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FDR PARK TO GET NEW MASTER PLAN

Planning Process Managed by Fairmount Park Conservancy in partnership with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

PHILADELPHIA – March 19, 2018 –This month, Fairmount Park Conservancy is launching a master planning process for FDR Park, the sprawling 350-acre park in South Philadelphia that is home to man-made lakes, a golf course, the American Swedish Historical Museum, and a range of recreation facilities including tennis courts, ball fields, and a skate park. FDR is Philadelphia’s only estuary park, meaning that its waterways are tidal and exchange salt water with the ocean. Originally designed by the Olmsted Brothers and opened in 1921, FDR’s popularity and years of heavy use have taken a toll on its infrastructure and environmental integrity. The new master plan will be developed by the Philly-based design firm WRT, which expects to solicit significant community input before the plan is finalized in 9-12 months.

WRT was selected from among 15 firms that responded to Fairmount Park Conservancy’s Request for Proposals (RFP). The Conservancy’s executive director said she and her staff were struck by WRT’s collaborative approach to design.

“When you have a large city park that includes a combination of historic architecture, critically important natural lands, and popular athletic amenities, you need a



team that can look at the whole picture, assess multiple priorities, and create a plan that responds to the park's importance as both a public space and an ecological asset," **said Jamie Gauthier, Executive Director of Fairmount Park Conservancy.** "Based on WRT's previous work, we are confident that their team of planners, urban designers, architects and landscape architects can strike that balance."

Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation and a lifelong Philadelphian, said it was time to restore South Philadelphia's only large park to its original intent as an urban oasis.

"The Olmsted Brothers designed parks to provide city dwellers with beautiful places to walk, picnic, relax, and play," **said Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell.** "Parks & Recreation is pleased to have Fairmount Park Conservancy's support in dedicating time and energy to rethinking current demands on FDR Park and mapping a vision for its next century."

Ott Lovell noted that portion of the cost of developing the plan will be funded by the parking concession that operates in the park during Eagles home games, reinvesting those revenues back into the park and the community. The rest of the cost comes from William Penn Foundation through Fairmount Park Conservancy and through an allocation from Councilman Kenyatta Johnson's capital budget for the 2nd District.

"FDR Park is a jewel for South Philadelphia communities and a destination for residents across the city, and we want to keep it that way!" **said Councilman Johnson.** "This planning process is an important next step forward. I'm a strong believer and advocate for revitalizing our parks and recreation projects to improve quality of life for our city, so I'm happy to be supportive."

WRT Principal, Keiko Tsuruta Cramer said, "FDR Park has long deserved detailed attention and careful design and programming consideration for its diverse user groups. The WRT team is thrilled to work with Fairmount Park Conservancy, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, and the local community and stakeholders, to restore the original vision of FDR Park as an urban oasis in South Philadelphia."

Members of Friends of FDR Park, the volunteer group that helps to maintain the park, spoke in support of the opportunity. “We’re glad to be part of the master plan process to provide a voice from supporters and users of the park,” said **Todd Pride, Board President, Friends of FDR Park**. “FDR is arguable one of the most diverse activity parks in the city, with a tremendous history and natural resources – and this process was designed to take all of these elements into consideration. We’re looking forward to this process and the outcome, which will elevate this great resource for the city and the region.”

In conjunction with the master planning process, Philadelphia International Airport has been investigating one of the most degraded areas of FDR Park for use as a wetland mitigation site. This mitigation would restore wetland function and habitat value to this underutilized area in the southwest corner of the Park.

Residents of South Philadelphia and regular FDR Park users are encouraged to participate in the development of a master plan for FDR Park. To register for updates and notice of community meetings and other opportunities to get involved, visit:

<https://myphillypark.org/fdr-park>

For high-resolution images of FDR Park, please visit our Dropbox folder:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6y5e2jhu2nszw7y/AAAxoKBoNaXZQDunFdun6XaWa?dl=0>

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About Fairmount Park Conservancy

Fairmount Park Conservancy exists to champion Philadelphia’s parks. We lead capital projects and historic preservation efforts, foster neighborhood park stewardship, attract and leverage investments, and develop innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park and more than 100 neighborhood parks around the city. Philadelphia has one of the largest urban park systems in the world, providing residents with extensive health,

environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits – including access to some of the region’s most famous attractions. For more information, please visit myphillypark.org, join us at [facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy](https://www.facebook.com/fairmountparkconservancy), and follow us on Instagram and Twitter @myphillypark.

About WRT

WRT is a dynamic cross-disciplinary firm offering services in planning, urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture. For more than 50 years, WRT has been dedicated to improving the quality of the natural and built environments by applying principles of sustainability to the planning and design of buildings, landscapes, cities, and regions. The firm has been the recipient of more than 400 planning and design awards both nationally and internationally. For more information, please visit <http://www.wrtdesign.com/>.