

PHILADELPHIA 250 WISHLIST

CATEGORY: CULTURE

ID CODE & TITLE	DESCRIPTION
C1: 2026 Pass	Develop a 2026 Pass, like a Go City Pass, that combines access to all of Philadelphia's arts and cultural institutions to make accessing all that Philadelphia has to offer easy and affordable. Maximize visitorship across the board during 2026 to expose Philadelphians and visitors to all the great institutions we have.
C2: A Flash, A Boom, and A Voice (historic humor)	To the right of St. Stephen Episcopal Church, 19 South 10th Street, is an historic marker: "This Church Is Built On The Site Where Benj. Franklin Flew His Famous Kite." The idea embraces Ben's experiment with his kite. All it would take is a pole with a sensor light that every so often is set to detect a movement on the steps outside the church. And zap! A bright light flashes, a boom, and then a voice cries out, "Ben, put down that kite, or you're going to get the shock of your life." The purpose of this historic humor is to recognize that Philadelphia has had an electrifying effect in helping make, shape and revolutionize history.
C3: Currents: A Multi-Media Extravaganza at Fairmount Water Works	Promote this program, which will highlight Philadelphia sculptors who will be creating a series of art installations within the raw architecture of the pool space beneath the Fairmount Water Works. Highlighting the history and ecology of the Water Works and the Schuylkill, the installations will explore the effects of climate change on the natural water systems over time. Local media artists will create videos that animate and rematerialize unexpected pre-colonial objects found in the Schuylkill; aquatic flora and fauna; natural phenomena; and visions of an imagined future 250 years ahead. Additional artists will have separate installations in other sections of the underground corridors.
C4: Legacy Reclaimed	The city's public archives should build on the success of The Legacy Reclaimed project (https://www.7thwardtribute.com/) in partnership with the Association for Public Art (APA), Mural Arts, and the History Collaborative to create a city-wide public art exhibit highlighting artist interpretive renderings and photographs of the evolution of Philadelphia since inception. This will highlight the region's unique identity.
C5: Transforming Empty Storefronts into Illuminating Art Spaces	Enliven Philadelphia's streetscape by commissioning artists to transform vacant, dark storefronts into illuminated, creative art spaces.

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CATEGORY: EVENTS

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E1: Permanent Atwater Kent Exhibition	Ensure that we have a real exhibition of materials from the Atwater Kent (aka Philadelphia History Museum/Drexel) collection.
E2: Beaux-Arts Ball 2026	Philadelphia's Beaux-Arts Ball evaporated in the 2000's; it was a tremendous annual event for the professional and academic community. We deserve a gathering of folly and celebration.
E3: Celebrate on the Schuylkill	Use the Schuylkill River, between the four bridges, as the place of celebration for the city. Like in Providence, Chicago, and San Antonio, celebration boats and art events occur ON THE WATER: Spectators can line the banks and the bridges, view it from buildings and rooftops. The Schuylkill is the heart of Philadelphia: Let's celebrate it and use it for our celebrations.
E4: Fan Fest for FIFA2026	Instead of (or in addition to) one large FIFA 2026 fan fest location, have 10 smaller ones so that the benefit can be extended into the neighborhoods. I've been to fan fest and it is amazing if done correctly, which means it's easy for fans to attend and have a good time, meet new people that you will remember forever, see new places, and experience the thrill of the game without having to buy a ticket!
E5: Highlighting Iconic Philly Sites	A light and sound show, a dynamic exploration of our city's historic buildings and their stories. As example: Cliveden in historic Germantown, Fisher Fine Arts at Penn, the Paul Robeson House in West Philly, Japanese House in Fairmount Park and Eastern State Penitentiary in Fairmount. One event each week at sundown.
E6: Summer Season Night Market in Chinatown	The night market, as an important night economic activity in Asian cities, brings vitality and economic vibrancy to the city's nights. Philadelphia's Chinatown night market has seen tremendous success and can be a season-long night market, which holds great potential for the urban development of Philadelphia. For example, it can enhance the vitality of the city at night, promote economic growth, support small businesses, improve nighttime safety, and become a unique urban landmark and signature event for Philadelphia.
E7: Host a World Cup Tune Up	Host the US Men's National Team for a World Cup warmup match. Also host the US Women's National Team for a friendly.

PHILADELPHIA 250 WISHLIST

CATEGORY: PLANNING

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P1: Agency Report Cards	Develop a report card on the achievements and capabilities of the city's planning and housing establishment. (Meaning PCPC, PIDC, PRA, PHDC, PHA, etc.) Are they up to peer city standards, what are strengths and weaknesses?
P2: Designing for Change	The sustainability and value of the built environment depends on designing for change, which supports a regenerative building stock. Create an initiative to promote this idea.
P3: Inclusionary Zoning	Figure out sufficient density and height bonuses, as well as other incentives, to actually make inclusionary zoning REAL. Likely must occur at the state level (can we clone Nikil Saval?)
P4: Nicetown Stitch	Use a design and implementation grant to cover Route 1 in Nicetown that works like the Chinatown Stitch.
P5: Public Space "School"	DAG could support a series of programs assessing useful tools for planning and creating new public spaces in the city. This effort is motivated by the vagueness and situationality of many public space projects, which do not seem to spring from a generally accepted set of principles for developing such spaces.
P6: Sports for All	Develop a citywide plan to equitably distribute and develop outdoor recreation and sports fields across the city, not just cluster them together to the detriment of the environment.
P7: Streeter Network	Develop a coordinated, well-supported Streeter network across the entire city to allow a broader number of restaurants to participate and welcome people into their establishments.
P8: The Delaware Waterfront— What Went Wrong/What Went Right?	Since the original work on planning the Delaware waterfront, many projects have been proposed: Some have succeeded, and others have either failed or gone into limbo. The proposal is for a panel or mini symposium to encourage research by planning and urban design students and faculty on what planning approaches worked, and which ones were unsuccessful and why.
P9: Zoning: Density Bonus for PV	Modify the zoning density bonus for LEED to include specific FAR/height bonuses for providing comprehensive PV systems. (Every dollar spent on energy is exported from the regional economy. PV also reduces the heat island effect.)

PHILADELPHIA 250 WISHLIST

CATEGORY: PUBLIC SPACE

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PS1: 2000 Sunflowers (aka Flower Bomb)	Grow 2000 sunflowers in re-used containers. Once they are just beginning to bloom, they are placed overnight in a single neighborhood on stoops and porches. Make your neighborhood beautiful with flowers that follow the sun. A photographer documents the project from start to finish. People are joyous. Collect the seeds if any are left to scatter in parks for wildlife, the old stalks to compost, and the containers to re-use for the next year's flower bomb.
PS2: Activate SEPTA's Underground Pedestrian Concourse with Pop-Up Markets	SEPTA's underground Center City Pedestrian Concourse (especially the area underneath Broad Street) can sometimes feel desolate and deserted. By allowing pop-up markets to set up in this space, it would allow local, small businesses without a brick-and-mortar location to showcase their wares, while also activating the space and making it feel safer for transit users.
PS3: Activate the Rail Park	Celebrate Philadelphia's industrial past and showcase its connected, resilient, and resident-driven future by commissioning temporary art installations in the undeveloped sections of the Rail Park's Cut and Tunnel with contributions from neighborhoods and major institutions along the way.
PS4: City Hall Dining	The courtyard of City Hall would be a great venue for a Parisian-style restaurant, such as Parc: Away from the traffic and noise of the city yet very much in the center of the city. There could be multiple restaurants, even if it's a government building.
PS5: Complete Streets Conservancy	The City should found a city-affiliated non-profit to manage a Philadelphia Street Furniture Library to make it easier for all communities to make public spaces in the ROW, provide constituent services support on ROW matters, and organize ROW stewards.
PS6: Deck the Flagpoles!	We should install Old Glory on the empty flagpoles attached to buildings throughout Center City. Many older buildings on Chestnut, Walnut and other Center City streets have large flagpoles attached to their facades. Imagine how festive Center City would look if all the empty flagpoles around town flew the American flag during the Semiquincentennial year of 2026. But why wait? Let's get started by July 4, 2025.
PS7: Dining in Womrath Park - July 4, 2026	On July 4, 1776, apparently there was a famous picnic at Womrath Park. "According to local lore, Thomas Jefferson read the Declaration of Independence on this site before it was read to the public at large. The Founding Fathers also allegedly dined at the park site on July 4th, 1776." There should be a special event at Womrath Park to celebrate again.

PHILADELPHIA 250 WISHLIST

PS8: Increased Activation on East Bank of Schuylkill	The east bank of the Schuylkill should be more than a running/biking trail. SRDC and others should coordinate consistent permanent and semi-permanent food and beverage options, and increased locations for seating. It should be more of a place to enjoy and less an athletic track.
PS9: Green Walk — A River-to-River Nature Trail Through Center City	Philadelphia is working on long-term projects to make our riversides green and accessible, but getting from one river to the other through Center City remains relentlessly gray and hard surfaced. The Green Walk Project would use existing green spaces to create a delightful, green walk from the i95 Cap Park to the edge of Washington Square, and, over time, extend the greening west on Locust Street to the Schuylkill River.
PS10: History in Bus Shelters	Restore and enlarge the CCD program to place an illustrated historical narrative on every bus shelter in the city. With SEPTA info too!
PS11: Lenape Boulevard	Rebuild East Market Street (Delaware River to City Hall) as a civic space -- with vehicular traffic -- as a unified hardscaped and landscaped "city room" with a design and presence that dominates the buildings at its edges.
PS12: Pedestrianize Center City	Pedestrianize the traffic circle around City Hall to provide a seamless car-free connection for people getting off the BSL or MFL at City Hall as well as people coming into the city at Suburban Station (who would now only have to cross 16th Street). This would also link City Hall directly to Love Park, and with a (hopefully) more park-like Ben Franklin Parkway, provide a safe space for pedestrians and cyclists all the way to the Art Museum.
PS13: Philadelphia Open Streets	Schedule street closures across the city to allow people to enjoy all of Philadelphia's neighborhoods on foot. Coordinate with local BIDs and RCOs to schedule public space events so that all communities can put their best foot forward, show what makes their neighborhoods special and support local businesses.
PS14: Public Pool at Former Powel Elementary	Create a public pool and park at the site of the former Powel School.
PS15: Rail Park Expansion	Use the city and state's political will to help The Rail Park finally acquire the next pieces of real estate so that realistic plans can be developed and executed.
PS16: Pedestrianize Sansom Street	Some blocks of Sansom Street were blissfully full of restaurant tables during the rebound from the Covid-19 lockdown. Let's redirect parking garage entrances, remove vehicle traffic, and make the entire length of Sansom Street a permanent, year-round outdoor dining destination.
PS17: SEPTA Art Stations	AS SEPTA rebrands itself, it has a unique opportunity to transform the rider experience by adding immersive art installations into these important public spaces. At a very minimal additional cost (1% of the total project budget), SEPTA could transform its stations from drab and unpleasant places to attractive showcases for Philadelphia artists. This is a relatively easy, low-cost, step that SEPTA could take to generate favorable publicity and seek to regain ridership lost during the pandemic.
PS18: Sidewalk Revitalization	Create consistent sidewalk design, finish and accessory treatment for the full length of the east-west streets in Center City with variations provided to signify the unique character of each street. Sidewalks belong to the people using them and should not be left to the imagination and budgets of individual property owners.

PHILADELPHIA 250 WISHLIST

PS19: Streeteries and pedestrian-friendly spaces everywhere!	Let's make Philadelphia the most pedestrian-friendly city in America. It's a shame that restaurants have been forced to close their streeteries: Reclaiming many more parking spaces for restaurants (especially in Philly neighborhoods where businesses lack outdoor seating, not just in Center City) and turning more blocks into car-free pedestrian paradises would go a long way toward making Philadelphia friendly to people on foot, not just cars.
PS20: Tree Blitz	We have organized blitzes around the city to plant street trees & add to the city's tree cover, like they did in Hunting Park.
PS21: Uninterrupted Waterfront Trails	Let's close trail gaps and create continuous automobile-free paths along not only the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers, but also all major tributaries including Cobbs, Darby, and Frankford/Tacony creeks.
PS22: Welcome Park at Elfreth's Alley	There is very little a visitor can learn about Elfreth's Alley by simply walking down the street. A relaxing little introductory park at the Second Street end of the alley could provide summary information for the ninety percent of tourists who come to the Alley when the Museum House is closed.

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CATEGORY: SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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S1: Achieve the City's Zero Waste Goal	Philadelphia has a documented goal of zero waste by 2035. Let's achieve it 9 years early!
S2: Leveraging Office Building Vacancy to Address Urban Food Insecurity	Transform vacant office space deemed unsuitable for residential use into innovative urban agriculture centers (micro greens, mushrooms as main crops), creating economic opportunity and addressing food scarcity in a city where 1 in 5 residents are considered food insecure.
S3: Solar Color for Cooler Philadelphia (SoCool Philly)	Have solar reflective paint (horizontal murals) or solar panels covering the vast majority of asphalt at school yards (paint) and parking lots (solar panels & paint). The goal is to get folks coming to town to say "that's so cool" while also reducing heat-island effect and adding to our reputation as a city of murals.
S4: Vacant Storefront Respite Locations	Utilize chronically vacant storefronts for hygiene centers, rest centers and or shelters for weather emergencies to help the houseless population. Incentivize owners to rent these spaces to non-profit organizations that specialize in helping these populations at a reduced rate. Host charrettes or design competitions for firms and students to design interiors/storefronts.

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CATEGORY: TRANSPORTATION

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T1: Bus Stop Seating	Stealth placement of seating at bus stops: an overnight extravaganza of increased seating to bring to light the obvious need to provide people with places to rest.
T2: Center City EV Charging	Install curbside EV Charging Stations downtown with three-hour maximum parking to speed the transition to quieter, zero emissions private vehicles. Revenue could be directed to the Philly Sustainability Office.
T3: Free SEPTA Days	Increase ridership by scheduling free SEPTA days and further encouraging folks to use public transportation with added focus on station cleanliness and quality bus shelters.
T4: No Trolley Track Left Unused	Wherever there's a trolley track (Germantown Avenue, 11th and 12th Streets in Center City, or anywhere else they're poking up through the pavement), repair the gaps and get them back in service.
T5: Public Transit to the Navy Yard	Existing (freight) rail lines connect the Navy Yard (adjacent to League Island Blvd) to both the West Philly high line and the CSX lines along the east side of the Schuylkill. Minor modification to the tracks and construction of passenger platforms could provide direct rail service to the Navy Yard within a few years.
T6: Reducing Particulate Pollution from Delivery Vehicles	Incentivize Amazon & UPS to transition to 100% electric delivery vehicles by charging conventional delivery vehicles a surcharge to use Center City streets.
T7: Renew Girard Community Bridge	The historic bridge carrying Girard Avenue over the Schuylkill River - connecting West Philadelphia and Brewertown as well as east and west Fairmount Park - presents one of the most unique views of our skyline, but it's poorly maintained, under-utilized and unable to meet its potential as a public space. Thoughtful planning can help visiting pedestrians and neighbors better connect to Fairmount Park and the Schuylkill River Trail, to destinations like the Philadelphia Zoo, Please Touch Museum, Lemon Hill, Smith Playground, and Discovery Center and the nearby commercial corridors. Small interventions, artwork and programming (perhaps piloting/leading to larger future investments) can help make the space itself a destination again, and meet its purpose as a bridge of communities, not just cars.