

Riverfront
North |

Greenway MASTER PLAN

Executive Summary

Master Plan Update
February 2021



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the over 300 people who attended public meetings and responded to surveys to help develop this Master Plan. The Riverfront North Greenway belongs to the people who enjoy it, and user input will help direct the next two decades of investments. Many thanks also go to the steering committee and the many stakeholders who hold a vested interest in the future of the Riverfront North Greenway. The contributions of these individuals to the Master Plan are appreciated!

Steering Committee

James Donaghy	Vice Chair, Riverfront North Partnership Board of Directors
Patrick Starr	Executive VP, Pennsylvania Environmental Council; former Secretary of the Riverfront North Partnership Board of Officers
Rob Armstrong	Trails & Transportation Program Manager, City of Philadelphia Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, & Sustainability (Formerly with Parks & Recreation Department)
Liz Lankenau	Director of Infrastructure Program Coordination, City of Philadelphia Office of Transportation & Infrastructure Systems
Kelley Yemen	Director of Complete Streets, City of Philadelphia Office of Transportation & Infrastructure Systems
David Kanthor	Transportation Planner, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Vadim Fleysh	Chief Design Engineer, City of Philadelphia Streets Department

Stakeholder Committee

The following stakeholder organizations were involved in the update of this Master Plan:

Office of Councilmember Bobby Henon
Office of PA Representative Mike Driscoll
Office of PA Representative Joe Hohenstein
City of Philadelphia Commerce Department
City of Philadelphia Office of Transportation & Infrastructure Systems
City of Philadelphia Streets Department
City of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Department
Philadelphia Water Department
Philadelphia City Planning Commission
PennDOT
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Circuit Trails Coalition
Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Fairmount Park Conservancy
Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Pennsylvania Audubon Society
Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership
Philadelphia Waterborne
Tacony Community Development Corporation
MaST Community Charter School
Sanaghan Group

Consultant Team

NV5
Econsult Solutions
Stokes Creative Group

This Project was financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Financing Authority.

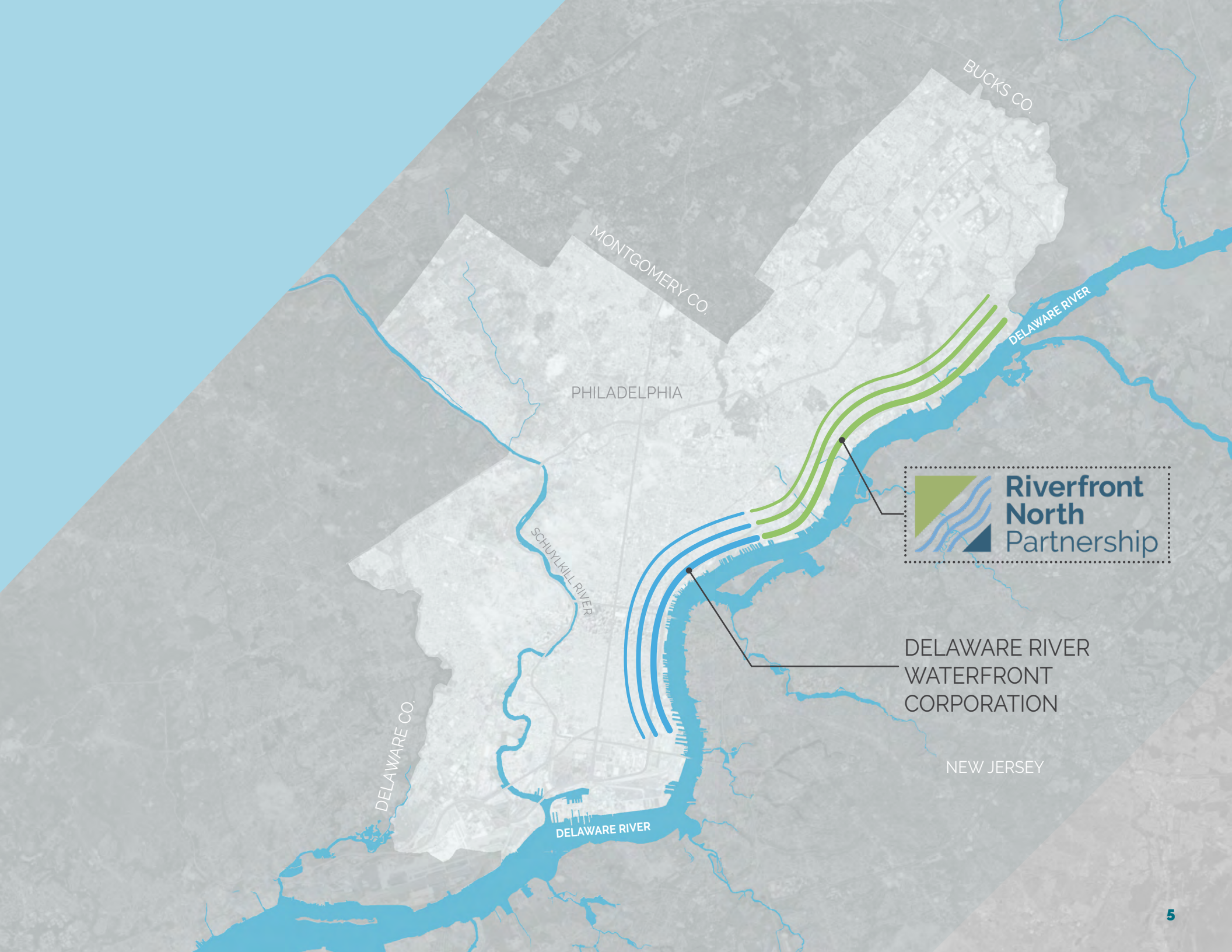
This Project was also financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

WHAT IS THE RIVERFRONT NORTH GREENWAY?

The Riverfront North Greenway is nearly eleven miles of greenway in Northeast Philadelphia between Allegheny Avenue in the Port Richmond neighborhood and Poquessing Creek in Torresdale. The greenway consists of trails, parks, open space, restored habitats, and other recreational activities along the Delaware River and adjacent areas. **The Riverfront North Partnership** (RNP) is the non-profit organization working with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation to create, activate, and restore riverfront spaces along the Greenway.

Riverfront North Partnership's Mission

To complete and sustain the riverfront trail and network of parks along the Delaware River that connects residents of urban neighborhoods to nature, offering unparalleled recreation, community building, and environmental education activities.



DELAWARE RIVER
WATERFRONT
CORPORATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

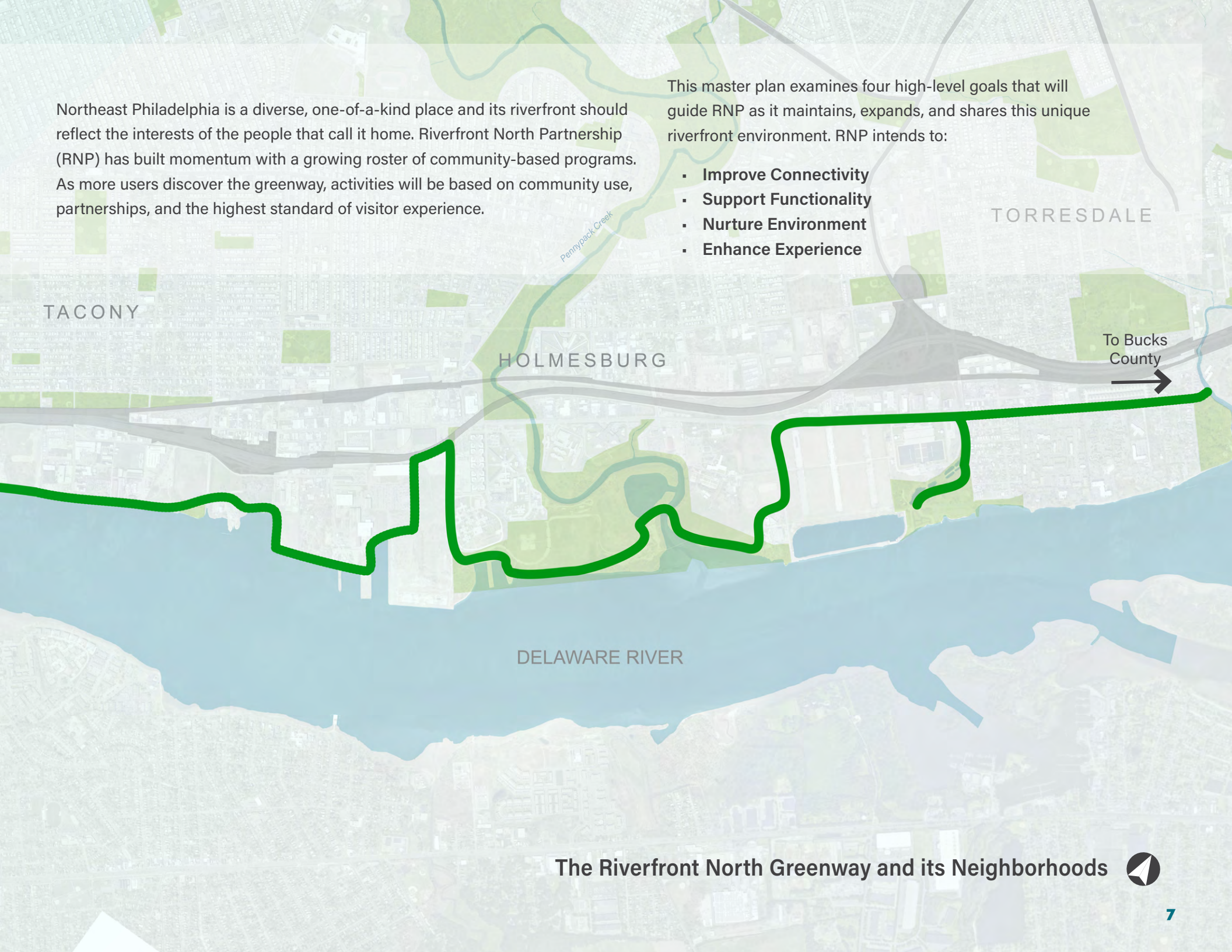
The Riverfront North Greenway has experienced significant change since the original *North Delaware Riverfront Greenway Master Plan & Cost Benefit Analysis* was completed in 2005. With eight miles of greenway trail completed, and three additional miles in the final design or construction phase, now is the time to consider the next two decades of investments to be made along Northeast Philadelphia's riverfront.

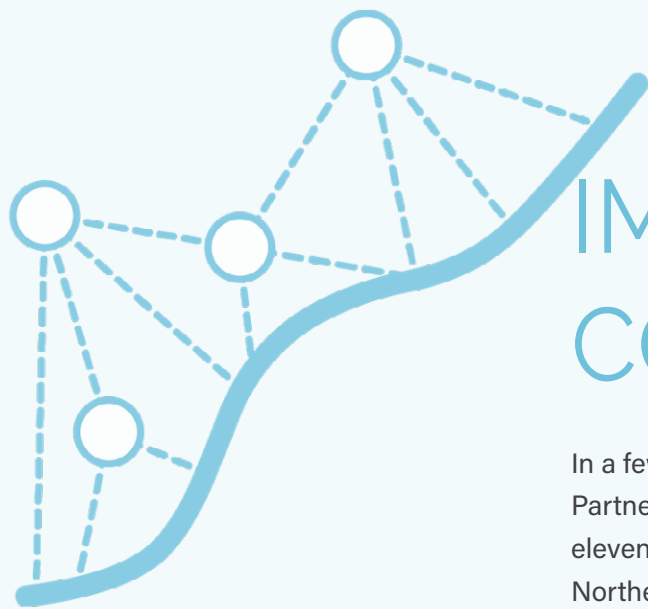


Northeast Philadelphia is a diverse, one-of-a-kind place and its riverfront should reflect the interests of the people that call it home. Riverfront North Partnership (RNP) has built momentum with a growing roster of community-based programs. As more users discover the greenway, activities will be based on community use, partnerships, and the highest standard of visitor experience.

This master plan examines four high-level goals that will guide RNP as it maintains, expands, and shares this unique riverfront environment. RNP intends to:

- **Improve Connectivity**
- **Support Functionality**
- **Nurture Environment**
- **Enhance Experience**





IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

In a few short years, Riverfront North Partnership (RNP) will have created eleven continuous miles of trail along the Northeast Philadelphia riverfront. It is now imperative to consider how the Riverfront North Greenway will interact with adjacent neighborhoods, the City of Philadelphia, and the region at large. Creating safe and intuitive walking, transit, and water-based connections will activate the riverfront and link to local, regional, and national multi-modal networks.

Properly implemented connector streets are an essential link that will directly connect hundreds of thousands of residents to the Delaware River. Connector streets will be designed to allow for better walking and bicycling conditions to the waterfront, and contain elements like increased tree canopy, traffic calming, and green stormwater infrastructure. By reducing or eliminating the barriers between Northeast Philadelphia neighborhoods and the waterfront, like dark underpasses and speeding traffic, RNP can

make nearby residents feel as though the greenway is right outside their front doors. By connecting neighborhoods more directly to the greenway, this will help foster a community ownership of the riverfront.

The Riverfront North Greenway is also a key piece of city, regional, and national trail networks. A high number of recreational trail users will soon be able to experience Northeast Philadelphia by way of connections through these networks. Wayfinding and unique attractions can help introduce visitors to the one-of-a-kind atmosphere in the Northeast.

As the health of the Delaware River improves, water-based recreation of all types is growing in popularity. More people are using motorized and non-motorized watercraft on the Delaware River, and the number and quality of waterfront attractions is growing on both sides of the river.



Riverfront North Partnership will collaborate with PennDOT, the Philadelphia Streets Department, and other partners to develop safe and intuitive connections from Northeast Philadelphia neighborhoods to the riverfront. The rendering above illustrates potential improvements to connector streets.



Cultivating collaborative relationships with adjacent property owners will be key to encouraging future site development that enhances the greenway experience. Shown here is an example of the type of building that could be adaptively reused and benefit the adjacent K&T Trail near Comly Street.



SUPPORT FUNCTIONALITY

The Riverfront North Greenway has a long history of industrial and institutional land uses that are active today and will continue into the foreseeable future. RNP respects these dynamic land uses and will leverage the current functionality to activate the Greenway as a unique part of the Philadelphia waterfront, and to potentially seek revenue streams from increasing land values. RNP will continue to work with the City of Philadelphia to forge relationships that transform vacant riverfront parcels into


uses that serve all interested parties. The Riverfront North Partnership supports future redevelopment of currently vacant parcels with uses that will have a cooperative relationship with the riverfront greenway. The continued redevelopment of the area along the Riverfront North Greenway presents opportunities for strategic economic development measures that will contribute to the overall success of this active waterfront.



NURTURE ENVIRONMENT

The Riverfront North Greenway has the potential to be one of the most accessible natural environments in the City of Philadelphia. By continuing the restoration of land- and water-based habitats along the waterfront, RNP and its stakeholders have an opportunity to create a lasting natural

corridor that will knit together the urban landscape and the expanse of the Delaware River. Increasing open space inventory along the river can support a growth in native plant and animal species, and enhance recreational activities such as bird-watching and fishing.



By restoring shoreline habitat and providing safe access at the river's edge, the Riverfront North Partnership can help improve the Delaware River, while creating educational opportunities. Illustrated here is a concept for a possible living shoreline project south of the Tacony Boat Launch.

Through resilient design, the impacts threatened by climate change can be tempered. By developing resilient, flood-accommodating environments along the riverfront, RNP can create enjoyable, recreational spaces for people and facilitate

access to the water during non-flooding events.

Parks and open space restoration along the Northeast Philadelphia riverfront make natural and recreational spaces accessible

to more diverse populations. By viewing the implementation of these spaces through an environmental justice lens, RNP can ensure that all riverfront spaces are inviting and accessible for an increasingly diverse community.



ENHANCE EXPERIENCE

Momentum is building as RNP takes an active role in engaging its community. While the physical barriers created by adjacent industrial and highway facilities remain a major challenge to visitorship, the riverfront persists as a popular destination. RNP is well prepared to leverage the soon-to-be continuous greenway and is already offering a wealth of quality experiences to visitors.

To build upon the types of experiences that will continue to grow a community of visitors and stewards, RNP will seek to:

- Expand stewardship through volunteers and service partnerships;
- Nurture relationships with private businesses that see the trail as an amenity to employees and stakeholders;
- Build robust programs that position the Greenway as a regional outdoor recreation destination;
- Practice creative placemaking with nonprofit and community partners; and
- Thoughtfully update features that respond to the community's needs.

View the full, detailed 164-page Master Plan document at:

www.RiverfrontNorth.org/MasterPlan



Riverfront North Partnership will continue to engage directly with local communities through volunteer stewardship, educational and outreach events, and activation of community spaces along the riverfront greenway. The photo depicts an outdoor musical performance at Lardner's Point.

