

Supporting **Park in a Truck**

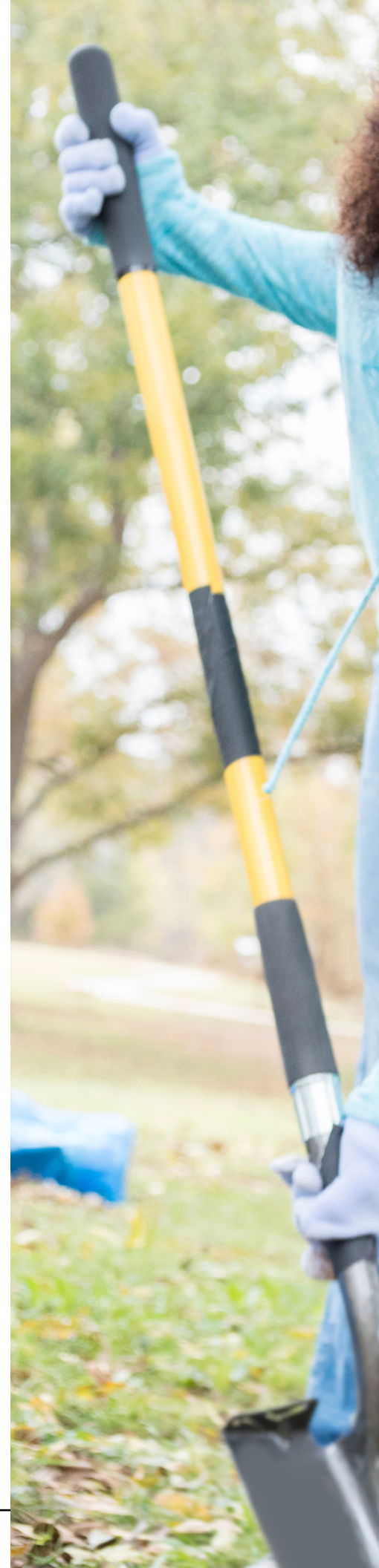


At a Glance

Philadelphia is currently home to approximately 40,000 under-utilized lots. These unused spaces contribute to a number of long-term challenges for neighborhoods, including decreased tax revenue, potential crime and safety hazards, and neighborhood blight. Public green space, on the other hand, creates habitat, provides stress relief, promotes social well-being, supports healthy activity, and reduces exposure to pollutants, noise, and heat.

Jefferson's **Park in a Truck (PiaT)** initiative is reimagining how social, ecological, and economic networks in cities are designed, built, and maintained. Led by the Thomas Jefferson University Landscape Architecture Program, PiaT is a community-operated green network established through low-cost, fast-turnaround renovations of under-utilized lots. Our mission is to improve environmental, social, and physical health in under-resourced neighborhoods, while helping residents lead revitalization efforts. The program:

- Works with community stakeholders to create a network of green spaces and healthy outdoor environments.
- Offers a simple, fast, and cost-effective model to improve access to green space and beautify neighborhoods.
- Successfully launched its first PiaT in a Mantua, Philadelphia neighborhood in October 2019.





Bringing Under-Utilized Lots to Life

Often, community representatives reach out to us with potential park sites. Once a neighborhood is identified, we partner with local organizations to conduct community engagement meetings. Our team then works alongside local organizations and residents to ensure the community is kept at the forefront of the process. We listen to what the community wants in the park rather than dictating what we presume the community wants or needs.

How It Works

- PiaT is implemented in neighborhoods where high-quality green space is needed.
- As pre-designed, shovel-ready parks, permits are not required since they sit on top of the ground and use local community members to build them.
- No complex, expensive, or specialized construction is required for the installation—making the project implementation manageable by community members of various ages.
- Community members mix and match attributes from four park prototypes: art, nature, sanctuary, and edible.
- Once a design is chosen, all the essential equipment and supplies are loaded onto a truck and delivered to the site, where community volunteers and Park Ambassadors build their park together.
- Community stakeholders work with our team to identify, recruit, and train local youth to be paid Park Ambassadors who will champion the park and generate buy-in from other community members who will use the park.
- This unique experience enables all participants to get involved with every stage of the process.

Our Proud Partners

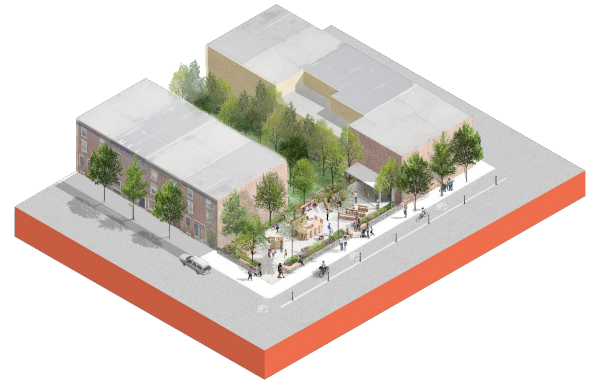
- City of Philadelphia
- Empowered CDC
- HUNE
- John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge
- Mantua CDC
- National Audubon Society, Inc.
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
- Philadelphia Water Department
- Philly Unknown Project
- PowerCorpsPHL
- Social Innovation Partners
- The Greenfield Foundation
- West Philadelphia Real Estate

Park Prototypes & Features

Art/Maker Park

Paint a wall, view art by local artists, attend a puppet show, hear a poetry reading, learn to weld, and explore creating and making in this interactive, flexible space.

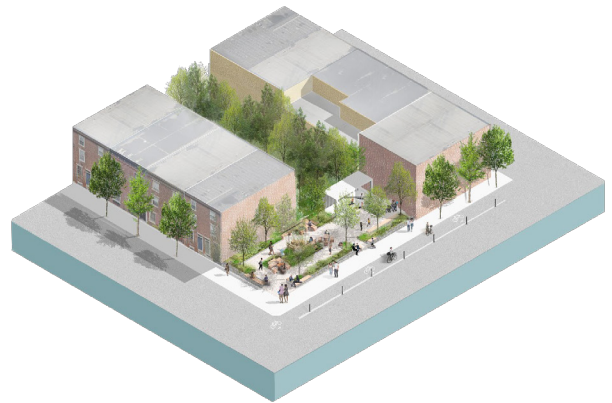
- Platform for performance art
- Easels for painting and drawing
- Space for artists to work, puppet shows, poetry readings, and more
- Clothesline/structure for hanging art



Sanctuary Park

Read a book, relax, stroll through the garden, and meet your neighbors for a chess game. There's a mindful loop to stretch your legs, and places for solitude.

- Comfy seating
- Lots of trees and plants
- Sensory wall
- Strolling “mindful” path
- Chess tables
- Solar water element
- Four 250-gallon rain barrels
- Space for classes, movies, and poetry reading



Edible Park

Eat fresh berries, have a community dinner, tend the garden, and grow food for humans and pollinators alike.

- Edible plants
- Keyhole vegetable gardens
- Tents/overhead canopy
- Potting table
- Compost area
- Community dining table
- 1,200-gallon cistern for storm water



Nature Park

Climb a tree, build a treehouse, chat by the fire, pitch a tent, and hide in the oversized nest. The space has a dry stream that collects rainwater.

- High wildlife value plants
- Natural materials, such as logs, stumps, and rocks
- Space for classes and movies
- Loose parts for imaginative play
- Tents



Plans to Scale

The novel coronavirus pandemic has shed light on huge disparities in our urban environment. The ability to social distance outdoors should not be a privilege—it's a necessity. As such, the need to scale PiaT is crucial and requires us to think beyond physical environments. Some of the opportunities we have identified include:

- Ramping up the **Park Ambassador Program** by seeking additional funding for an Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for developing a training program and overseeing the Park Ambassadors. The program will also include additional staff members to manage different city sectors and volunteers to teach community members key park-building skills.
- Exploring more ways to **connect with neighborhoods virtually**, such as establishing an **Online Toolkit** that outlines the entire park-building process, shares essential information about designing, building, and maintaining community parks, and includes 3D park models.
- Growing our **“Pay It Forward” Initiative** that shares park-building knowledge with other neighborhoods bringing PiaT into their community.
- Creating a **virtual platform** to host town hall meetings and design charrettes that expands access for all community members to provide and receive input about the project.
- **Expanding partnerships** with agencies managing city lots, as well as initiating **new relationships** with potential local, national, and international partners interested in advice and guidance from PiaT.
- **Identifying unused city warehouses** and converting them into PiaT work and storage spaces.



Sustainability

As part of Jefferson's greater mission to improve lives, PiaT is deeply committed to implementing sustainable and replicable projects that directly impact the community and reduce health inequity in Philadelphia. Park construction is normally an expensive and complicated process with minimal local engagement and support. However, our PiaT method costs much less than the average park. We benefit from inexpensive construction methods, local suppliers and volunteers, and recycling many onsite materials.

Sustainability is administered through community members and Park Ambassadors who are identified and trained in the park development stages. Industry partners and charitable organizations interested in improving access to communal green space in Philadelphia are essential to the development and sustainability of PiaT.

Park Ambassador Program Video



To watch an informational video further explaining our Park Ambassador Program, please visit vimeo.com/391259265

Current Funding Streams

- Philanthropic and Federal Grants
- Individual and Industry Donations
- Community Partners
- Thomas Jefferson University
- Philadelphia Collaborative for Health Equity

Current PiaT Projects

- **Mantua Neighborhood:**
653 N. Melon St.
- **Kingsessing Neighborhood:**
5730 Kingsessing Ave.
- **Kensington Neighborhood:**
2275 N. Phillips St.
- **Mt. Moriah Neighborhood:**
Catharine Elementary School,
6600 Chester Ave.





**Real change
is possible
when we work
together.**

KIMBERLEE DOUGLAS

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
JEFFERSON LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM

FOUNDING DIRECTOR,
JEFFERSON LAB FOR URBAN AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

Thank You!

We are steadfast in our mission to invigorate Philadelphia neighborhoods through the addition of communal green spaces. But, without visionary benefactors, our transformational program and its added health benefits will be tantalizingly out of reach.

The Jefferson enterprise, its College of Architecture and the Built Environment, and the Lab for Urban and Social Innovation are providing consultation services for community park-building initiatives. Their *pro bono* efforts are at capacity and additional resources are desperately needed.

You are the difference. With a gift in support of PiaT, you will spark change in areas of the city that need it most. Together, we can help ensure every Philadelphian has access to green space regardless of socioeconomic circumstances. ***Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of an impactful gift.***

Support Opportunities

- **\$175,000:** Helps support the Park Ambassador Program for 2 years, including program oversight, curriculum development, and ambassador stipends
- **\$50,000:** Helps support Online Toolkit development, testing, and dissemination
- **Fund an Entire Park**
- **Operations** (warehouse space to store park materials)
- **Truck(s) and Construction Equipment**
- **Volunteers, Donations, and Community Partnerships**



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FOR MORE INFORMATION,

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