

Developing a Strategy for Appropriate Uses of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Report to the Parkway Council Foundation and Managing Director's
Office – City of Philadelphia
February 28, 2018

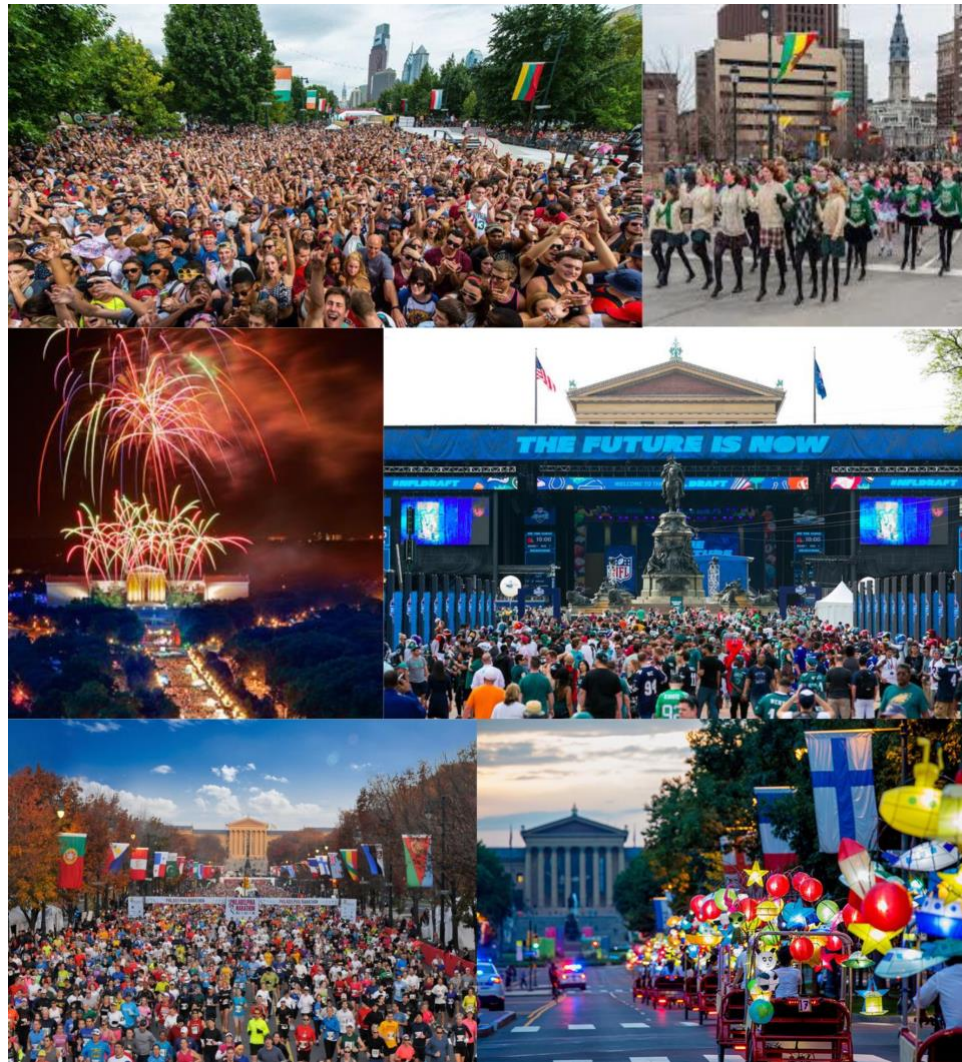


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A complete appendix for this study is provided in a separate document.

Cover Photos (Top Right to Left): Budweiser *Made in America* Concert; St. Patrick's Day Parade; NFL Draft; Welcome America Celebration; Cai Guo-Qiang: *Fireflies*, commissioned by Association for Public Art. Jeff Fusco Photography © 2017; Philadelphia Marathon.

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Definitions

The Parkway Council Foundation and the Managing Director's Office of the City of Philadelphia initiated this study as a collaborative effort to reflect on the historical use of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway (Parkway) as a venue for major events and to consider models for appropriate decision-making on uses of the Parkway.

This study is intended to provide context for decision-making on special event uses of the Parkway, providing an objective tool (Scorecard) to weigh various factors drawn from the input of residents, visitors and City and private stakeholders. Additional considerations were drawn from and informed by examining special events practices in nine cities across the country and permitting and licensing practices of the National Park Service. The intent of this study to represent input from residents, businesses and community stakeholders, and provide an analysis of uses and a set of recommendations to accompany the Scorecard, drawn from conclusions of the input and research. It was not to comment on specific past events or specific current events on the Parkway. Recommendations emerging from this study are in response to the experiences of visitors to the Parkway and residents and institutions on and adjacent to the Parkway.

Key questions addressed for this study include:

- What is the character of events that have occurred over the past 5 to 7 years, and how are those events changing from historical uses of the Parkway? What are historical increases/decreases in number and types of events?
- How have community perceptions changed in terms of the role of the Parkway as a community asset and, more specifically, as a venue for both commercial and community events?
- What are the implications and impacts—both positive and negative—for businesses, institutions and residents along and immediately adjacent to the Parkway?
- Are there alternative sites/venues in Philadelphia that can accommodate large-scale events? Would those producing and attending events on the Parkway now consider alternative venues as desirable?

Special events, for purposes of this study, are defined as those events that occur regularly/annually on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, as well as extraordinary events, occurring primarily between Logan Circle and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. These events are further defined as those requiring some level of lane closures and those likely to utilize the roadway in programming.

Programming and events in Eakins Oval, Logan Circle and Shakespeare Park were reviewed and generally informed this study, but the criteria outlined in the Scorecard are intended for considering events as defined above. It's important to note that there are other events that occur on the Parkway, such as First Amendment events—marches, protests and demonstrations (such as the recent Women's March 2018), spontaneous and planned sports celebrations (such as the recent Eagles Super Bowl Victory Parade), and political events—that were not within the purview of this study.

The range of Parkway events considered in this study is essentially grouped into four relevant categories:

- Community Celebration – The best example of this is the Welcome America 4th of July Celebration. Community celebrations are free to the public.
- Community Pride – Examples include ethnic and heritage-day parades. Community pride events are free to the public.
- Cause Related – Examples include walks, runs, marathons and related events, often focused on raising funds for specific causes. It is important to note that many of the cause-related events are coordinated by corporate or for-profit organizations; these are categorized separately for this study. Cause-related events may or may not include a fee for participation, but are free for public viewing.
- Commercial/Corporate – The primary examples are the NFL Draft and Budweiser Made in America Festival. Commercial/corporate events require participants to purchase tickets, for either some portion or all of the event activities.

Not directly falling within the categories above is the 2015 Papal Mass. Research participants recognized the unique nature of this event—what was required to manage anticipated attendance and the required preparations for health and security—and often referred to the event as “once in a lifetime.”

Context

In calendar year 2017 nineteen events and festivals within the definition of this study enlivened the Parkway, ranging from the NFL Draft, Welcome America 4th of July Celebration and Made in America Festival, to the Puerto Rican Day Parade, Parkway 100 Celebration, and numerous parades, walks, races and other occasional community events and celebrations.

Events on the Parkway generally began in mid-March with the St. Patrick's Day Parade and continued through the weekend before Thanksgiving with the Philadelphia Marathon. Twelve of these events represent long-standing traditions of at least ten years; ten of them have taken place on the Parkway for many more years. The remaining events are either new, somewhat recently added, or one-time events. They vary in magnitude and impact on road closures, security, communications, and overall management.

The large-scale events and the Papal Mass in 2015 significantly influenced the desire for this study and the development of the Scorecard. However, the issues raised in seeking this study have been “on the table” for decades. The City, the Parkway Council, and residents/resident association along the Parkway have deliberated on these issues for many years, if not decades. A recent 2013 study, *More Park, Less Way*, referenced these concerns,¹ citing the tensions between large-scale events and the character of the area. A 2010 study prepared for the Parkway Council Foundation by Econsult, Wallace Roberts & Todd, and Portfolio Associates addresses the ongoing concerns about type, frequency and magnitude of events. Meetings between Parkway Council representatives and the City in 1998, documented in archived minutes, addressed identical issues around use, impact and frequency.

There is a perception among residents and stakeholders informing this study that use of the Parkway as a venue for large-scale special events (categorized as attracting greater than 50,000 participants) has increased. A multi-year review² indicates, however, that usage has been relatively stable and consistent, with annual parades, walks, marathons and the 4th of July celebration upholding long-standing traditions. The concerns expressed by residents and through the Parkway Council are magnified by the out-of-the-ordinary events in recent years—the September 2015 Papal Mass and related activity, and the April 2017 NFL Draft, in particular. Made in America was often cited in addition to these two (though the addition of a Labor Day weekend celebration has taken place for five years, from 2013 through 2017), adding to the perception of increased usage. In addition, numerous First Amendment activities—rallies, protests and marches—and sports celebrations have occurred in recent years, adding to the perceptions of overuse and the frustrations expressed by residents on and adjacent to the Parkway.

¹ “More Park, Less Way: An Action Plan to Increase Urban Vibrancy on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway,” <https://issuu.com/pennpraxis/docs/moreparklessway>.

² A listing of Parkway event closures between 2007 and 2017 is included in the Appendix.

Findings and Conclusions

A review of events within the definition above on the Parkway between 2007 and 2017 indicates that overall use has not increased significantly. The number of events has remained relatively the same, with the majority of events occurring annually. The nature of the events has not changed significantly, with the exception of two particularly large and extraordinary one-time events—the Papal Mass (2015) and NFL Draft (2017). The City has added one event, the Made in America Festival, which began in 2013 and is often cited by residents and stakeholders as “out of the norm.”

The perception persists, however, that events have increased significantly, accompanied by a sense that the Parkway is overused. A broad analysis of these perceptions, and input from residents, municipal and private stakeholders, and institutions on the Parkway, however, is more nuanced; a number of issues related to specific and/or personal—or institutional—experiences influence these perceptions and impact beliefs on what is or is not appropriate for the Parkway. The level of activation on Eakins Oval, at Shakespeare Park and within other areas adjacent to Eakins Oval also contributes to the perception of an increase in special events. Generally, the activity in these areas rates highly with participants and is viewed as desirable. Regardless, they contribute to increased activation of spaces in and around the Parkway. Other events contributing to the sense of overuse of the Parkway include First Amendment activities and more spontaneous events such as the recent Eagles Victory Parade.

The recommendations section of this report further elucidates approaches in responding to the conclusions outlined below. Findings and conclusions include:

- Residents and stakeholders questioned how decisions regarding the Parkway are made without the context of an overarching vision for the role of the Parkway in the life of Philadelphia, and, more specifically, how programming and special events must be related to that vision. If there is a guiding vision informing decisions, it is not broadly known or understood. The perception is that a clearly articulated and broadly shared vision is lacking for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway that serves as the point of reference for decision-making on Parkway events.

The City has an opportunity to initiate and embrace a process to articulate a shared vision that will guide how the Parkway is managed and utilized in the future.

- Residents expressed their frustrations with noise, damage, inconvenience and appropriateness of events, both in focus groups and through a resident survey. They also articulated that their decision to live in the Parkway district was an intentional choice related to the diversity of activity on the Parkway. Overall, residents and institutional stakeholders expressed support for events on the Parkway and embraced it as a primary venue for community use; however, they indicated a need for improving event management and strengthening communications around planning and execution of events to reduce impacts on residents, institutions and the physical infrastructure of the Parkway.

Opportunities are available to address communications and elements of event management that will mitigate many of the concerns and frustrations expressed, while at the same time increasing resident support of Parkway programming.

- Concern over the impact of large-scale events on the cultural institutions and other entities on and adjacent to the Parkway were factors that initiated this study. Specific issues considered included public perceptions of closed access, lost admissions, lost productivity, and physical damage to buildings, sculptures, properties and collections.

Evidence garnered through direct interviews and a review of available financial documentation reveals that Parkway events, particularly the extraordinarily large events, impact the cultural institutions and entities on and adjacent to the Parkway in numerous ways. Financial and physical impacts on the institutions range from very modest to significant. Because of its location, iconic status (particularly the museum steps), and centrality in hosting all major events, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) bears the impact in a more direct and significant way than other institutions. Of particular concern is the potential damage to parts of the PMA collection resulting from proximity to excessive noise.

Additional concerns expressed by residents and in interviews with numerous Parkway institutions centered around long-term wear and tear on infrastructure, such as greenways and grass areas trampled by crowds and equipment and, in particular, the plaza at the base of the PMA steps, the steps themselves and the East Terrace, as well as Iroquois Park. In these and other areas, the use of heavy equipment and the construction and removal of extensive staging for large events has caused extensive wear.

According to interviews with institution representatives, the event producer must usually bear the cost to repair and/or restore identifiable damage and wear and tear resulting from events. Repairs such as restoration of grass and landscaping occur regularly after events and are billed to the event producers. Residents voiced frustration that many areas, though replanted, cannot recover because of the frequency of events that impact green spaces. Event producers are responsible for the cost of damage to infrastructure such as light poles, curbs and sidewalks as well. In interviews conducted as part of this study, event producers acknowledged that they anticipate such costs, understand the obligation of restoration or reimbursement and accept the responsibility. The special event application clearly articulates that event producers will be responsible for all costs associated with City services, as well as restoration and repair.

There are opportunities for careful consideration of methods of cost recovery, damage mitigation and restoration of lost revenues. For example, it is not apparent whether either long-term wear and tear on major infrastructure is considered in the current fee structure or restoration of lost revenues.

Additionally, a more intentional partnership and collaboration with the cultural institutions and entities through the Parkway Council around planning, marketing and programming will benefit program management and mitigate negative impacts on the institutions, building on the existing relationships between the City and the institutions.

- As residents and institution stakeholders expressed concerns, a common theme emerged: issues around communications in planning, preparation and event management. It should be noted that in all instances, participants acknowledged—and in some instances, praised—improvements in outreach and communications in planning for events. Participants voiced appreciation for recent approaches by the current City administration, members of City Council, and the Special Events office in addressing resident and institutional concerns. These acknowledgements included suggestions for deepening and broadening communications, which are reflected in the recommendations of this report.

There is a distinct opportunity to build on the good will established by the current administration, forge stronger partnerships with the residents and institutions, and address communications and planning issues.

Several alternative venues in Philadelphia should be considered for special events. Both the intercept surveys of attendees of numerous events and interviews and surveys of event producers explored the concept of using these venues—the Sports Complex, Penn’s Landing, Belmont Plateau and Mann Music Center in particular. Both groups clearly indicated a willingness to produce events in alternative venues and to attend events in places other than on the Parkway. In fact, participants viewed considerations of public transit options as highly important for the placement of an event, outweighing the aesthetic value of holding the event on the Parkway.

The openness to these options presents opportunities for the City to encourage and incentivize the use of alternative venues when negotiating and working with event producers in determining appropriate settings and sights for events. There are opportunities to both encourage and incentivize use of alternative venues when the City is negotiating and working with event producers.

- Two distinct issues of transparency were articulated by residents and stakeholders.
 - The first centered around the process of decision-making on events scheduled for the Parkway, particularly large-scale events. This is a common theme seen in numerous Parkway event studies over the years and is regularly documented in these studies. The response in this effort begins with the Scorecard.
 - The second was the perception that the City loses money on events, and that public funds are being used to “prop up commercial interests.” This was prominent in resident comments related to the NFL Draft and Made In America Festival. However, research of fees and billing related to large-scale events indicates that event producers bear all direct costs (public safety, sanitation and

site impact), and clear provisions are provided for reimbursing the costs of restoration and repair.

Opportunity exists for the City to increase transparency around decision-making, clarify the use of public funds associated with producing events on the Parkway (as well as across the city), and better communicate what event producers do and do not pay for.

Recommendations and Observations

Throughout the research process, the consulting team noted several issues consistently raised by residents, institutional representatives and stakeholders based on their experiences of events in recent years. The following recommendations, based on the described observations and considerations in planning and management of special events on the Parkway, offer possible solutions for reducing negative impacts and enhancing the experiences of Parkway residents and visitors.

Vision and Oversight

As indicated in the findings above, a common theme runs throughout all forms of research citing the need for articulation of a publicly acknowledged and broadly shared vision for the Parkway as a point of reference in determining appropriate uses. There have been a range of studies conducted and reports issued on Parkway development and use over the past fifteen to twenty years that consistently conclude the need for articulating and committing to a shared vision. However, it is not apparent to informants in this study if or in what ways these recommendations have been embraced or acted upon by the City or any administration over the years. We reiterate the need for clearly articulating a guiding and shared vision. Input from municipal representatives indicates that the 2013 report, *More Park, Less Way* is a driving force for investments in and around the Parkway. Yet there is little, if any, understanding among residents and stakeholders that this is the context for decision-making. Additionally, the 2010 *Increasing Cultural Activity in the Parkway Museums District: Realizing the Vision of the Parkway as an Exceptional Cultural Destination* also articulates a vision for the Parkway that embraces a different approach and focus. Both reports put forth a vision for the Parkway and actions to achieve the specific vision articulated in each.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Elected and municipal officials need to engage with residents, institutional and community stakeholders in a intentional, focused effort to craft a shared vision for the Parkway, and to fully embrace and commit to that vision as the lens for special events, infrastructure management and overall development of the Parkway District. In the event that a vision for the Parkway is assumed, there is a need for communicating that regularly with residents and stakeholders and sharing in what ways it serves as the framework and point of reference for decisions on Parkway use.
- Past studies have outlined approaches to Parkway management with recommendations for creating a distinct Parkway District management entity and/or trust. Recommendations in these studies are based on in-depth research of nationally prominent examples. It is suggested that these options be carefully revisited and fully explored.

Communication

Communication is a broad topic that encompasses several elements of the findings above and is addressed in two specific recommendations below.

- a. Residents, businesses and stakeholders often cited the inconsistency and inaccessibility of up-to-date and accurate information on special event street closures, changing public transportation routes, security, safety and access impacts. A review of channels for communicating event planning³ and closures indicated regular efforts to inform the public of closures (such as the interactive map on the Street Departments beta-site⁴ and the Managing Director's Office webpage)⁵ and event impacts, yet no definitive source or reference across City or other platforms was found. A review of practices across other cities did not disclose a consistent approach. Development of a "go-to" site and platform to fulfill this communication deficit presents an opportunity for Philadelphia to create a national model. A lack of communication in planning prior to events was also noted, although recent efforts to improve engagement of residents and stakeholders in event planning and preparation through community meetings and other formats including social media were acknowledged.
- b. There is a lack of transparency around costs associated with special events and if, and to what extent, the City subsidizes events, particularly those produced by corporate or commercial entities. Transparency is essential for residents and businesses to have an understanding of the approval process as well as the public investment in events. Though subsequent to the research period of this study, the recent Super Bowl victory parade illustrated a clear example of this confusion. It was unclear to the public who would bear the cost; both national and local press questioned whether it was a City-sponsored and subsidized event or an event produced and paid for by the Eagles.⁶ Transparency challenges arise when communication between City officials and the public is poor; the public is unaware of the distinction between the regular approval process and the right of the City administration and Mayor to approve and/or promote events that he/she feels are in the best interest of the City and are an appropriate investment of public funds.

³ This review included social media postings—primarily Twitter and Facebook—through the Mayor's Office, Special Events Office, Managing Director's Office, Parks and Recreation, Police Department, Office of Transportation and Infrastructure and Streets Department, as well the websites and social media channels of SEPTA, special event producers for Made in America, Welcome American and the NFL Draft. Posting and articles through Philly.com and in the Philadelphia Inquirer were also reviewed.

⁴ "Streets, sidewalks and alleys," City of Philadelphia, <https://beta.phila.gov/services/streets-sidewalks-alleys/street-closures/>.

⁵ "Street Closures," Managing Director's Office, <http://www.phila.gov/mdo/specialevents/pages/streetclosures.aspx>.

⁶ Tom Schad, "Who will pay for Eagles' championship parade?" *USA Today*, February 9, 2018; "The city breaks down the numbers of the Eagles Parade," *6ABC Action News*, February 10, 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish a dedicated, central on-line resource, such as a real-time web site with associated social media channels—a “go-to” source—specifically dedicated to special event street closures, changes in public transit routes, parking and other associated impacts. This resource will serve residents and visitors in their planning for all special events in Philadelphia, not just those on the Parkway. It is recommended that it is separate and distinct from the Office of Special Events website and is promoted specifically as the primary source for closures and related transportation associated with events across the City. Ideally, this central source would also serve as the feeder for the social media and any web-based platforms on events through all City service and administrative departments. A “go-to” and centralized platform also presents the opportunity for integrating notices of community meetings and other relevant pre-planning communications.
- Develop a dedicated page on the Office of Special Events website as a dashboard that communicates the economic and community value of events across the City. The dashboard may include elements such as the number of events annually, the number of people attending events, community organizations served through permits (i.e., heritage parades, block parties, other community celebrations) as well as costs and financial information addressing concerns about the City subsidizing commercial events. It is also an opportunity to indicate positive economic benefits such as hotel nights generated, temporary jobs generated, etc.

Noise, Sound and Vibration Management

A key issue identified by Parkway residents and institutional stakeholders was managing and controlling noise. Issues raised ranged from the use of amplified sound in the early morning hours—a particular point of contention, regarding the direction of announcements for the numerous races, marathons and walks that begin at 7:00 a.m. or earlier on a Sunday morning—to the decibel level and its impact on the neighborhood, to ongoing concerns of damage to the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art resulting from excessive vibration and amplification.

Step 1 of the current special events application asks if amplified sound will be included and for what hours. This is the extent of any reference to amplified sound or noise management. There are no additional direct references in the application regarding noise management or specific references to prevailing ordinances. The application’s terms and conditions acknowledgement and signature page does not specifically address noise management, though part “A” of the terms and conditions is a blanket acknowledgement of all applicable laws, rules and regulations. There is no link in the

application to review the prevailing ordinances and codes.⁷ There is no evidence that event contracts specifically address noise, sound and vibration management.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A review of practices in other cities revealed noteworthy examples to consider adopting to address concerns about noise management and mitigating the impact of amplified sound.

- The City of San Francisco requires a specific amplified sound permit that includes acknowledgement of prevailing terms and conditions, in addition to the special event permit.⁸ This fee-based permit charges one fee for *for-profit* entities and a much lower fee for *non-profit* organizations. Consider establishing a similar amplified sound and noise management permit for special events in Philadelphia.
- The City of Chicago event permit application includes a specific section requiring articulating a noise control plan,⁹ with sections to indicate the proximity of amplified sound to residential addresses and what means—such as on-site contact, etc.—will be available to control amplified sound during the event if necessary. This would be a simple addition to the Philadelphia permit application, and should be accompanied by expected standards.
- Create a standardized noise management addendum to all special event permits that outlines clear guidelines, references and links to the existing codes and ordinances. It should include a clear outline of enforcement methodologies to be utilized in the event of a violation, ranging from on-site corrective actions to the potential of halting an event in extreme cases.
- Add a noise management policy to the FAQ¹⁰ section of the Managing Director’s webpage and the Office of Special Events FAQ webpage.¹¹
- Update fines in the event of a violation and include in the addendum recommended above when the fines will be enforced, particularly if corrective action has been requested and not enacted.
- Outline clear guidelines, in a noise and amplified sound addendum, for early morning loudspeaker announcements that limit the decibel level and direction of amplification to reduce the imposition on residential buildings adjacent to the Parkway prior to 8:00 a.m.

⁷ “The Philadelphia Code,” Chapter 10-400, American Legal Publishing Corporation, last modified February 14, 2018, [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Pennsylvania/philadelphia_pa/thephiladelphiacode?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:philadelphia_pa](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Pennsylvania/philadelphia_pa/thephiladelphiacode?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:philadelphia_pa).

⁸ “San Francisco Recreation and Park Department Amplified Sound Application,” <http://fs18.formsite.com/sfrpsurvey2/ampsound/index.html>.

⁹ “2017 Special Events Permit Packet,” Noise Control Plan, p. 8, https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dca/Neighborhood_Festivals/permitpacket2017.pdf.

¹⁰ “Streets, sidewalks & alleys,” City of Philadelphia, <https://beta.phila.gov/services/streets-sidewalks-alleys/street-closures/>.

¹¹ “FAQs,” PHL Office of Special Events, <https://phlevents.org/faqs/>.

Guidelines and Standards

Residents and institutional representatives consistently cited frustrations with trash accumulation and public urination during special events. While event producers are required to provide appropriate infrastructure, the City should seize opportunities to establish/articulate standards and practices for event producers in addressing these concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Establish clear guidelines, based on anticipated attendance/participation, specifying the provision of portable restrooms by event producers as a condition of an approved special event permit.
- Establish, document and outline a clear communication process between event producers and the Sanitation Department in a step-by-step addendum to the event application to ensure a prompt and efficient post-event clean-up plan.

Revenue and Cost Recovery

In addition to the numerous operational and organizational issues related to special events addressed above, the financial burden on the non-profit cultural institutions and other entities resulting from closures, inaccessibility, security and damage mitigation requires careful and thoughtful consideration. The cultural institutions established along the Parkway both benefit from and are challenged by their location, particularly in relation to large special events. While 73% of respondents to the intercept survey indicated that attending events on the Parkway would encourage visiting one or more of the museums on the Parkway, up to 40% indicated events make it hard to visit museums. There is no identifiable data indicating that special events produce increased visitation to the cultural institutions, yet attendance data reviewed for this study clearly indicate that reduced admissions during large special events impacted nearly all institutions. Additionally, many of the institutions incurred some level of unreimbursed expenses— from somewhat modest to quite significant—for security and safety, damage mitigation and lost productivity.

Documents reviewed trace the discussion and debate over the years of the impact on and costs borne by cultural institutions when large special events occur. Interviews with institutional representatives as well as commercial entities further elucidated the issues, indicating that event producers regularly work directly with individual institutions in covering security and related out of pocket costs, as well as reimbursing costs for damage mitigation, replacement and restoration. The costs at times exceed

reimbursements provided and evidence suggests that damage to infrastructure—sidewalks and other major hardscape—is accumulating over time, and restoration and refurbishment costs will require resources not currently accounted for in fees charged to event producers.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a specific methodology for generating revenue through the imposition of Parkway usage fees to be utilized in reducing the financial losses incurred by the non-profit cultural institutions, affected entities and/or infrastructure restoration on the Parkway resulting from large-scale special events.

- Establish a dedicated fund to receive event usage and impact fees for the purpose of museum/institutional revenue recovery and/or infrastructure restoration and impact costs on adjacent entities. Only events with registration fees or admissions charges for participation would have fees assessed; no fees would apply to an event that is completely free and open to the public. Fees from an amplified sound permit, if instituted, could also contribute to this dedicated fund. It is acknowledged that the cultural institutions have negotiated directly with event producers in the past for reimbursement of added security costs, repairs and restoration, and other losses incurred. This fund is to be considered separate and distinct from those practices. A review of fee practices in other cities provides examples that include:
 - Minimal per-person charges for sports events (walks, runs, marathons) of \$1.00 - \$1.50 per runner and/or \$.60 – \$.75 per walker. Variations in fees account for non-profit versus for-profit produced events. Whether or not these fees are passed along to participants or absorbed into registration fees should be at the discretion of the event producers.
 - Minimal per-person charges (\$1.00 - \$1.50 per sold ticket) for events with a gate or admissions fee.

Collaboration with the Parkway Council

The Parkway Council has been the primary organization representing the interests of institutions, businesses, and residences on and adjacent to the Parkway for over fifteen years. Their stated mission includes the following: “The Parkway Council works closely with the City of Philadelphia and other public and private organizations to identify the best strategies for enhancing and promoting the Parkway, and serves as a strategic partner and catalyst to ensure that those strategies are implemented.” The long-standing relationship between the City and the Parkway Council, including their work together on this study, presents the opportunity to continue to strengthen collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION: Strengthen the collaborative relationship and partnership between the City and the Parkway Council by establishing a formal position for a Parkway Council representative on the City Special Event Task Force when Parkway events are on the agenda.

Please refer to the Benchmarking section for additional information and suggestions citing relevant and useful practices in the nine cities examined for this study.

Methodology

This study was informed by both primary and secondary research. Primary research focused on engagement of community and institutional stakeholders, municipal and civic leadership and residents in and around the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, as well as attendees of events on the Parkway between September 3, 2017, and November 24, 2017.

Secondary research focused on reviewing documents, literature and contemporary best practices in special event planning, as described below.

Engagement Activities

Interviews

Individual and small group interviews were conducted with key informants representing the City of Philadelphia, organizations, cultural institutions, businesses and residents along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and relevant organizations in Philadelphia. Interviews were conducted between August 15, 2017, and December 21, 2017. A complete list of interviewees is included the appendix.

Resident Focus Groups and Resident Survey

A series of six focus groups with residents and business representatives from the Parkway District took place between September 15 and September 18, 2017. Parkway Council staff reached out to member organizations to serve as hosting sites and to representatives of local neighborhood associations to recruit participants. To ensure diversity of age, residence, gender and race in the focus groups, individuals completed a brief online RSVP form (survey) to apply to attend the group. The form also included a space to indicate interest in attending the group. We strove to populate each group with a cross section of the community though this was somewhat limited based on the respondents to the RSVP form. The consultant team selected the focus group participants, and confirmed by email. In total, 74 people participated in focus groups, selecting their times and locations from the choices below:¹²

Friday, September 15, 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Friends Select School
Saturday, September 16, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at The Barnes Foundation
Saturday, September 16, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. at The Barnes Foundation
Sunday, September 17, 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Sunday, September 17, 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Sunday, September 17, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Monday, September 18, 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. at Mormon Temple Meeting House

¹² A list of focus group participants may be found in the Appendix.

Monday, September 18, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Mormon Temple Meeting House
Monday, September 18, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. at Mormon Temple Meeting House

Because community interest in the focus groups was extremely strong, we created an online survey to allow people who were not selected for the focus groups to provide their input. At the request of various neighborhood associations, this survey was extended as an open invitation for resident participation, and was available between September 1, 2017, and December 10, 2017. To be as inclusive as possible, representatives of resident buildings and neighborhood associations in and adjacent to the Parkway received invitations to participate in the survey. Residents increased the distribution of the link through social media. The online survey resulted in 322 respondents.

Professional Discussion Groups

Additional discussion groups were conducted with representatives of businesses on and adjacent to the Parkway, the Mayor's Cultural Advisory Council, professionals in the hospitality industry, and independent event producers with experience producing and promoting events on the Parkway and across the Philadelphia region.

Intercept Survey

The consulting team worked with Parkway Council staff to identify appropriate event dates between Labor Day Weekend and Thanksgiving to survey visitors to Parkway events in intercept format. A one-page paper survey was developed to gather visitor opinion about the events and their location on the Parkway. This survey was intended to be as random as possible, and not specially targeted to tourists or residents. A team of students from Temple University's School of Sport, Tourism, and Hospitality Management, trained by the team and managed by a team leader, conducted the surveys. The students collected 540 intercept surveys.

Secondary Research

The Managing Director's Office of the City of Philadelphia and the Parkway Council Foundation provided documents and studies to the consulting team for review. An additional literature search revealed further documentation and aided in identifying the practices of nine cities for benchmarking. Numerous studies have been conducted in reference to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway which were also reviewed.

Research Findings

Through all methods of direct engagement—interviews, discussion and focus groups, intercept and resident surveys—a number of themes emerged about experiences related to events on the Parkway.

Seventy-four residents participated in focus groups, 322 residents responded to and completed the on-line survey, and 540 intercept surveys were completed.

Resident Focus Groups and Survey

The resident focus groups and on-line survey were consistent in the themes that reveal a neighborhood passionate about the Parkway. Residents and business interests consider it a gem, often referring to the Parkway as Philadelphia's "parlor," "front porch," or "living room" and as the cultural heart of the City. Residents often refer to the Parkway as "Philadelphia's Champs-Élysées." Participants and respondents want the Parkway to be valued for the rich, diverse resource that it is. And in sharing it with the world, they want consideration for the people who live and work here.

Residents shared their aspirations for the Parkway, as well as their positive experiences, concerns and frustrations with events in the recent past. Residents are mixed on their view of events on the Parkway, ranging from fully embracing all events and uses to expressing frustration with noise, inconvenience and disruption.

Overall, there is a desire for a shared and broadly understood vision of a public commons that supports events and community celebrations. Support among residents for events on the Parkway was broad, though tempered by concerns about the frequency and number of events, the magnitude of disruption to daily life, noise and damage to infrastructure. The following comments are representative of the range of resident feedback:

- *"I like the uniqueness and diversity. My block is like the U.N. I like the accessibility of the Parkway coming and going through it. I think it also provides a great economic opportunity for the City and hopefully for the businesses in the area."*
- *"I moved to Philadelphia because I love the excitement and I love the events on the Parkway. It's why I moved to Logan Square. We go to the fireworks and Thanksgiving every year. I love the Oval and its programming. I loved the NFL Draft and I attended Made in America every year but this year. I love having the events like the Fireflies too. I know it's a challenge, but it's very exciting. We belong to every one of the institutions on the Parkway. I also like the events where people can participate, like the runs and the bike race."*
- *"The taking of public space for private events trashes this resource. Twelve-foot fences block people from using it for too long. Neighborhood sports associations are unable to use the fields. It should still be a City resource."*

- *"It's lovely to walk the Parkway and see your neighbors in such a cultural area. I feel very good about events that are inclusive, that don't require big fences or the exclusivity of payment where people can't afford to be there. The recreation department's work on the Eakins Oval should be highly commended. It's inclusive and is for people visiting and people who are neighbors."*

Parkway: Design, Usage, Vision

A common theme across all research methods was the lack of an agreed-upon vision for the role of the Parkway in the life of Philadelphia. Residents acknowledged numerous attempts over the past several years to articulate a vision for the Parkway,¹³ but the consensus is that these plans have not been fully utilized or had "traction" for implementation. There was also acknowledgement of increased outreach to residents in preparation for events in an attempt to mitigate disruption and inconvenience. Close to 90% of residents surveyed participate in Parkway events. Two thirds indicated that they take part in summer activities on the Eakins Oval; more than 40% participate in national holiday celebrations; and upwards of 25% participate in large-scale events such as the Philadelphia Marathon, NFL Draft, and the Papal Mass.

Observations and data from the focus groups and resident survey clearly indicate that participants consider the Parkway the heart of the city and the neighborhood: a park where people gather and a flexible venue for an ever-changing mix of uses. The diversity of opportunities for outdoor activity, the beauty of the Parkway and environs, and the presence of the cultural institutions were cited often. The three most important aspects of events on the Parkway reported on the resident survey were events that improve Philadelphia's image as a Great American City, events that encourage visitation to museums in the area, and events that make people feel they are part of something good.

Representative comments include:

- *"The Parkway is a place that is an event in itself."*
- *"It's been dramatically improved (by recent construction) and is a place that is now better for pedestrians, for events and for drivers."*
- *"Logan Circle looks better each year."*
- *"Sister Cities Park is a home run."*

Residents find the regularity of Parkway events "a challenge but it's very exciting." However, "the number and size of events has overwhelmed (the Parkway's) capacity to be a gracious host." According to residents, the types of events they would most enjoy having on the Parkway are art, cultural, and food events (over 50%), followed by craft fairs and parades (more than 33%).

¹³ Most often cited was the 2013 "More Park, Less Way: An Action Plan to Increase Urban Vibrancy on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway/," a study commissioned by the Department of Parks and Recreation and developed by PennPraxis. <https://issuu.com/pennpraxis/docs/moreparklessway>.

Keeping the Parkway accessible for pedestrians is paramount. Many desire to enhance use of the numerous micro spaces with signs that help visitors get around the Parkway green itself. "There are paths that just start and then go nowhere." "Crossing the Parkway is difficult, confusing in many places, and cars go too fast." Residents expressed frustration at the lack of amenities on and around the Parkway, particularly bathrooms and water fountains. Some of the most challenging aspects of events on the Parkway reported on the resident survey were damage to the park that detracts from its natural beauty and disruptions that limit access and negatively impact residential life.

Remaining pedestrian friendly and improving on that quality is seen as vital. "In Europe there are city centers where you can't drive—you have to take a bus to get in. That's the trend." "There must always be a way for pedestrians and those with mobility issues to cross the Parkway at all times and for residents and workers to get in and out."

Cultural Institutions

The cultural institutions are a source of pride; many consider them a magnet for visitors. A large number of focus group participants indicated they are members of one or more of the institutions. This support was strongly evidenced as residents expressed concern over the limited accessibility to cultural institutions resulting from the frequency and scope of events on the Parkway.

"It would be frustrating to travel here only to find our institutions closed and Rocky inaccessible." Cultural institutions should be "treated as gems, and the Parkway curated as a gem, not just because someone wants to have their event there."

Residents especially disliked the blocking of the iconic art museum steps during large events. Those who completed the online survey indicated events that encourage visitation of museums on the Parkway as the second most important aspect of seven tested. Business owners believe cultural tourists spend more on hotels and restaurants than concert goers, whose purchases may be limited to the event itself. Some participants would like the institutions to host more events that spill out onto the Parkway. "They're missing the chance to use their front yards to get people in, and should escape their ivory towers."

Small Events

Smaller events were very popular, especially short, intimate, cultural experiences that don't require closures. One resident expressed it this way: "I love the weird little things you encounter." Respondents regarded these smaller events as an important benefit of living in the City. The Fireflies was very popular: "It was so nice, that after rush hour on a weeknight, we could all have this beautiful experience. It felt neighborly." Pop-ups and beer gardens were generally appreciated. Programming at the Oval scored high again and again through the resident survey and among comments by focus group participants. Respondents acknowledged that small events might not attract many from outside the area, but had less impact on the Parkway residents and organizations. Conversely, some small events

were seen as creating outsized effects. Walkathons and runs, in particular, were cited for the length of time they occupy the Parkway, beginning in the early hours of weekend days and lasting many hours, blocking the ability to cross the Parkway. Complaints were expressed about the noise from bullhorns very early in the morning. Participants also expressed frustration that even a small parade can block access for much longer than seems justified.

The increase in small events is creating problems for the neighborhood comparable to the effect of big events, and in some cases the problems are worse because of their frequency. *"With so many weekend events, nobody can come see you. It's impossible. People trying to get to church can't. There was a family with a young girl in a wheelchair that waited an hour to cross the streets and the cops said there were just too many runners."* Many believe the City should *"share the wealth of these events"* with other venues and neighborhoods around Philadelphia, suggesting that, at the least, a walk or run be started one place but finished somewhere else. *"Not everything needs to begin and end at the art museum."*

Large Events

Reaction to large events was mixed, but mostly negative for what residents consider "commercial" events. To generalize: free, open, public events like the 4th of July (Welcome America) were well tolerated and even enjoyed. Private events, requiring 12-foot fences to block off large areas of the Parkway and neighborhoods for extended periods of time, were seen as excruciatingly disruptive and not of benefit to residents or most local businesses. Many hold strong opinions that the large events perceived as commercial are not appropriate for the Parkway and that other locations would serve better for these events. *"I absolutely hate Made in America [being on the Parkway]. My tax money goes to a company that is not even American owned, so the irony of that really screams at me. There is no cost/benefit analysis from the City and that infuriates me. The fact that they use big garbage trucks to block off the streets is emblematic of the whole thing."* While not all music festivals might be considered "large" events, they often are. When asked what types of events residents would enjoy having on the Parkway, music festivals ranked last, with 26% choosing this type of event.

Comments indicated frustration with a lack of transparency about commercial events, costs of events to the tax payer, loss of use of public space, unnecessary inconvenience from closures and poor communication. These issues and perceptions create resentment among residents who participated in focus groups and the resident survey. They suggested a predictable system for City response to events and central authority for managing them would address much of the issue.

Additionally, the participants see the neighborhood as stressed by too many big events, too many street closures, too many people, too much noise, too much trash, too much public drunkenness, public urination, helicopters, and the length of time it all goes on before, during and after these big events: a disruption of people's lives for as much as five weeks at a time for a single event without recognizable benefit for the neighborhood. At the same time, contrarily, residents valued community-based big events as an important aspect of Philadelphia culture, in spite of their disruptive nature.

Big events such as the Papal Mass and the NFL Draft that are seen to elevate the image of the City on the national and international stage were viewed as mostly positive, with the caveat that support was contingent on whether they happened on rare occasions and did not restrict access for weeks on end. Residents who took the online survey ranked events that improve the City's image as the most important aspect of seven tested. *"With the Pope and the NFL draft, Philadelphia has elevated its reputation in the world."* However, participants considered large, televised events such as these the most disruptive to the local residents because of helicopter noise.

For some participants the NFL Draft was the tipping point, arousing anger over issues of access to their neighborhoods and residences, mainly due to the length of the set up and tear down, and blockage of the iconic art museum steps.

"It's atrocious. The constant helicopters, amount of congestion. It was poorly planned. The City sold itself out to this organization. It was despicable and nauseating and I wanted it to leave and never come back. And I'm a football fan."

"Tourists coming to see [the] Parkway, river, museum and steps and finding closures, lack of access, and drunken crowds doesn't elevate our image as a world class city."

"People come to the City to see the Rocky statue. 24/7 they want to see it. Tourists are always asking for directions. It's out of sight for many of these events."

Health and Safety Issues

Residents expressed concerns about safety, worrying that emergency services may not be able to get to residents when needed during events. One participant noted, *"I was lucky to have had my heart attack on a day when there wasn't an event."* Incorrect and inconsistent advance information about closures given to healthcare workers in neighboring hospitals and senior residences has made this a critical issue for them. *"I work in home health care, and these [disruptive events] block us from visiting the sick and homebound in hospice. We are not EMS, so the police would not let us through."* The police and security are not viewed as helpful in managing the chaos, providing access to residents and local workers or in doing enough to manage crowd control and illegal behavior. *"Weeks-long disruption by events...creates serious safety/access concerns; not only is traffic aggravating, it is very unsafe for anyone needing access to medical care/hospitals, which is almost impossible during events."*

Diversity and Choice of Parkway Activities

When asked what type of events residents would like to see on the Parkway and what events they find appealing, participants indicated:

"Logan Square has come back alive because of the recent construction—you have the mini-parks and Shakespeare, the chess set: Sister Cities is alive."

"Programming on The Oval (Eakins Oval) is good. It needs to get bigger and more creative."

[The] "kickoff to the Centennial of the Parkway opening was wonderful and the kind of event that seems appropriate. Replicate the small events. Big events work too in some cases." One participant suggested getting rid of the biggest and the smallest to leave "a nice middle ground of events that fit the Parkway."

"Arts and culture events are wonderful. They showcase the City and its role as a major arts center. They expose everyone to the beauty of the diverse cultural mix that makes up the City. Including food, drink, and culturally important and relative entertainment adds tremendously to such events."

In addition to preferred uses of the Parkway, residents would welcome more investment and attention on amenities: the addition of a few more places along the Parkway for casual stopping, sitting, grabbing a bite to eat and enjoy the space, and well placed accessible restrooms are seen as a must. *"There are no bathrooms or places to buy even a bottle of water. Not many water fountains, and they don't always work. The Parkway has to be both a showplace and a place for the neighborhood."*

Street Closures and Parking

Consistently, residents expressed frustration with street closures and parking restrictions resulting from events on the Parkway. They asked for a standardized, more predictable approach to traffic and parking management. Suggestions included notifying residents by email when streets will be closed, posting advance notification signs on the highways at earlier exits for detours, and providing resident parking somewhere else during big events. *"The City manages this through different departments, and three police districts cover Center City. None of the police districts coordinate road closures, so there are days when you can't get out and you can't get in. There's no coordination, and nobody is in charge."*

In many places, satellite parking areas offer shuttle services into events; residents expressed interest in seeing this here. They suggested that if visitors use Center City garages, they are likely to patronize nearby restaurants and bars before returning to their parked cars, benefitting businesses throughout Center City.

Residents who took the online survey ranked closures and parking disruptions second only to "damaging the park" as detractors of Parkway events.

"Limit the amount of time roads can be closed. NFL Draft was like a month—that's absurd."

"You cannot constantly affect parking. The NFL event was ridiculous. People had to move cars for extended time. Last week's marathon, 23rd Street was closed to parking to residents for three days. Guess what? On Sunday, participants parked there anyway. They received no tickets. We the residents were the only ones inconvenienced."

"I believe local residents should get a parking pass and be allowed to park on Pennsylvania Avenue or local parking garages."

Noise Levels

Noise levels were consistently cited as a major problem resulting from events. Residents wanted to see greater control of the decibel level, asking that event sites be planned to direct sound more inwardly, towards the center of the event rather than outward towards residences and businesses. Concern was expressed about extremely loud profanity during Made in America, which was seen as excessive and inappropriate in a public space. Helicopters were blamed for the most disruptive noise, which people complained was so loud that it literally shook people's windows and items on the walls in their homes.

"Limit after hours noise; limit early mornings and after-hours helicopters."

"Loud Parkway events should always begin after 7:00 a.m. and end by 8:00 p.m., in accordance with the local noise ordinances."

Bus Routes and Detours

Residents reported that bus detours cause long walks for those who must use the bus. This is especially hard on seniors and those with mobility problems.

"Bus drivers only sometimes follow the detour routes, so you can't depend on where the bus will stop. Communication problems make it worse."

"Any SEPTA route changes and parking restrictions should be well publicized at least one week prior to each event."

Coordination of Events and Communication with the Public

Most people believe too many entities are involved in programming for the Parkway, and that no one entity is in charge. Suggestions were made to use current technologies for consistent, real time communications and schedules, pushing coordinated and accurate information out to the public.

"We need a Playbook with Standard Operating Procedures for events, based on size. If people know what to expect, they can plan."

"Use the stadium, use Fairmount Park, Lemon Hill, and other venues more appropriate for big events."

"Communicate during planning, not afterwards."

"Have a resident plan for each event, ensuring information about the event's time, location, detours, etc. is widely available and easy to comprehend."

Transparency of Plans, Financials and Schedule

Taxpayers want to know how much the City makes or loses by hosting events that restrict their access to the assets they feel their taxes support.

"What are the costs and who benefits?" "What are the event organizers contributing? Is there positive economic impact for the City?"

"Have them somewhere else sometimes; also, please stop the no parking signs in my own neighborhood. Give us a tax break; keep our streets clean."

"Stop corporate takeovers of our public space...focus on the residents who pay taxes here first."

Philadelphia: The Parkway's Reflection on the City

"With the Pope's visit and the NFL Draft, Philadelphia has elevated its reputation in the world." Residents talked about how the Fireflies event was highlighted by the New York Times. A "fabulous" event "that had minimal effect on our city but got a lot of positive attention." "The Parkway is a world class place." "It's great to see us get things that really put Philadelphia on the map as a first-tier city." Events that improve the City's image were ranked number one out of seven aspects to consider among residents who took the online survey. Some responses were contradictory: "Reduce the frequency. World class cities do not open themselves up to the highest bidder." Yet there is a positive theme revealing residents' support for events, no matter their impact: "Don't let NIMBY's have an overwhelming voice in discouraging these types of events in the future. The exposure for our wonderful City is tremendous and helps us being mentioned as a world class city. Less events will have a negative impact on our City's image." True to the spirit of Philadelphia, residents offer viable solutions: "Rotate events around the City—truly showcase the City [to] the world. Realize you are turning off international visitors who come to the museums and find the Parkway inaccessible [during events]."

The demographics of the resident survey respondents were:

Age:

Under 18	0.0%
18-34	13.4%
35-64	52.5%
65 and over	34.2%

Gender:

Male	37.3%
Female	62.4%
Identify/other	0.3%

Racial/Ethnic Identity

White	93.6%
Black, African American	1.5%
Hispanic, Latino	1.2%
American Indian	1.2%
Asian Indian	0.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.6%
Middle Eastern	0.6%
Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic	1.2%

Intercept Survey

The intercept survey was intended as a short questionnaire of eleven questions, including basic demographics (age, racial identity, home zip code), the reason for their visit to the Parkway at the specified time, and their general experiences with and attitudes about events on the Parkway.¹⁴ Quotas were set for each event to ensure a balance of surveys were collected across the event types. The survey team members stationed themselves at locations adjacent to the events in order to capture input from passersby; it was unknown to the team members whether the passersby were at the location to attend an event or just happened to be in the area.

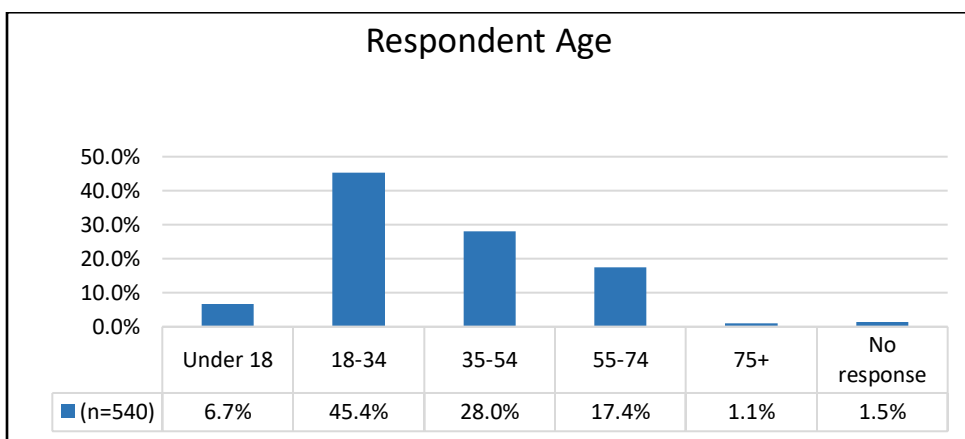
540 intercept surveys were completed at the following events:

- Made in America
- Parkway Run
- Puerto Rican Day Parade
- Cai Guo-Giang: Fireflies
- Parks on Tap (multiple dates)
- AIDS Walk
- Philadelphia Marathon

Of the 540 surveys completed:¹⁵

- 63% (341) were completed by residents of Philadelphia
- 37% (199) were completed by non-residents¹⁶

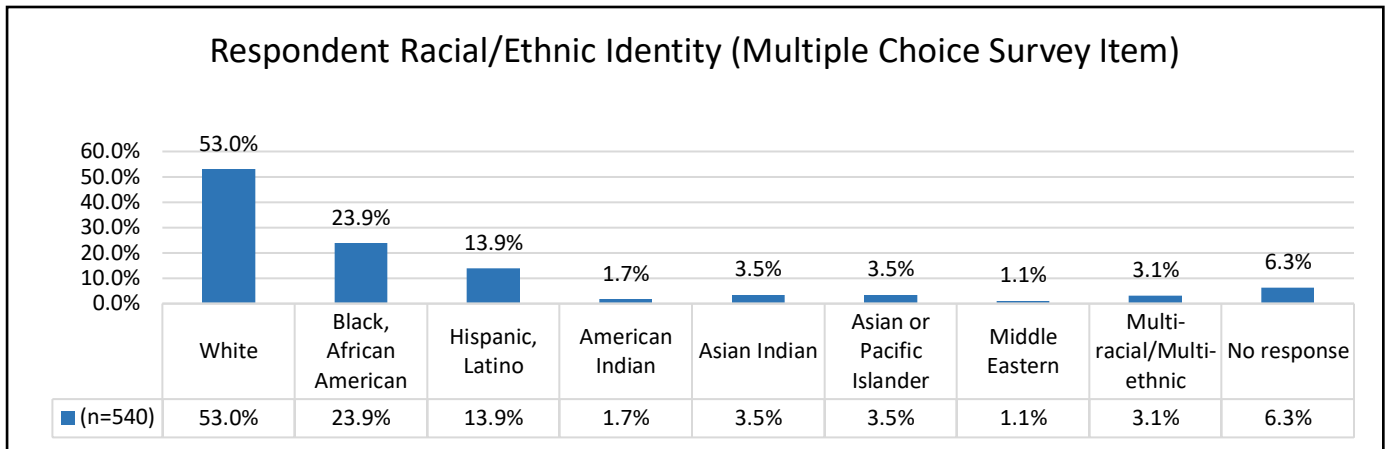
Charts representing the age distribution and racial/ethnic identity of intercept survey respondents are below:



¹⁴ A copy of the survey instrument is included in the appendix.

¹⁵ Data for all questions on the survey are included in chart and graph form in the report appendix.

¹⁶ A map indicating concentrations of respondent zip codes is included in the appendix.



Survey respondents were asked if they were intentionally visiting the Parkway for the specific event in progress. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of all respondents were on the Parkway for the specific event, though a higher percentage of non-residents (83%) were intentional visitors for the event surveyed.

The Philadelphia Marathon and AIDS Walk drew the most intentional visitors, and Parks on Tap and Made in America drew the least intentional visitors to the Parkway. Of the 16 Parkway events indicated on the survey, residents of Philadelphia attended an average of 2.35 in the last three years compared with 1.42 among non-residents.

When intercept survey respondents were asked what types of events “you like having on the Parkway or would like to see more of,” music festivals were the most popular for both residents and non-residents. This was inconsistent with the responses in the resident survey, where music festivals were the least favorite. Philadelphia residents expressed more interest in art festivals, cultural festivals, charity events, food events, bike races, and craft fairs than did non-residents.

What They Like Best about Events

Question 5 on the intercept survey asked for respondents to indicate *agreement*, *disagreement* or *no opinion* on a series of statements on “what do you like BEST about events like this one.” The full charts and graphs are included in the appendix.

- City image:** Among respondents who were intercepted during events, a large majority—over 87%—in all cases felt the event taking place improved the City’s image. Among the rankings, the events that respondents believed most improved that image were the Philadelphia Marathon, Cai Guo-Qiang: Fireflies and the AIDS Walk. At the bottom of the ranking were Parks on Tap and Made in America.
- Increased spending:** When asked if attendance at the event taking place increased their spending at businesses in the Parkway District, more than 78% said it did, regardless of the

event. The Philadelphia Marathon topped the list, followed by Cai Guo-Qiang: Fireflies and the Puerto Rican Day Parade. Non-residents' responses on this question indicated their spending at businesses in the Parkway District was higher for all events except for the AIDS Walk and Philadelphia Marathon.

- **Museum visitation:** When asked if attendance at the event taking place encouraged visiting museums on the Parkway more, 73% said that it did, regardless of the event. The Philadelphia Marathon and AIDS Walk topped this list. At the bottom of this ranking was Parks on Tap and Made in America. In surveys that took place at Made in America, the Parkway Run, AIDS Walk, and Philadelphia Marathon, more Philadelphia residents claimed they felt encouraged to visit than non-residents. On the other hand, non-residents were substantially more encouraged than Philadelphia residents to visit Parkway museums among those surveyed at the Puerto Rican Day Parade, Cai Guo-Qiang: Fireflies, and Parks on Tap.
- **Parkway beautification:** Among intercept respondents, more than 80% noted the Puerto Rican Day Parade, Parks on Tap, and the AIDS Walk as most helpful to beautifying the Parkway.
- **Unique opportunities:** The AIDS Walk, Puerto Rican Day Parade, and Cai Guo-Qiang: Fireflies were noted by intercept respondents as the events bringing unique opportunities needed in the Parkway District (more so than the other events tested).
- **Elevates cultures or causes:** Topping the list for events that elevate cultures or causes important to society were the AIDS Walk, Puerto Rican Day Parade, and Philadelphia Marathon.
- **Part of "something good":** When asked if the event taking place during the intercept made them feel that they were part of something good, more than 90% indicated that it did for the AIDS Walk, Parkway Run, and Philadelphia Marathon. At the bottom of this ranking were Parks on Tap and Made in America. With the exception of the AIDS Walk, non-residents intercepted at events were more inclined to feel they were part of something good than were Philadelphia residents, regardless of the event.

What They Dislike about Events

Conversely, Question 6 on the intercept survey asked for respondents to indicate *agreement*, *disagreement* or *no opinion* on each statement regarding "what do you dislike about events like this one."

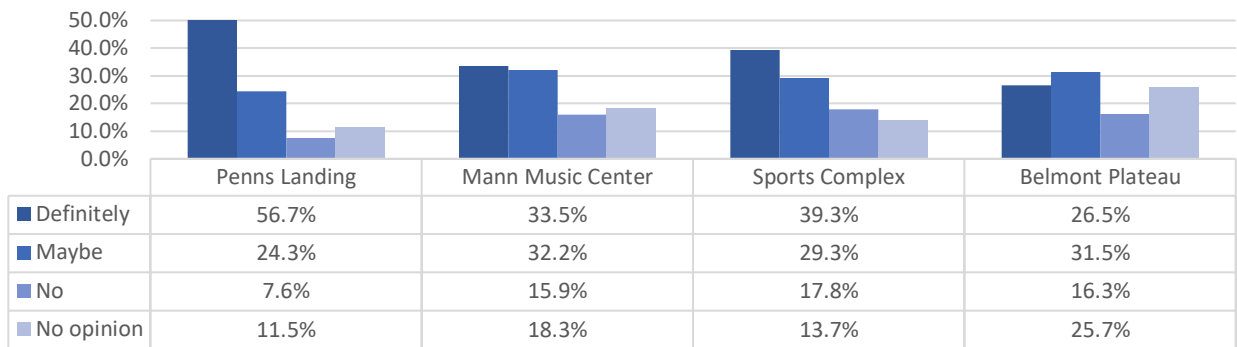
- **Detracts from Parkway enjoyment:** Few respondents intercepted during events felt that the event detracted from their enjoyment of the Parkway. The largest percentage was 20% of people (both residents and non-residents) intercepted during Made in America.

- **Difficulty with shopping or dining:** Among intercept survey respondents, those intercepted at Made in America felt the event made it difficult to dine or shop in the Parkway District (33% on average, with nearly 38% of residents and 26% of non-residents) compared with other events (less than 20%). This was followed by the Philadelphia Marathon (19%).
- **Museum visitation:** The result was similar for events making it hard to visit museums on the Parkway, with Made in America topping the list (40% for residents and 33% for non-residents), followed by the Parkway Run (15% for residents and 21% for non-residents).
- **Damages the Parkway:** Made in America and the Parkway Run topped the list of events believed to do the most damage to the park or detract from its natural beauty. The Philadelphia Marathon and Parks on Top were at the bottom of this ranking.
- **Disrupts access:** Disrupted access and lack of parking were cited the most as a detractor of events by those intercepted during Made in America (61% of residents and 51% of non-residents) and Parks on Tap (50% and 29% respectively) events. Fifty percent (50%) of residents indicated the AIDS Walk and Parkway Run as disruptive.
- **Safety:** Few intercept respondents felt less safe because of the crowds at events (less than 20%), with Made in America rated the highest and the Puerto Rican Day Parade the lowest (at 0% for both residents and non-residents).

Venue

Question 7 on the intercept survey asked respondents if they would be likely to attend an event like this one if it were taking place at another location in Philadelphia. The survey proposed four choices of venue, and respondents were asked to indicate *definitely*, *maybe*, *no*, or *no opinion* for each venue. More than 50% indicated they would (*definitely or maybe*) attend events like the one during which they took the survey if they were held at other locations in the City; the top location selected was Penn's Landing, followed by the Sports Complex, Mann Music Center, and Belmont Plateau. Results for City residents and non-residents were almost identical on this question.

Are you likely to attend an event like this one if it were taking place at another location in Philadelphia? (n=540)



Alternative Venues

Part of the research process included an examination of potential alternative venues. Consideration was given to existing infrastructure and degree of appropriateness as a substitute for events currently held on the Parkway—both large-scale special events such as the NFL draft and ongoing events such as parades, races, marathons, etc.

Four possibilities were originally selected for consideration:

- Mann Music Center
- Penn's Landing
- Sports Complex
- Belmont Plateau

Four other alternatives were examined, but not included as options on the intercept survey. These areas were the:

- Navy Yard
- West Park Drive area
- FDR Park area
- Avenue of the Arts/South Broad Street Corridor.

Additional considerations for venue selection in the future could be specific neighborhoods, particularly for some of the cultural or heritage parades, taking into consideration the scale and scope of each event. This model has been relatively successful for the Columbus Day Parade, which now takes place on South Broad Street, in and around South Philadelphia and the Italian Market area.

In reviewing the intercept survey responses, it is evident that the event-attending public would support many of the events even if the location were changed from the Parkway to an alternative venue. Attendance was not driven by their being held on the Parkway. Though not all of the venues are appropriate for all of the events, there appear to be several viable options for events currently held on the Parkway.

Highlights of related intercept survey findings include:

- In total, across attendees surveyed at all events, 80% of the respondents answered *definitely or maybe attend* for Penn's Landing, 70% for the Sports Complex, 65% for the Mann and 57% for Belmont Plateau.
- For those attending Made in America, 71% indicated *definitely or maybe attend* if MIA were held at Penn's Landing, 64% at the Sports Complex, 58% at the Mann and 46% at Belmont Plateau.

- For those participating in the Parkway Run (obviously would need to be renamed!), 88% indicated they would *definitely or maybe attend* at Penn's Landing, 78% at the Sports Complex, 74% at the Mann and 66% at Belmont Plateau.
- For those participating in Aids Walk, 91% indicated *definitely or maybe attend* at Penn's Landing, 76% at the Sports Complex, 74% at the Mann and 70% at Belmont Plateau.
- For those participating in the Philadelphia Marathon, 71% indicated *definitely or maybe attend* at Penn's Landing, 64% at the Sports Complex, 55% at the Mann and 50% at Belmont Plateau.
- The sample size at the Puerto Rican Day Parade was not significant enough to form a conclusion.

In addition, a survey was distributed to event producers. Based on the responses received, event producers also indicated a willingness and openness to utilize alternative venues for their events.

It is acknowledged that not all venues are appropriate for every type of event, and each venue presents unique operational challenges, particularly in an era where security considerations have become far more complex and significant in event planning. Access to public transit and existing or lack of existing infrastructure presents relevant considerations in determining appropriate events for each venue. It is also noted that the majority of special events included in the definitions for this study have long histories of being held on the Parkway, and that moving to an alternative venue may be seen as lessening the importance or value of the event. When considering a move to alternative venues, thoughtful and open discussion between the producers of long-standing events and the City will be necessary.

Additional considerations for alternative venues:

- Facilities that are easier to secure and are further away from residential areas may better serve as venues for large-scale ticketed festivals. Depending on scope and scale, possibilities could include the Mann Music Center, Penn's Landing/Festival Pier and the Sports Complex. One approach for consideration is to assess the feasibility of using some of the large parking lots at the Sports Complex for festivals. The X Games took place at the Sports Complex many years ago, so there is historic precedent.
- Public transportation and infrastructure needs should be reviewed for cultural parades and athletic events. Locations such as West Park or the Navy Yard could work for some athletic events. Some of the cultural parades could be relocated to a more intimate setting in neighborhoods or sections of South Broad Street. The South Broad Street location presents challenges similar to those on the Parkway, including resident and business access, particularly for some larger events which might require substantial barricading in order to secure public safety. The biennial Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA), held recently on South Broad Street, could be an instructive model to review when considering alternative venues.

- The Navy Yard is an underutilized resource, and communications should be enhanced between PIDC and the City with regard to mass transit availability and the types of events that could be relocated there.
- Although Belmont Plateau is an attractive site for some events, mass transit availability and neighborhood use of the facility are challenges for consideration.
- Penn's Landing is a viable alternative for some events, though, as with other locations, there are challenges presented by barricading streets that may make it a less feasible location, particularly for athletic events.

In general, the Parkway should not be the default location for special events until all other opportunities have been explored.

Benchmarking and Literature Review

Best and prevailing practices for special events planning were examined in nine other cities in the United States. In addition, a literature review of newspaper, magazine and on-line materials concerning events on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway from 2012 through 2017 was conducted. Special event permitting and licensing requirements from the National Park Service were also reviewed, as well as applications and permits from several other cities, including Phoenix and Los Angeles.

The nine cities examined were:

- San Francisco
- Portland, Oregon
- New York City
- Dallas
- Chicago
- Boston
- Baltimore
- Austin, TX
- Seattle

A number of key findings from a review of these nine cities and the National Park Service includes the following. Many of these practices are consistent with current practices in Philadelphia, as noted below.

- In all cases, applicants desiring to produce any type of special event are required to complete a permit application process with an accompanying fee, comply with appropriate city ordinances and regulations and, in many cases, secure additional permits from a variety of city agencies, including health (food), emergency services, fire, police, streets, etc. Philadelphia's special event permit requires a \$25 fee. Additional required permits are articulated on the cover page of the application (a listing of other departments requiring permits).
- Many cities also required supplementary permits such as an *amplified sound permit*, *ADA compliance permit*, etc. Philadelphia does not require similar supplementary permits.
- Many cities differentiated permit costs by *for-profit* and *not-for-profit* tax status of the event producer, as well as anticipated attendance numbers. Some cities charged a per-person impact fee for athletic events, or a percentage of ticketed gate sales as additional fees. For example, San Francisco charges run/walk events a \$1.35 per-runner and \$.68 per-walker "park impact fee." Philadelphia does not currently levy impact fees.
- Before permits are issued, in many cases, multiple city departments are required to approve the application.
- Some cities include a specific maximum decibel level for amplified sound, which is typically in the 70-decibel range. In the case of the National Park Service, although a

specific decibel level is not always specified, the permit includes broad language—“noise level may not affect Park operations”—providing latitude in enforcement.

- Some cities require a damage deposit. Additionally, the National Park Service reserves the right to require permit holders to secure a surety bond and to pay for cost recovery.
- In all cases, including Philadelphia, proof of adequate insurance is required, as well as a requirement to name the permitting entity as an additional insured.
- Some cities, including San Francisco, charge organizations that sell tickets a percentage of the ticket sales as a “park regeneration fee.”
- In reviewing application processes and components of the cities studied, several specific practices were worth noting and considering for Philadelphia:
 - Several cities required a specific sanitation management and removal plan as a component of their event permit application. Philadelphia does not currently require this as a component of their application. Additionally, several cities include a requirement for a portable restroom plan.
 - San Diego includes a section on “Mitigation of Impact,” which requires the applicant to address steps that will be taken to lessen impact on community groups, residents, business groups, etc. in the affected area.
 - In the case of a for-profit company, San Diego requires event producers to “bring significant revenue, resources, ideas, technologies and/or partners to address community needs” as a criterion in awarding an event permit.
 - The permitting process, in most instances, is comprehensive and complex. In addressing the need to simplify and/or streamline the permitting process, some cities, including Philadelphia, are seeking to consolidate and promote a “one stop shopping approach.” For example, Chicago's application¹⁷ is over 30 pages long and is extremely detailed, requiring a noise abatement and community outreach plan. A number of cities have transitioned to an online permitting process, such as Los Angeles and Phoenix.

Literature Review

A review was conducted of press and articles from the past five years regarding issues of use and special events on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.¹⁸ This review indicated a diversity of opinions, many of which were mirrored throughout interviews, focus groups and surveys conducted for this study. Additionally, the issues discussed and debated in the articles reviewed ultimately support the recommendation above for articulating a broadly shared vision for the Parkway and development of a dedicated

¹⁷ “Special Events Permit Packet,” Cultural Affairs and Special Events, https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/permit_packet.html.

¹⁸ A bibliography of press and articles reviewed is included in the appendix accompanying this report.

managing entity responsible for Parkway management and development. The press and articles addressed various themes:

- Ongoing tension results when the City must choose between focusing on the economic impact vs. quality of life impact of events on the Parkway.
- There is debate on the appropriate use of public space. Many hold the opinion that public space should be available for the use and benefit of everyone and that “branded” events lead the City down a “slippery slope.”
- The City needs to find a balance between hosting events and respecting the residents and institutions.
- What is the Parkway: Is it Philadelphia’s signature cultural destination? A made-for-television event space? A gorgeous highway to sprint commuters in and out of Center City? Or a Central Park for all residents to enjoy?
- The idea of “cost recovery,” with regard to events, is confusing. Residents and business owners are uncertain whether all costs (including site restoration, City labor overtime, security costs, etc.) are actually recovered.
- Opinions vary as to actual business impact, depending upon the type of event and type of business. Whether the increase in actual business compensates for the inconveniences of staff travel, deliveries, disruption for regular customers, etc., was one of the recurring themes.
- The perception of “oversaturation” is common, appearing in a number of articles.

Scorecard

The Special Events Scorecard is a tool to foster discussion and debate on the appropriateness of special events on the Parkway. Specifically, the Scorecard is intended to serve as a framework for reviewing applications for special events on the Parkway. It could be adapted as a general framework for any special events in the City.

Development of the Scorecard was informed by synthesizing the issues that emerged through interviews, focus groups, resident surveys, a review of literature on special events planning and industry practices. An initial draft of the Scorecard was presented in a workshop to representatives of several City departments and the Parkway Council. Their feedback was integrated into a refined Scorecard, presented below. In the benchmarking process for this study, no similar approach was identified among the cities examined.

It is recommended that the Scorecard be utilized as a group exercise, with consensus on the rating of each criterion. The criteria are not intended to be viewed in priority order, and all criteria are weighted equally. Discussion in the workshop session concerning weighting and priorities questioned whether one particular category or criterion should have priority or be weighted more heavily than others. The consensus was to proceed with the assumption that all are equal, understanding that there is an opportunity for each workgroup utilizing the Scorecard in the future to reconsider the context for specific events and/or the usefulness of testing a weighted or priority system. The Scorecard may adapt to practices and uses over time and be adjusted and amended as appropriate, relevant and useful.

There are 30 criteria presented, and each criterion is referenced to one or more of five categories for consideration:

- Public Benefit
- Economic Impact
- City Image
- Quality of Life
- Institutional Impact

Each criterion is scored on a scale that weighs positive, neutral and negative attributes of the proposed special event.

Rating Scale:

- + 2 Proposed event meets the highest criterion, the statement is most true, and/or the event is highly desirable.
- +1 Proposed event meets the criterion, is desirable, but has mitigating factors to weigh or consider.
- 0 Proposed event is neutral or not applicable in regard to the criterion.
- -1 Proposed event does not meet the criterion, is not beneficial or desirable, and has little or no value to residents and visitors.
- -2 Proposed event has a negative impact on the criterion, raises serious concerns, is least true and/or is not appropriate for the Parkway.

The maximum score is +60; conversely, the lowest possible score is -60. It is possible that an event may be scored low by consensus, but that factors not taken into consideration in the criteria override. The last section of the Scorecard outlines questions that may influence the final decision. Additional questions should be added as appropriate and necessary. Regardless, the following is intended as a guideline in determining appropriateness and/or desirability of an event.

Ratings may be assigned to scoring ranges in the following quintiles:

80% - 100% / between +40 and +60	Highly desirable/appropriate event
60% - 80% / between +20 and +39	Desirable/appropriate event with areas to consider and weigh carefully for value
40% - 60% / between 0 (neutral) and +19	Event may have value but there are concerns in certain areas for consideration
20% - 40% / between -20 and -1	Unlikely to be a desirable or beneficial event
Under 20% / below -21	Event raises serious concerns; is not desirable or appropriate for the Parkway

Proposed Event: _____ Proposed Date: _____ Event Producer: _____

	Evaluation Criteria	Rating Scale					Categories					Notes
		+2 Highest desirability and/or most true	+1 Desirable and/or true	0 Neutral or N/A	-1 Some undesirability	-2 Highly undesirable	Public Benefit	Economic Benefit	City Image	Quality of Life	Institutional Impact	
1	Event is free and open to public.						■		■	■		
2	Event benefits an important local cause or community need (e.g., health, social service, justice).						■	■	■	■		
3	Event benefits a recognized national/global cause (e.g., health, social service, justice).						■		■			
4	Event celebrates cultural heritage and provides an opportunity for sharing that heritage with the residents of Philadelphia and visitors to Philadelphia and the Parkway.						■					
5	Event brings unique cultural experiences that are heightened by being located on the Parkway (Parkway makes it better).						■					
6	Event provides unique cultural experiences that heighten the experience of the Parkway. (Event makes the Parkway better).						■					
7	Event is a long-standing Philadelphia tradition.						■			■		
8	Event is likely to generate a sense of pride of place or ownership of place in relation to the Parkway.						■		■	■		
9	Event is scheduled for a weekend.						■	■		■	■	
10	Event is scheduled for a weekday.						■	■		■	■	
11	Event is likely to draw visitors from across the City of Philadelphia.						■	■				
12	Event is likely to draw visitors from the region and beyond.							■	■			
13	Event is likely to generate economic activity for:											
a.	Hotel room nights							■				
b.	Restaurant and bar patronage							■				
c.	Public and private transit							■				
14	Event will not require City subsidy—all expenses, including public safety, sanitation and security, will be reliably covered by the event producer.						■	■			■	

	Evaluation Criteria	Rating Scale					Categories					Notes
		+2 Highest desirability and/or most true	+1 Desirable and/or true	0 Neutral or N/A	-1 Some undesirability	-2 Highly undesirable	Public Benefit	Economic Benefit	City Image	Quality of Life	Institutional Impact	
15	Event will generate temporary employment (e.g., crew, etc.).							■		■		
16	Event will not impede access to the area by local work force.									■	■	
17	Event will generate positive media attention for Philadelphia.						■		■	■		
18	Street closures will result in minimal inconvenience and disruption to traffic flow.							■		■	■	
19	Access to parking is adequately addressed for residents.									■	■	
20	Access to parking is adequately addressed for visitors.									■	■	
21	Access for residents and residential services to come/go from their buildings will not be interrupted (for example, Parkway remains porous at multiple locations for pedestrian and cyclist crossing).							■		■	■	
22	Public transit is available and sufficient to service anticipated participants.						■	■		■		
23	Security requirements will result in minimal inconvenience and disruption for Parkway area residents and visitors.									■	■	
24	Event will not restrict or prohibit access to Parkway-adjacent institutions.						■	■			■	
25	Adequate compensation is provided addressing financial impact for adjacent institutions.							■			■	
26	Event is unlikely to cause or contribute to infrastructure damage.						■	■		■	■	
27	Cross-marketing opportunities exist between event and local cultural assets.							■			■	
28	Cross-programming opportunities exist between event and local cultural assets.							■			■	
29	Producer has experience with events in Philadelphia.						■	■			■	
30	Producer has an established and reliable track record.						■	■			■	
	TOTAL											
Other Considerations:												

	Evaluation Criteria	Rating Scale					Categories					Notes
		+2 Highest desirability and/or most true	+1 Desirable and/or true	0 Neutral or N/A	-1 Some undesirability	-2 Highly undesirable	Public Benefit	Economic Benefit	City Image	Quality of Life	Institutional Impact	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there appropriate alternative venues for the special event? If so, what venue and what incentives are available to encourage consideration of an alternative? Are there competing activities at the time of the proposed event? Does this strain available services and resources to fully support the proposed event? Is the event occurring in conflict with planned or emergency infrastructure/street construction and/or repair on or adjacent to the event area? <p>Comments and Additional Considerations:</p>											