

Email comments received at SRPBridge@hntb.com

I think the green path is the only one to pick. The garden is only used 5 months a year by a limited number of people and never open to the public. I want to know why their voice carries so much weight over all of the other people who use the rest of the park. The squared off garden would make the rest of the park safer by eliminating those little dark areas outside the garden.

I hate the red path because it makes the dog run area unsafe and would be a place for the homeless and drug dealers to hang out.

I don't like yellow path because it blocks the view of the river

When I go to Cape Cod in the summer, I enjoy the bike trails through the National Seashore. At several points along the way there are small underpasses for the roadway above. Is this a possibility for the railroad crossing? It would seem a lot easier than building something that has to crossover 3x as much height. The underpasses could be made 10 or 12 feet.

I think the yellow design is the least intrusive, doesn't take anything away from various parties.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to voice my opinion of the 3 SRP bridge options even though I couldn't be at your meeting on Nov. 4th.

Judging by your preliminary drawings, I think the Green path along the garden border and disgoring onto 25th St. is the best option. It would keep bikes away from the playground where they are not allowed due to safety hazard to young children. It might also be easiest to block access underneath this bridge so it will not be another attraction to criminals and the homeless. Additionally, if the garden is squared off it could actually increase the number of garden plots and eliminate the dog leg design along the garden that was hastily added in the '80's due to complaints by the city Managing Director and which is unlighted and attracts drug users, etc. Win-win.

Even though this was ruled out by the legal agreement, I think it is clearly worthwhile for you at least to evaluate an option [that uses CSX ROW below the Locust St. donut and lands back at the crossing, negating the need to connect to the mixed-use Schuylkill River Park], from the physical feasibility perspective.

The proposed bridge which curves is the most functional – right angles create congestion.

My preference would be to delay the crossing until the South St. bridge is completed and then make a connection there. I see no reason for additional crossings over. However, if delay is not an option then I support the shortest and simplest option (the one through the garden).

I think a connector bridge is an unfortunate expenditure of \$ that could be used to extend the trail south or for other important uses. I do not see why, if a train is blocking the Locust Street entrance to the path, people can not turn around and go back to the 1st appropriate available entrance...that's what we do now all the time and it works fine. An appropriate sign can be posted to this affect and it's completely reasonable.

Hello there,

Are any or all of these connector bridge models going to affect the dog park? It looks like at least two of them would go right through (it's hard to see if they are above it, next to it, or through it) the current dog park location. I couldn't imagine that they would take the dog park away, but I figured I'd ask if there were any plans to change it.

What a choice! I really like the circular (red) design best, but worry about security to the West of the bowl. Either of the other two is acceptable, with yellow slightly favored.

My thanks for the presentation today and your generally successful efforts to both present your reasoning and keep the passions within bounds.

Since you didn't ask for signatures on the assessment forms you won't be able to discount the one I handed in, but my thoughts after the meeting have led me to change my opinion - hence this EMail.

On that assessment I ranked the "northern" scheme and the "bowl" scheme as having good aspects. The "volleyball court" scheme received no ranking. After consideration I now would give that one definite preference to either of the other two schemes. My reasoning is as follows:

- A late answer confirmed my growing suspicion that the expected traffic will be very, very light if CSX holds its promise not to park trains blocking Locust St.

- That being said I believe the best answer is NO bridge - it's a waste of money.

- On the assumption that the best answer isn't legally acceptable, the next best is for the scheme with the least impact on the park.

- I see the potential impact on the park of the schemes as being in three areas: security, shading, traffic.
 - Traffic we've already eliminated - there will be minimal impact from debouching deep in the park.
 - Shading was inadequately addressed at the meeting - you could and should have presented studies evaluating it, particularly for the gardens - I teach my Sophomores a tool to do a basic study (Sketchup) quite simply
 - Security is highly likely to be a disaster for the "bowl" plan because mutual visual surveillance will be greatly reduced. Again a few Sketchup models could have addressed this issue quite readily.

 - For me that leaves the "northern" and the "volleyball" court as contending alternatives.

 - If, as some implied, it might be possible to build the "northern" ramp in the adjacent parking lot I would accept that.

 - Assuming that cannot happen for either time or money reasons, the "volleyball court" scheme gets my vote as being the least intrusive, though if I were a member of the garden community I'd want to see the shade and shadow studies to understand its effect on the western end of the gardens.
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I am writing to express my endorsement of the yellow design for the pedestrian bridge linking 25th Street and Schuylkill Banks, and opposition to the red and green designs.

From talking to Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC) and HNTB representatives at today's meeting, it is clear that no one is aware of the significance of the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden (SRPCG).

The Garden was an unprecedented gift from the City of Philadelphia to the community that has never been repeated, and probably never will be. Built at a cost of over \$630,000 in the mid '80s (over \$1.1 million when adjusted for inflation), it has won the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Annual City Garden Contest numerous times.

The Garden's most recent award was bestowed by the Smithsonian Institution. In 2006, due to being considered an outstanding American garden, the Smithsonian photographed and documented the SRPCG each season of the year for its Archives of American Gardens so that the Garden's beauty would be preserved for future generations.

Any alteration to the Garden would fundamentally change it, ruining over 20 years of work that has gone into it by Center City West residents to make it a prize winning garden, tourist attraction, and focal point for the community. They'll never be anything like it built in the City, and few other American cities are lucky to have something similar. The Garden needs to be preserved, not demolished.

I object to the red bridge since it would cut the Schuylkill River Park in half. The Park is the largest piece of open space in Center City; it should remain that way. Not only would it eliminate street level sight lines that currently allow people to look up and down the river, and at the sunset, but the bridge would eliminate full views of the park which are important for safety reasons.

If they yellow bridge were not to result in the loss of garden plots, and stay outside of the Garden fence, it would make the most sense, especially since it has little impact on the Park.

The issue of speeding bicyclists was frequently raised by community members at the meeting; I believe that the yellow bridge would best deal with this. The green bridge is highly problematic in this regard since it would be placing an inclined ramp that empties into the 25th St. sidewalk which is heavily used by pedestrians. The red bridge isn't much better since it empties into the entrance of the park which also sees a lot of foot traffic. The 90 degree bend in the yellow bridge would force cyclists to come to a near complete stop. A sculpture could be placed at the mouth of the bridge which would force them to come to another stop when exiting the bridge.

There are also safety benefits of the yellow bridge. Having lived a block from the Park for over 24 years, crime, prostitution and the homeless have long been problems in the Park. Increasing foot traffic in the Park at dusk and dawn could help push the homeless and criminals out of the Park long term. As mentioned before, the red bridge eliminates an open view of the park that is important for safety.

Lastly, as a member of Center City Residents Association (CCRA) and the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden, I found that the repeated claims during the 11/4/07 town hall meeting that the Center City West community was involved in the design process was disingenuous at best. CCRA was never included in the process, despite having asked in letters dated 12/5/06 and 8/11/07, as well as through phone calls to your office. The Garden was also never consulted even though one of the bridges would go right through it. You should immediately hold a meeting with representatives of the Garden and CCRA to get their input on the bridge so that the whole community is actually included in the design process.

I had the pleasure of seeing the different options that you presented yesterday, and I spoke then FOR a change for the better even though many people are very reluctant to any kind of change.

In my opinion the only viable solution, from the ones that you presented, is the red option (NO CORNERS!!!!!!), but considering the number of active users of the river bank, I would like to point some things out:

Good

- entrance to the park without disturbance to the park users by bicyclists, wheel chair users and runners
 - no use of corners in the design which are VERY difficult to maneuver when a person is on wheels (especially going down) and may lead to accidents otherwise
 - sloping landscape can be used in the winter for sledding as long as the inner side of the curve side is not planted as a flower bed. The outer side could be planted.
 - community gardens are not disturbed
 - visually very pleasant and a more organic approach to the landscape without the "add on" look
 - even though it is not one of my priorities the overlook opportunity may be beautiful

Bad

- the ramp should extend slightly longer at the merge with the river to accommodate a gentler "landing or rest" at the entrance of the park to allow people on wheels to have an easier break. This will also allow for a lower slope in the park reducing the security/safety concerns.
 - the ramp should have a wider mouth or entrance and narrow as it goes up
 - tunnel or underpass is too narrow and therefore a security issue for park users. That should be much wider at park level with a longer bridge span

I prefer the Yellow path, because it provides a direct way from the south without altering the existing park very much and with no switchbacks. Access from the north seems like less of an issue since the adjacent communities already have a number of access points - i.e. Walnut, Chestnut, Market and, I assume Cherry.

The whole concept of the additional connector bridge seems like an incredible waste of money and space when there are already two existing ramps at Market and Chestnut Streets.

If the money must be spent why not consider the option of a tunnel. A tunnel under the racks need only be enclosed for the portion directly under the train tracks. This will leave plenty of room for an easy grade transition in the space currently used to cross the tracks. With respect to the Federally mandated grade for handicapped this can be accomplished by using a slighter grade on each side of the tunnel. So the center would be dug to the depth needed for bicycles and pedestrians while the side would be dug to the depth required for wheelchairs.

Yes I have heard the argument; "What about drainage" I am not an engineer so I can only suggest you might want to contact the Dutch. You may or not know that significant portions of Holland are below sea. It's transportation system is heavily dependent on bicycles and trains. As a result the country is crisscrossed with pedestrian/bicycle/handicapped tunnels under train lines.

I do not remember any mention of tunnels at the meetings or in anything I have read. Was this every seriously considered or addressed?

I think you should talk with Carl Dranoff about using a slice of his parking lot for the bridge. He has supposedly done so much for the city with the development of Symphony House and his large donation to the Suzanne Roberts Theater. Maybe he could do a little more and give up 10 parking spaces to save the Schuylkill River Park from an intrusive bridge.

Despite my comments, I think you guys are doing a great job and the presentation on November 4 was very good. I am sorry that you are being harassed so much, but the park is very important to us.

What ever alignment and configuration is chosen, it should take into account the proposed pedestrian bridge across the Schuylkill that UPENN is proposing as it expands eastward and develops the postal lands. These plans should "fit" together!

In my opinion, option 3, the curved ramp, is the best. Option 2, straight ramp, is second. Option 1, switchback, is the least attractive.

regarding the designs for the CSX PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE in the Schuylkill River Park:

We wish to register our extreme distress with the options (particularly the red and green) that would affect the park and Community Garden to such a great extent.

We've lived in this community for 20 years, and enjoyed all the resources --park, garden, and the newer walking path. Our involvement with the Community Garden is longstanding --- the changes necessitated by the Green Option are breathtaking in the amount of damage they would cause.

The unique nature of this garden, and its value, seems too obvious to need expounding on ...it's recent inclusion in the Smithsonian's outstanding American Gardens speaks to that.

One of its unique features is its relationship to the park and the larger community. The outside borders exist, not for the plot holders, but to all who use the park. The garden itself was designed, and continues to be used, by the community as a whole ... the benches and central open area (the one that would be destroyed as part of the Green Plan) are there for strolling and socializing, for the enjoyment of all.

What is NOT obvious is the extreme violence that the Green bridge plan would do to the

garden. Not only would it mean losing 10-15% of the existing plots, but the suggested proposals for finding replacement land (destroying the central fountain/cistern; taking space from the dog park (what happens to the dog park then?) would completely destroy the integrity of a very carefully designed space. The sketches of the 3 options look innocuous, and are very misleading.

Finally, we understand that no community input has been allowed, despite 2 written attempts on the part of CCRA. This is outrageous and simply unacceptable.
