



Building the Melon Street Park
Baidi Wang/Staff Photographer

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUE

The proposed work of Park in a Truck (PiaT) is to investigate whether launching a community-operated green network, established through low-cost, fast-turnaround renovations of vacant lots, can not only improve environmental, social and physical health in under-resourced neighborhoods, but also unite advocacy efforts to slow displacement and allow communities to guide revitalization and reinvestment efforts.

Project Name: Park in a Truck

Location: 38th and Melon Streets, Philadelphia, PA

Project team:

Kim Douglas, Director, Landscape Architecture Program, Jefferson
Dr. Drew Harris, Jefferson
Richard Newton, OLIN, ASLA, RLA
Teddy Pickering, Student, Jefferson

ENGAGEMENT

We see ourselves as facilitators of the design process and start all projects by developing guiding principles and goals with the community. This serves as a road map to ensure the design process is meaningful and authentic for the community.

OUTCOME

In the short term, we successfully leveraged a cost-efficient urban park to break silos in community development. Our first park was built for our projected number. The community has fully embraced the park as their own shared responsibility. Our hope of a park network remains a long term goal.

RESOURCES

We received the use of two lots privately owned by a local developer. We were awarded a grant from a local foundation, received in-kind resources from the University and Mantua Civic Association and many, many hours of volunteer time.

LESSONS LEARNED

One local resident, who appreciated how involved the community had been in transforming a small slice of the neighborhood, said “This is about ownership.”