Great Public Spaces: Philadelphia's Regional Foundation Creates a Public Space Fund.

**Lead Presenter:**

Shawn McCaney, ASLA, is a Senior Program Officer and team leader for the Creative Communities Center of the William Penn Foundation. As part of the Foundation’s new 10-year strategic plan, Mr. McCaney led the planning of the Foundation’s new Great Public Spaces strategy. Since 2006 Mr. McCaney has also been leading the Foundation’s efforts to promote high quality redevelopment of Philadelphia’s central waterfront area, including initiating a new master plan and “early action” improvements intended to promote public access as an organizing principle for riverfront redevelopment. Mr. McCaney is a graduate of Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania.

**Co-Presenter:**

Mark Keener, is Principal and Director of Urban Design for Brown & Keener, a Division of RBA. Mr. Keener was the principal planning consultant to the William Penn Foundation in the development of its new Great Public Spaces grantmaking strategy. Mr. Keener brings a strong commitment to public participation in planning and well-honed graphic design instincts, both of which are central to the ongoing success of many of the communities the firm has worked with and to the firm’s numerous awards. Mark received both a B.S. and M. Arch from the University of Virginia.

**Session Description:**

As part of its 2012 Strategic Plan the William Penn Foundation created a new parks and public space grantmaking strategy. Learn about why the Foundation decided to create a dedicated public space strategy and the internal planning it conducted to guide the investments of its new Great Public Space Fund.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Learn about the role of private philanthropy in the development of parks and public space, including functioning as a catalyst for public sector action and investment
- Gain insights into the internal strategic planning and decision making process of a private foundation, including the role of internal and external stakeholders and influencers
- Understand the specific public space planning process the William Penn Foundation used to identify priority investments
- Learn about the systems the William Penn Foundation is developing to evaluate the success and impact of its public space investments
Session Outline:

I. Overview: From Muir Woods to Millennium Park - the historic role of philanthropy in public space development
   a. Review historic examples of public space development driven by philanthropic investment
   b. Discuss the evolving nature of post-war philanthropic support for parks
   c. Current state of the art: public-private partnerships

II. Brief history of the William Penn Foundation
    a. Founding story
    b. A legacy of conservation
    c. Changing regional philanthropic landscape and the 4th generation

III. Discussion of the Foundation's 2012 Strategic Plan: Three Centers
     a. “Capitalizing Change” – Reframing Philanthropic Practice
     b. Closing the Achievement Gap
     c. Watershed Protection
     d. Creative Communities

IV. Evolution of the "Creative Communities" Grant Center
    a. Influence of the Creative Placemaking Movement
    b. Collaboration with ArtPlace
    c. Great Public Space: public space as a platform for the arts and cultural expression
    d. Cross-strategy/Cross Center initiatives

V. A "New Civic System": William Penn Foundation’s Public Space Strategy
   a. Penn’s Five Squares: the original Civic System
   b. An expanding urban core: building on the natural and historic built form of the city
   c. Goals and aspirations: enhancing existing assets
   d. Operating principles: promoting physical and psychological access

VI. Evaluating Success and Measuring Impacts
    a. Monitoring utilization and connectivity; quantitatively and qualitatively
    b. Spillover effects; serving local markets
    c. Contributing toward a new narrative for Philadelphia
CREATIVE COMMUNITIES GRANT CENTER

GREAT PUBLIC SPACES
STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

ACCESS TO GREAT PUBLIC SPACES is a key ingredient for a vibrant and creative city, providing a stage for healthy civic life that promotes community engagement and opportunities for outdoor recreation and play.

OUR GOAL over the next ten years is to improve access to, revitalize, and develop parks, trails, and open spaces in order to enhance the quality of life of residents of neighborhoods on the periphery of Center City.

OUR APPROACH is to connect residents to high quality public amenities and, through new trails and greenways, promote greater connectivity between neighborhoods and Center City.

OUR FOCUS will be on specific places where we can build on the momentum of existing planning and development, including neighborhoods that are revitalizing, changing, and some that are continuing to struggle.

OUR INVESTMENTS will accomplish this by:

- Enhancing the amenities in existing parks and public spaces
- Improving access to existing parks and public spaces
- Supporting innovative and high quality programming to activate and animate public spaces
- Promoting connectivity through new and expanded trails and greenways
- Encouraging the use of data to improve public space management
- Advocating for sustainable public space operations and maintenance practices

www.WilliamPennFoundation.org
There are many opportunities to create “great public spaces” in neighborhoods outside of Center City.

Our criteria are specific, since there are more worthy public space projects that we can hope to support. We will concentrate on investments that advance one or more of the following objectives:

- Increases access to green space in an under-served community
- Provides a new public amenity desired by the local community
- Responds to strong evidence of community interest and support
- Serves a community outside or on the periphery of Center City
- Acts as a community gateway, portal, or connector
- Enhances the performance of an existing park or public asset
- Promotes connectivity to the “Circuit” regional trail network
- Promotes public access to a riverfront or waterway
- Capacity and resources are available for operation and maintenance

Contact Shawn McCaney, Senior Program Officer for Creative Communities at (215) 988-1830 or smccaney@williampennfoundation.org