceisland.org

Center City:

Center City District spearheads much of the park work in the core of the city, with solid contributions from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, to ensure that recreational opportunities abound in parks and pockets all over downtown Philly.

- **Dilworth Park** – In July 2018, the first phase of an interactive public artwork will debut at Dilworth Park, which itself debuted in 2014. *Pulse* by internationally known artist Janet Echelman features four-foot-tall curtains of dry mist that will move across the park's fountain as SEPTA trains pass underneath. Made possible by a grant from William Penn Foundation, this summer's portion will begin with the green mist, representing the trolley lines. Still to come: blue for the Market-Frankford Line and orange for the Broad Street Line. The engaging experience joins the popular park that makes up City Hall's western-facing front yard. The \$55 million multi-use space, formerly a concrete sweep, is complete with tree groves, benches, a cafe, a large programmable fountain that transforms into an ice rink in the winter and areas for outdoor events and performances. 15th & Market Streets, (215) 440-5500, dilworthpark.org
- **June 5th Memorial Park** – Opened in early June 2018, this civic monument about building safety commemorates the memory of the six lives lost in the tragic 2013 building collapse in Center City Philadelphia. Passersby can relax among the greenery or take a moment for reflection. 22nd & Market Streets, june5memorial.org

-more-

- **LOVE Park** – Re-opened in May 2018 after a two-year \$26 million renovation, JFK Plaza—better known as LOVE Park—now features an updated fountain, benches and new greenery in the popular space. And the spiffed-up *LOVE* sculpture is once again the perfect backdrop for hundreds of photos each day. Still undergoing its \$700,000 update, the Welcome Center will open with a restaurant and bathrooms in fall 2018. 16th Street & John F. Kennedy Boulevard, phila.gov/parksandrecreation
- **The Oval** – Ben Franklin surely would have appreciated this eight-acre pop-up park, which occupies Eakins Oval, a little-used parking lot on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Food trucks, movies, a beer garden, free health and fitness classes, theme days and a ground mural designed by PORT Urbanism and painted by Mural Arts Philadelphia bring the space to life for one summer month. The park, open for its sixth year in 2018, is imagined and executed by Fairmount Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Parks & Recreation. July 20-August 19. 2451 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, theovalphl.org
- **Sister Cities Park** – Kids of all ages adore this landscaped park tucked along the Parkway. The site stars a Children's Discovery Garden, pebble-bottomed boat pond, the Logan Square Café, a pint-sized hill that evokes the Wissahickon Valley and a programmed fountain that pays tribute to Philadelphia's 11 sister cities. On warm Thursday nights, music lovers bring their own bottles and snacks for picnics and performances. Center City District maintains and programs the park. 18th Street & Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 440-5500, sistercitiespark.org

Beyond Center City:

As Center City goes, so goes its urban environs. Greening is happening on a rooftop and formerly concrete spaces in West Philadelphia, along a defunct trolley route in Fairmount Park and abandoned rail lines just north of Chinatown and in popular seasonal pop-up gardens planned by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

- **Cira Green** – This elevated park, which debuted in 2015, perches 95 feet above the street and wows guests with skyline views and cool breezes. Atop the Cira Centre South parking garage, the site employs blue-green roof technology and storm water management techniques to reduce impact on the environment and sewer system. This summer, the venue will introduce one of Philadelphia's largest outdoor media screens and an onsite restaurant to create lifestyle and entertainment programming designed to transform Cira Green into a must-visit destination. Entrance on 30th Street between Chestnut & Walnut Streets, ciragreen.com
- **Centennial Commons** – The initial phase of the Centennial Commons, a new park-within-the-park, includes safer pedestrian access, freshly laid walking paths, a native plant garden and giant porch swings designed to make this historic public space more comfortable for its guests. The \$7 million, three-phase Centennial Commons project—a collaboration between Fairmount Park Conservancy and City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation—will activate West Fairmount Park with new public spaces. 41st Street & Parkside Avenue, (215) 988-9334, myphillypark.org
- **Fairmount Park Trolley Trail** – The four-mile loop of a turn-of-the-century trolley route that brought people to Fairmount Park is now a trail for hikers and bikers and anyone who wants to access a scenic area dotted with stone tunnels and bridge abutments. An ongoing project led by the Fairmount Park Conservancy, along with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and the Belmont Plateau Trails Alliance, aims to make the trails more accessible. Though portions are still under construction, the trail is open every day, and guided walks are available each month in season. Tours begin at the Chamounix Hostel. 3250 Chamounix Drive, (215) 988-9334, myphillypark.org

-more-

- **Frankford Pause** – Opened in fall 2017, this park—from its name to its design—is inspired by the sound of the passing SEPTA elevated train (“the El” for short, or Market-Frankford Line to be official). The bright magenta stripes along the ground and walls will coordinate with an interactive lighting feature that will be installed during phase two, which begins this winter. The outdoor space serves as a hub of community activity, including social gatherings, public performances and art displays. Frankford Avenue & Paul Street, frankfordcdc.org
- **PHS Pop Up Gardens** – The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) once again takes over two underused lots for its PHS Pop Up Garden at South Street and PHS Pop Up Garden at uCity Square. The greening projects (called “horticultural interventions” by staffers) transform the otherwise barren spaces with beautiful horticultural designs. The popular hangouts feature curated food and beer menus, with proceeds supporting PHS programs that address challenges such as healthy eating, food accessibility, environmental sustainability and urban livability. Open through October 2018. 15th & South Streets & 36th & Filbert Streets, (215) 988-8800, phsonline.org
- **Rail Park** – The quarter-mile stretch of the former Reading Railroad that makes up the \$10.3 million first phase of the Rail Park officially debuted on June 14, 2018. The space includes plantings, artwork, seating areas and giant wooden swings. Up next, the Center City District will focus on the remaining length of the Viaduct (east of Broad Street), while the Friends of the Rail Park aim to develop the area known as the Cut (west of Broad), opening the first section as early as 2020. The full project will transform a three-mile section of abandoned elevated and below-street-level rail lines into green space where people can walk, bike, sit and admire the urban views. When completed, it will be twice the length and width of New York City’s High Line. Primary funders to date include the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, the William Penn Foundation and the Knight Foundation. Along Noble Street between 11th & Broad Streets, therailpark.org

Regional Developments:

The towns surrounding Philadelphia contain boundless outdoor pleasures, including untamed state and national parks and masterpieces of horticultural design. Joining longtime favorites such as Longwood Gardens, Chanticleer Garden, Valley Forge National Historical Park and Ridley Creek State Park are newer spaces dedicated to public engagement and education.

- **Meadowbrook Farm** – At the bequest of late owner J. Liddon Pennock, Jr.—a celebrated floral and landscape designer—this private estate became a nonprofit affiliate of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. The staff uses a light touch to maintain the naturally stunning 25 acres and outdoor “Garden Rooms.” Tours of the house and gardens are offered April through September, and a Thursday gardening series with rotating themes pairs gardening with kid-friendly fun, live music, libations and shopping in the specialty Plant Shop. 1633 Washington Lane, Abington Township, (215) 887-5900, meadowbrookfarm.org
- **Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden** – This formerly family-owned, now native species-rich garden opened to the public in May 2018. Beautiful trees, landscape architecture and community programs inspire the gardener in everyone—and give ideas for people’s own outdoor wonderlands. 1829 E. County Line Road, Villanova, (610) 353-5587, stoneleighgarden.org

Future Philly Parks & Trails:

- **30th Street Station District Plan** – This \$6.5 billion, 35-year project includes 40 acres of green and pedestrian-first space and pedestrian-only bridges across the Schuylkill River.

-more-

- **Bridesburg Park** – The 10-acre park coming to Northeast Philadelphia's Bridesburg neighborhood will feature a lawn, stage, event plaza and river overlook, and it will link the Port Richmond Trail and the Delaware Avenue Extension Trail. In the final design phase now, the City of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation project is approximately two years away from completion. It will cost between \$5 million and \$7 million.
- **Cherry Street Pier** – A \$5 million DRWC project will transform the long-vacant Pier 9 on the Delaware River into a 55,000-square-foot multi-use space with shipping-container artist studios, vendors, markets, an open-air park and a performance area in fall 2018.
- **Drexel Square** – Coming in the fall of 2018, this 1.3-acre West Philadelphia space will serve as a central activity hub for Schuylkill Yards, the \$3.5 billion development led by Brandywine Realty Trust on land owned by Drexel University.
- **Navy Yard Spur** – This Schuylkill Banks development will connect South Philadelphia's Navy Yard and FDR Park to the main Schuylkill River Trail in 2024.
- **Passyunk Point to Fort Mifflin Trail** – The three-mile trail will provide direct pedestrian access to the historic Fort Mifflin site in 2022.
- **Penn's Landing Cap and Civic Space** – Construction for the I-95 cap and civic space is projected to begin in 2021. The project—complete with an 11-acre park, new South Street Bridge, and on-road bike trail—will connect the city and the Delaware River waterfront.
- **Riverfront North** – This 11-mile greenway of parks and trails along the Delaware River will stretch uninterrupted from the Port Richmond neighborhood to the Bucks County by 2022.
- **Schuylkill River Trail** – In 2019, the \$15 million Schuylkill Crossing will connect the east and west banks of the Schuylkill River, from the Grays Ferry Crescent to Bartram's Garden, and construction will begin on the Bartram's to Passyunk segment, connecting Bartram's Garden to Passyunk Avenue along the west side of the Schuylkill River. The Christian to Crescent segment, stretching from Christian Street to the Grays Ferry Crescent, will begin construction in 2020; it will complete the Schuylkill River Development Corporation's vision for an off-road, multi-use trail along the Schuylkill between the Fairmount Water Works and Bartram's Garden.
- **West Bank Greenway** – When complete in 2023, the West Bank Greenway will run from the Philadelphia Zoo to Bartram's Mile.

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website and blog, visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers. Travelers can also call and stop into the Independence Visitor Center for additional information and tickets.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.