



Rediscovering Philadelphia's Hidden River

The Tidal Schuylkill River Master Plan

Executive Summary

Prepared for:

The Schuylkill River Development Corporation
March 2003


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Prepared by:

EDAW

Design, Planning & Environments Worldwide



As the new century establishes itself, we are looking at bright opportunities for positive change on the Tidal Schuylkill River in Philadelphia. Since 1992, the Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC) has been working to revitalize the river for the benefit of current and future generations of Philadelphians.

Over the past year, with the support of the City of Philadelphia, we have been rediscovering opportunities to plan for and encourage improvements in the natural, physical and economic environment of the river. A matching grant of \$500,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources set the stage for a comprehensive planning process involving communities, neighborhoods, corporations, foundations, and government agencies. The match, both contributions and in-kind services was provided by key partners. As a result, a common vision for the river's redevelopment is now underway.

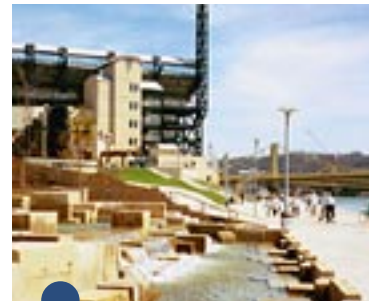
The Tidal Schuylkill River Master Plan provides a framework for the creation of a sustainable strategy for the long-term physical, social and economic development of the most urbanized segment of the river. Prepared in a collaborative environment with a task force of stakeholders – 44 public and private agencies, organizations, businesses, institutions and community members – the master plan is a blueprint for a hopeful future for the river and those who are drawn to it.

Table of Contents

- 1 Rediscover the Hidden River**
Although heavy industry is gone and the factories are closed, the river reflects years of neglect, abuse and inaccessibility – a legacy shared by many industrialized riverfront cities east of the Mississippi.
- 2 Creating a Vision: The Planning Approach**
As a result of an extensive, year-long public participation process, community workshops and meetings with stakeholders, a unified vision emerged to guide planning and development.
- 3 A New Vision for the River**
Prepared in a collaborative environment with a task force of stakeholders including public and private agencies, organizations, institutions and individuals, the master plan is a blueprint for the river's bright future.
- 4 Creating a Greenway**
The creation of a continuous greenway and trail system will enhance the Schuylkill River's natural environment, increase public access by several miles and provide a multitude of recreational opportunities.
- 5 Creating a Transportation Framework**
New and improved roadway connections and new mass transit opportunities proposed in the master plan will unlock the river's hidden treasures.
- 6 Creating Places**
Public and private interests have invested more than \$300 million in the restoration of historic landmarks, residential real estate, public parks, trails and in planning for infrastructure and transportation improvements.
- 7 Implementation Strategy**
The Tidal Schuylkill River Master Plan maps the route for discovering the "hidden creek" and identifies projects and priorities for guiding physical improvements within the study area.
- 8 Acknowledgements**
As the new century establishes itself, we are looking at bright opportunities for positive change on the tidal Schuylkill River in Philadelphia.

Rediscover the Hidden River

Taking a cue from the successful local redevelopment models of Penn's Landing and the Camden waterfront and other exemplary efforts in Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., Dayton, Chattanooga and Louisville, the Schuylkill River is ready for revitalization as a valuable urban resource in its own right. There's no better time than the present.



North Shore Riverfront
Pittsburgh, PA



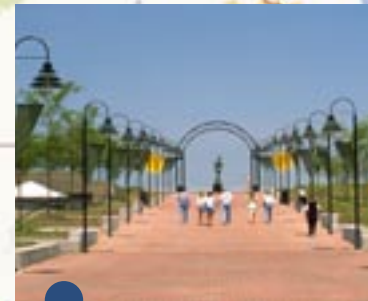
Washington Harbor
Washington, DC



Dayton Riverscape
Dayton, OH



Ross's Landing
Chattanooga, TN

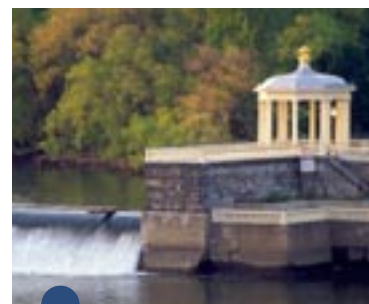


Louisville Riverfront
Louisville, KY

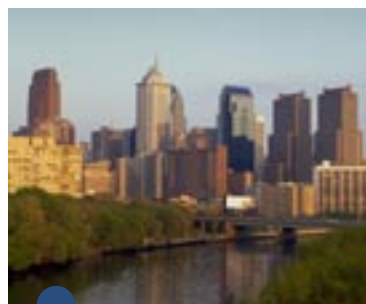
Nearly 130 miles long from its headwaters in the Blue Mountains of Schuylkill County to the tidewaters of the Delaware River in Philadelphia, the Schuylkill River is the largest tributary in the Delaware River basin, accounting for about a third of the Delaware's flow. After Europeans first sailed the river in the early 17th century, it was christened "Skokil," meaning "Hidden Creek," by Arendt Corrsen of the Dutch East India Company.

The tidal Schuylkill River, stretching eight miles from the Fairmount Water Works to its confluence with the Delaware River, undergoes a daily tidal change of six feet between low and high tides. Once the manufacturing backbone of the city—now with much of the heavy industry gone and factories closed—the river reflects years of neglect, abuse and inaccessibility—a legacy shared by many industrialized riverfront cities across the country.

While much of the tidal portion of the Schuylkill River has been neglected, a number of important landmarks, parks, neighborhoods, businesses and institutions call the riverfront home. In total there are over 60,000 households, 113 train embarkments at 30th Street Station, and over 13 million gallons of oil processed at the Sunoco Company each day.



Fairmount Dam and
Water Works



The Schuylkill River at
Center City



Inactive Sunoco Property

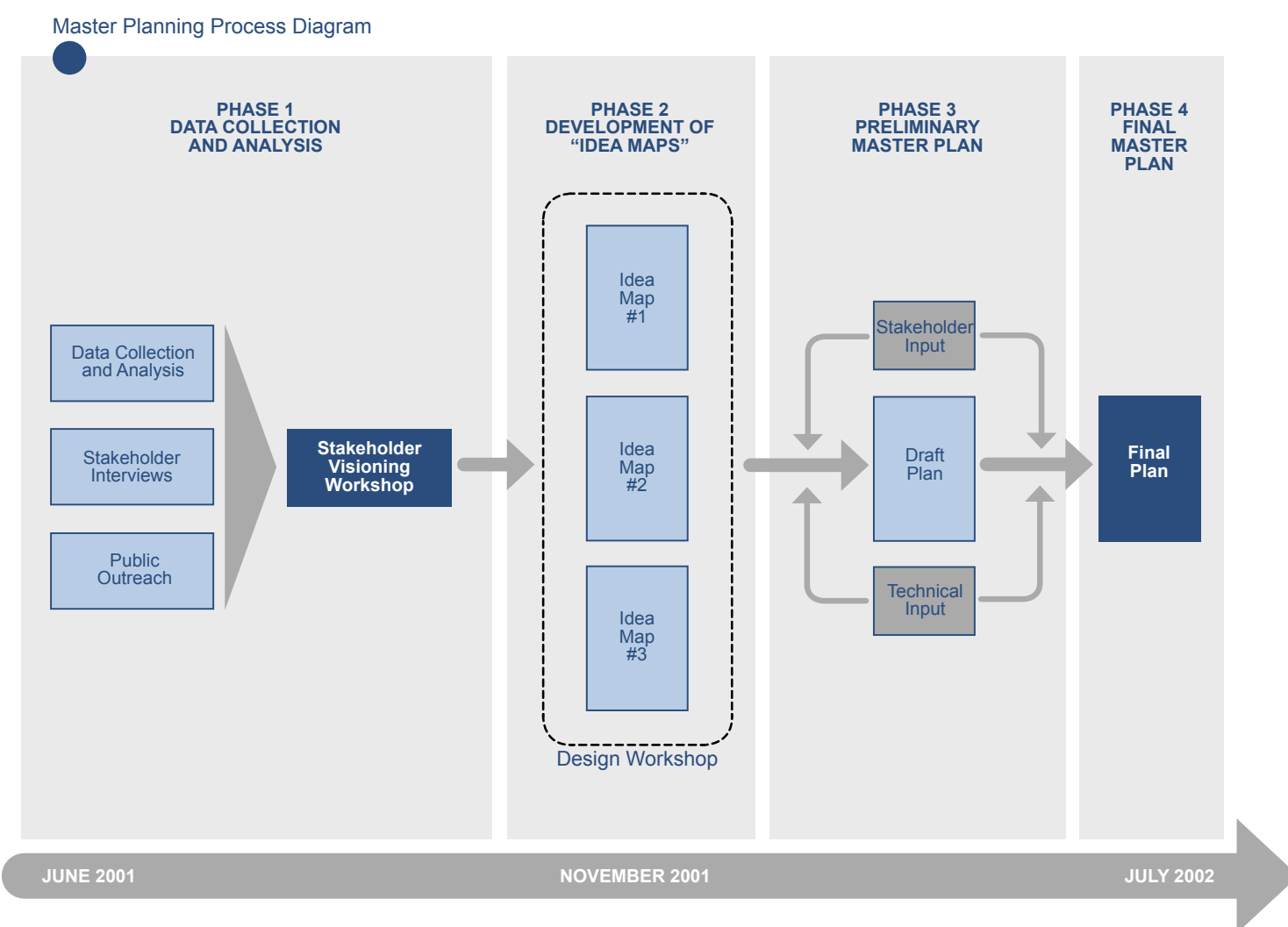


Existing Industry on the
waterfront



Creating a Vision: the Planning Process

As a result of an extensive, year-long public participation process, community workshops and meetings with stakeholders, a unified vision emerged to guide planning and development. The process included a number of key milestones. Stakeholders and community members were engaged to help develop the vision, provide input on the issues along the river, comment on alternative “idea maps,” and assess the draft plan and priority projects. The following diagram illustrates this process.



The master planning process was initiated to provide a vehicle to promote the active use and enjoyment of the river corridor; restore natural river ecosystems; empower communities through neighborhood and economic development; and foster an ethic of civic pride and stewardship in residents. Supporting these all-encompassing strategies are six guiding principles that give the master plan structure and direction and which also function as evaluation criteria for each project proposed for the waterfront. These guiding principles are described on the facing page.

1. Promote Greenway and Trail Development

Trail and greenway corridors are recognized for their environmental, recreational and aesthetic value. The Schuylkill River system, on both the east and west banks, will connect with the larger system that continues north along the river and links with other trails and greenways such as the Schuylkill River trail, the East Coast Greenway, the Tinicum-Fort Mifflin/Mingo Creek trail, the Historic Mill Creek Greenway and the Botanic Trail (“High Line” Park extension).



Celebration Village, Celebration, FL

2. Improve Environmental Quality

A high-priority Philadelphia Water Department goal is the continued improvement of water quality. Action items include eliminating sources of pollution and restoring natural systems through storm water management; increasing awareness and stewardship through educational programs; and increasing water activities. In addition, the master plan recommends floodplain and wetlands protection, improving wildlife habitat and establishing guidelines for sustainable development.



Wetland Restoration at Historic Bartram's Garden

3. Build Strong Communities

For the Schuylkill River to become the focal point of existing and new waterfront neighborhoods, development has to incorporate live, work and play scenarios. The way to build and nurture strong communities is by preserving the best of what is already there, take advantage of opportunities for infill construction, offer a range of housing types and provide the type of mixed-use development that has proven successful in attracting a new demographic. Proposed projects should balance affordability and financial equity.



University Corner, Charlottesville, VA

4. Develop a Distinct Character

People remember good times and want to relive them again and again, so providing areas for public gatherings along the riverfront is vital to creating unique destinations. Equally important is the preservation and enhancement of open space such as wetlands, habitat and interpretive sites. The design of new areas must take into account the surrounding built and natural environments as well as the cultural and historic factors that characterize this urban waterfront. Public art projects can play a vital role in creating a unique character, already a long-standing Philadelphia tradition.



Lights on the Center City Bridges

5. Provide Access and Transportation

One of the reasons the Schuylkill is underutilized as a recreational destination is its inaccessibility. Over the years barriers have been erected that cut neighboring communities off from the river, the most obvious of these being railroad tracks and the Schuylkill Expressway. Another obstacle is occupation of riverfront property by private corporations that restrict public access. The Tidal Schuylkill River Master Plan envisions reducing the division between neighborhoods and the river by creating and improving pedestrian access, promoting civic uses and making improvements to the transportation system.



River Liffey Promenade, Dublin, Ireland

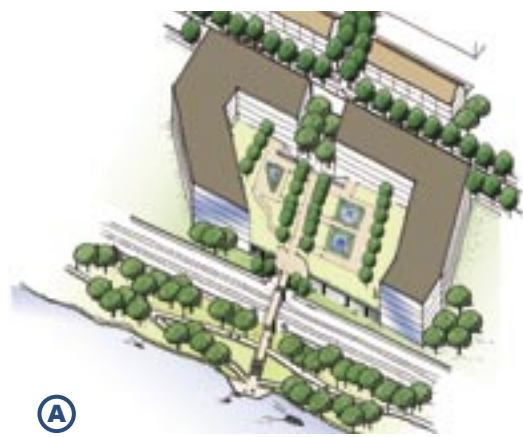
6. Build Public/Private Partnerships

Throughout the planning process, community members voiced strong support of the need for local development as a means to providing an economic anchor in the neighborhoods and long term investment. The master plan envisions the public and private sector working closely together to develop some of the key parcels along the river. The public/private relationship is crucial to guiding and implementing the long-term development process.



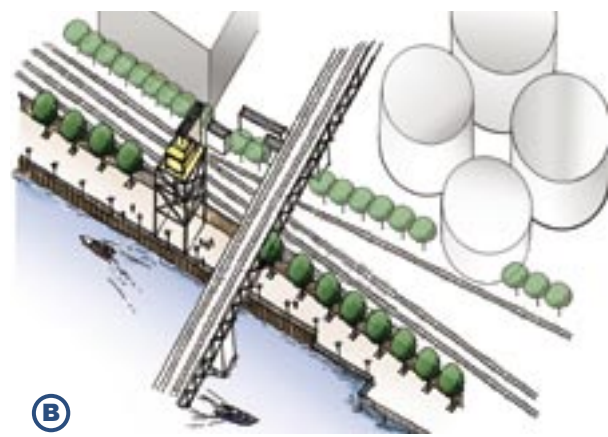
New residential loft space along the river

A New Vision for the River



A

Reconfiguration of the existing Kennedy Building for mixed-use development. Note the pedestrian access to the riverfront over the existing CSXT railroad tracks



B

Aerial view of the Schuylkill River Trail at the Trigen Power Plant – note the preservation of the existing crane



C

Conceptual illustration of the proposed South Street Bridge pedestrian access ramp



D

Aerial view of the proposed the seasonal restaurant and boat docking facility at the former waterfront motel site



E

Aerial view of the proposed Forgotten Bottom Waterfront Park



F

The U.S. Gypsum site presents opportunities for developing cultural facilities that preserve and interpret the Schuylkill River's industrial history, similar to Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord in Duisburg Germany



G

Greenway/trail development along Passunk Crescent could be similar in character to Dayton, Ohio's riverfront



H

River beacons could create a unique identity for the Schuylkill River, opportunities for civic art, and identify neighborhood connection points, similar to Dayton, Ohio's riverfront

Illustrative Master Plan

- 1 Improved Pedestrian Connections to Trail Systems along Kelly and West River Drives at River Bridges
- 2 Improved Pedestrian, Vehicular Way-Finding and Streetscape Improvements to Philadelphia Zoo and Art Museum
- 3 Coordinated "Schuylkill Gateways" Plan
- 4 Schuylkill River Trail and Greenway
- 5 New Residential Development with Access to the Riverfront at Naval Home and Kennedy Building
- 6 Forgotten Bottom Neighborhood Revitalization
- 7 New Vehicular Ramp Linking Grays Ferry Avenue and Lindbergh Boulevard
- 8 New Roadway and I-76 Overpass Between South and West Philadelphia
- 9 New Roadway Through Sunoco Property Linking University City and the Navy Yard
- 10 New Railway Linkages through Development on East and West Banks
- 11 Grays Ferry Avenue Streetscape Improvements
- 12 Lindbergh Boulevard Streetscape Improvements
- 13 Historic Mill Creek Greenway Connection to the Schuylkill River Trail and Greenway
- 14 "High Line" Park Extension (Botanic Trail) to Mill Creek Greenway and Schuylkill River Trail and Greenway
- 15 Cultural Facilities (Industry Museum, Performing Arts Center) at US Gypsum Site
- 16 Passunk Crescent Residential and Commercial Waterfront Development
- 17 Sunoco Property Riverfront Park (Boat Launch, Fishing Pier, Picnicking, Habitat Restoration, Great Lawn)
- 18 Harkness Point Open Space (Habitat Restoration, Boat Launch, Expanded Italian Gardens)
- 19 Girard Point Maritime Center (Marina, Boat Storage, Boat Repair, Sailing School, Boat Auction, Police Marine Unit)
- 20 Pedestrian Access from F.D. Roosevelt Park to Girard Point Maritime Center Under Industrial Railroad Tracks
- 21 Highway Access to Fort Mifflin from Points North

- Residential Development
- Mixed Use Development
- Commercial Development
- Office/Light Industrial Development



Creating a Greenway...

The creation of a continuous greenway and trail system linking Fairmount Park and Fort Mifflin will enhance the Schuylkill River's natural environment, increase public access by several miles and provide a multitude of recreational opportunities. New streets, improvements to existing streets, and pedestrian bridges and ramps will link adjacent neighborhoods and communities to the river and greenway trail system. The greenway trail system will also connect to the East Coast Greenway, a national trail network extending from Maine to Florida.

...Trails, Open Space,

The character of the greenways and trails will vary to complement existing surroundings and provide a basis for the future development of riverside parcels. Physical aspects will range from formal promenades and paved paths to unpaved trails through natural habitats. Greenway design will integrate modern shoreline stabilization practices including bioengineering using shrubs and trees, which double as enhanced wildlife habitat.








Work on the greenway and trail system has already begun. Construction of the trail between Fairmount Water Works and the Twin Bridges is complete and construction of the trail to Locust Street, including pedestrian access ramps at Market and Chestnut Streets, began in 2002. The completion of the Schuylkill River Park trail will create a safe, attractive bike and pedestrian link between Fairmount Park and Center City.

...Wildlife Habitat

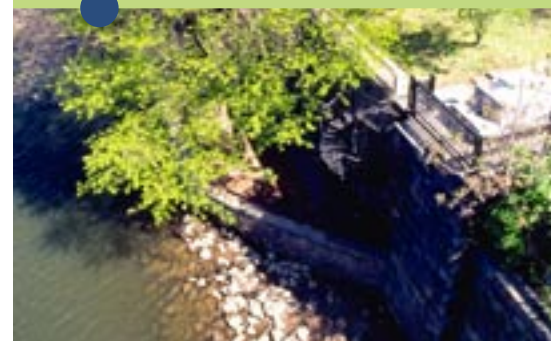
The proposed greenway trail continues south along the eastern bank of the Schuylkill to the Grays Ferry Bridge and along the edge of the Forgotten Bottom neighborhood, providing it with park space and waterfront access. The trail will then cross the river via the Grays Ferry Bridge, with an improved pedestrian path on the bridge itself and an access ramp connecting the trail and bridge on both the east and west banks. The next trail segment heads south to Historic Bartram's Garden and Passyunk Avenue. In the long term the trail will continue south, terminating at Fort Mifflin.

In addition to trails, larger open space areas are proposed for the greenway at key points such as Schuylkill River Park, parks adjacent to Forgotten Bottom, Historic Bartram's Garden and the proposed "Great Lawn" on the Sunoco property. These would become important community amenities for surrounding neighborhoods and city dwellers in general.

Greenway and Trail Development Plan

-  Greenway/Trail
-  Pedestrian Access Ramps from Bridge to Trail
-  Trail System Connections
-  Neighborhood Access
-  River Beacon and/or Art Opportunity
-  Freight Rail Line Adjacent to Trail
-  Existing Open Space

Spiral staircase leads to the Schuylkill Riverfront



New trail construction linking Schuylkill River Park and Fairmount Water Works



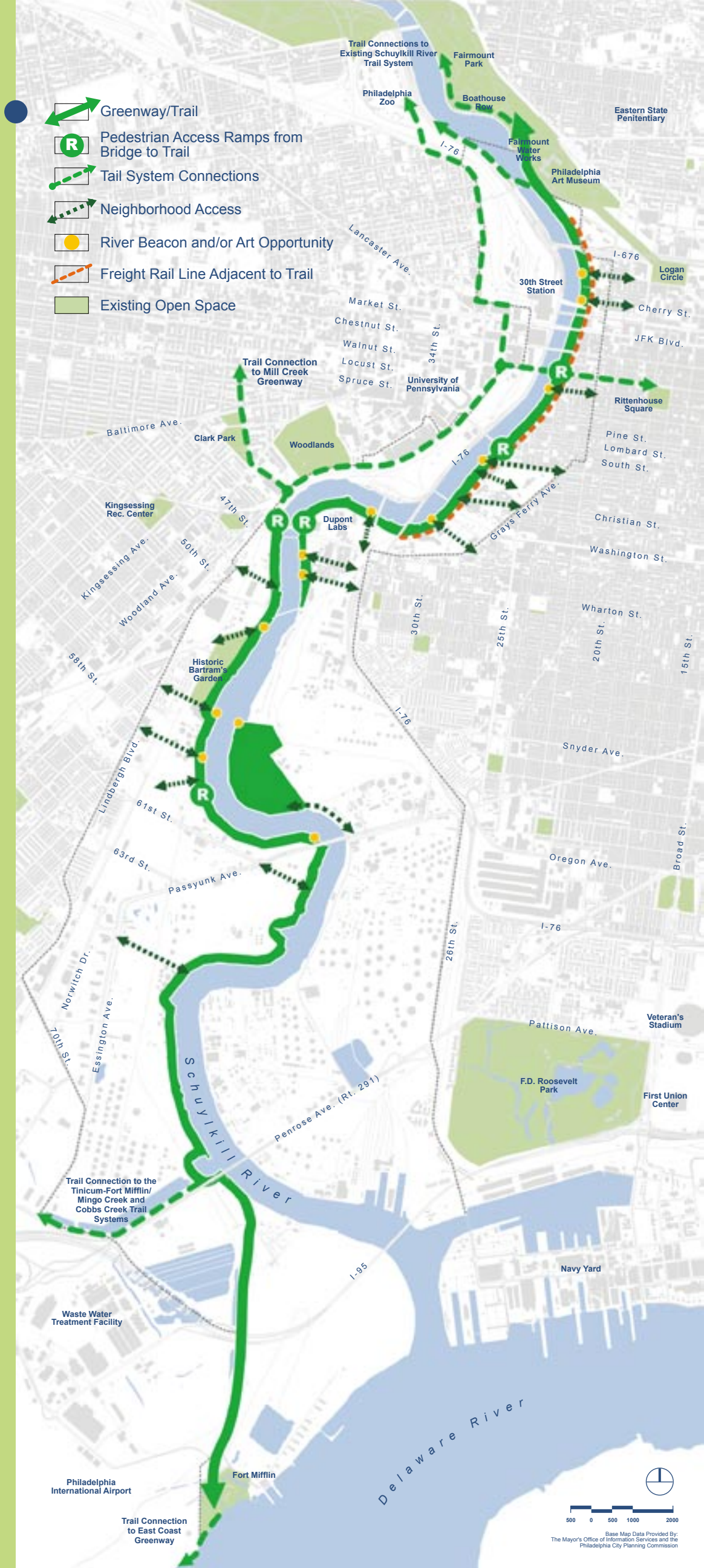
PATH Trail System, Atlanta, GA



Pathways at Fort Mifflin



San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge



Creating a Transportation Framework...

Industrial land use requiring few connections between road and river characterizes the banks of the Schuylkill, thus hampering access and new development. Transportation solutions proposed in the master plan will rectify the situation over time, unlocking the river's hidden treasures. Key elements of the transportation framework include:

...Roadways

● Improved connections east of the Schuylkill River

These include the construction of new road segments that create a continuous road from the University Avenue Bridge, through the eastern edge of the Sunoco property, connecting with 26th Street and then reaching the Philadelphia Navy Yard. In addition, a road running east-west connecting from 61st Street through the Sunoco property, across I-76 to Lanier Park, is proposed.

● Improved connections west of the Schuylkill River

These include the construction of a road between Grays Ferry Avenue and Lindbergh that will facilitate access between Center City and Southwest Philadelphia. In addition, the plan identifies the continuation of the east-west road across the Schuylkill River to 61st Street.

...Mass Transit

● New mass transit options that link with the current system

These improvements include a light rail line connecting with the station adjacent to the Woodlands, then running south through the Sunoco property and west across the proposed bridge and potentially connecting to the R1, R2 and R3 lines. This line can also run east connecting to the Broad Street line.

● River Access

Use of the river as a transportation corridor is a key element within the long-term vision. The plan identifies a number of places for docking, marinas and other river access. These opportunities include existing public docks (Fort Mifflin), planned public and private docks (Fairmount Water Works, Historic Bartram's Garden, Center City Marina) and future river access opportunities at Schuylkill River Park, the Walnut Street Bridge, the Sunoco property and near Girard Point at the mouth of the Schuylkill River.

Transportation Improvements Plan

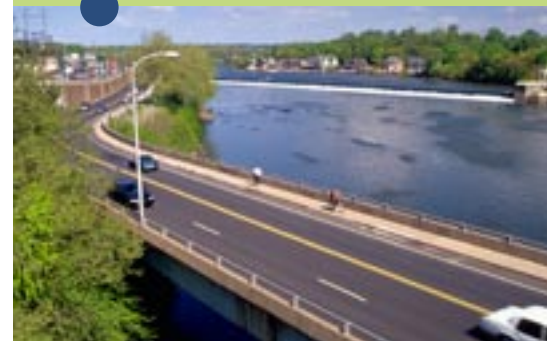
The Schuylkill Expressway (I-76)



Landscaped Boulevard, Liverpool, UK



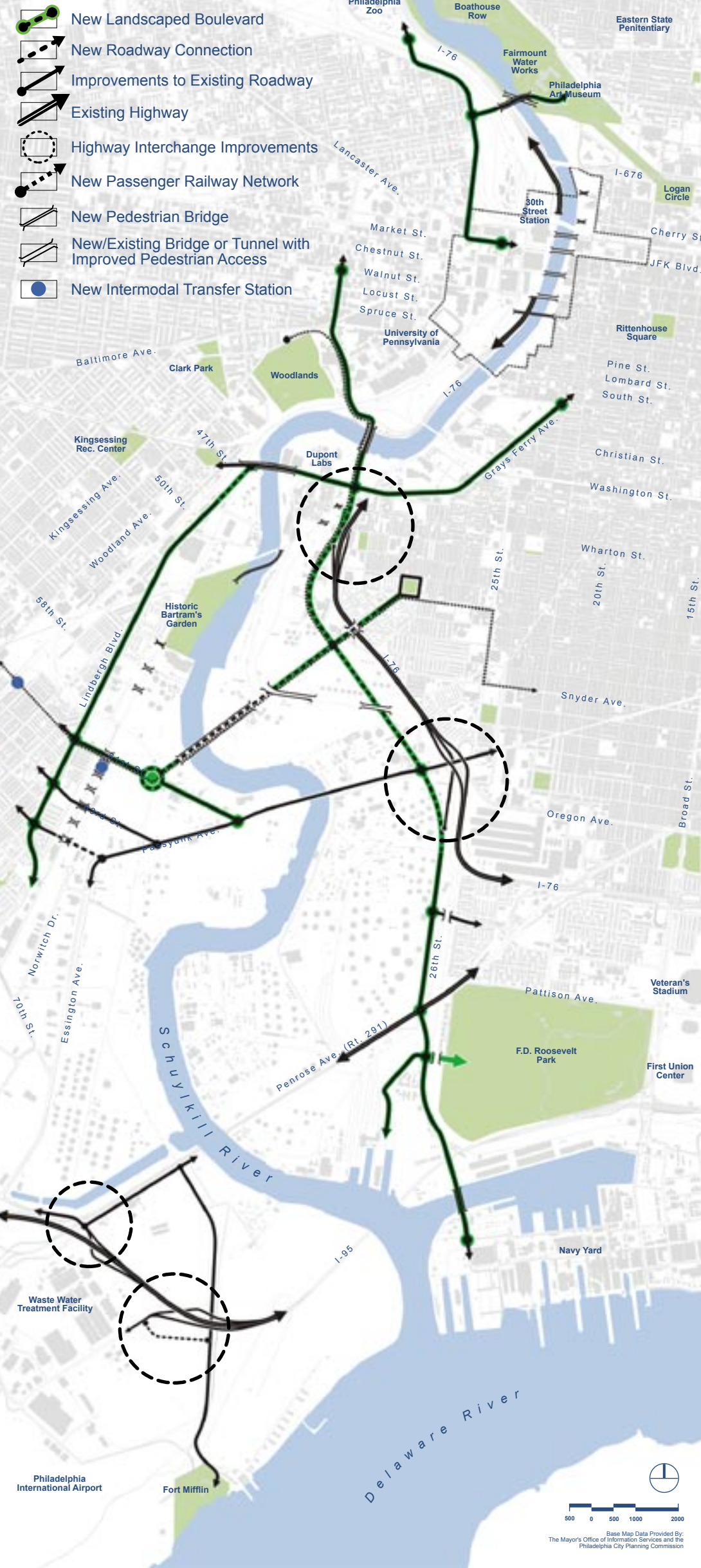
The pedestrian environment across existing bridges could be improved



River Thames Ferry System in London



Existing trolley system in University City



Creating Places...

In a city that has long defined its central business district on the east and west by river boundaries, it takes vision to imagine that the western boundary – the Schuylkill – can be transformed from an edge to a center. Fortunately, there are many that have this vision and are working diligently to make it a reality. In the past five years alone, public and private interests have invested more than \$300 million in the restoration of historic landmarks, residential real estate, public parks, trails and in planning for infrastructure and transportation improvements. We anticipate that more than \$2 billion will be invested in the next five to ten years in order to:

- **Create park facilities for public concerts, picnics and festivals**

Along the length of the tidal Schuylkill the master plan illustrates opportunities for a variety of public spaces. These include greenway sitting areas, small parks in established neighborhoods like Forgotten Bottom and larger open spaces such as the event lawn illustrated on the Sunoco property. There are also a number of cultural and historic sites like Historic Bartram's Garden and Fort Mifflin that are capable of accommodating similar functions.

- **Revitalize and preserve existing neighborhoods**

There are many neighborhoods located along the Schuylkill but there is only one within the study area – Forgotten Bottom. The master plan recommends the redevelopment of some of the industrial land bordering this neighborhood as open space and residential, including infill housing.

- **Create new residential and commercial development**

New residential and commercial development at Passyunk Crescent will help link the Southwest Philadelphia community with the river and provide opportunities for people to live, work and play along the river.

- **Provide employment opportunities**

The redevelopment of the Sunoco property north of Passyunk Avenue is a critical element in the revitalization of the Schuylkill River. A master plan illustration depicts the site as an active commercial and mixed-use area linked with surrounding communities.

- **Improve wayfinding and the public environment**

A system of interpretive elements along the river will also be developed so that the trail system becomes a vehicle for discovery and learning about the heritage of the Schuylkill River and Philadelphia.

Existing loft apartments on the banks of the Schuylkill River



Charming Philadelphia neighborhood



...to Live,

Center City Philadelphia



Manchester City Center, Manchester, UK



...Work, &

Lakewood Festival Area, Lakewood, CO



DTC Crescent Park, Denver, CO



...Play

Rediscover the Hidden River

Creating a Vision: The Planning Process

A New Vision for the River

Creating a Greenway

Creating a Transportation Framework

Creating Places

Implementation Strategy

Acknowledgements

Implementation strategy

A revitalized Schuylkill River is within reach. It will not happen overnight or without a lot of hard work and the commitment of the city, area landowners, residents, institutions and businesses. It demands vision, innovation, creative financing, leadership, community participation, dedication and the forging of a public/private partnership. It also demands time. Philadelphia is capable of this and much more.

A key player in the implementation of this ambitious endeavor is the Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC), a non-profit organization founded in 1992 whose mission it is to achieve positive change on the river for the benefit of the city, region and Commonwealth. To fulfill this mission, SRDC seeks to create a sustainable strategy directed to the long-term physical social and economic health of the tidal Schuylkill River. Within that framework, an operating strategy is at work that emphasizes the importance of alliances, joint ventures and close cooperation with federal, state and city agencies.

The Tidal Schuylkill River Master Plan maps the route for discovering the “hidden creek” and identifies projects and priorities for guiding physical improvements within the study area. In essence, it is a framework for future decision-making and a tool for coordinating public and private investment for maximum impact.

The master plan incorporates and addresses ongoing initiatives within the corridor and presents an organized approach to redevelopment. A phasing plan (right) reflecting development priorities and focusing the energies of stakeholders and partners proposes short-term (up to five years) and long-term (six to fifteen years) actions. Full implementation will occur over a ten to twenty-year period. Shown below are the cost benefits of the master plan in both the short and long term. It is anticipated that the total tax benefit to the City of Philadelphia over a 25-year period could reach \$419,035,000 for short-term implementation projects and \$1,036,820,000 for long-term implementation projects.

Short-Term Economic Benefit Summary

Anticipated Development Program	
Residential Units	1,274 Units
Retail	80,500 SF
Restaurants	11,000 SF
Office Space	604,500 SF
Flex Space	130,000 SF
Marina/Boat Storage	200 Boats
Structured Parking	1,515 Spaces
Development Value	
Total Construction Costs	\$288,310,000
Post-Development Value	\$466,850,000
Unabated Value	\$26,180,000
Job Creation	
Annualized Construction Jobs	1,922
Permanent Employment	2,921
City Tax Benefit	
Construction Related Taxes	\$12,105,000
Annual Taxes (Abatement Period)	\$9,148,000
Annual Taxes (Post Abatement Period)	\$21,030,000

Long-Term Economic Benefit Summary

Anticipated Development Program	
Residential Units	2,000 Units
Retail	1,450,000 SF
Restaurants	3,000 SF
Office Space	422,000 SF
Flex Space/Industrial Space	1,950,000 SF
Sports Fitness Complex	100,000 SF
Industrial Heritage Museum	50,000 SF
Marina/Boat Storage	200 Boats
Structured Parking	1,200 Spaces
Development Value	
Total Construction Costs	\$666,705,000
Post-Development Value	\$950,400,000
Unabated Value	\$71,100,000
Job Creation	
Annualized Construction Jobs	4,445
Permanent Employment	7,546
City Tax Benefit	
Construction Related Taxes	\$32,795,000
Annual Taxes (Abatement Period)	\$25,047,000
Annual Taxes (Post Abatement Period)	\$50,237,000



Acknowledgements

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Philadelphia Department of Commerce

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Brown & Keener Urban Design
Urban Design

Urban Partners
Economic Planning

Urban Engineers, Inc.
Marine and Civil Engineering

Justice and Sustainability Associates
Community Outreach

Fox & Fowle Architects
Architecture

Karin Bacon Events, Inc.
Event Planning

BioHabitats, Inc.
Wildlife Habitat Analysis

Margie Ruddick Landscape
Landscape Architecture

History Now
Historic Overview, Interpretive Opportunities

*Unless otherwise shown, all photography
and illustrations by EDAW, Inc.*

Rediscover the Hidden
River

Creating a Vision:
The Planning Process

A New Vision for the
River

Creating a Greenway

Creating a
Transportation
Framework

Creating Places

Implementation Strategy

Acknowledgements



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