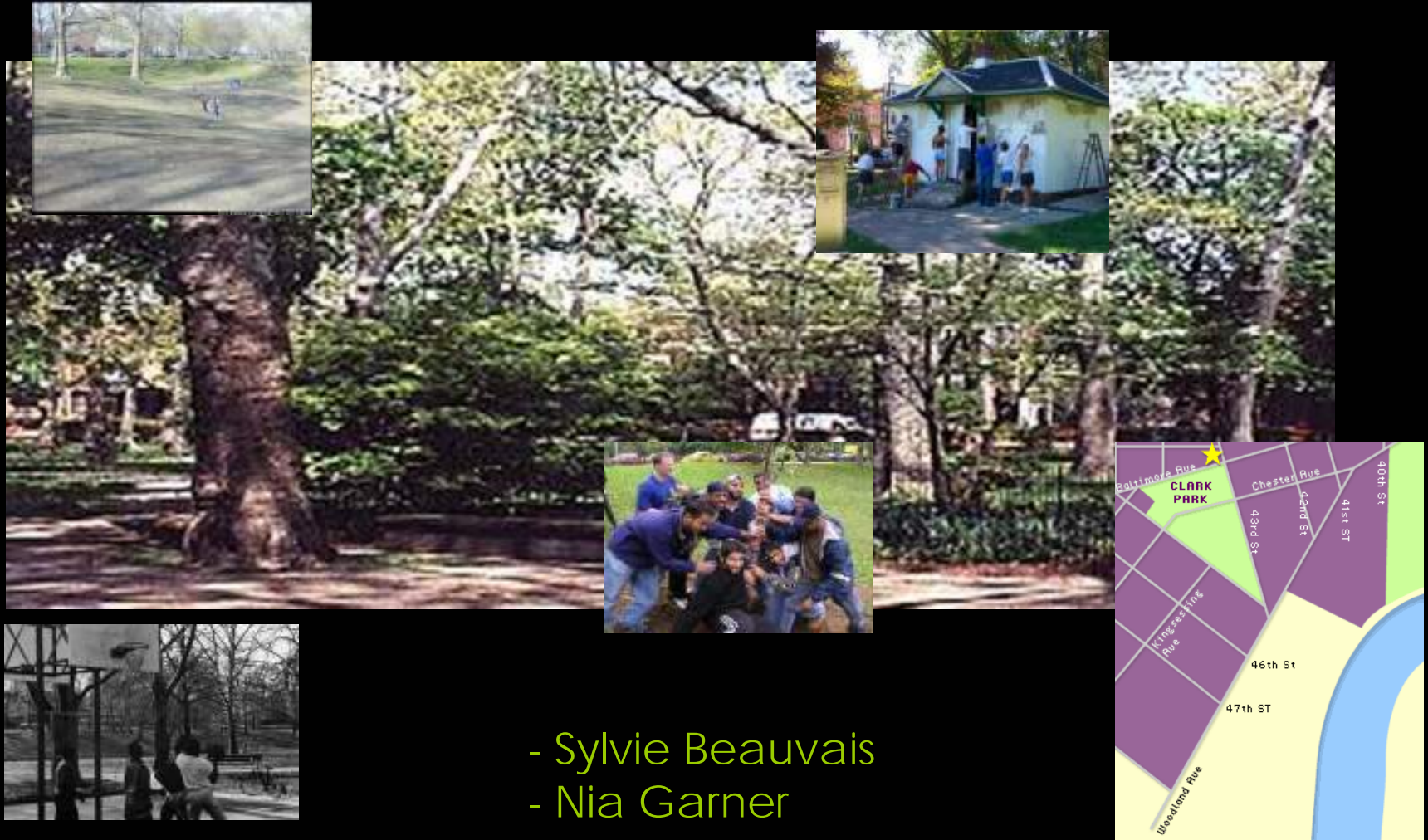


Clark Park and The Role of Community: Sustainability of Neighborhood Initiatives



- Sylvie Beauvais
- Nia Garner

History of Clark Park



Clark park was established in 1895.

- More than 300 trees
- Covers nine acres.
- Heart of UC:
boundaries are Baltimore Avenue, Woodland Avenue, 43rd and 45th Streets.
- Neighbors include the University of the Sciences, the HMS School for children with Cerebral Palsy, and a District Health Center.

Park Renewal Plan: First Phase

Clark Park Revitalization Project Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Master Plan

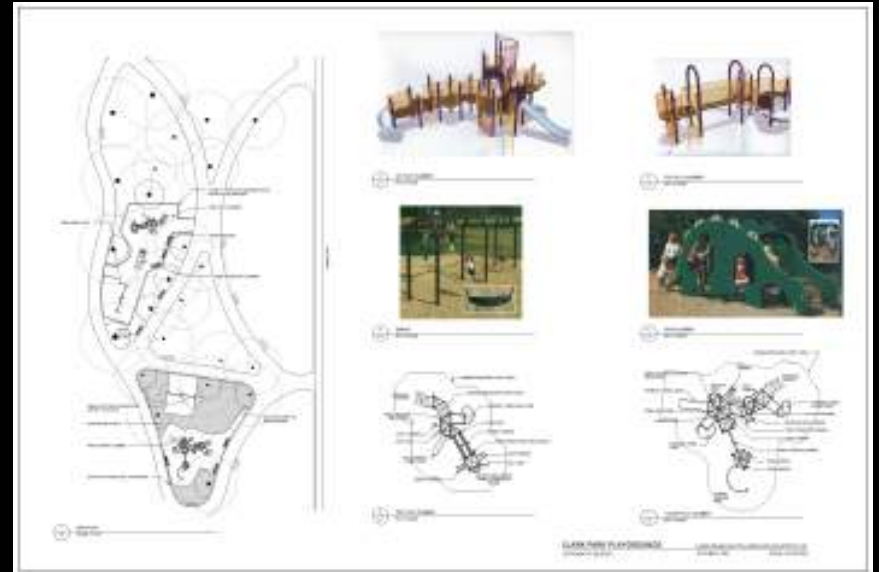


Renewal Plan

Clark Park is currently undergoing a process of revitalization resulting from increased public and private investment, planning and volunteer efforts.

Key Players:

- The Department of Recreation is responsible for Clark Park and is the ultimate authority on changes.
- The Steering Committee (FOCP), working with the Rec Department, will continue to involve the community as the plan moves forward.
- Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and Recreation Commissioner Victor N. Richard III have endorsed the plan.



<http://www.clarkpark.info/ClarkPlaygrounds.gif>

Renewal Plan Details

Key Components:

New benches, better lighting, new playground, improved courts, trees.

- Overall: New sidewalks, lighting, benches and trash cans. "Bump-outs" for safer crosswalks into the park. Improved entrances at 43rd & Baltimore and at 45th & Woodland.
- North Park: A central, civic plaza with chess tables and climbable sculpture for tots. Lighting, benches and landscaping around the Dickens Statue and Gettysburg Stone. A strip of dry-laid paving stones in the Farmers' Market area along 43rd Street. Attractive fence along Baltimore Avenue.
- Center Park: A new playground for tots (completed June 2003); new playground equipment for ages 6-12 (Fall 2003). Make the basketball court standard high-school size and surround with attractive fence. Grade the Bowl to improve drainage and turf. Add plantings, benches to make attractive gathering area at the old shuffleboard court near 45th and Chester.
- South Park: Develop old Kingsessing Avenue, now a parking lot for USP, into a mall with benches, landscaping, and sculpture or water spray/play spot for kids.

Tree Plantings: Current Status

- The Morris Arboretum study of the park's 300 trees. (The \$8,500 survey was funded by the University City District.)
 - Recommends dead or hazardous trees be removed.
 - Inappropriate species removed.
- 55% of trees in park are just one species: London plane
- Over 75% of the park's trees are in good health (expected to live 15+ years).
- However, concentrations of Planes and Sycamores leave the park vulnerable to major losses through disease.



Urban Trees Are Vulnerable

Urban trees have stressful lives

- Polluted air
- Compacted soil (dogs, people running over it)
- Lawnmowers run over roots and wound them
- Trees near pavement don't get enough oxygen from roots

More prone to diseases:

- Clark Park Planes have fungal infections.
- Trees were overplanted, so it is easy for a pest to infect the entire population
- Pruning has to be carried out carefully to keep disease from spreading



Tree Plantings: The Future

- New plantings will promote species diversity to ensure long-term health of the urban forest
- No more than 5% of the total population shall consist of any single species
 - Specie selection based on health and maintenance
 - 'right tree right spot'
- Preservation of 'established formal character' of the park
 - Established planting patterns considered
 - Preference given to native species
 - Preference given to species which foster and promote wildlife
 - Species with known maintenance problems discouraged.



Tree Planting: Design Issues

Design is a balance of two factors

1. Appropriate Trees/Plants

- Can't require constant care: No shrubs
- Can't require constant pesticides: no vulnerable species

2. Overall Design

- Has to maintain overall look of the Park: uniformity provides sense of harmony
 - Trees will be planted in small groups along walks
- Can't mix trees with downward growing branches with trees with upward growing branches
 - Chaotic Effect
 - This is known as the tree's architectural detail
- Intelligent Pruning: Air, Line of sight, Safety.
 - Raises the visual ceiling of the park—gives a sense of airiness
 - Allows more light to reach the ground, good for trees, good for illumination and sense of safety.

The Food Trust and Its Goals

- Increase access to affordable and nutritious foods
 - Can we relate better to the concept of biodiversity by changing our diets?
 - Do we think more about the origins of food when purchasing from farmers?
 - Does purchasing food in a 'natural' environment change the experience and our relationship to nature?
- Improve the health of children and adults through better nutrition
 - Supported by Educational Programs : Food demonstrations, nutrition education, and health screenings
- Support local farms and sustain the environment



Food Trust and Farmer's Markets

How the Food Trust Accomplishes its Goals:

- Farmer's Markets, School Programs, Educate Policy Makers.

In Clark Park, Markets are held :

- every Thursday from 3pm to 7pm
- every Saturday from 10am to 3pm.
May to December

Lengthening of Market Presence

- Originally from May to Thanksgiving. This year, April to December.
- Then Winter Market held 2nd Saturday Dec-April. Roots, preserved vegetables. Dairy and Meat products lengthened the market season.



<http://www.thefoodtrust.org/index.html>

The Food Trust and Its Impact on the Community

- More people are eating locally grown produce.
- More people are eating a greater diversity of vegetables and fruits (different varieties and hybrids, heirloom breeds)
- More people are eating more daily servings of fruits and vegetables. (60% are eating more, 80% of these are eating 2 more servings per day)
- Proof of success: one market where people travel to attend, continuous for 6 years, longest season, greatest number of farmers and attendees. Reflects reality of small full-time farmer's existence (mix of markets)



Small Farm Agriculture

- Demise of the small, family farm
 - Negative labeling: obstacle to economic development.
 - The American model of large scale, mechanized, corporate agriculture is held out as the best way to efficiently feed the world's population.
- Small farmers are numerically dominant.
BUT
 - Numbers have dropped substantially
 - Facing new threats to their livelihoods on an unprecedented scale.
- Public value of small farms
The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Commission on Small Farms "A Time to Act":
 - Diversity; Environmental benefits; Empowerment and community responsibility; Places for families; Personal connection to food; and Economic foundations.
- Small farms make more efficient use of land
- Small farms are great examples of biodiversity

The Food Trust & Biodiversity

- Reducing the Ecological Footprint
 - Supporting Local Farmers
 - Transportation and Accessibility
- What makes this market the biggest success?
 - Community (Mix of community groups involved, their ongoing commitment to advertising the market)
 - Transportation (on the Trolley Line)
 - Safety (UCD provides storage and safety)
 - Diversity of Neighborhood (Most socio-economically diverse shoppers)
 - Sustained support
 - Location (Park, Transport Hub, Across from Key Neighborhood Café)



Strength of Community:

Range of Activities (sampling of calendar):

- May 10: Spruce Hill May Fair; May 26: Memorial Day Picnic; June 7: Change Your Mind Day; June 21: Clark Park Arts & Music Festival; June 28: "Safety First" (Movie); Aug. 24: Health Fair.

Groups Involved with the Park:

- Philadelphia Department of Recreation
- Philadelphia Green
- Baltimore Avenue in Bloom
- Philadelphia Parks
- Friends of Philadelphia Parks
- University City District
- Farmers' Market
- University City Arboretum
- University City Historical Society
- Bartram's Garden
- Spruce Hill Community Association
- Dickens Fellowship