



Summary

Design Competition Objective

How can a city respond to the crisis of vacancy? Philadelphia, with over 40,000 vacant properties representing nearly 1,000 acres, has become one of the nation's foremost examples of urban abandonment and extensive sprawl.

The competition sponsors invite participants to suggest compelling ideas for Philadelphia's vacant land and imagine fantastic long-term solutions that inspire change and reshape urban and natural forms throughout the city.

Eligibility

The competition sponsors encourage entrants to work in teams, although individuals may also enter. For more information, see *Eligibility*.

Schedule

Wednesday September 7, 2005	Registration begins
Friday October 7, 2005	Late registration begins (5:00 pm)
Monday November 14, 2005	Registration ends; deadline for questions (5:00 pm)
Monday November 21, 2005	Answers posted online
Friday January 6, 2006	Entries due online (5:00 pm)
February 2006	Results announced; entries exhibited to the public

Competition Awards

In the first phase of the competition, up to five finalist teams will receive \$5,000 each and will continue on to the next phase, *Reconnecting the Lots*.

Registration

Registration is online. The registration fee is \$150 USD (registration is \$180 USD after 5:00 pm Friday October 7, 2005). Note that no shipping or printing is required as files will be submitted digitally (see *Submission Format* below).

Submission Format

To ensure fair evaluation of all boards and to eliminate printing and postage fees for entrants all entrants will submit only digital files. The competition organizers will be responsible for printing,

mounting, and laminating all boards. All files will be professionally printed as high-quality (200 dpi) prints, laminated, and mounted on 1/4" Gator board.

Two 30" x 40" boards at 200dpi in PDF format are required, together with smaller JPEG versions of the same files (600 x 800 pixels each), a single detail/thumbnail (100 x 100 pixels), and a Microsoft Word compatible document containing the project description text. For more information about digital file specifications, please see Rules & Eligibility.

Philadelphia LANDvisions Program Overview

Phase I: Our Voices, Our Future: Community Envisioning Process

May 2005

Philadelphia LANDvisions began in May 2005 with a series of community meetings. A broad range of Philadelphia's residents and stakeholders engaged in a series of community 'visioning' sessions that looked at natural land and water resources at the regional scale as well as neighborhood structure at the local scale. Community participants learned from experts about the city's ecological foundation—its hydrology and geology, and studied maps of Philadelphia's extensive vacant lands, natural resources, and built environment.

Town Meeting

May 5, 4-8 pm

Amtrak 30th Street Station

The first gathering brought over 400 people to 30th Street Station to imagine possibilities for vacant land in the city. Participants were asked to identify what they love about the city: all ideas were collected and then voted upon using keypad polling, the results of which appear on the Philadelphia LANDvisions website (www.landvisions.org). The program continued with a series of short presentations providing background on the current state of vacancy in the city as well as an overview of the ecology of the region. The session continued in smaller groups of 10: participants both clarified their ideas and then expressed their hopes and aspirations for the future of the city. Using innovative technology techniques, these ideas were captured and made immediately available on the website for public appreciation and ongoing involvement.

The River Corridors

May 18, 4-8pm

The Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing

This session applied the ideas from the Public Community Forum to issues related to our river corridors. The meeting began with a series of presentations of existing or planned projects that integrate our rivers with recreational, residential, and commercial uses. The session continued with a keypad vote on the 10 most critical themes, such as "Living with Water," "Creating New Communities," and "Economy and Jobs," that emerged from the May 5th session. Participants then broke into small groups to discuss the inherent values, guiding principles, and strategies that follow from a particular theme. Groups then shared their ideas with the larger forum; you can view them here (www.landvisions.org). The meeting concluded with a vote on the importance of each theme.

The Neighborhoods Session

May 25, 4-8pm
City Hall

The final session focused on how vacant lands can be used to transform Philadelphia's neighborhoods. After an initial keypad polling exercise to determine the characteristics of those present, participants began by discussing the assets and liabilities of different types of vacancies within the city. Then, a mapping exercise challenged participants to brainstorm uses for vacant lands in an unidentified Philadelphia neighborhood. While some groups concentrated on the environmental possibilities of vacant sites, others directed their attention to social or economic options. Finally, participants engaged in a storytelling exercise in which they shared memories of their neighborhood's past and their hopes and wishes for its future. The keypad polling results, lists of assets and liabilities, maps, and hopes and wishes can be viewed on the Philadelphia LANDvisions website (www.landvisions.org). Additionally, audio recordings of the storytelling exercise are also available online.

For more information see www.landvisions.org.

Phase II: Urban Voids: Grounds for Change An International Design Ideas Competition

September 2005 — February 2006

Entrants from around the world are now asked to imagine new possibilities for designing a comprehensive view of Philadelphia's urban fabric that creates a new relationship between ecology and the built environment. Submission of ideas will make visible concepts that reconnect vacant land to the city's existing green infrastructure. A prestigious multidisciplinary jury will review and evaluate all submissions, making awards on criteria that acknowledge a range of design ideas. The jury will select up to five finalists who will receive monetary prizes and proceed into the next phase of the competition.

Phase III: Reconnecting the Lots

February 2006 — May 2006

During the third phase, Phase II finalists will further develop strategies for implementing their ideas. Teams will prepare a site-specific design proposal, focusing on a designated area in Philadelphia. An advisory committee and project partners will provide technical support as needed, matching professional partners with the semi-finalist teams. Team members will be encouraged to interact with neighborhood groups, experts in the field, members of the business community, and elected officials while developing their final submissions. A prestigious multidisciplinary jury will review the final submissions. The winning submission will receive recognition as well as a monetary award. A key outcome from this competition will be the development of innovative designs that will directly influence the plans of the decision makers and implementers in Philadelphia. In addition, the process will help formulate principles and emerging best practices for issues of vacancy throughout the country.

Philadelphia History & Orientation

Philadelphia Orientation

Philadelphia sits at the confluence of the Delaware River and its smaller tributary, the Schuylkill in southeastern Pennsylvania, about 150 miles northeast of Washington DC and about 100 miles southwest of New York City. Most of the city lies between the two rivers in a riparian buffer zone where hundreds of underground streams flow, although several Philadelphia neighborhoods collectively known as West Philadelphia (including Eastwick, Powelton, Mantua, and University City) are located across the Schuylkill River to the west, and ferries and bridges connect Philadelphia with Camden, New Jersey across the Delaware River to the east.

The center of Philadelphia is located at 39°59'53" north, 75°8'41" west. The current population of Philadelphia is about 1.5 million, down from a peak of about 2 million in 1950.

Philadelphia's Natural Resources

Philadelphia has an extensive parks system anchored by Fairmount Park and including urban squares, natural areas (including stream corridors, woodlands, meadows and wetlands), street trees throughout the city, and many neighborhood parks. The Philadelphia parks system comprises about 8,900 acres in all.

The city of Philadelphia spans two physiographic regions, the Piedmont and the Inner Coastal Plain, with the dividing line occurring at the fall line of the Fairmount Water Works, where the first falls on the Schuylkill River are located.

Philadelphia generally receives from 30" to 50" of precipitation most years (including about 20" of snowfall). Average high temperatures vary from around 30°F in winter to around 87°F in July and August, although high temperatures above 90°F are not uncommon in during summer.

Local wildlife includes various species of coyotes, foxes, beavers, peregrine falcons, red-tailed hawks, beavers, otters, raccoons, snakes, rabbits, owls, frogs, deer, turtles, fish, and butterflies. In addition, many migrating birds stop over in Philadelphia during the spring and fall migration seasons. Local flora includes purple coneflower, swamp milkweed, butterfly weed, swamp sunflower, swamp mallow, blue-flag iris, bee balm, cinnamon fern, flowering dogwood, quaking aspen, black cherry, willow oak, basswood, witch-hazel, and wild rose, among many others.

Philadelphia History

Early History

William Penn received a land grant from King Charles II of England for land west of the Delaware River, where he looked to found a colony based on the Quaker ideals of freedom and religious tolerance. He named and chose the site for Philadelphia, the location of an earlier Swedish settlement, and specified a grid with wide streets to avoid another disaster like London's 1666 Great Fire, as well as to embody his vision of a "Greene Countrie Towne." The original location of Philadelphia comprises present day Center City and the waterfront area around Penn's Landing.

The original inhabitants of the Philadelphia area included the Lenape who, despite William Penn's pacifist Quaker beliefs, were decimated by European diseases and eventually forced further west.

Philadelphia's 1793 yellow-fever epidemic (the first in a series) killed nearly 5,000 people in less than five months, and drove many wealthy citizens to the suburbs. Philadelphia recovered, and remained the largest city in the North American colonies until overtaken by New York City in 1836.

Philadelphia continued to grow, becoming an early railroad hub, which (together with its location on the Delaware River), made it a major industrial center. In 1854 the city annexed surrounding suburbs to reach its current size of 159 square miles.

Post-Industrial/Vacancy

As in many eastern American cities, Philadelphia's fortunes fell with the decline of industrial manufacturing after World War II. Exacerbated by Federal highway development and Federal housing policies that encouraged new development outside the city, as well as racial and political unrest inside the city, large areas of Philadelphia's Center City and surrounding neighborhoods fell into disrepair. In addition, narrow lots crowded with small, aging townhouses (including Philadelphia's distinctively tiny three-story "Trinity" townhouses with one room per floor) became less attractive to Philadelphians than larger houses in outlying suburbs. Philadelphia has consistently lost residents since 1950. Between 1950 and 1990 the city lost over 400,000 residents. In the 1990s alone another 4.3% of the population left, many headed for nearby areas, including Montgomery County.

The city has razed many of its unsafe abandoned buildings leaving vacant lots, while others remain standing. Today Philadelphia has the highest per capita vacancy rate in the country. As of the 2000 census, almost half (45%) of the residential street segments in Philadelphia contained some kind of abandoned property and more than one third (36%) contained at least one vacant residential structure, totaling approximately 26,000 vacant residential structures and nearly 3,000 vacant commercial and industrial structures—more than 40,000 vacant parcels to date.

Renaissance

Recently Philadelphia has experienced regeneration in and around Center City, as well as redevelopment in outlying areas of Philadelphia, including parts of Manayunk, Germantown, and East Falls. This renaissance, however, has not reached every neighborhood. Pockets of urban blight remain throughout the city, particularly in the ring of neighborhoods around the city center, including North Philadelphia, Kensington, Parkside, Grays Ferry, Point Breeze, and others.

Recent initiatives to revitalize Philadelphia include the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's **Philadelphia Green** project to "clean and green" vacant lots throughout the city, and the City of Philadelphia's **Neighborhood Transformation Initiative** (NTI), an unprecedented effort by the City of Philadelphia to counter the history of decline in Philadelphia and revitalize Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

Site & Criteria

Program Description

Philadelphia needs a compelling long-term vision for developing its vacant lots, a strategy that envisions how vacancy in Philadelphia can be changed from an obstacle (vacancy as absence) to an asset (vacancy as possibility).

The jury will seek out powerful, transforming ideas with the potential for further development and realization, ideas that are specific enough to take advantage of Philadelphia's unique attributes yet broad enough to be applied to neighborhoods throughout the city.

The Urban Voids competition, an idea generating process, is the second phase of Philadelphia LANDvisions. For this phase of the competition, entrants are free to suggest program elements that best express their idea and are in keeping with the competition aims (specific program elements will be developed in the next phase). Community-generated ideas can be found in the results of Phase I: Our Voices, Our Future: A Community Visioning Process at landvisions.org.

Site Description

The site comprises the city of Philadelphia. Design proposals should address the issue of vacancy at a citywide scale, referencing Philadelphia's waterways, soils, and geology, as well as the city's physical adjacencies. Lots could include former industrial ("brownfield") sites—so entries should acknowledge issues of toxicity and urban waste—as well as sites that have been treated transitionally through cleaning and greening.

Finalists working in the next phase of the competition will focus on specific locations in particular neighborhoods to further develop their proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

The jury will look for:

- A clear, compelling idea
- A concept with clear potential for realization
- An approach that takes advantage of Philadelphia's natural and urban context

Rules

Entries which do not meet the following criteria will be disqualified and will **not** be viewed by the jury.

Eligibility

The competition sponsors encourage entrants to work in teams, although individuals may also enter. At least one primary registrant must be a graduate of one of the following degree programs:

- Accredited professional architecture program
- Accredited professional landscape architecture program
- Accredited professional urban planning or urban design program

OR

If no primary registrant is a graduate of one of the above programs, the team must include an advisor (faculty member or practicing professional) who is a graduate of one of the above degree programs.

The competition organizers encourage students, members of community groups, and others interested in these issues to enter the competition. Connections to potential professional advisors can be found through organizations such as the Community Design Collaborative in Philadelphia, your local AIA chapter, your local ASLA chapter, or your local APA/AICP chapter.

Team members fall into three possible categories: primary registrants (one of whom will be the contact), advisors, and consultants. Awards will be given to primary registrants, but all team members will be acknowledged in publications and exhibitions.

Primary Registrants: The main team members, responsible for the design.

Advisor: Advisors may be faculty and/or practicing professionals who are graduates of one of the accredited programs listed above. Advisors provide technical and design advice to their team.

Consultant(s): Consultants are optional team members who provide consultation or assistance to the primary registrants (for example rendering assistance or engineering advice), but are not responsible for the design.

To better formulate creative solutions to the multi-faceted issue of vacancy in Philadelphia, the competition sponsors encourage multidisciplinary teams. Members could include geographers, botanists, sculptors, sociologists, engineers, ecologists, zoologists, geologists, historians, agronomists, photographers, horticulturists, folklorists, gardeners, hydrologists, historians, artists, etc.

The competition is open to all individuals, teams, and firms from around the world with the following exceptions and qualifications:

- The trustees and employees (and immediate family members of the trustees and employees) of Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture, the City Parks Association of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and the Reinvestment Fund Inc. are not eligible to enter as primary registrants, advisors, or consultants.
- Only one entry per registration will be accepted. Entrants who wish to submit more than one project must register for each scheme they intend to enter by the registration deadline.

The competition is anonymous and the jury will not be informed of any aspect of the authorship of any submission.

Registration

Entrants are required to register for the competition prior to submitting their entries. Registration is \$150 USD (registration is \$180 USD after 5:00 pm October 7). Registration will be available until 5:00 pm Monday November 14. Registered entrants will receive access to the password-protected *Download Images* page.

This fee includes registration fee in addition to high-quality printing, mounting, and lamination of submitted digital boards. To ensure fair evaluation of all boards, to eliminate shipping damage, and to eliminate printing and postage fees for entrants, all entrants must submit digital files. Van Alen Institute will be responsible for printing, mounting, and laminating all submitted boards. All files will be professionally printed as high-quality (200 dpi) prints, laminated, and mounted on 1/4" Gator board.

Also note that there is no additional print information—all information is available online.

Entrants can only register online, and can pay by credit or debit card via a secure system. Upon completion of online registration and payment, entrants will receive their registration confirmation and registration ID number, as well as access to downloadable images.

All payments are final. The competition will not be able to offer refunds for registrants who do not submit an entry.

Late Registration

After 5:00 pm Friday October 7, 2005 the registration fee will be increased to \$180 USD.

Submission requirements

Deadline: All submissions must be received online no later than 5:00 pm Friday January 6, 2006. Submissions may NOT be delivered in person or by mail. See below for format requirements.

Late Submissions: Submissions uploaded after 5:00 pm on Friday, January 6, 2005 will be considered late entries and will be deleted without being viewed.

Confirmation: Entrants will receive an automatic email confirmation upon receipt of both registration and payment.

Submission Format Requirements

Please read all submission requirements carefully. Files that do not meet the requirements will be rejected. No resubmissions will be allowed after the deadline has passed. If you have any questions, you may submit them online until 5pm November 14, 2005. Answers will be posted on this website.

Anonymity: The submission shall have no name or mark that could serve as a means of identifying the project, other than the registration number, which entrants will receive by email after completing the registration process (including payment).

Text: A text statement of no more than 250 words explaining the project's concept, design intent, and phasing should be included on board A, as well as in a separate Microsoft Word compatible (.doc) file.

Drawings: Plans, sections, and perspective views are suggested, but the scale of each is left up to the entrants. Additional drawings may be included if they will further explain your project.

Each team shall submit two boards, A and B, explaining their project. Board A must include a text statement of no more than 250 words on the board itself (the same text should be saved as a Microsoft Word compatible file). The boards must be uploaded to the competition website in both of the following formats:

Two 30" x 40" PDF files, 200 dpi, 5MB maximum size for each file
(primary files for printing boards)

Two 600 x 800 pixel JPEG files, 72 dpi, 150K maximum size for each file
(web-ready files for online exhibition)

In addition, the following two files are also required:

One 100 x 100 pixel JPEG file, 72 dpi, 20K max size
(image detail of your choice from either board for online thumbnail)

One Microsoft Word compatible (.doc) file containing the same project description text (250 words or less) as the first board

All files must be in **LANDSCAPE** format (long side horizontal, short side vertical). All files must be named with the registration number you received when you submitted your registration, followed by an underscore and 01, 02, etc. For example, the files for registrant 0000 would be called:

Board A: 0000_A.pdf (large file), 0000_A.jpg (small file for web)

Board B: 0000_B.pdf (large file), 0000_B.jpg (small file for web)

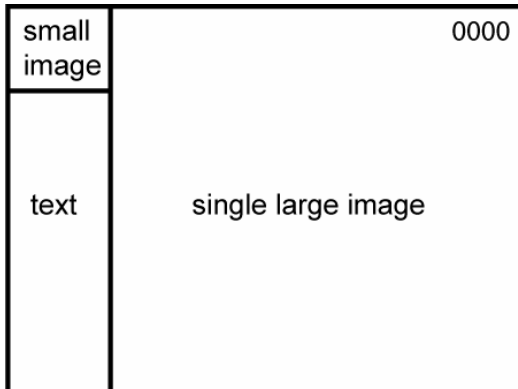
Other: 0000_thumb.jpg, 0000.doc

Each PDF file must include the entrant's registration number.

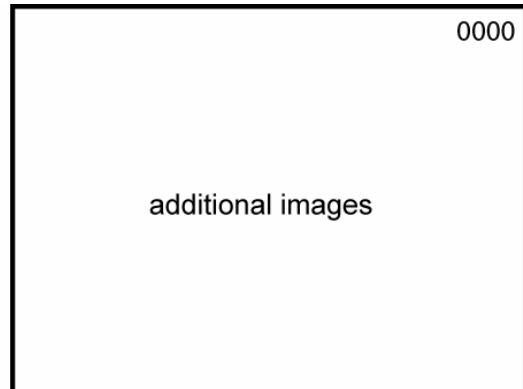
For PDF files, graphics should be set to 200 dpi/ppi. If printing to PDF from Illustrator, for example, choose Effect → Document Raster Effects Settings → Resolution → Other: 200 ppi. Note that to meet the file size requirements you may have to adjust your PDF software compression settings.

Layout: Two 30" x 40" landscape boards are required. Each board must include the entrant's registration number in the upper right hand corner in either 36 point plain black text on a white background or 36 point plain white text on a black background.

Board A must include the project description text (the same text will also be submitted separately as a Microsoft Word compatible .doc file), a small diagram, plan, or sketch to place the project in context, and a single large image that conveys the intent of the project. The suggested layout for this board is: large image on the right, text at the bottom of an 8" column on the left, and an overview, sketch, or diagram in the top of the 8" column on the left (above the text).



suggested layout for board A



suggested layout for board B

Board B should contain whatever additional drawings, diagrams, or sketches are necessary to further explain the project.

Rights

Finalists: in the first phase of the competition, up to five finalist teams will receive \$5,000 each to continue on to the next phase of the competition, *Reconnecting the Lots*.

Public Exhibition and Copyright: Van Alen Institute and the CPA shall retain ownership of all prize-winning design submissions. Van Alen Institute plans to hold both an online and a gallery exhibition of work submitted in the competition following the jury. In entering the design competition, entrants grant Van Alen Institute and the City Parks Association unrestricted license to exercise the entrants' rights regarding their design submissions, including, but not limited to,

reproduction, preparation of derivative works, distribution of copies of the design submission, and the right to authorize such use by others.

Announcement, Displays, and Publication of Results: When entering the competition, the registrant and all team members recognize the competition's program as the intellectual property of Van Alen Institute and City Parks Association and **agree to credit the two organizations by name in any subsequent exhibition or publication of the project.** Entrants will be credited on all online and print material published by the organizers of the competition.

Awards

In the first phase of the competition, up to five finalist teams will receive \$5,000 each and the opportunity to continue on to the second phase.

FAQ

Questions must be submitted before 5:00 pm Monday November 14, 2005. Answers will be posted on the Frequently Asked Questions page. We regret that we cannot reply individually.

Please check that your question is not already answered before submitting.

Registration

Registration will be available online beginning Wednesday September 7, 2005.

Registration ends Monday November 14, 2005.

The registration fee is \$150 USD (late registration, after 5:00 pm Friday October 7, 2005, is \$180 USD). The registration fee includes high-quality printing, mounting, and lamination of submitted digital boards.

Jury

The jury will include:

Diana Balmori

Landscape architect
Principal, Balmori Associates

James Corner

Founder and Director, Field Operations
Chair and Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning,
University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Design

Jerold Kayden

Professor, Co-Chair, and Program Director, GSD Department of Urban Planning

Mary Miss

Sculptor, photographer, and environmental artist

Anne Spirn

Professor of Landscape Architecture, MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Cathy Weiss

Executive Director, Claneil Foundation

Bios and additional jurors will be announced soon.

Project Team

Project Sponsor

City Parks Association of Philadelphia

City Parks Association stimulates visionary thinking about natural resources and open space in the urban community. From its founding in 1888, City Parks Association has encouraged the establishment and maintenance of public parks and open spaces in the city of Philadelphia. City Parks' programs foster ongoing dialogue and collaborative action among people committed to the stewardship of our city's natural resources.

www.cityparksphila.org

Project Partners

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is a not-for-profit membership organization founded in 1827 to motivate people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture. Programs of the PHS include the annual Philadelphia Flower Show, the Philadelphia Green program, and the McLean Library. www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org

Pennsylvania Environmental Council

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council improves quality of life for all Pennsylvanians by enhancing the Commonwealth's natural and built environments by integrating advocacy, education and implementation of community and regional action projects. The Council values reasoned and long-term approaches that include the interests of all stakeholders to accomplish its goals. www.pecpa.org

The Reinvestment Fund

The Reinvestment Fund Inc. builds wealth and opportunity for low-wealth communities and low- and moderate-income individuals through the promotion of socially and environmentally responsible development. TRF makes loans, equity investments, and grants to affordable housing, small business, community services, commercial real estate, workforce development, and energy conservation projects; provides relevant and high quality research, information and policy ideas to government, nonprofit institutions, and private sector partners; and builds public and private partnerships and systems that connect low-wealth people and places with opportunity, information, and resources. www.trfund.com

Competition Advisor

(Development & Management)

Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture

Van Alen Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving design in the public realm through a program of exhibitions, competitions, publications, workshops, and forums, and is an advocate for active and accessible waterfronts. Founded in 1894 as the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects, the Institute was renamed in 1996 after William Van Alen, the architect of the Chrysler Building and its largest benefactor, and reorganized to focus on the public realm. Based in New York, the Institute's projects initiate interdisciplinary and international collaborations between practitioners, policymakers, students, educators, and community leaders. www.vanalen.org

Project Funding

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The City of Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development

The Claneil Foundation

The National Endowment for the Arts

The Samuel S. Fels Fund

Competition Credits

Competition Manager: Jonathan Cohen-Litant, Van Alen Institute

Website Design: Jonathan Cohen-Litant, Kirsten Hively, and Marcus Woollen, Van Alen Institute; Doug Meehan, CPA

Aerial Photography: Jonathan Cohen-Litant

Maps: Vicky Tam, Cartographic Modeling Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania

Additional Photography: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society; Students from Gideon Elementary School and Vare Middle School in Philadelphia, under the direction of Tory Read

Selected Bibliography

Books

- Anderson, Elijah. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.
- Nash, Gary B. *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991 (reprint).
- Stevick, Philip. *Imagining Philadelphia: Travelers' Views of the City from 1800 to the Present*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.
- Alotta, Roberta. *Mermaids, Monasteries, Cherokees and Custer*. Santa Monica: Bonus Books, 1990.
- Nese, Jon M. and G. Schwartz. *Philadelphia Area Weather Book*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005.
- Kavanagh, James. *Philadelphia Birds*. Phoenix, AZ: Waterford Press, 2001.
- Colimore, Edward. *The Philadelphia Inquirer's Guide to Historic Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: Camino Books, 2003.
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- Lapsansky, Emma Jones and Anne A. Verplanck (Eds). *Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections On a Quaker Ethic in American Design*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Rockland, Michael Aaron. *Snowshoeing Through Sewers: Adventures in New York City, New Jersey, and Philadelphia*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

Reports

- www.philaplanning.org/plans/areaplans/areaplans.html
Reports on neighborhood blight and redevelopment by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- www.philaplanning.org/plans/vls.pdf
Vacant Land in Philadelphia, a 1995 report by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- www.lgean.org/documents/Revitalization%20of%20Vacant%20Properties.pdf
The Revitalization of Vacant Properties, a report by the International City/County Management Association
- www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/uscities/pdf/philadelphia.pdf
The National Resources Defense Council's 2003 report on pollution in Philadelphia's drinking water
- www.housingalliancePA.org/Issues/Issues_Home.htm#Reclaiming%20Abandoned%20PA
The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania's report and action guide for vacancy in Pennsylvania

Websites

The City of Philadelphia and Its Neighborhoods

- www.phila.gov
The official website of the City of Philadelphia includes links to agencies, officials, and policy documents
- www.pasda.psu.edu/
Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access website with Pennsylvania GIS information, including online GIS tutorials
- www.cml.upenn.edu/
The cartographic Modeling Lab at the University of Pennsylvania
- <http://citymaps.phila.gov>
Maps and photographs from the city of Philadelphia, including aerial photos, zoning maps, and a searchable photo archive
- www.ushistory.org/philadelphia/
Historical background on Philadelphia from the Independence Hall Association in Philadelphia
- www.pbs.org/philadiary/
The website companion to the PBS film "Philadelphia Diary" based on interviews with Philadelphia residents
- www.epa.gov/epahome/commsearch.htm
The EPA website, with a searchable "EnviroMapper" and "Envirofacts," as well as watershed information

Vacancy and Vacancy Initiatives in Philadelphia

- www.cml.upenn.edu/nbase
Philadelphia NIS NeighborhoodBase, with GIS maps and charts of Philadelphia neighborhoods
- www.philaplanning.org/plans/areaplans/areaplans.html
Blight and redevelopment plan information from the Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- www.phila.gov/nti
The City of Philadelphia's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NIS), lead by Mayor John Street

Philadelphia's Natural Resources

- www.phila.gov/fairpark
Philadelphia's city parks system
- www.fow.org/park/park.htm
Friends of the Wissahickon website, with information on the geology, soils, vegetation, wildlife habitats, and water quality of this valley in Fairmount Park
- www.nlreep.org/amy's.htm
Downloadable PDF brochures on Philadelphia's native flora
- www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/bflyusa/chklist/states/counties/pa_101.htm
Philadelphia's butterflies, from the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center of the US Geological Survey
- www.fow.org/download/checklistofthebirds.pdf
PDF brochure on birds found in Wissahickon Valley
- <http://philadelphia.extension.psu.edu>
Penn State Extension for Philadelphia, with information on soil testing, plant cultivation, and the Penn State Urban Gardening Program