



THE FUTURE OF FAIRMOUNT PARK

Advisory Committee Report

April 2006

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I. INTRODUCTION

Fairmount Park can and should be the City's signature asset. The Park's vast array of historic houses and its system of watershed parks are unparalleled in the nation. Its green spaces and trails reach into virtually every neighborhood, providing breathing space from the pressures of urban living. Its lighted boathouses and flag-bedecked Parkway beckon to visitors and provide a powerful tool for tourism development. Along with the iconic Liberty Bell, **Fairmount Park is Philadelphia.**

Philadelphians recognize this treasure in their midst: Ninety percent of citizens surveyed recently said they believed the Park brought real value to their neighborhoods. (*Fairmount Park Community Survey, June 2003, p. 22.*) Together with "arts and culture," Fairmount Park was the most frequently-mentioned asset making Philadelphia a good place to live. (*Community Survey, p. 19.*)

But citizen support hasn't translated into adequate funding for this treasured asset. The Park has not been able to garner sufficient funds from the public and private sectors to reach its full potential. Fairmount Park's budget has decreased dramatically when adjusted for inflation, to the point where **it now receives less than half of the real dollars it received from the City only 20 years ago.** Measured as a percentage of the City budget, the Park's operating budget is at an all-time low (0.36%). Park staff has decreased to almost skeletal numbers, resulting in fewer Park Rangers, electricians, arborists, plumbers, and groundskeepers, among other positions. Yet, until now, the Park has appeared content to rely on this ever-shrinking slice of the City budget, retreating into what some have characterized as a "victim mentality."

The current Park, now under new leadership, has done a better job recently of maintaining trails, bathrooms, and other facilities. Likewise, the new Fairmount Park Commission board (the "Commission") has had successes in facilitating exciting projects in the Park (e.g., Please Touch Museum at Memorial Hall, Microsoft School of the Future, Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis Center, Water Works renovation). **But these improvements cannot mask the structural problems inherent in the current system.**

While the Park will always remain dependent on the City for much of its funding, creative ways to generate much-needed supplemental private and public funding must be found. The way that volunteer Commissioners are selected and appointed must be modernized to allow more citizens to serve and new direction and leadership to emerge. While the need for a governing body that serves a watchdog land preservation role remains paramount, a modernized Commission must focus on policy-making, funding, and strategic planning. The Park's organizational structure must be redesigned to work more seamlessly with the Park's sister agencies and to encourage a more entrepreneurial mindset.

If these changes are made, citizens can expect that, in the words of the Park's new vision statement:

Fairmount Park will be one of the top park systems in the nation. Philadelphia, now known for its cultural and economic renaissance, will also be known for the renaissance of its Park system – a vast urban treasure preserved and maintained for the enjoyment, health benefits, and quality of life it provides to the City's residents and visitors from around the world. Fairmount Park's preservation, conservation, recreation, and cultural programs will be heralded as among the best in the country; contributing significantly to Philadelphia's positive image, uniqueness of place, economic vitality, and quality of life.

II. FAIRMOUNT PARK AT A CROSSROADS

At the end of last year, Commission President Robert N.C. Nix, III gathered a volunteer advisory committee of several Commissioners and civic leaders from different sectors to develop a plan for recreating the Park as a more robust and thriving organization. *(See report title page for a list of core advisory committee members.)* The intention was to develop a set of recommendations that would support and build on the five broad strategic changes called for in the Park's 2004 Strategic Plan:

- Greater synergy and efficiency between Fairmount Park and the Department of Recreation
- A more defined role for Fairmount Park Commissioners
- Develop leadership and management capacity at Fairmount Park
- Improved management practices
- Positioning the Fairmount Park system as a key economic driver for the City of Philadelphia

(See *A Bridge to the Future: Fairmount Park Strategic Plan Summary Report*, pp. 5-6.)

Some political leaders have argued that these changes can be accomplished only if the Park merges with the City's Department of Recreation and the Commission is eliminated as a quasi-independent body. The advisory committee respectfully but strongly disagrees, for the following reasons:

- While it is true that the time has come for changes to be made in the way Commissioners are selected, the role of the Commission as a land preservation entity remains vital as the City struggles to balance economic development against open space needs.
- The two agencies have two distinct missions which deserve and warrant two different departments. The Recreation Department is a social service-oriented agency that concentrates on built recreational facilities and programming. Fairmount Park, in contrast, preserves and enhances a unique network of watershed and neighborhood parks and historic properties. (Some would say that Fairmount Park has more in common with the Water Department than the Recreation Department.) The Park is big enough and complicated enough to deserve its own department. Moreover, the Park has been ignored for too long already. Its problems can be better addressed in a department solely focused on Park issues rather than one that has to deal with recreation issues as well.

- While continued efficiencies between Fairmount Park and the Recreation Department should be sought, there is no evidence that further “realignment” or consolidation will save the City money, improve the Park system, or increase the ability of the Park to raise money from private or foundation sources. Certainly, the Recreation Department suffers from its own well-publicized financial woes. The advisory committee fears, instead, that one merged department will result in diminished -- rather than expanded -- resources for *both* agencies. Until both departments are properly funded, merger should not be considered.
- The Strategic Plan provides three Park governance options: 1) consolidation; 2) institute Recreation Coordination Board; or 3) responsibility-based alignment. (*See A Bridge to the Future, pp. 62-66.*) The governance and funding reforms called for in this report are consistent with governance alternative #2. The consultants did not recommend consideration of the consolidation option *for at least five years* after initiation of the Strategic Plan (which is now in its *second* year). **Moreover, the Plan states that an important element of any proposal to combine Fairmount Park with the Recreation Department would be exploration of a dedicated funding mechanism, something the current consolidation proposal before Council doesn’t address.**
- The committee believes that leadership, partnerships across City departments and with outside organizations, and expanded funding are the keys to the Park’s future success, whatever its organizational structure. Successful park systems thrive for these reasons, not because they are managed by one department or another.

Council is correct that the time is now ripe for aggressive change and for focusing public debate on the future of Fairmount Park. But this committee is confident that citizens can and will enjoy a more vibrant and exciting Park only if the Park diversifies

its funding sources, modernizes its governing board, and coordinates – not consolidates – with the Recreation Department. In this way, the Park will win back the confidence of public and private funders, the political establishment, and the public. This report outlines how to accomplish these reforms so that Fairmount Park can indeed become a Philadelphia icon as recognized and well-cared for as the Liberty Bell.

III. FUNDING FOR THE PARK MUST INCREASE

A. So how much does the Park really need?

Truth be told, the Strategic Plan dodged the all-important question of money. The \$600,000 Plan (half-funded by the City) informs readers how much other cities' park systems receive, but it doesn't evaluate how much it will take to run Fairmount Park optimally. The Plan doesn't analyze how many additional Park staff positions are needed or assess the Park's unmet capital needs.

But however preliminary (and potentially embarrassing) the analysis, it must be done as the first step in coming up with a solid plan to improve the Park.

CAPITAL:

- While its maintenance backlog and the amount of parkland for which it is responsible continue to grow, the Park's capital budget continues to decline, from a high of \$7.4 million in fiscal year 2000 to a proposed \$3 million in fiscal year 2007.
- Based on interviews with Park staff, the committee estimates that **it will take at least \$50 million to eliminate the backlog of capital repairs** needed by Park historic houses and structures such as picnic pavilions, bathrooms, and playing fields. Immediate priority needs to be given to stabilizing the Park's unique historic properties. **New capital projects** such as developing the trail networks and additional environmental education centers called for in the

William Penn Foundation-funded NLREEP program **account for an additional \$35 million in needs.**

OPERATING:

- A staff of more than 600 in the 1970's has dwindled to 170 today. Over the past two years alone, staffing levels have decreased by more than 20%.
- Currently the Park has 170 City-funded civil service staff plus 20 City-funded Ranger positions, for a **total of 190 positions costing \$12,882,232** for proposed fiscal year 2007. To provide optimal service, the Park estimates that it needs a total of 375 staff plus 39 Rangers, for a **total of 414 positions costing \$26,847,067.**
- Additionally, there are 20 current staff funded out of the Park's (non-City) Trust and Custody accounts, costing \$402,378. Optimally, the number of employees funded from these accounts would rise to 40, costing the Park \$800,000.
- These figures do not include benefit costs for City or Trust employees.

See the chart attached as Exhibit "A" for more information, including proposed additional positions.

To run the Park in an optimal manner, then, requires securing an additional \$14 million per year for the operating budget plus at least \$85 million to meet the Park's existing deferred and planned capital needs. Although this may seem daunting, consider that Chicago somehow manages to find and spend \$40,064 per acre of parkland. Philadelphia spends only \$1,500. We can't get a world-class park without investing the necessary operating and capital dollars.

B. What steps must be taken to secure the necessary funds?

1. The Park must act more entrepreneurially

The advisory committee recognizes that the budget of the City of Philadelphia is quite constrained and the Park simply cannot be successful if it remains totally dependent on municipal resources. Because Fairmount Park has the ability to attract tourists and recreational enthusiasts from throughout the region, it has the opportunity to capture outside revenues. Both the Board and top Park staff need to be individuals who have the perspective and ability to place a greater emphasis on entrepreneurial activities.

The Park's new funding strategy must be to supplement City dollars by raising the additional money it needs from multiple sources, including:

a) Increase earned fees and revenues through the following methods:

- Pursue the Strategic Plan recommendation to create “revenue intensive zones and districts” containing golf courses, restaurants, cafes, parking, and rollerblading/fishing equipment/bicycle rental concessions that enable the Park to maximize revenues from a handful of zones and direct these revenues to broader Park maintenance. Implementation could begin as soon as additional expertise is secured and a new agreement is reached with the City regarding retention of earned income within the Park (see Section 2(b) below).
- Consider creating new fee-charging amenities that also enhance the public's experience of the Park, such as skating rinks, laser tag areas, climbing walls, and mazes.
- Investigate adding a mandatory “Park improvement fund” donation for event participants and for institutions using Park property.

- Explore the feasibility of imposing a “1% for the Parks” program (similar to the City’s “1% for Art” requirement) for new development adjacent to or within a specified distance from parkland.
- Work with the City to grant naming rights for certain facilities to create maintenance endowments.

b) Establish a dedicated public funding source

- The Strategic Plan calls for the City to explore the “opportunity for [a] dedicated funding mechanism.” How this would work (e.g., percentage of lottery proceeds, hospitality tax, tax on outdoor recreational equipment, new regional park and cultural tax, assessments on adjacent benefiting properties, percentage of previously abated property taxes, raising capital funds through the issuance of bonds) and what percentage of the Park budget should be raised through these mechanisms needs to be determined.
- In other states, one solution to stable park funding is the set-aside, by local or state government, of a portion of the real estate or sales tax within a region. There is now a proposal to set aside a portion of the sales tax collected in the five southeastern Pennsylvania counties for the operational support of arts and cultural organizations. Existing park systems in the region could be added as eligible recipients under this proposal.
- Consider creating a Fairmount Park license plate; explore designating Fairmount Park as an “honorary state park.”
- The dedicated funding mechanism(s) ultimately chosen for the Park may dictate the best organizational model for the Park (see Section IV (B) below).

- c) **Put in place a new board committed to a public-private partnership**
- The Fairmount Park Conservancy has raised more than \$13 million in the five years since its creation. Friends groups have raised an additional \$3 million per year during the same period. The Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust has raised and invested over \$5 million to preserve historic Park houses since it was founded in 1992. Likewise, new Commission board members should be selected in part because they have the skills and abilities to raise private dollars, help obtain public grants, and direct and analyze budgets.
- d) **Develop both an acquisition and disposition strategy with clearly defined and written guidelines**
- Over the last several decades, significant acreage has been added to Fairmount Park, even though the budget was not adjusted accordingly. The Park board should assess both the cost implications of adding land to the Park (e.g., maintenance costs), as well as the benefits that might be derived from the lease or re-use of a small number of parcels. The Strategic Plan also supports this step (*see Operational Review Findings Report, p. 27*).
 - Acquisition and disposition strategies must include stakeholder input, a transparent process, and a carefully developed set of written criteria to guide the decision-making process.

2. The City must step up to the plate

Perhaps the Commission is at fault for not having made the case strongly enough with this or previous Administrations as to the huge economic contribution the Park plays in making the City a desirable place to live, work, and relocate. While the needs of the City's police, fire, and human service departments are great, the value of Fairmount Park

to Philadelphians' everyday life and to the City's economy must not be overlooked or short-changed. What the Park needs from City Hall is:

a) Commitment to include fair and adequate funding in the Park's operating and capital budgets

- The Park's alarming downward funding spiral must be halted immediately. Municipal funding must be increased back to agreed-upon base levels, with built-in cost-of-living adjustments. One or more dedicated public funding sources must be identified to supplement the City's general fund dollars. For its part, Park management needs to show the Administration and Council exactly how it will use additional funding to provide better service and an improved experience for users.

b) Agreement to allow the Park to keep revenues it generates on parkland

- This policy is consistent with the law. The supplementary Act of 1878, which followed the state legislation creating Fairmount Park in 1867, included the following mandate to retain Park-generated funds for the Park:

“All rents, license charges and fees; all fines, proceeds of all sales, except of lands purchased, and profits of whatsoever kind, to be collected, received, or realized shall be paid into the city treasury as a fund to be exclusively appropriated by councils for park purposes.”
53 P.S. § 16485.

Currently, of course, funds generated by the Park are turned over to the City's general fund and are not reallocated back to the Park.

- This policy is consistent with the Strategic Plan. The Plan challenges Park staff to generate outside earned income to cover a sizable portion of its operating budget. It calls for conditions that foster an entrepreneurial

culture among Park managers. But this recommendation makes no sense if every dollar that is raised goes directly into the City's general fund. (See *Operational Review Finding Report*, pp. 13, 28.)

c) Cooperation in working with the Park to create a culture of entrepreneurship by restructuring the Park's governance and management (as outlined in the next section of this report)

- The Administration should consider transferring back to the Park the Human Resource and Financial staff that were removed from direct Park supervision by creation of the "joint administrative cluster." These staff now report to a deputy recreation commissioner. Anecdotal information suggests that this move has made it difficult for the Park to manage its financial and human resources in an optimal manner.
- The Park needs authorization and funding to hire staff to implement the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan contains eighty Park-improvement strategies, organized into five functional areas (Organizational/Culture; Finance/Human Resource/Technology; Planning/Capital Programs/Historic Properties/Property Management; Operations & Landscape Management/Building Maintenance; and Programs/Public Relations/Volunteer Services/NLREEP). The Park and the City organized work groups around these functions, ranking each strategy as high, medium, or low priority. To date, twenty-two months into the 10-year strategic planning process, nine strategies already have been completed and thirty more are underway. However, key positions need to be filled immediately if this momentum can continue and the Park can flourish. These include: a Chief Financial Officer and additional property management, legal, and policy staff. These staff should be paid for by City funds but be exempt, non-civil service positions. For its part, the Park must be able to show the Administration and Council how additional

City-funded staff will lead to increased Park revenues and improved service to users.

- The Administration should move carefully in “realigning” Fairmount Park and Recreation Department functions. Certain functions performed by both departments, like trash collection and fleet management, may be improved by a consolidated approach. Other “realignments” proposed by the Administration are too premature to garner the advisory committee’s support. For example, the Administration has a preliminary proposal to form a joint Marketing, Development and Revenue Generation Division between Fairmount Park and the Recreation Department. But the proposal is still vague on the all-important specifics: To which department will this new division report? Will revenues generated on parkland flow back to the Park or be used to subsidize repairs to recreation centers? When would the additional staff positions needed to run such a division be funded? How would the division’s efforts be coordinated with similar efforts by the Fairmount Park Conservancy? Only after the public has had a chance to deliberate about these proposals and the realignments have been shown to strengthen the Park’s ability to become self-sufficient should this and similar realignments be considered.

IV. A NEW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE IS NEEDED TO ATTRACT AND MANAGE NEW FUNDING

Citizen surveys conducted by the Strategic Planning team showed that “it is the experience of the Park and not its management structure that matters most to residents.” (*Fairmount Park Community Survey, June 2003, p. 25.*) But to improve the Park experience – to make Fairmount Park more attractive, exciting and responsive to the needs of all Philadelphians, to better serve currently underserved neighborhoods, and to be a greater lure for tourists and suburbanites – the Park needs to create a new governance structure. **It needs a system that inspires more confidence, attracts bold**

and creative leadership, has a new and improved relationship with City Hall and other funders, and consequently receives more support.

A. The board of the Fairmount Park Commission should be restructured

The Commission serves a vital role as arbiter of Park land use decisions. As the City is faced with ever-mounting economic development pressures, the need for an independent or quasi-independent board such as the Commission to balance these pressures against the primary mission of ensuring preservation of public parkland becomes even more crucial. That is why the notion of a purely advisory Park board that provides a “public hearing” function for land use decisions (decisions which are then made by other City departments such as Commerce and Revenue) is squarely rejected.

However, the current system for electing Commissioners by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas -- behind closed doors, with no opportunity for public input and no adopted criteria to guide the judges’ selection process -- is antiquated. It was put in place 150 years ago to keep political interference to a minimum. The world has changed. The lack of transparency in the election process has eroded the public’s trust and has separated the Park from the Administration. This translates into reduced funding for the Park from individuals, corporations, foundations, and government. A new governance structure would address public concerns about the accountability of Commission members. **It would encourage future Administrations and the public to feel more invested in the Park.**

This conclusion also was reached independently by “Citizens for Better Parks” (the Philadelphia Parks Alliance-led effort). Like the advisory committee, that group concluded that a new selection process for Commissioners is a key step in returning the Park to vitality. Likewise, the Strategic Plan governance alternatives #2 and #3 call for improving Commission governance through “clearly defined and published appointment process and criteria for Fairmount Park Commissioners.” How that might work in practice is spelled out below.

1. Create a new Fairmount Park Board of Trustees with clear roles and responsibilities

A new Board of Trustees should take the place of the current Commission. The roles and responsibilities of Board members should be clearly defined as focusing on policy and strategic direction. Too often, current Commission meetings seem mired in details rather than on setting direction and funding priorities for the future of the Park. This Board should have a name (“Board of Trustees,” e.g.) different than “Commission” both to signify a new start and to eliminate the confusion that now exists with having a Park board with the same name as the operating entity it oversees. The Board of Trustees would focus on:

- Vision and direction of the Park system
- Protection of land, water, and historic structures
- Formulation of land acquisition, disposition, and reuse policies
- Budget direction and oversight
- Prioritization of projects and activities
- Advocacy for the Park
- Marketing and public relations
- Fundraising to supplement the Park budget (in coordination with the Conservancy)

2. Use a transparent process to select Board members who have defined qualifications

After a new Administration is in place, a new system should be implemented for appointing members to the Board of Trustees. These proposed changes are designed to allow more citizens to serve, to permit new vision and leadership to emerge due to shortened terms and possible term limits for Trustees, and for needed areas of expertise to be represented.

- The Board of Trustees would consist of fifteen members:
 - Four *ex officio* government members: The Mayor (or Managing Director or Chief of Staff as designee); President of City Council (or Chief of Staff as designee); Recreation Commissioner; and Director of Office of Watersheds in the City’s Water Department. *Ex officio* members are important to ensure support, investment, and coordination.
 - Eleven Trustees would be appointed for staggered three-year terms. Term limits should be considered for Trustees.

- Trustees would be individuals with a demonstrated interest in and knowledge of the City’s Parks and whose skills complement the needs of a large park system. Eleven appointees with the following talents and affiliations would be sought:
 - Two appointees would be current board members or directors of neighborhood, city-wide, or watershed volunteer park organizations.
 - One appointee would be the chair of the Fairmount Park Conservancy.
 - One appointee would be the chair of the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust.
 - Seven appointees would come from among the following categories and would need at least seven years' active experience:
 - Landscape architect or city planner
 - Horticultural expert
 - Historic preservationist
 - Board member or director of a cultural institution located in Fairmount Park
 - Business executive

- Philanthropist
 - Attorney
- Diversity from a geographic, racial, and gender perspective would be encouraged.
- The new Board of Trustees would establish an internal nominating committee composed of Trustees which would nominate subsequent members. The nominating committee would advertise vacancies, post resumes on the Park website, and take public input. Consideration should be given to whether the Mayor should have the ability to veto nominees. (The idea of having nominees ratified by Council was rejected as being as politicized a process as the current one.)

3. An interim appointment process should be used until a new Administration takes office

Although a new Administration will not take office until 2008, the ten current elected Commissioners' terms end in June 2007 (and there is one existing vacancy). Until the new appointment process recommended above is implemented, the advisory committee recommends that Commission President Nix appoint a nominating committee composed of leaders from Park volunteer groups and civic organizations to review and rate applications for all future elected Commissioner seats. The nominating committee should advertise for the positions, post resumes on the Park website, take public input, and provide their recommendations to the Board of Judges.

B. The Park's organizational structure should be reformed

In the last decade or so, in response to the shortage of both funding and entrepreneurial talent, two sister agencies were created to augment the Park's operating

department: the Historic Preservation Trust (to renovate and lease historic Park properties) and the Fairmount Park Conservancy (to fundraise for priority Park projects). Although the sister organizations have had notable successes, the level of collaboration is less than it could and should be. In short, the system is **fragmented**. The Strategic Plan also calls for better coordination with the Commission's sister agencies but doesn't provide a roadmap for this change.

A more efficient organizational structure needs to be set up to maximize revenue generation, planning, coordination, collaboration, and impact. Furthermore, the Park's organizational structure needs to be changed with an eye towards encouraging entrepreneurial leadership, which, as noted above, is an important part of moving the Park to point where it can raise a significant amount of outside funding to supplement City resources.

To address these issues, the advisory committee believes that a new organization should have the following characteristics:

- A strong, diverse Board of Trustees that is forward-looking, inspires broad civic confidence, sets policy for the organization, raises funds for the Park, and sets the highest professional standards for its employees.
- An agreement with the City of Philadelphia that guarantees a base level of municipal funding for the Park with built-in cost-of-living increases, and the mandate and authority to encourage entrepreneurial activity, enhance the revenue-generating capability of the Park, and a written agreement with the City of Philadelphia to retain a majority of revenues raised in order to augment City funding.
- Adequate professional staff, or paid consultants, with expertise in the areas of parkland and property management, environmental education, volunteer

management, marketing, public relations, and concession and special events management.

These three objectives can be fulfilled by 1) strong coordination and contractual agreements between the current Park staff, the Historic Preservation Trust, and the Fairmount Park Conservancy; 2) the merger of these three organizations; or 3) the creation of a new entity with a dedicated revenue stream raised either at the regional or municipal level. (*See Management Alternatives Overview, attached as Exhibit "B".*) To determine the most effective and appropriate revenue structure, the advisory group recommends the retention of professional consultants who can evaluate how much revenue might be raised from concessions, the lease of land or assets, the creation of some form of regional tax, bonding authority, or a municipal Park assessment district. A final decision about organizational structure should await the results of this analysis.

V. HOW AND WHEN WOULD THESE RECOMMENDATIONS TAKE EFFECT?

Implementation of these governance and funding changes will require legal changes and voter approval. To do this, the committee recommends that between now and this fall the ideas in this report be further developed as follows:

- An expanded advisory committee should be appointed to govern the next phase of transition planning, which will deal in more detail with the items noted in this report. Members should be appointed by June 1, 2006, in consultation with the Administration, City Council, the Commission, and the Philadelphia Parks Alliance. An unbiased, result-oriented civic leader should be appointed to head the transition team. The work items listed below ideally should be completed by September 8, 2006.
- Options for implementing a dedicated funding mechanism need to be researched in detail.

- Foundation funding should be secured by July 1, 2006, to hire consultants to perform this study.
- The Home Rule Charter will need to be amended to change the Commissioner selection process.
 - Legal research is needed to determine if state legislation also is required because the Commission was created by state law. Any legislation, ordinance, or ballot question needs to make clear that the new Board retains its land use control powers.
 - The Philadelphia Parks Alliance reform report contains several governance recommendations which differ to some degree from those of this report (length of board terms, term limits, ratification of Trustees by Council, e.g.). The transition committee needs to review both documents to reach a consensus on the best approach.
- The state law providing for Park-generated revenues to inure to the benefit of the Park may need to be reaffirmed or written into new legislation/ballot question.
- The Committee of Seventy and the law firm of Dechert LLP will donate legal services to research the above issues. Legal assistance also will be sought as necessary from the Philadelphia Parks Alliance, the City Solicitor's Office, and City Council legislative staff. The goal is to have ready for the next Administration's review and consideration a **package of reform legislation** relating to implementing a dedicated funding mechanism, changing the Commissioner selection process, and changing the Park's management structure (to the extent these reforms require legal action).
- The preliminary financial estimates of the Park's operating and capital needs contained in this report need to be verified.

- The committee requests that this task be completed by City financial personnel.
- Business plans need to be prepared showing estimated ranges of revenue from the Park's Horticultural Center, golf courses, and potential revenue zones.
 - The committee requests that this task be completed by City financial personnel.
- An analysis of under-utilized Park real estate assets for possible lease or re-use needs to be initiated.
 - The transition committee should work with Park staff and the Commission to develop written guidelines for a consultant to use in evaluating properties. Park staff should incorporate these guidelines into a consultant RFP.
- The Park and the Department of Recreation should continue to eliminate redundancy in their land holdings.
 - Consider transfer of Fairmount Park sport fields which are in proximity to recreation centers to the Recreation Department. However, this cannot be done if it reduces Park staff who maintain these fields, because they are also the ones who maintain the Park's trails and natural areas.
 - Consider transfer of all Recreation Department neighborhood parks and squares without active recreation to Fairmount Park. However, this should not be done if it reduces Recreation Department personnel who maintain these parks, because they also maintain other recreation sites.

VI. CONCLUSION

The work of reforming Fairmount Park -- a 150-year old beloved but beleaguered institution -- is underway. With proper funding and a reinvigorated governance structure,

the Park's vision WILL become a reality. If the reforms suggested in this report can be implemented, citizens and funders can expect a Park where:

- Neighborhood parks would be maintained at a “gold” level of service, and more parks would be created where they are needed.
- Fountains along Kelly Drive would flow once more.
- Every Philadelphian could walk from home to a trail that would connect with hundreds of miles of regional trail networks.
- Golfers would enjoy a first-class golf experience at 6 golf courses and newly created driving ranges and golf centers.
- Summer concerts and movie nights would enliven parks throughout the City.
- Spring wildflower walks, summer kite festivals, fall foliage 5K runs, microbrew sampler evenings, holiday tours of decorated historic mansions, and annual wedding vow renewal ceremonies would give Philadelphians something to look forward to in the Park each season.
- Natural areas would remain wild, but where appropriate, Park users would find refreshment stands, cafes, and bike/blade/canoe/kayak/fishing equipment rentals at their disposal. Visitors would travel from around the region for the Park's ropes courses, rip-lines, skateboarding parks, archery ranges, miniature golf courses and outdoor ice skating rinks.
- It would be easy and educational to find your way around Fairmount Park because it would have better directional and interpretive signage and maps that are downloadable from the internet. A Park trolley would take riders anywhere in the Park system for a minimum fee.
- Deteriorated Park houses would be restored to their former grandeur, providing expanded resources for the community and increased tax revenue for the City.
- Fairmount Park would be a leader in the use of sustainable building practices such as solar panels, green roofs, composting toilets and geothermal heating and cooling.