

**PHILADELPHIA PARKS AND RECREATION  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET TESTIMONY  
APRIL 19, 2023**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good Morning, President Clarke, and Members of City Council. I am Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner. Joining me today are Aparna Palantino, Deputy Commissioner for Capital Infrastructure and Natural Lands Management and Marissa Washington, Deputy Commissioner of Administration. I am pleased to provide testimony on Philadelphia Parks and Recreation's Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget.

**DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS**

**Mission:** The people of Philadelphia own a treasure of facilities and resources that they have entrusted to Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR) to manage democratically, equitably, and sustainably. PPR activates and stewards those treasures with programs and services that contribute to the health, wellness, and prosperity of all.

**Plans for Fiscal Year 2024:**

**Summer 2023**

We continue to plan for a summer season with robust program offerings and services. We have been actively planning for a full summer pool and camp season. Beginning in January, we kicked off a robust recruitment process to screen, certify, and hire hundreds of aquatics staff including lifeguards. In support of these efforts, this February we hosted the first ever Philly Phreeze pool plunge, a one-day pool fundraiser that has raised nearly \$70,000 from over 800 donors in support of our lifeguard recruitment initiative and hiring bonuses.

We are also preparing for summer camps, Playstreets and Kensington activations, which provide high-quality experiences to support working families and youth while also providing meals to up to 20,000 youth each day. Working across City agencies and community partners, PPR will continue to provide safe and fun programming to thousands of Kensington families through the PlayParks initiative. PlayParks provided a summer camp like experience at three Kensington parks. Over the course of six months, this collaborative effort supported more than 60 park activations and events across these Kensington public spaces. With support from the William Penn Foundation and other external partners, PPR continues to enhance programs to make them relevant and accessible to all. This includes supporting literacy and playful learning tools to enhance summer programming at camps and PlayStreets.

**Weekend Hours**

Beginning last year, PPR opened 66 recreation centers, with gyms, for weekend programming. This year we will continue to open nearly 100 recreation centers for Saturday and Sunday programming with the goal of providing safe and welcoming spaces for youth and teens to recreate during out of school time hours, across all neighborhoods.

**Making Space**

With support from the Knight Foundation and in partnership with the Commerce Department and Rec Philly, we recently announced the ten finalists for Making Space - PPR's entrepreneur in residence program.

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These ten finalists include local creatives, makers, entrepreneurs, and are all persons of color. They were selected from an open call of 600 applications. They will receive technical assistance from Rec Philly to help support their business idea and seed capital from the Knight Foundation. Three to four winners will receive an invitation to host their business at a rec center in exchange for free public programming and youth/teen mentoring opportunities.

### **Philly Tree & Urban Agriculture Plans**

This year PPR will launch two, ten-year strategic plans. The Philly Tree Plan launched in February will begin to implement short- and medium-term recommendations to support the equitable growth and care of Philadelphia's urban forest for the health of all city residents, including transitioning to a proactive rather than reactive public tree planting and maintenance cycle. The goal, over time, is to increase the health and size of the street tree portion of the city's canopy and urban forest. Additionally, PPR is leading a citywide partnership to introduce Philadelphia's first-ever urban agriculture plan, to uplift Philadelphia's rich history of urban farming and gardening, and clearly define the resources, policies, processes, and programs necessary to sustain them into the future.

**BUDGET SUMMARY & OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS**

<b>Staff Demographics Summary (as of December 2022)</b>				
	Total	Minority	White	Female
Number of Full-Time Staff	651	342	309	187
Number of Exempt Staff	43	21	22	25
Number of Executive Staff (deputy level and above)	7	2	5	4
Average Salary, Full-Time Staff	\$55,578	\$54,439	\$64,785	\$67,089
Average Salary, Exempt Staff	\$84,332	\$73,022	\$95,128	\$83,911
Average Salary, Executive Staff	\$130,797	\$124,913	\$133,151	\$136,502
Median Salary, Full-Time Staff	\$53,412	\$49,515	\$63,753	\$64,519
Median Salary, Exempt Staff	\$82,600	\$70,000	\$102,770	\$80,535
Median Salary, Executive Staff	\$124,469	\$124,913	\$129,300	\$124,913

<b>Employment Levels (as of December 2022)</b>		
	Budgeted	Filled
Number of Full-Time Positions	827	651
Number of Part-Time Positions	90	64
Number of Exempt Positions	46	43

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Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)	7	7
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$55,676	\$55,578
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions	\$52,069	\$53,412

<b>General Fund Financial Summary by Class</b>						
	FY22 Original Appropriations	FY22 Actual Obligations	FY23 Original Appropriations	FY23 Estimated Obligations	FY24 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY24-FY23
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$52,352,786	\$51,586,651	\$61,031,936	\$59,175,651	\$65,706,117	\$6,530,466
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$5,659,542	\$6,041,127	\$7,674,442	\$8,350,442	\$7,673,442	(\$677,000)
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$2,552,225	\$2,701,834	\$2,930,025	\$4,137,025	\$3,538,538	(\$598,487)
Class 500 - Contributions	\$2,000,000	\$5,719,817	\$1,500,000	\$3,350,000	\$1,500,000	(\$1,850,000)
	<b>\$62,564,553</b>	<b>\$66,049,429</b>	<b>\$73,136,403</b>	<b>\$75,013,118</b>	<b>\$78,418,097</b>	<b>\$3,404,979</b>

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<b>Contracts Summary (Professional Services only)</b>						
	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY23 YTD (Q1 & Q2)	FY24 Projected
Total amount of contracts	\$5,304,936	\$2,259,468	\$1,521,000	\$3,266,933	\$2,985,500	\$1,905,000
Total amount to M/W/DSBE	\$4,519,074	\$967,500	\$406,000	\$1,635,000	\$1,376,746	\$750,000
Participation Rate	85%	43%	27%	50%	46%	39%

<b>Total M/W/DSBE Contract Participation Goal (Public Works; Services, Supplies &amp; Equipment; and Professional Services combined)</b>			
	FY22	FY23	FY24 Projected
M/W/DSBE Contract Participation Goal	22%	35%	35%

## **PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW**

### **Proposed Funding Request:**

The proposed Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund budget totals \$78,418,097, an increase of \$3,404,979 over Fiscal Year 2023 estimated obligation levels. This increase is primarily due to the current expansion of programming and community investment.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$65,706,117 in Class 100, a \$6,530,466 increase over FY23. This funding will support the department's 945 full-time positions, 80 part-time positions, and over 1,500 seasonal positions. These positions will support extended facility hours and increased management of our natural resources.
- \$7,673,442 in Class 200, a \$677,000 decrease from FY23. The decrease is due to one-time funding in the mid-year transfer to cover increase costs of services realized in FY23. This funding will support contracts and professional services. These services are necessary for the maintenance and management of over 10,000 acres of public land and hundreds of facilities and amenities that see millions of visits a year.
- \$3,538,538 in Class 300/400, a \$598,487 decrease from FY23. The decrease is due to one-time funding in the FY23 Fall mid-year transfer to cover contract costs of summer meal/afterschool snacks and other supplies. This funding will provide resources for staff to complete their assignments in the care and maintenance of public spaces and facilities throughout the city of Philadelphia.
- \$1,500,000 in Class 500, a \$1,850,000 decrease from FY23. The decrease is due to a one-time funding in the mid-year transfer. This funding through the Philadelphia Activities Fund will assist local communities in providing activities for youth, seniors, and special populations.

**STAFFING LEVELS**










The department is requesting 945 budgeted positions for FY24, an increase of 158 positions over FY23.

The increase is attributed to additional funding received for extending facility hours, continued implementation of staff realignment known as Goal 3 and increased management of facilities and natural resources. This investment helps the department expand programs, provide higher quality services and increases program staff safety.

**NEW HIRES**

New Hires (from 7/1/2022 to December 2022)	
	Total Number of New Hires
Black or African American	14
White	19
Other	1
Total	34






**PERFORMANCE, CHALLENGES, AND INITIATIVES**

Measure	 FY22 ACTUAL	 FY23 TARGET	 FY24 TARGET	 MAYORAL PRIORITY
Number of programs	2,081	2,500	3,000	
Number of unique individuals who attended programs	99,716	115,000	130,000	
Total visits (in millions)	6.0	7.0	7.0	
Program participation rate	77.8%	80.0%	83.0%	
Percent change in pool visits compared to FY20 (pre-COVID)	-59.4%	72.0%	21.7%	



**FY24 STRATEGIC GOALS**

- PPR will open recreation centers for Saturday and Sunday programming with the goal of providing safe and welcoming spaces for youth and teens to recreate during out of school time hours, in all neighborhoods.
- PPR staff will lead over 2,750 programs and engage 130,000 participants.
- PPR will open all available pools, providing swim lessons for all PPR camps and the public twice weekly.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

Measure	 FY22 ACTUAL	 FY23 TARGET	 FY24 TARGET	 MAYORAL PRIORITY
New trees planted	3,221	3,000	3,200	
Percent of 311 requests	67.7%	60.0%	69.0%	











<b>closed that meet standard</b>				
<b>Percent of Perform requests closed that meet standard</b>	<b>66.4%</b>	<b>68.0%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	

**FY24 STRATEGIC GOALS**

- PPR will continue to coordinate with Rebuild on the implementation of projects using the PPR Capital team, Special Projects team, the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, and the project users for the selected sites.
- PPR will continue to implement life safety and expand security systems across sites.
- PPR will create GIS software to record information pertaining to completed and prospective capital projects, including various building and site improvements, streambank restoration, bridge stabilization, and stormwater management. This will be used as a tool to inform internal PPR staff and external public users, via website, on the status of improvements and investments being made.
- PPR will continue to implement recommendations of the Philly Tree Plan, including hiring staff in the Urban Forestry Division to complete critical public tree maintenance and communication with residents, targeted tree planting in communities that are most in need of increased tree canopy, and restoration and maintenance of our forested natural areas.
- Continue to close the gap on the tree maintenance backlog, work toward increasing capacity to perform maintenance on more street trees per year, and continue to plant additional street trees to help increase the city's tree canopy, per Philly Tree Plan recommendations.
- Continue to expand the public-private food composting partnership with the goal of adding an additional 25 recreation centers, educating 25 staff members, and conducting 50 training sessions for youth and staff each year.
- Working with the approved concessionaires, commence operation of a lumber yard at the Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center, upcycling urban wood from mulch to usable lumber.
- Work closely with other City departments and external agencies to address illegal dumping in parks, including installing cameras in key areas to identify offenders.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**







<b>Measure</b>	 <b>FY22 ACTUAL</b>	 <b>FY23 TARGET</b>	 <b>FY24 TARGET</b>	 <b>MAYORAL PRIORITY</b>
<b>Percent increase in concessions revenue</b>	<b>66.0%</b>	<b>-4.0%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	
<b>Percent increase in volunteer participation</b>	<b>228%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>10%</b>	

				
<b>Percent of permit holder Net Promoter Score survey respondents who are detractors</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	
<b>Total Engagement</b>	<b>104,634</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	

**FY24 STRATEGIC GOALS**

- Inclusion Plan - Enhances capacity and connection across PPR’s system to provide optimal service and increase participation for individuals with disabilities and the neurodiverse. PPR will shift from a model of isolation to inclusion supporting programs and amenities to ensure all Philadelphians feel welcome in recreation centers.
- Explore innovative ways to bring people into public spaces and make them more relevant to new and existing users by opening these spaces for social enterprises and eSports. Through leveraging external resources and partnerships, PPR will explore advancing resident-led models to reimagine underutilized space in recreation centers, increasing exposure to and knowledge of the entrepreneurial and eSports communities and industry. With support from the Knight Foundation and in partnership with the Department of Commerce and Rec Philly, Making Space—PPR’s entrepreneur in residence program—accepted 600 applications from local creatives, makers, and entrepreneurs. Ten finalists were announced, finalists include local creatives, makers, entrepreneurs, and are all persons of color. They will receive technical assistance from Rec Philly to help support their business idea and seed capital from the Knight Foundation. Three to four winners will receive an invitation to host their business at a rec center in exchange for free public programming and youth/teen mentoring opportunities..
- Leverage Rebuild’s physical capital investment to make human capital investments in volunteer and community groups (Friend Groups and Advisory Council) to engage more deeply with residents, enhance staff engagement capacity, support higher quality programs and services, and better serve communities in need.
- Support planning and investments in marquee public spaces like FDR Park, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and the Centennial District by providing spaces where neighbors can come together and serve as a model for community engagement and economic development.

EXECUTIVE, ADMINISTRATION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Measure	 FY22 ACTUAL	 FY23 TARGET	 FY24 TARGET	 MAYORAL PRIORITY
Percentage of permanent staff attending trainings	94%	95%	95%	
Net hires (full and part-time)	-28	28	45	

**FY24 STRATEGIC GOALS**

- PPR will maintain hiring strategies within each division and program to reduce vacancies due to funding increase in FY23 and FY24 and national labor challenges.
- Continue to expand language access funding and support for growing immigrant communities to ensure youth have equal access to programming and activities across the city.
- Increase training and professional development opportunities for all staff through in-house training and continued use of LMS and local partners.

**OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS**

**Federal and State (Where Applicable)**

The Department of Parks and Recreation receives federal/state funding through the Afterschool Snack program, which offers reimbursement to eligible organizations to help schools serve health snacks to children in after-school activities, the Phila-A-Job II Work Experience, a federal grant program funded through the Philadelphia Youth Network, and the Summer Food Service Program, which provides nutritious meals to low-income children.

**CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE**

M/W/DSBE Participation on Large Professional Services Contracts											
Top Five Largest Contracts, FY23											
Vendor Name	Service Provided	Dollar Amount of Contract	RFP Issue Date	Contract Start Date	Ranges in RFP	% of M/W/DSBE Participation Achieved	\$ Value of M/W/DSBE Participation	Total % Participation - All DSBEs	Total \$ Value Participation - All DSBEs	Local Business (principal place of business located within City limits) [yes / no]	Waiver for Living Wage Compliance? [yes / no]
Platinum Productions, LLC	2220712- Artist Performer	\$210,000	Exempt from Posting (Entertainment)	6/14/2023	MBE: NA	100%	\$210,000	0%	\$0		
					WBE:	0%	\$0				
					DSBE:	0%	\$0				
Synergetic Sound & Lighting	2220684- Sound Consultant Services	\$185,000	2/23/2022	5/30/2023	MBE: Best Efforts	0%	\$0	0%	\$0		
					WBE:	0%	\$0				
					DSBE:	0%	\$0				
Big Block Entertainment Inc	2220670- Artist Performer	\$175,000		6/14/2023	MBE: NA	100%	\$175,000	0%	\$0	No	N/A

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			Exempt from Posting (Entertainment)		<b>WBE:</b>	0%	\$0					
					<b>DSBE:</b>	0%	\$0					
Big Block Entertainment Inc	2220673- Artist Performer	\$175,000	Exempt from Posting (Entertainment)	6/14/2023	<b>MBE:</b> NA	100%	\$175,000	0%	\$0		No	N/A
					<b>WBE:</b>	0%	\$0					
					<b>DSBE:</b>	0%	\$0					
Big Block Entertainment Inc	2220825- Artist Performer	\$150,000	Exempt from Posting (Entertainment)	6/14/2023	<b>MBE:</b> NA	100%	\$150,000	0%	\$0		No	N/A
					<b>WBE:</b>	0%	\$0					
					<b>DSBE:</b>	0%	\$0					

Non-Profit Vendor Demographics		
Center For Employment Opportunity	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	80%	40%
Executive	60%	80%
Board	50%	30%
Fairmount Conservancy	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	36%	60%

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Executive	33%	100%
Board	31%	46%
Drexel University	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	59%	40%
Executive	48%	33%
Board	25%	10%

**EMPLOYEE DATA**

Staff Demographics (as of December 2022)				
Full-Time Staff			Executive Staff	
	Male	Female		
	African-American	African-American	African-American	African-American
<i>Total</i>	208	87	<i>Total</i>	0
<i>% of Total</i>	32%	13%	<i>% of Total</i>	14%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$49,938	\$62,620	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$124,469
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$45,417	\$55,875	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$124,469
	White	White	White	White
<i>Total</i>	221	88	<i>Total</i>	3
<i>% of Total</i>	34%	14%	<i>% of Total</i>	29%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$62,395	\$71,107	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$148,092
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$59,162	\$68,314	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$148,092
	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic	Hispanic
<i>Total</i>	20	6	<i>Total</i>	0
<i>% of Total</i>	3%	1%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$51,573	\$61,951	<i>Average Salary</i>	N/A
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$49,515	\$65,729	<i>Median Salary</i>	N/A
	Asian	Asian	Asian	Asian
<i>Total</i>	10	5	<i>Total</i>	1
<i>% of Total</i>	2%	1%	<i>% of Total</i>	14%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$63,757	\$83,998	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$125,357
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$62,927	\$72,128	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$125,357



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	Other	Other		Other	Other
<i>Total</i>	4	1	<i>Total</i>	0	0
<i>% of Total</i>	1%	0%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%	0%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$50,609	\$52,593	<i>Average Salary</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$41,908	\$52,593	<i>Median Salary</i>	N/A	N/A
	Bilingual	Bilingual		Bilingual	Bilingual
<i>Total</i>	16	13	<i>Total</i>	0	1
<i>% of Total</i>	2%	2%	<i>% of Total</i>	0%	14%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$71,438	\$75,420	<i>Average Salary</i>	N/A	\$125,357
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$68,314	\$72,600	<i>Median Salary</i>	N/A	\$125,357
	Male	Female		Male	Female
<i>Total</i>	463	187	<i>Total</i>	3	4
<i>% of Total</i>	71%	29%	<i>% of Total</i>	43%	57%
<i>Average Salary</i>	\$56,440	\$67,089	<i>Average Salary</i>	\$123,190	\$136,502
<i>Median Salary</i>	\$50,866	\$64,519	<i>Median Salary</i>	\$120,803	\$124,913

**LANGUAGE ACCESS**

- 1. Provide the name of your language access coordinator, the date of your last department training, and a link to the posting of your language access plan.**

**Coordinator:** Gwendolyn Vilade  
**Training Date:** March 31, 2023  
**LAP link:** [Philadelphia-Parks-Recreation-Language-Access-Plan-2021.pdf](#)

- 2. Breakdown new hires and existing staff by race and language. Breakdown how many front-line personnel are trained to provide language access services.**

Staff Breakdown by Race

Asian	Black	White	Hispanic	Native American	Two or more
15	295	311	26	2	3

Languages Spoken

Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese)	Portuguese	Italian	French	Greek	Malayalam/Kannada	Japanese	Spanish	Telugu	Multilingual : Hindi and Gujarati	Multilingual: Polish and Russian
1	1	1	1	2	2	1	13	2	3	2

There were three trainings in 2022 for Recreation Leaders and seasonal staff engaging directly with community members. The focus of the training was to ensure staff are aware of the resources available and understand their responsibility to provide services to those members of our community where English is not their primary language. There were 199 attendees.

**3. How many requests for language access services did your department receive in the past year? How many language access services were delivered by staff? Breakdown language access services provided, by language, including but not limited to the language line, translation of public notices and documents, website language services, and advertisement/publication services.**

**Language Access Services**

- Translation Service Types: 5
  - Policies, Public Notices, Surveys, Programs and Services
  - Languages requested: Arabic, Chinese (Simplified & Traditional), Khmer, Korean, Polish, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Nepali, Burmese, Faroese, Indonesian, French
- Interpretation Services (Phone and in person): 41 instances
  - Languages: Arabic, Chinese (Simplified, Traditional & Wenzhou), Khmer, Korean, Mandarin (Simplified), Polish, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, Nepali, French, Indonesian, Faroese, Burmese

**4. Explain what your department has done to improve language access services over the past year.**

Philadelphia Parks and Recreation has translated the following documents into Spanish: Park rules and regulations, after-school applications, lifeguard posters, Camp Philly brochures and Summer Camp information. In addition, we provided translation services for community meetings. We continue to work closely with the Office of Immigrant Affairs to ensure all documents are available in languages that meet the needs of residents.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### **1. How has climate change affected your department's provision of services?**

The impact of warmer weather due to climate change is extending the department's operational and programmatic season. This requires longer shifts, additional resources, and more staffing/amenities to keep outdoor public spaces safe, clean, and ready to use year-round and increasingly in higher-demand warmer months. Also, a recent report on Philadelphia's tree canopy (Philadelphia Tree Canopy Assessment, 2019) reveals that Philadelphia has lost over a thousand football fields worth of tree canopy in the last ten years. Losses were significant throughout the city, especially in communities of color. A healthy tree canopy is proven to play an essential role in reducing the main contributor to climate change – CO2. The report emphasizes the importance of deepening engagement with residents in neighborhoods of need while preserving existing tree canopy in order to reach our climate resiliency and tree canopy goals.

### **2. How might worsening climate change increase costs and demands for your department?**

PPR anticipates increasing demands and costs for departmental services. The department's prime operational and programmatic time of year has traditionally been during the spring and summer months. We are and will continue to see longer and warmer weather which will increase demands for already high-use amenities and programming like public pools, cooling centers, athletic fields/courts, and camps. The department has the responsibility for approximately 130,000 street trees and millions of trees in our parks and natural areas. Extreme high wind and rain weather events are causing and will continue to contribute to tree emergencies (falling limbs, downed trees) causing property/utility damage and dramatically decreasing our urban forest. Our urban forest helps to create stronger, healthier, connected communities, reducing the urban heat island effect, and combating climate change.

### **3. How does your department intend to mitigate and adapt to climate change?**

The department is currently utilizing external investments to help respond to climate change. In support of city-wide equity and sustainability goals, the Philly Tree Plan set out a 10-year strategy to grow, protect, and care for Philadelphia's tree canopy, and set forth new ways of working with residents to combat climate change. The plan provides recommendations to the City and its partners on how to best coordinate and strengthen their work on tree planting and maintenance, and what role policy can play to support a more tree-friendly culture across the city.

Over the past year, staff continued to execute a public-private, food composting partnership. The partnership included the development and receipt of a Department of Environmental Protection permit for small-scale composting in an urban setting, the initiation of food waste composting by Bennett Compost, and food waste collection and education for youth and staff at 25 recreation centers with collections totaling 14,440 pounds of food waste.

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In addition, PPR will work with the approved concessionaire to commence operation of the Reforestation Hub at the Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center. Known as Urban Wood, the program will allow for a new way to connect and educate neighborhoods, especially youth, to Philadelphia's urban wood canopy. Logs and other wood received from citywide storms and natural land restoration projects will be upcycled to usable lumber.