



March 26, 2025

Katherine Liss  
The Philadelphia Art Commission  
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Katherine:

Creative Philadelphia (Creative PHL) is requesting a conceptual review of the Percent for Art project for the Olney Recreation Center during the Philadelphia Art Commission meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The project is described below.

**SUBJECT:** Percent for Art – Olney Recreation Center

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Creative Philadelphia is leading this Percent for Art opportunity for Olney Recreation Center in collaboration with our partners at Rebuild and Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC). The Olney Recreation Center is a Rebuild site at 100 E. Godfrey Ave. in the Olney neighborhood of North Philadelphia, consisting of a major renovation and addition to the existing recreation center building, new playground areas, updates to the outdoor playing fields, and ADA upgrades.

The Percent for Art project consists of an art wall installation located on a prominent exterior concrete retaining wall at the Olney Recreation Center site. The purpose of this public art commission is to create a dynamic and inviting art installation that is permanent, site-specific, and reflects the culture, values, and diversity of the Olney community. The artwork will signify a point of arrival to the Olney Recreation Center and embody the spirit and principles cherished by the Olney community.

Creative PHL distributed a Call for Artists which was open from June – August of 2022 and 44 artist teams applied. Creative PHL assembled a Percent for Art Committee to guide the selection of the artist, which included: community stakeholders, local arts and culture professionals, representatives from the Project Design team, Creative PHL, Rebuild, and the Public Health Management Corporation.

The Committee selected four (4) finalists, who received input and inspiration from the community, prior to and after creating their design proposals. Community input was received through in-person and online community engagement meetings and an online survey that collected public feedback about each design. The Artist team consisting of Olney Culture Lab, with artists Mama Carla Wiley and Carolina Gomez was selected by the Olney Recreation Center Percent for Art Committee as the winning team.

The artists have designed a wall installation celebrating the Olney neighborhood's diversity and history. The artwork includes a vibrant, 3D installation made of ceramic tile, mosaic, sea glass, and painted

polytab cloth, with sections representing Olney's past, present, and future. Themes of Lenape history, the evolution of the community, and its hopes for the future are interwoven through detailed elements like a mosaic turtle and flowing waters adorned with the word "community" in multiple languages. As a living document, the design reflects community contributions and captures the neighborhood's dynamic spirit with colorful depictions of local houses, gardens, and aspirational symbols for the future.

Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to call me at 215.686.4596.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marguerite Anglin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a stylized "A".

Marguerite Anglin, RA  
Public Art Director  
Creative Philadelphia

# Olney Percent for Art: Philadelphia Art Commission Presentation

Presented by

Olney Culture Lab of CultureTrust Greater  
Philadelphia,

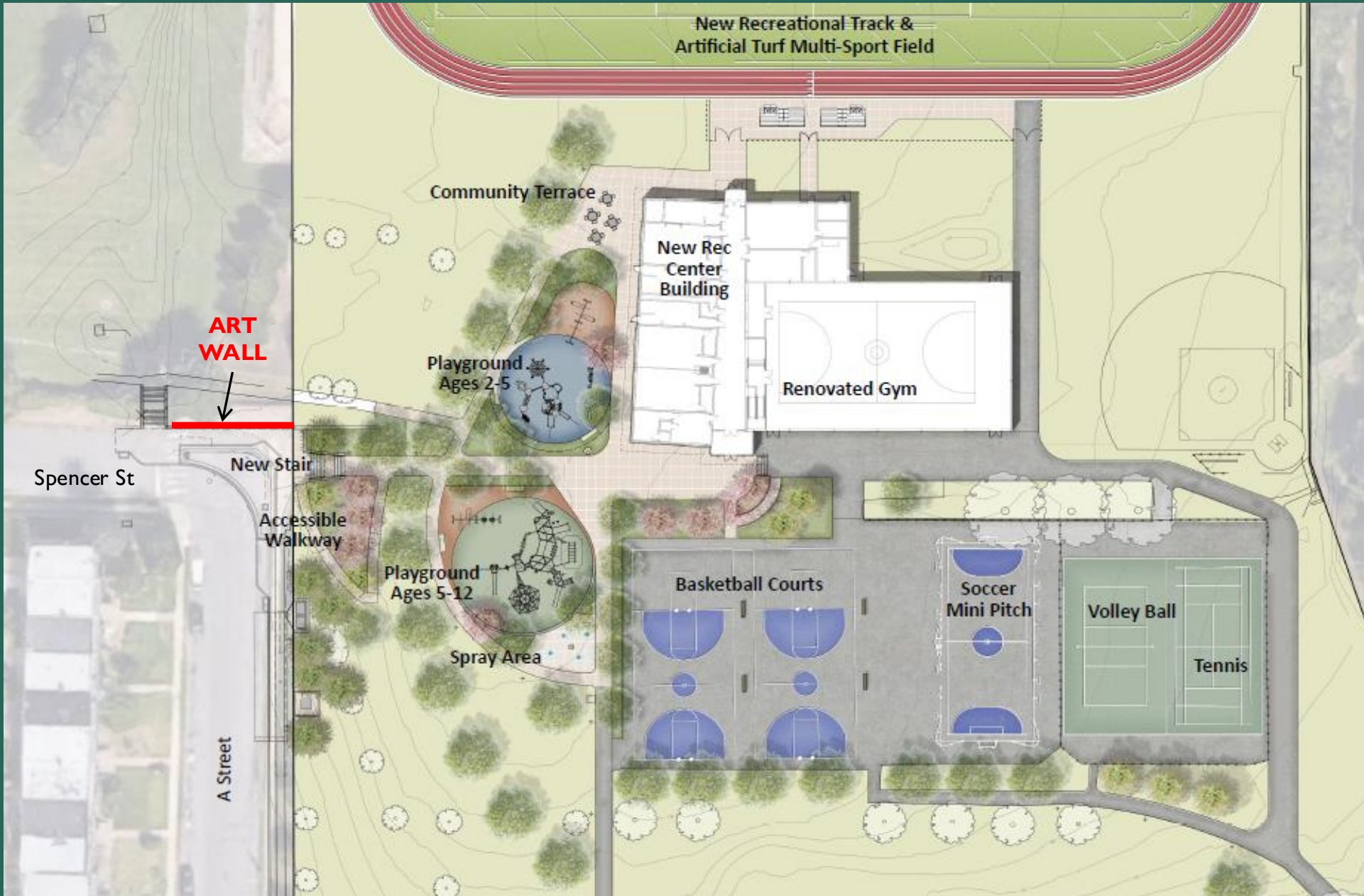
with Co-Lead Artists Mama Carla Wiley and  
Caroline Gomez

April 9, 2025



a project of CultureTrust Greater Philadelphia

# Olney Percent for Art Location





# Olney Percent for Art Location



Outdoor Art wall location at A St and Spencer St.





At Olney Culture Lab, we believe that culture can be a catalyst for community development and social change. Our mission is to celebrate cultural assets by designing and producing events and programs that showcase the multitude of diverse cultural expression found in the greater Olney neighborhood of Philadelphia. By strengthening networks in the community and creating strategic alignment of cultural assets and resources, we increase social capital and a sense of civic pride.

Designed by Co-Lead Artists

Mama Carla Wiley

&

Carolina Gomez



# Mama Carla Wiley

Carla “Mama Carla” Wiley has been an artist, preschool specialist, parenting educator, storyteller/oral historian, quilt maker & historian, and writer for over 25 years. She lives and works in Olney and has collaborated on numerous projects with Olney Culture Lab over the course of the past decade. Currently, she has been combining the nationally known Mother Read Family Literacy model with her Human Race Studies Certification and writing a curriculum to be used throughout Philadelphia to dismantle racism in education.

Mama Carla has used quilting and storytelling as a means of teaching young women in her Rites of Passage program the steps toward female maturity. Working with institutions as diverse as Aetna, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Civil War Museum, The African American Museum and The Free Library of Philadelphia, Mama Carla has created programs that use stories, photographs, images, and quilts to bridge the gap between cultures and peoples. With an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, she researches tirelessly and shares her findings with all ages through the written and spoken word as well as through fiber art.

Mama Carla was a volunteer quilt instructor at Temple University’s PASCEP program, as well as a proud PASCEP Advisory Board Member. She has served on Philadelphia’s First Book committee and taught family literacy throughout the tristate area.

Currently Mama Carla has retired from her role as a Preschool Teacher and Library Assistant for the Free Library of Philadelphia. She is also the co founder of the cultural arts group Progeny’s Legacy Jamaa.



# Carolina Gomez

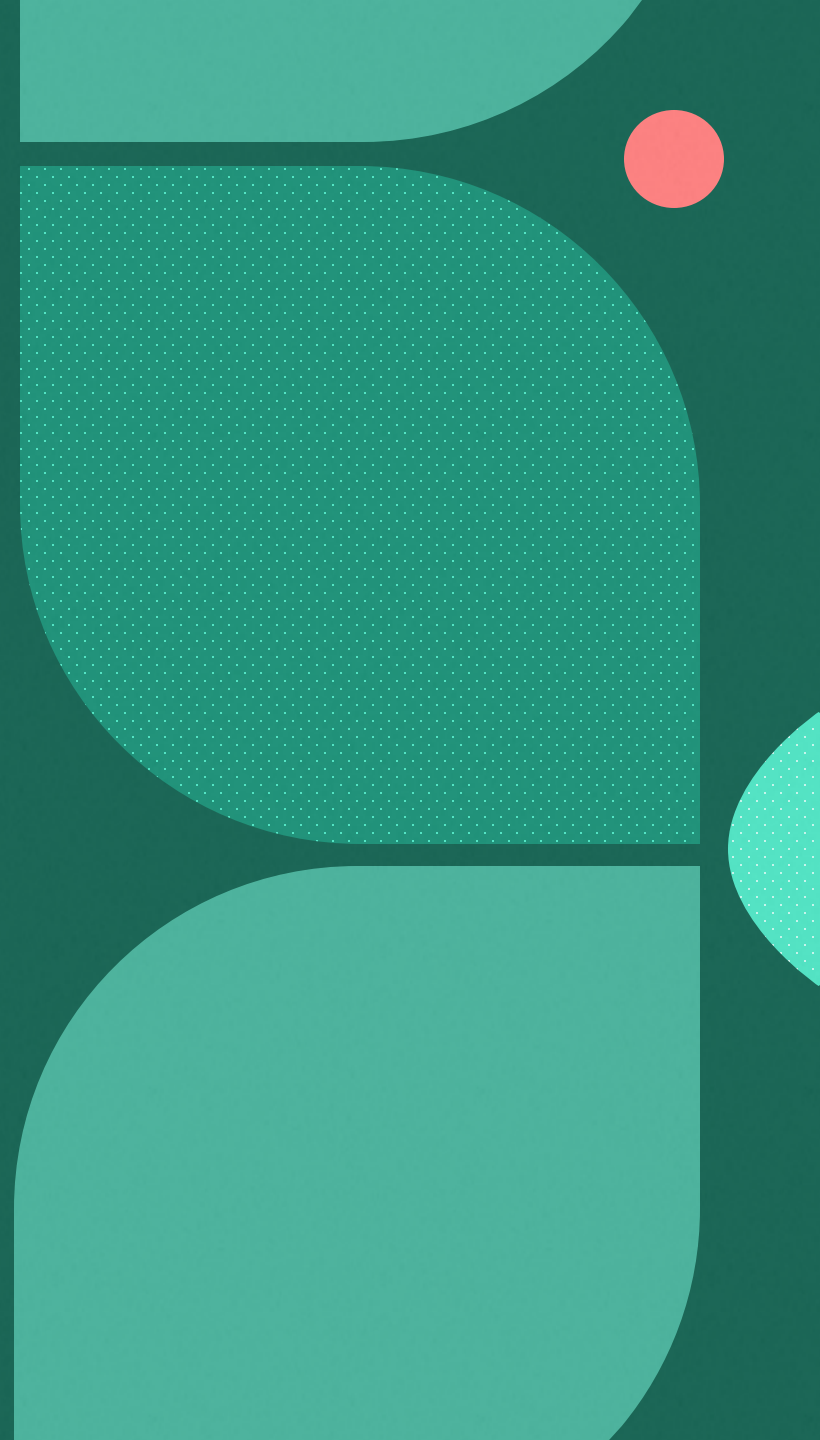
Carolina Gomez is a visual artist, graphic designer, muralist, and teaching artist, based in Philadelphia, PA. She works simultaneously as an Assistant Instructor for the Fleisher Art Memorial, as a Mural Assistant with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. She is multilingual in both Spanish and English and connects deeply with her Columbian heritage. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from Temple University's Tyler School of Art in 2015.

Carolina is currently a member of the design team for another of Olney Culture Lab's projects, "People of the Park." In collaboration with the Tookany-Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, People of the Park celebrates the stories of individuals who currently have an on-going, personal connection with Tacony Creek Park in Philadelphia, which runs, in part, through Olney. The project reflects not only the rich backgrounds and heritages of the individuals featured, but also their special relationships with the park itself, and the many ways in which they spend time inside this beautifully biodiverse, urban greenspace. Carolina's designs will be transformed into permanent park signage, which will offer extended opportunities for passersby to further engage with the stories, photos, interviews, and soundscapes captured by the project team.

As an independent visual artist, Carolina's artwork is available on several online artist and art sales platforms.



# Our Artwork Concept





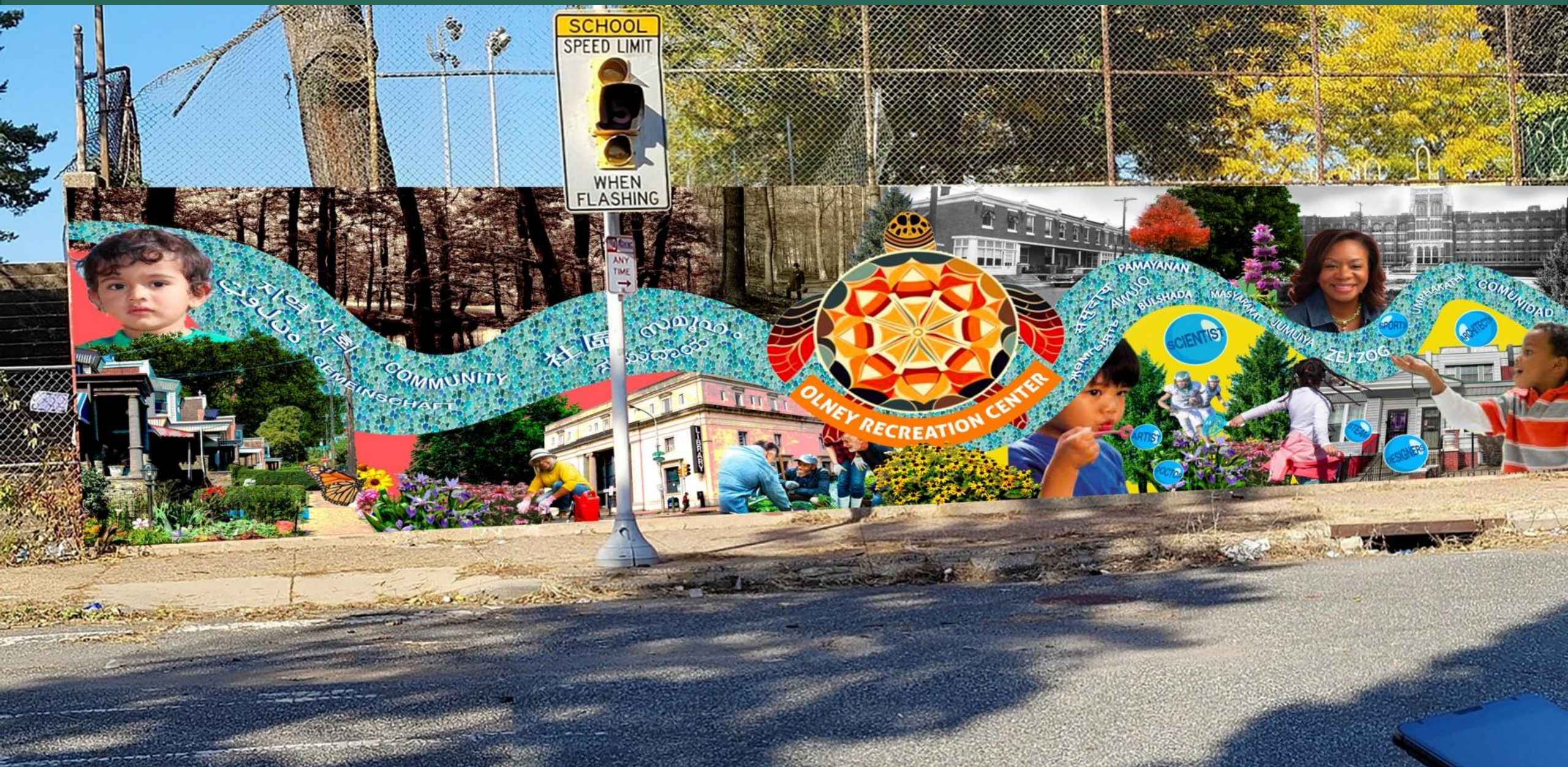


Mosaic with seaglass, stone and tile.

Painted and printed mural sections  
Architectural Ceramic Pieces







SCHOOL  
SPEED LIMIT



WHEN  
FLASHING

ANY  
TIME  
→



지역 사회  
COMMUNITY  
GEMEINSCHAFT



PAMAYANAN  
AMUJO  
BULSHADA  
KEMILARTIS  
JUMUWA  
ZEL ZOG



UNTERKATH  
COMUNIDAD



SCIENTIS

ARTIS

SPORT

DESIGN



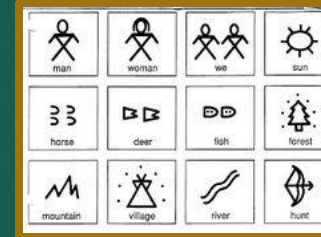
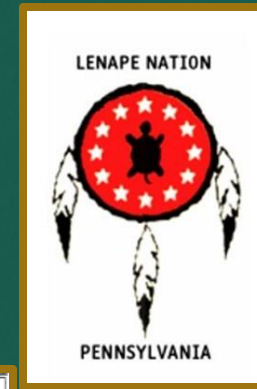


## Design Inspiration



## & Material Examples

- Olney's roots - part of traditional Lenape indigenous land.
- Historically, German, Polish, Czech, and Irish immigrants, then people across African, Latin, and Asian diasporas.
- Reflects the people, cultures, traditions, and histories of Olney.
- 3-Dimensional Engagement - mosaic, sea glass, tempered glass, and architectural ceramic.
- Olney's past, present and future.
- Ceramic Turtle honors Pennsylvania's Lenape Nation. (w/ metal threads if necessary)
- "Olney Recreation Center" - architectural ceramic.
- River - sea glass, stone, and durable ceramic tile mosaic.
- Ceramic floating words for "community" or "neighborhood" in the river.
- The Present - Houses, people, businesses, gardens, and trees.
- The Future - Children w/bubbles - hopes, dreams and vibrancy of the community. Some blue bubbles - architectural ceramic.
- Like a quilt of the Olney community.





# OLNEY- BASED IMAGE INSPIRATION





# PUBLIC SURVEY FEEDBACK & REVISIONS

“To know Olney is to know it is full of  
color and people who come from  
different backgrounds.”

# PUBLIC SURVEY FEEDBACK

“This looks like Olney...”

## Examples of Positive Public Feedback:

- diverse representation
- youthful sub-culture of Olney
- mixed media of the colorful paint, photos and mosaics
- tells a beautiful story
- Olney is very diverse
- will make people think about where the community has come from
- very inspiring

## Insights and Critiques from the Public:

- sport affects or children playing and being happy
- needs to say Olney rec center somewhere

# PUBLIC SURVEY-BASED REVISIONS

- We added the words, “Olney Recreation Center,” in a central location, around the Lenape turtle as way to incorporate placemaking.
- We increased diverse representation of faces and ages. Diverse faces add authenticity and neighborhood-centeredness.
- We included more youth playing and looking out over the community. They are watching, learning, and listening.
- We featured more children joyfully using the recreational landscape around the Rec Center, Note two young football players represent history of youth football and team sport in Olney.
- We added more Olney-specific housing and landmark buildings. This is Olney.
- Recognition of the Lenape Nation indicates the community’s longevity, endurance, and resilience. We believe in the vitality and longevity of Olney



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Plans to host 3-4 community engagement gatherings in preparation for the installation. These will be artist-led, art-making gatherings to reflect and extend images, words and themes in the installation.
- Artmaking workshops will engage multigenerational Olney residents in the process throughout the project timeline, and provide another tactile, tangible connection to the installation.
- Similar colors and ideas, as well as real individual and family photos and cloth and clay/ceramic experiences will be incorporated to increase the community's bonds with the installation, the Recreation Center, and each other.

# Summary Description of Fabrication Approach and Procedure

**Fabrication:** It is our intention to work with the following fabricator -  
Karen Singer Tileworks

We have secured advisory support from Gina Micheals @ Legacy Atelier

We have approached them specifically about fabrication of raised architectural ceramics and mosaic for the following sections or images in the installation:

- Turtle & Olney Rec Center words
- River and floating words
- Floral elements & bubbles

# Summary Description of Fabrication Approach and Procedure

## Methods for painting, printing & ceramics:

- Our team has researched using architectural ceramic tiles and reliefs, as well as mosaic segments to ensure the artwork's long-term durability.
- Mural-style painting on durable outdoor Polytab and Mural Cloth will be incorporated to utilize the expertise of co-lead artist Carolina Gomez.
- Painted and printed sections to be adhered using durable acrylic gel adhesives and spray sealants to protect the artwork longterm.
- We will work with a local ceramic tile and relief fabricator to create the elements of the installation that protrude from the wall.
- We will work with a local mosaic artist to ensure the river is inset properly.
- We have ongoing guidance and advisement from colleagues at Germantown-based Legacy Atelier to prepare for the installation process.



# PROJECTED TIMELINE

