

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, City of Philadelphia and Pew Charitable Trusts Announce Extensive Improvements for Ben Franklin Parkway and Development of New Park in South Philadelphia

Philadelphia, PA—July 17, 2008—Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, and The Pew Charitable Trusts today announced plans for extensive landscape and roadway enhancements on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, as well as the development of a new park in South Philadelphia’s Hawthorne neighborhood. A consortium of funders will provide more than \$19 million for the work.

Work on the two projects is scheduled to begin this year and is expected to be completed in 2011.

“The creation of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway was one of the earliest examples of urban renewal in this country,” Governor Rendell said. “This investment will help restore it as a tree-lined boulevard that is engaging for pedestrians and bike riders; an appropriate home for some of Philadelphia’s most famous landmarks and cultural institutions; and a beautiful focal point for Center City.”

“A revitalized Parkway with new art, lighting, street improvements and enhanced green spaces will be a huge asset for both Philadelphians and visitors to our city,” said Mayor Nutter. “Today we are also demonstrating our commitment to community development with the announcement of funding and a development plan for Hawthorne Park at 12th and Catharine, a neighborhood green space that will now move forward after years of planning and consultation. I would particularly like to thank our many foundation and community partners for their determination and commitment to these two projects.”

Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Costs for the Parkway project are estimated at \$17.1 million. The work will be supported by the City of Philadelphia, which will contribute \$6.4 million, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which will provide \$6.45 million to the city for the project. The Pew Charitable Trusts will contribute \$2 million and will manage all of the private contributions, including a \$1.25 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and a \$1 million grant from the William Penn Foundation.

In coordination with the Fairmount Park Commission, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), the Center City District (CCD) and the City of Philadelphia will implement the streetscape and landscape upgrades on the Parkway between John F. Kennedy Plaza and Eakins Oval.

“This will be a dramatic improvement for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, one of Philadelphia’s greatest civic assets,” said Donald Kimelman, managing director of Pew’s Information Initiatives and the Philadelphia Program. “These enhancements, coupled with the impending move of the Barnes Foundation’s priceless art collection to the Parkway, will result in a remarkable transformation.”

The City will make the street adjustments, which will include improving some traffic lanes, upgrading sidewalks and installing new benches, bicycle lanes and safer pedestrian crossings on

the 1600, 1700, 2100 and 2200 blocks of the Parkway. The 1800 block on the south side of Logan Square will also be included in these plans.

CCD will manage the landscaping for Sister Cities Plaza in front of the Cathedral Basilica, including the addition of new trees, shrubs, grass, benches, and other improvements. PHS, Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Fairmount Park Commission will manage the landscaping on the block surrounding the Rodin Museum, including new lighting and paving for the entry plaza upon which *The Thinker* sits, and restoring Meudon Gate, the main entryway to the garden. In response to this plan, the Philadelphia Museum of Art has committed to raising substantial funds to restore the Rodin Museum's courtyard garden and ensure its continued maintenance.

PHS, CCD and the Fairmount Park Commission have jointly developed a long-term maintenance plan to continue the Parkway's high standard of landscaping after the work is completed.

Hawthorne Park

The new neighborhood park will be developed in Philadelphia's Hawthorne section, just south of Center City at 12th and Catharine Streets. This neighborhood has been transformed in recent years by the demolition of the Martin Luther King public housing project and the construction of a mixed-income townhouse development in its place. PHS, with input from Hawthorne neighborhood residents, created a conceptual plan for the design. PHS will oversee the design in coordination with Fairmount Park, who will manage the construction. The park, which will be roughly the size of half a city block, will provide green space with shade trees, paths and benches, and a lawn area that could serve as an amphitheater.

Costs for Hawthorne Park are projected to be approximately \$2.15 million. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will provide \$1.1 million to the City of Philadelphia through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In addition, a \$300,000 community development grant has been committed through the legislature from State Representative Babette Josephs. The City of Philadelphia through Councilman Frank DiCicco, The Pew Charitable Trusts and the William Penn Foundation will each contribute \$250,000 for the work.

"Just as the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is a tremendous asset to the downtown, neighborhoods need world class public spaces as well," Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said. "The Commonwealth's support for Hawthorne Park will create a special green space in a densely populated area and support the continued revitalization of this growing community."

The scope of work for each area on the Parkway, as well as Hawthorne Park, is detailed on the attached fact sheet.

What others are saying about the Ben Franklin Parkway and Hawthorne Park plans:

"We're fortunate to have a unique window of opportunity on the Parkway—with the coming of the Barnes and the major expansion projects of several other institutions—to re-shape this great asset as a dynamic cultural campus. The Parkway enhancement project represents a major step in that direction." —*Matt Bergheiser, Philadelphia Program Director, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*

"The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is honored to be working on the landscape of the internationally renowned Rodin Museum. The project, designed by Olin Partnership and the

Philadelphia Museum of Art, will make the site more visitor-friendly and will enhance one of the jewels of the Ben Franklin Parkway.

“PHS is also very proud to be helping create the new Hawthorne Park in South Philadelphia. A park is the outdoor living space of a community, and this densely built community has been waiting for a green haven for a long time. We’re thrilled to be working with the city and the Fairmount Park Commission to make this dream come true.” —*J. Blaine Bonham, Executive Vice President, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society*

“The Barnes Foundation looks forward to moving its galleries to the Parkway within a few years, and today’s announcement about the enhanced landscaping, roadway and sidewalks only makes us even more excited when we think about the importance of landscape to the Foundation.” —*Derek Gillman, Executive Director and President, The Barnes Foundation*

“The tradition of partnership has always spelled success in Philadelphia, and this broad Parkway initiative promises more of it today. We can now move forward to rejuvenate the Rodin Museum garden and make it more fully accessible. We are delighted to collaborate with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and Fairmount Park to revitalize this verdant setting in the original spirit, working with a wonderful design by Philadelphia’s internationally renowned landscape firm Olin Partnership. Today’s developments add great momentum as we celebrate one of the city’s great defining thoroughfares, renewing Jacques Gréber’s masterpiece of landscape design, and welcoming new generations of visitors from near and far.” —*Gail Harrity, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Philadelphia Museum of Art*

“We are pleased to join the Governor, Mayor, and our colleagues in philanthropy to enhance not only the Benjamin Franklin Parkway—the city’s most enduring symbol of its long commitment to providing public access to open space—but also the development of a completely new community park in South Philadelphia. We applaud the Mayor and Governor for their commitment to these essential public infrastructure investments and for recognizing their role as necessary components of a long-term economic and community development strategy, not only for Center City, but for our neighborhoods as well.” —*Feather O. Houstoun, President, William Penn Foundation*

“We are thrilled with today’s announcement of State, City and private funding to substantially improve the public realm along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and for the construction of Hawthorne Park, the 64th park in the Fairmount Park system. We thank the funders and look forward to working with our partners to realize both of these great projects.” —*Mark A. Focht, Executive Director, Fairmount Park*

“The Benjamin Franklin Parkway, an extraordinary mile-long cultural district, will be a far more pedestrian friendly and attractive environment thanks to the generous support of the Governor, the Mayor and the three foundations. This is key to our strategy of getting people to walk and visit multiple institutions, and extend their stay in Center City.” —*Paul R. Levy, President and CEO, Center City District*