

Fairmount Park & Philadelphia Museum of Art

LANDSCAPED PARKING FACILITY & ROOFTOP SCULPTURE GARDEN

RELOCATED SURFACE PARKING

NEW PUBLIC AMENITIES

S y n o p s i s

Landscaped Parking Facility & Rooftop Sculpture Garden

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is planning to build a new below-grade parking facility and rooftop sculpture garden in a section of East Fairmount Park between the Azalea Garden and the West Entrance to the Museum.

This plan is part of the Museum's overall Master Plan to modernize and expand their facilities over the next ten years and beyond. The Museum is a vital part of the City's cultural and economic life, drawing nearly one million visitors annually from all over the world. The Museum's seventy-eight year old facilities are in need of major repair and modernization. In addition, the existing amenities surrounding the Museum no longer meet the needs of its growing audience. Extending opportunities for displaying sculpture in the surrounding park setting and increasing parking capacity for visitors are critical to the Museum's future success.

The Museum has received final design approvals for the landscaped garage and sculpture garden from the Fairmount Park Commission, Philadelphia Art Commission and the Philadelphia Historic Commission. The Museum intends to begin construction in late 2006, with completion envisioned for 2008.

A few facts about the landscaped parking facility and rooftop sculpture garden include:

- The Museum will pay the full cost of design and construction of the garage and will be responsible for all operating costs. The City of Philadelphia is not providing any funding for this project.
- The Museum will manage and operate the new parking facility.
- The garage will accommodate approximately 400 – 440 cars.
- The parking facility is intended primarily to serve Museum visitors, but others, as well, may use the parking facility.
- The Museum wants the visitation experience to be as affordable as possible. While the parking rates have not yet been set, the Museum plans to set the rates at a reasonable level that will encourage maximum use of the facility.
- The plans for the parking facility include security lighting and surveillance to help provide a safe environment for those using the parking facility and rooftop sculpture garden.

Relocated Surface Parking

The Museum's parking garage and sculpture garden will be built upon the existing Fairmount Avenue surface parking lot that now accommodates 84 vehicles and extends from the Italian Fountain to Kelly Drive parallel to the Azalea Garden. The parking spaces in this lot are designated by contract for exclusive use by the newly-opened Water Works Restaurant and Lounge from 11:00 am – 11:00 pm, seven days a week. In order to relocate these spaces, the Park and the Museum will provide the spaces listed below:

- 18 existing spaces along the driveway leading to the restaurant
- 38 marked spaces around the Italian Fountain, which will be restriped.
- 10 spaces in the currently marked Italian Fountain bus drop off zone (5:00 pm – 11:00 pm)
- 14 spaces in the Museum's parking garage (5:00 pm – 11:00 pm)
(Unless otherwise noted, the above spaces will be reserved for restaurant use from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm, seven days a week)

In addition to the above, a new 27 car parking area for public use will be built between Water Works Drive and the Schuylkill River. This lot will be available to the public 24 hours a day and will contain environmental features such as pervious paving in the parking spaces, perforated curbing and an adjacent rain garden to manage stormwater runoff. The Museum will fund the design and construction of the new 27 car parking area and the restriping of the Italian Fountain parking. The new parking area will be constructed prior to, or concurrent with, the construction of the parking garage.

New Public Amenities

In addition to the landscaped parking facility, rooftop sculpture garden and the relocated surface parking, the City of Philadelphia is committed to providing the following additional public amenities in the area bounded by Lloyd Hall, Water Works Drive, the Italian Fountain and the Schuylkill River.

- The current "silt peninsula" in the Schuylkill River will be improved and made publicly accessible by dredging a channel between it and the river wall. The newly created island will be accessed by a pedestrian bridge and will feature boardwalks with built in seating and interpretive graphics. Additionally, invasive vegetation on the island will be removed and replaced with native plants. Also, the density of plants will be thinned to open views to the river from the adjacent park area and recreation path. The newly established island is envisioned as a place for environmental education and quiet contemplation.
- Between the existing Water Works Drive parking and the river wall, the City will install an interactive water feature and children's themed sculpture.
- A new handrail will be installed on top of the existing river wall. A section of the railing may include sculptural panels.

- Themes for the interactive water feature, children’s sculpture and handrail sculptural panels have not been chosen. Possible themes include the history and animals of the Schuylkill River and the history and plant and animal diversity of Fairmount Park.
- The existing paved recreation trail will be relocated to accommodate the new 27-space parking lot. The realigned trail will pass close to the interactive water and sculptural elements, enabling the public to engage with these amenities. The realigned trail will include lighting, benches and trash receptacles.
- The landscape area around the Italian Fountain will be widened to reduced pavement and provide a more appropriate and accessible setting.

Design and construction of the environmental island, interactive water feature, sculptural elements, handrails, increased Italian Fountain surrounds and associated landscaping will be funded by the City of Philadelphia. The Museum will fund the design and construction of the relocated recreation path and associated site amenities (lighting, benches and trash receptacles) in and around the new 27 space parking lot.

Benefits

The benefits of the parking facility and sculpture garden, relocated surface parking and public amenities are numerous and include:

- Increase in parking in East Fairmount Park, benefiting people who use the Park for walking, biking, jogging, rowing, and other recreational activities, benefiting people from the City and beyond who visit the Museum of Art, and benefiting people who live in the nearby neighborhood
- “Knitting together” the landscape of the Azalea Garden and the Art Museum by removing the Fairmount Avenue parking lot and replacing it with the landscaped sides and roof of the new parking facility
- A outdoor rooftop sculpture garden with spectacular views of the Azalea Garden and the Schuylkill River
- An increase in public park land by making the currently inaccessible silt island accessible for environmental education and quiet relaxation
- A decrease in impervious coverage in this section of East Fairmount Park by removing existing Fairmount Avenue surface parking lot and pavement around the Italian Fountain
- Providing a new, interactive water feature and public sculpture geared towards children
- Providing amazing views of Boat House Row and the Schuylkill River from the newly accessible island