

CENTER CITY DIGEST

Viaduct Rail Park: A Long Time Coming

Choose your narrative frame: Either *good things take time*; or *it takes forever to get anything done in Philadelphia*.

In 1984, 91 years of rail service came to an end on the elevated Reading Viaduct as the Center City commuter tunnel integrated two separate train operations underground into SEPTA's Regional Rail system. Center City employers gained access to a 360-degree labor market, while the Viaduct and the upper floors of the Reading Terminal were rendered obsolete.

A decade later, the Reading Headhouse and train shed were repurposed as a hotel and gateway to the Pennsylvania Convention Center. The bridge over Arch Street was reclaimed, but the portion of the viaduct running to the north side of Vine Street was demolished to make way for the convention hall and its service truck ramp. SEPTA briefly considered reusing the eastern branch for a new light rail line, but that soon passed. Instead, the industrial relic languished and was soon overgrown with trees, weeds and wildflowers.

In the fall of 2003, two local artists and viaduct neighbors, Sarah McEaney and John Struble, attended a presentation by one of the original advocates for Manhattan's High Line – three years before New York started construction and six years before first opening. Inspired, they formed the Reading Viaduct Project advocacy group in December 2003 and began beating the drum. Had they simply charged everyone a few dollars for the many tours they led, or installed toll-booths in the myriad holes that were cut in fences, the project might have been fully funded years ago.



Initially, I was skeptical, a non-believer. My conversion experience came only after walking the first phase of the High Line in late summer of 2009 and following Sarah and John the very next weekend in Philadelphia. We wandered slightly above the fray, curving over Philadelphia's street grid, glimpsing views of the downtown skyline, the Ben Franklin Bridge, the Ukrainian Cathedral, passing between an amazing array of empty and repurposed industrial buildings, warehouses, rowhouses and a depressing landscape of vacant, derelict lots.

The new Viaduct Rail Park will start its life, less a connecting link, like the Schuylkill River Trail, and more as a unique, re-imagined relic of the industrial age, the center-piece, anchor and stimulus for a mixed-use, mixed-income, live-work neighborhood unlike any other in Philadelphia.

Though frustrating, the time between inspiration and construction start has helped. Lessons have been learned from the High Line in New York City about what to do and not to do; especially the importance of dedicated revenue for



Planning, design, engineering and final construction documents were prepared by Studio|Bryan Hanes and Urban Engineers and funded by generous grants to the Center City District from Poor Richard's Charitable Trust, the William Penn Foundation and the City of Philadelphia.

maintenance. Chicago's Bloomingdale Trail and Atlanta's Beltline have demonstrated clearly the interplay between quality parks and economic development and the potential to capture value induced by park enhancements. A host of similar initiatives are underway across the U.S. and in Canada, enriching the conversation about creative place-making.

But thanks to Governor Tom Wolf's award of a \$3.5 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant, the wait is over. We move from Photoshop to shop drawings, from vision to construction. With the RACP grant, the CCD will have in hand nearly all the funds needed from foundation, state, city and private sources to build Phase I. We will proceed with construction as we continue to raise the remainder of funds. You can help!

The project has an enormous range of friends and supporters: the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, Mayor Jim Kenney, State Representative Michael H. O'Brien, Councilman Mark Squilla, former Councilman Frank DiCicco, the William Penn and Knight Foundations, The McLean Contributionship, a host of individual donors and the Friends of the Rail Park, the grassroots advocacy group that has dramatically expanded the visibility and support for the Viaduct Rail Park through events and social media.

In order to enable a construction start in 2016, the CCD began the competitive bid process in July 2016, based on construction documents prepared by Urban Engineers and Studio|Bryan Hanes, and approved by all relevant City departments. Construction is projected to take 15 to 18 months.

Phase 1 will improve the 1300 block of Noble Street and turn a dilapidated quarter-mile portion of the viaduct that runs southeast from 13th and Noble Streets across 12th Street to Callowhill Street into a vibrant green park with walking paths, landscaping, lighting, benches and swings. SEPTA is leasing the land to the CCD for renovation purposes. Upon completion, SEPTA will donate the land and the CCD will turn the completed project over to the City of Philadelphia, which will own the park and maintain it in a partnership between the Department of Parks & Recreation, the Friends of the Rail Park, and the CCD.

The new 25,000-square-foot linear park will provide a much-needed green amenity for the Callowhill neighborhood and support the expansion of both Chinatown and the emerging, mixed-use zone on the expanding

edge of Center City. The Rail Park will foster new investment in the surrounding neighborhoods and prompt the redevelopment of major vacant buildings and parcels in an area where 32% of the land is still undeveloped. And this is only the first step.

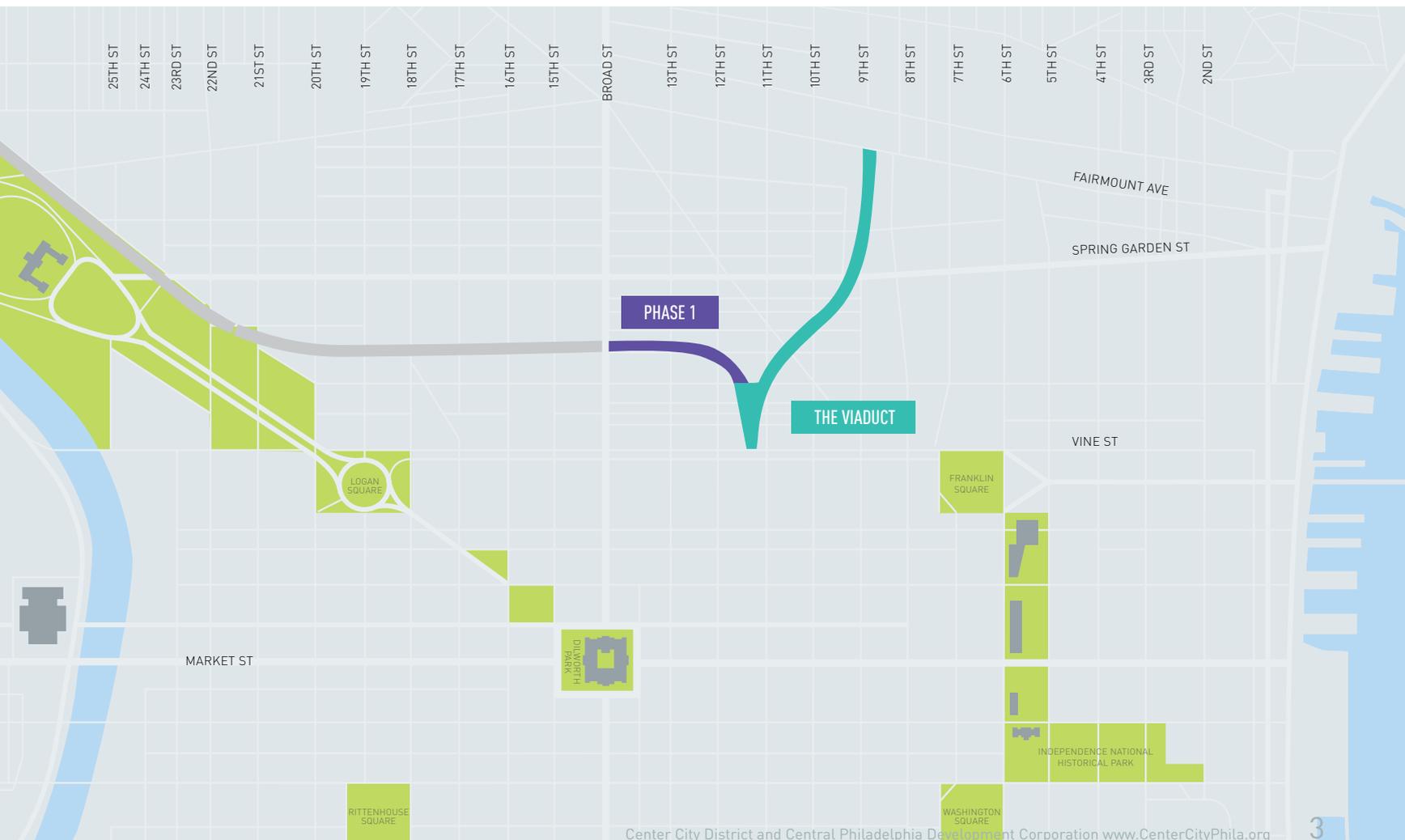
You can help make this transformative project a reality, laying the groundwork for so much more that can follow. Make a gift today by going to supportccdf.org and get more information about the project at centercityphila.org.

Paul R. Levy
 President
plevy@centercityphila.org

MAJOR DONORS TO PHASE 1 CONSTRUCTION

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania \$3,500,000	Tuttleman Family Foundation \$12,500
City of Philadelphia \$2,800,000	Anonymous \$10,000
Knight Foundation \$1,000,000	Bank of America \$10,000
William Penn Foundation \$750,000	Univest \$10,000
PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources \$500,300	Victor Keen and Jeanne Ruddy \$10,000
PA Dept. of Community & Economic Development \$125,000	Poor Richard's Charitable Trust \$10,000
The McLean Contributionship \$50,000	Sarah McEaney \$5,000
Post Brothers \$25,000	Parkway Corporation \$5,000

TOTAL DONATIONS TO DATE – \$8,822,800



CSR Mary Reynolds Enjoys Helping People

Mary Reynolds had been a tour guide most of her adult life, often dressing in colonial garb, but in 2015, she picked up *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and saw an ad for a job as a Community Service Representative (CSR) at the Center City District. The job description appealed to her and in April she donned the well recognized uniform of a CSR.

"I love it, I really enjoy it," Reynolds said. "This is like being a tour guide or concierge. But, it's full-time and focused on all aspects of the city."

Reynolds works the 3:00 –11:00 p.m. shift, Tuesday through Saturday, and answers lots of questions. Two of the most-asked are "Where are the Rocky steps?" and "Where is the Liberty Bell?" But she also helps people remember where their cars are parked, locate a restaurant, or find an address that seems to elude them.

"Usually they are in the general neighborhood, but, even with a smart phone and GPS, they need a little extra guidance to get where they are going," Reynolds said.

Reynolds is deployed in various areas of Center City and enjoys the variety of experiences in each. In Dilworth Park, she encounters people from all walks of life, and questions often center on City Hall. "They'll ask about the history, how long it took to build. They're usually impressed by the building." In other areas, she finds "locals who want to know how late the DMV is open and tourists looking for Chinatown."

Reynolds worked at Fort Mifflin before coming to the Center City District and she still conducts occasional tours there, sometimes arriving at the CCD just in time to change out of her colonial costume ("more Molly Pitcher than Martha Washington") and into her CSR uniform. She also has worked as a seamstress sewing up authentic period costumes.

Reynolds is popular with her colleagues, maybe because of the cookies she bakes for them or the extra supplies of aspirin, Band-Aids, instant drink mix and other items she carries around in



CSR Mary Reynolds

case someone needs a little extra care. Or maybe it's because she studied to become a birthday party clown and was able to make animal balloons for another CSR's baby shower not long ago.

So she brings diverse skills to the job. "I enjoy helping people and this job gives me an opportunity to do that," she said.



Tell us what you think.

For 25 years, the Center City District has been making downtown Philadelphia clean, safe and attractive with lighting, signs and landscaping. Ten years ago we began renovating and programming Center City parks, including Dilworth Park and Sister Cities Park. We produce Restaurant Week and Center City District Sips. How are we doing? What can we do better or differently?

PLEASE TAKE FIVE MINUTES TO COMPLETE OUR BRIEF ON-LINE SURVEY AT

CCDSURVEY.COM

AND BE AUTOMATICALLY ENTERED TO

WIN \$250 IN RESTAURANT GIFT CERTIFICATES.

FIVE LUCKY WINNERS WILL BE RANDOMLY SELECTED.

The survey closes at midnight on **October 31, 2016**, so please give us your opinion and suggestions today!

Building on Success at Sister Cities Park

Sister Cities Park, located in Logan Square, just marked its fifth summer as one of the nation's leading multi-generational parks, attracting families with children, seniors, nearby workers and visitors to Parkway institutions. The CCD transformed the park in 2012 from a derelict space to a thriving destination through a \$5.2 million renovation that added a café, Children's Discovery Garden, wading pond, Visitor Center, mobile library, lawn and fountain. The CCD maintains the park and provides children's programs and music on the lawn for adults and families, attracting an average of 28,500 visitors in warmer months.

TO ENRICH SISTER CITIES PARK, WE'RE SEEKING TO ADD TWO MAJOR NEW COMPONENTS:



A signature new playscape

Imagine an innovative children's playscape that is simultaneously a work of art and a structure that appears from afar as a composite of color amidst trees, but close up reveals itself as a textile

web, sufficiently resilient and responsive to the movement of laughing children. This new attraction will be designed by Toshiko MacAdam, a Japanese-born Canadian textile artist famous for her strong and beautiful woven playgrounds. At a cost of \$300,000 for design and installation, we hope to have this new playscape ready for climbing next summer, and we invite you to learn more about bringing this new amenity to Sister Cities Park.



Adding Frankfurt-am-Main

One of the park's unique features is a fountain that is both a favored play-space for children and a commemoration of Philadelphia's sister cities. Flush with the ground, the fountain's circular shape is emblematic of the world, with the central spout representing Philadelphia. Our sister cities, whose names are engraved in the fountain, are represented by spouts positioned by their distance from Philadelphia and engineered to spray plumes of water relative to population size. Philadelphia recently added an 11th sister city relationship

with Frankfurt-am-Main in Germany. We need to upgrade the fountain at a cost of \$30,000 to welcome our first new sister city in 20 years. Several regional businesses and organizations have offered their help, including Morgan Lewis, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, the Philadelphia branch of the German-American Chamber of Commerce, CDI Philadelphia, and Ralf Wiedemann, Honorary Consul of the Federated Republic of Germany. We want to expand our list of supporters, particularly those corporations who do business or have offices in Germany, so that by next spring, when we turn the fountain on, it will represent all of Philadelphia's sister cities.

We're also looking to introduce new programs, and expand our mobile library and educational activities to make the park more visible and more memorable. For these, we've recently received support from the Lindback Foundation, Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation and Beneficial Bank.

If you, too, would like to help us improve Sister Cities Park, please contact Nancy Goldenberg at ngoldenberg@centercityphila.org or 215.440.5523, or visit supportccdf.org to make a contribution today.

Become a part of Philadelphia's success.

We need your help and hope you'll consider making a gift today using the enclosed envelope or give online at SupportCCDF.org.



**CENTER CITY DISTRICT
FOUNDATION**

Outdoor Seating Venues Join Growing Number of Outdoor Cafés

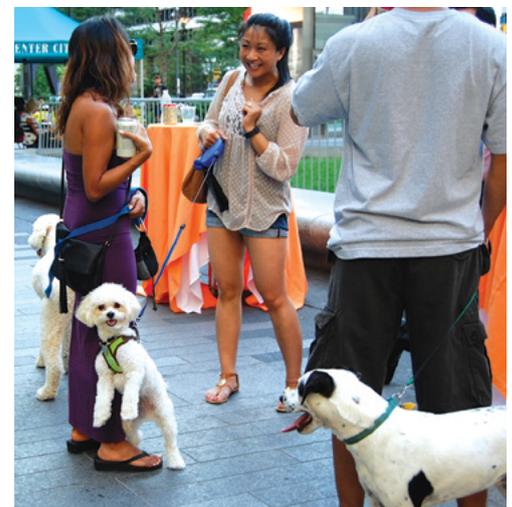
Sidewalk cafés have increased by 439% since the Center City District (CCD) began surveys in 2001 and now number 372 with 5,579 seats at restaurants, cafés, bakeries, and ice cream parlors between Vine and South Streets, river to river, according to a new report from the Center City District/Central Philadelphia Development Corporation released on September 6.

The animation of city sidewalks has been augmented as well by non-food retailers such as nail salons and art galleries, parks and formerly barren office plazas. In addition, summertime outdoor pop-up beer gardens have gained popularity in recent years.

Adding together all these outdoor seating locations between Vine and South Streets, river to river, the number rises to 431, up 4.6% from 2015, with 6,322 sidewalk seats, up 4.4% from 2015.

Outdoor seating continues to enhance the vitality of downtown with major new developments bringing even more activity to the sidewalks of Center City, creating an ever more thriving public domain.

To download the new report, *Outdoor Seating 2016*, please go to centercityphila.org.



Sips & Yappy Hour at Dilworth Park

Dilworth Park continues to serve multiple audiences in different ways: children in the fountain, office workers at the café and tourists seeking information. During the proverbial dog days of summer, beginning August 31 and continuing for five consecutive Wednesdays, pets and their owners gathered at the southern end of Dilworth Park for Yappy Hours presented by TD Bank, while on the north end, Center City District Sips presented by Two Gingers continued to welcome large crowds to enjoy the music, drinks

and light fare at the café. During the Democratic National Convention, the special-edition DNC Sips on Wednesday, July 27, (above), attracted 1,800 people, more than four times the typical turnout.

But as temperatures cool, watch for the installation of the Rothman Institute Ice Rink, which begins on October 24, with the rink scheduled to open on November 11.

Rothman Institute Ice Rink and More Winter Highlights

America's Garden Capital Maze Debuts

The **Rothman Institute Ice Rink** will reopen for its third season on Friday, November 11, with a salute to veterans, accompanied by the popular **Rothman Institute Cabin** with a new menu from the Dilworth Park Air Grille, all supplemented by an expanding number of attractions.

Through a generous \$300,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation to the Center City District Foundation (CCDF), an entirely new large-scale winter attraction featuring America's Garden Capital Maze also will open on November 11, as CCDF partners with Greater Philadelphia Gardens to celebrate the region's horticultural heritage. The **Wintergarden** will be in place for three months with a variety of free gardening programs for families and adults offered in January and February.

Dilworth Park will reprise the **Made in Philadelphia Holiday Market**, which will open on Saturday, November 19, and remain open everyday, closing on Christmas Eve. Approximately 35 vendors will offer a variety of crafts, candles, handmade hats, gloves and many other holiday gift items.

Through a partnership with SEPTA, the **Santa Express** will arrive in Dilworth Park on Friday, November 25, and Santa will join the skaters on the ice.

The **city's official Christmas tree** will be installed in a prominent location on the Market Street walkway and will be illuminated on Saturday, November 26.

Admission to the Rothman Rink will be \$3 for children 10 and under, \$5 for adults, and skate rental will be \$10.

Hours will be Noon to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday; Noon to 11:00 p.m. on Friday; 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Saturday; and 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday. For holiday hours and inclement weather, please check the Dilworth Park website, dilworthpark.org. The Rothman Cabin will offer hot chocolate, beer, wine, French fries, hamburgers and more! Both will remain open until Sunday, February 26, 2017.

The CCD is grateful for additional support for the winter season from Subaru, Capital One, Temple University, and 6abc.

Mark your calendars and enjoy all the fun at Dilworth Park!



The Made in Philadelphia Holiday Market debuted last year on the south side of the park, along with the Rothman Cabin on the north side of the Rothman Institute Ice Rink.

THE ROTHMAN INSTITUTE CABIN IS PERFECT FOR HOLIDAY PARTIES AND WILL FEATURE JIM BEAM MAPLE COCKTAILS AND SAM ADAMS BEERS. TO BOOK YOUR EVENT, PLEASE CONTACT SARAH ANELLO AT 215.440.5507 OR SANELLO@CENTERCITYPHILA.ORG.

CENTER CITY DIGEST

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DILWORTH PARK WINTERGARDEN

ROTHMAN INSTITUTE
ICE RINK



ROTHMAN INSTITUTE
CABIN

FEATURING AMERICA'S GARDEN CAPITAL MAZE

THE COOLEST PLACE IN CENTER CITY
NOV. 11, 2016 THROUGH FEB. 26, 2017

Located at City Hall. For more information visit

DILWORTHPARK.ORG



The Center City Digest is a publication of the Center City District (CCD), a private-sector sponsored municipal authority committed to providing supplemental services that make Philadelphia's downtown clean, safe and attractive; and of Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) with 60 years of private-sector commitment to the revitalization of downtown Philadelphia.