



Advocating for Users of Philadelphia's Tidal Schuylkill River Parks

Schuylkill River Park Alliance is incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the name of Lower Schuylkill River Park Users Association (LSRUA).

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Reaching The Hidden River

ISSUE 5

LATE FALL 2007

Wrapping up 2007

It has been a busy year for Schuylkill River Park Alliance. With your help, we got a new name and a whole lot more done!

This past April, we all witnessed the official signing of a settlement agreement between the City of Philadelphia and CSX permitting installation of safe street-level crossings at both Race and Locust Streets and requiring construction of a connector bridge in the vicinity of Locust Street.

Since April, we have been working hard to make sure that the settlement agreement gets implemented. Toward that goal, we have done the following:

- Through our participation on the 'Design Concept Team' along with Friends of Schuylkill River Park, Schuylkill River Development Corporation, Fairmount Park Commission, Center City Residents Associa-

tion, Streets Department and others, we worked to engage the community in deliberating the alignment of the connector bridge between the Schuylkill River Park Trail at Schuylkill Banks to Schuylkill River Park at 25th and Spruce Streets. We conducted online surveys in April and November, helped organize a public meeting in early November and helped to compile the evaluation results, which all posted on www.riverparkalliance.org.

- Successfully asked CSX to put down rubber panels between the tracks at the crossings and to pave their approach to make getting into the Park easier for wheelchairs, bikes and strollers. CSX completed this during the summer.
- Asked the Streets Department to finish the paving between the city streets and park path at the two crossings, which was accomplished at Race Street.

We also organized several park events:

- April and May clean ups
- The second annual *Runnin on the River* for 165 runners in September and the fourth annual Halloween parade.

ANSWERS TO YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why must the connector bridge be built? The settlement agreement between CSX and the City of Philadelphia calls for the two grade crossings to be "improved" (with automatic gates that close the crossings when trains approach or are parked) within 24 months (April 2009) and that an above grade crossing be built within 30 months (October 2009). CSX only agreed to allow the Locust Street crossing to be improved and made a legal grade crossing as long as an overpass was also constructed by the City. CSX wants an additional above grade crossing to give park users an alternative entrance and exit if by chance the Locust street level crossing is closed. CSX understood that the Walnut Street bridge stairs and the future South Street ramp would be available, but stood firm on its demand for an additional above grade crossing. The settlement agreement is under the jurisdiction of Federal Judge Bruce Kaufman and if the above grade crossing is not constructed, it is likely that CSX will go back to court. For more answers about other connection options, see our website's [Connector Bridge page](#).

Why is the Locust Street crossing only partially paved? The path of the current crossing at Locust Street is on CSX's property. The City's right-of-way of Locust Street actually traverses the tracks a little to the south of the current crossing (to the other opening in the fence). For the paving to be (*see over*)

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2007 ALONG SCHUYLKILL RIVER PARK TRAIL



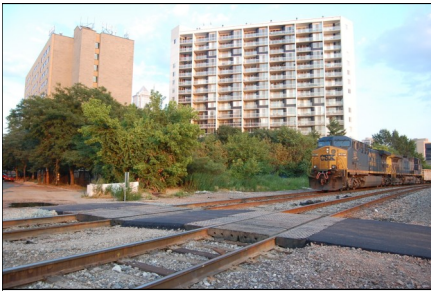
April flood Clean up



Mayor John F. Streets signs agreement with CSX's William Goetz surrounded by (from left) Councilman Darrell Clarke, Solicitor Romulo Diaz, Anne Pizzoli from U.S. Senator Arlen Specter's office (obscured), Councilman Jack Kelly, Jeannette Blize of State Representative Babette Joseph's office, Council President Anna Verna, Charlie Hoffman of State Senator Vincent Fumo's office, and SRPA's Sarah Stuart and Andy Toy.



May Clean Up with City Corps and other volunteers



Paved Race Street crossing



2nd annual *Runnin' on the River*



Paved Locust Street crossing



People Halloween Parade



Pet Halloween Parade



Connector Bridge Public Meeting

FAQs continued from previous page

completed, CSX and the City are currently defining their responsibilities. We are trying to bring about some kind of arrangement to make the rest of the paving possible.

When will the JFK Bridge work be completed? The current construction schedule calls for the work to be completed and the bridge re-opened in February 2009.

Will the park north of Race Street be landscaped? Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC) reported to Schuylkill River Park Alliance that some delays were encountered in the acquisition of permits and approvals for this project, which we wrote about in [Issue 2 of Reaching the Hidden River](#). These problems have been resolved and completed plans should be ready for the bidding process soon. Construction is scheduled for Summer 2008.

How many people use the park? Based on data collected for SRDC, the trail has **2,500 user trips a day** (averaged out over year). Runners, bicyclists and walkers use the trail in roughly the same amounts, although the runners slightly outnumber bicyclists and walkers.

To prevent congestion, will the trail have more directional striping? Yes, Fairmount Park is planning to paint additional stripes on the path to help keep people moving to the right so to avoid collisions. This will most likely occur in spring of 2008.