

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name Rose Gray Title Housing & Development Director
 Organization Asociacion de Puertorriquenos Telephone (215)235-6070
 Address 600 W. Diamond Street City/State/ZIP Philadelphia, PA 19122
 Fax (215) 235-0450 E-mail rgray@apmhousing.org

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Signature

Rose Gray - Director of Development

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

see attached for all responses

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE (CONTÖD)

4. How did the economic impacts of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

Rose Gray

rgray@apmhousing.org (215) 235 6070

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM) is a multifaceted social service agency and community development corporation (CDC) serving eastern North Philadelphia and the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area. APM's development efforts over the past 10 years within eastern North Philadelphia include: 229 units of affordable rental housing, 58 units of homeownership, 44,000 square feet of commercial retail space, and a daycare facility. Currently, APM is assisting in the development of an independent school and anticipates developing 50 additional units of homeownership. In partnership with PHS, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the American Street Empowerment Zone, APM assisted in facilitating the open space projects by participating in project planning, holding community meetings, and working with neighborhood residents.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

There is an overwhelming amount of vacant land in need of redevelopment. We started by focused on supporting residents in transforming lots on their block into community gardens and side yards. Over time, we recognized the need to think more long term. By creating green buffers and stabilizing vacant land we were able to address the future needs of the entire neighborhood. As priorities shifted, fewer resources were available for developing the smaller gardens.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

PHS received funding from The William Penn Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The American Street Empowerment Zone, The Independence Foundation and The Elizabeth S. Hooper Foundation. By leveraging these funding sources, we were able to have a more comprehensive approach to greening. Funding for landscape plantings and maintenance came through APM's operational budget, developer fees, and grants. Funding landscape maintenance is one of the most significant challenges. To address this issue at Gateway Plaza, we received volunteer support from Ready Willing and Able, a non-profit organization that assists homeless and disadvantaged men and women.

4. How did the economic impact of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

This work has attracted new interest in development along American Street, stabilized residential areas in the community, and helped attract an independent school. If we did not stabilize the vacant lots around the development projects, potential investors would not be able to see the potential. By eliminating dumpsites and greening the vacant land, a sense of order was restored to the neighborhood, helping creating a healthier home for the residents and their children.

5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

As a developer, I did not initially recognize greening and open space as an important role in revitalizing communities. Working with PHS, I came to realize that it is an essential part of a holistic approach to community revitalization. Greening helps make connections within the neighborhood; people feel safer walking down the street and start to think of the community as their home. Poor communities lack greening. Having been a developer for 12 years, I have seen how greening makes a positive change in resident's attitudes and how the outside world regards a community.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The community organizing part of this work has been an effective way of sharing information and getting a pulse on the communities needs. Greening has also had an impact on attracting outside investment. More recently, this work led us to develop a community revitalization plan that incorporates open space as a foundation for APM's future redevelopment efforts. The least successful part is that we do not have enough funding to complete all of the work.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name Linda Estremera (resident) Title _____

Organization Hogar de Esperanza Telephone (215) 232-2172

Address 2203 Germantown Avenue City/State/ZIP Philadelphia, PA 19133

Fax (_____) E-mail _____

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Signature Linda Estremera

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

see attached for all answers

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONTÖD)

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

Linda Estremera Resident

Hogar de Esperanza

2203 Germantown Ave, Apt 204

(215) 232-2172

Philadelphia, PA 19133

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

I became involved because I live here and wanted something nice around my neighborhood. As a resident of Hogar de Esperanza, I gave ideas for what to do with the garden, helped plant, gave ideas for a name, and wrote a poem with the mural artists. I also attended meetings to decide on how to organize floor captains from our building who would open and close the garden and help keep it clean.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

We do not have a lot of nice places to go around here. We needed a place not only for ourselves, but for our families when they come to visit. The garden is something for us to use and enjoy.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Initially we wanted to include a place for kids to play. There are maybe four or so children who live or visit here, but there is no playground that they can use. In this project, there was no funding for a playground, but APM's property management explained that there may be an opportunity to build one in the future. Residents also wanted their family visiting the garden to be able to park cars in the parking lot. Eventually we agreed with property management that visitors would need to park on the street in order to make sure the spaces were available for residents. Both of these issues were resolved in meetings between residents and property management.

4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

A better place to live? Yes! It is much easier to enjoy our environment here in the residence. It is much safer for the kids. They don't have to play in the parking lot. It is nice to sit out there and look at something beautiful; enjoy the flowers and smelling them. I love the smell of flowers. It is so beautiful and brings light into the home you live. It is also a place for parties. We have resident cookouts and family reunions. I plan to have my wedding there.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

The only thing I would like is to have more added to the mural, but I understand that it could not be done because the wall was so damaged. I would also like better benches. They are fine for the young people, but they need cushions to make them more comfortable. Some residents bring out their own chairs to sit in the garden.

Would I change anything with the process? No. I think everything was perfect. Philadelphia Green included us. They sat down with us to get our input and explain what was going to happen. They focused on what we wanted. Property management also keeps it cleaned up and maintained. They were out there watering all last summer to keep the plants alive.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

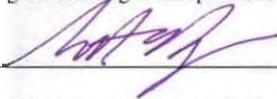
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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Scott Page	Title: Associate
Organization: Wallace Roberts & Todd LLC	Telephone: (215) 772.1492
Address: 260 S. Broad Street, 8 th Floor	City/State/Zip: Philadelphia, PA 19102
Fax: (215) 732.2551	E-mail: spage@ph.wrtdesign.com

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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

Wallace Roberts & Todd LLC (WRT) recently completed a comprehensive neighborhood plan for the APM area. Our work was organized by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) Philadelphia Green Program in partnership with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), the APM CDC and city organizations. The plan built upon the efforts of PHS in the area and provided planning for future activities to be carried out by PHS in partnership with APM. Due to the success of PHS's ongoing work in the area, the plan's foundation was based on extending these efforts and creating new opportunities for community open space through innovative vacant land management practices. WRT continues its relationship with PHS and APM in discussing future implementation of many of the plan recommendations.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The overall intent of the project was to provide strategies for managing the extensive amount of vacant and blighted properties in the area. Based on landscaping and community participation, the specific objectives were to improve the image of targeted streets and blocks, and build community pride in the neighborhood. These objectives were sought through a number of ways. Some vacant sites were intended for long-term use as community gardens and others were short-term 'clean and green' approaches to clear the property in preparation for future development. New development by the local CDC included the participation of PHS in providing play space for children and accompanying planting. Targeted streets were also improved with streetscape improvements that included landscaping and training to community residents to maintain them over the long-term.

3. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

The project has had numerous impacts on the community. Once a location for large amounts of illegal dumping onto vacant lots, the cleaning and greening of these spaces have dramatically improved the physical image of the neighborhood. It has been these efforts that are responsible for the CDC's ability to create new affordable homeownership units currently under construction. Targeting streetscape improvements, play areas and landscaping within and around new development has also reinforced and ensured the success of the various developments. The Borinquen development created by APM included a shared tot lot, landscaping and streetscape treatments. The development has remained one of the most stable and attractive areas in the neighborhood with use of the play area by kids throughout the community.

More importantly, the greening and gardening efforts by PHS were coupled with educational classes for local homeowners in maintenance and planting. These efforts continue with community plantings organized on PHS on specific days of the year. It has been these physical and social initiatives that have made the planning work completed by WRT possible. There is already an awareness of the value of open space in the neighborhood as well as a heightened degree of community pride that the plan sought to capitalize on.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did you or your organization participate in making them?

The main compromises made during our planning work related to the different objectives and interests by our three clients – PHS, PEC and APM. The different interests related to open space, housing and commercial development and transit connections. In the planning work, WRT with the help of PHS navigated these perspectives and blended them together to create a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts. Focusing on PHS's capacity and interest in furthering open space initiatives, WRT proposed an open space network as the most important public improvement to be implemented. The network consisted of streetscape improvements, continued gardening and new park spaces. At the outset of the recommendations, the plan recommended an extensive array of new parks to provide play space for local schools and create a community resource. The number and size of parks diminished in discussions with the client group and upon reviewing the City's resources for maintaining recreation space in the future. Open space and new parks are still the strongest element of the plan, but trade-offs were made to better reflect the realistic budgets and staff capacity of the organizations involved.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

As a design and planning firm, much of our work is based on physical proposals and strategies to achieve them. Open space has not received its full weight in the context of neighborhood planning as there have been few precedents to learn from. Using open space as a generator of activity and center for community activism deserves further attention. The physical strategies combined with the local hands on training by PHS, represents one model in place that can assist other entities in creating neighborhood plans that look far beyond housing and/or social services. Understanding the range of uses for open space and the number of positive impacts from marketability and pride to increased safety, this is an instructive and extremely valuable contribution to the array of neighborhood planning efforts underway across the country.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

As noted above, the most successful aspect of PHS's work in APM is the local knowledge and respect for open space by community residents fostered by PHS as well as the extremely positive physical benefits through site clearance, community gardening and streetscape improvements. Without these efforts, the basis for our planning work would not have existed. Building on the accomplishments of PHS, the plan was pushed to examine the most innovative solutions for open space and gardening within the context of a neighborhood plan. For instance, PHS promoted to include other elements that would benefit the neighborhood and city as a whole. These included storm water management initiatives in concert with the Philadelphia Water Department's Office of Watersheds. The end result is a plan that capitalizes upon the expertise of the clients, their efforts in the neighborhood, and created an action-oriented and prioritized implementation plan to continue the revitalization of the community.

The least successful aspects of the plan completed by WRT relate to a number of forces unique to the APM community. Although greatly improved, the market interest is still not in place to bring significant private investment to the neighborhood. Funding is also limited as PHS and APM are operating within small and fixed budgets that can only finance improvements to a certain amount of properties within a given year. The WRT plan will take some time to implement as expressed in its action plan.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Eva Gladstein	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Phila. Empowerment Zone	Telephone	(215) 686-0457
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Fax	(215) 686-0462	E-mail	Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov

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Eva Gladstein

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

What role did your agency plan in the development of this project? Describe any requirements of this project by your agency.

The American Street Vacant Land Management Project was developed to address the overwhelming negative impact of abandoned and blighted land on the industrial and business initiatives. This project was funded by Philadelphia Empowerment Zone. PEZ invited PHS to design, and operationalize the program based on their previous experience with land management activities in the New Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. The primary goal of the project was the creation of a model for sustainable community development permanently removing the blighting influence of hundreds of vacant lots in the neighborhood and creating a community-based system to stabilize the land.

PHS operated this program under a performance-based contract with the EZ. Under the contract, PHS was required to design and implement a process to:

- Select community-based partner organizations
- Work with these partners to establish criteria for site selection
- Select appropriate sites
- Develop plans for the treatment of such sites, and
- Develop mechanisms to maintain these as green spaces or for other neighborhood uses

How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

In a survey conducted by the PEZ, blighted land was identified as the first priority issue that needed to be addressed by area residents and businesses. The purpose of this project is to clean and stabilize vacant lots throughout the American Street neighborhood of the Empowerment Zone. A parallel goal is to establish and build the neighborhood's capacity to manage vacant land through a neighborhood-based system combining efforts of residents, block organizations and community based organizations (CBOs). This effort demonstrated the impact of creating simple, cost-effective park-like settings to make a positive visual impact, decrease littering and short-dumping, improve quality of neighborhood life, and help to develop effective land stewardship among community-based organizations, businesses and residents.

The following observations reflect our learnings in this three-year pilot endeavor:

- Site selection was always based on a strategy of conducting land management adjacent to new residential and commercial developments as well as supporting stable residential blocks endangered by incipient blight. This approach did not address the needs of the industrial corridor in the first year. However, in recognition of this fact, treatment of key, highly visible

parcels along this corridor during the following years produced a more concentrated visual impact, made the corridor more appealing for business attraction and expansion and helped transform the look of the entire neighborhood.

- An innovation in this program was the use of 'post and rail' fencing as a signature for the project. This design element served to identify all of the 58 sites as part of a well-maintained and managed system. In contrast with the traditional 'clean lot programs' that are conducted in most cities, the use of higher quality design and horticultural treatments (e.g. – including trees and fences) increased the sustainability of the program because it resulted in greater community interest and support. The costs associated with this approach cannot be applied uniformly to all 31,000 vacant parcels in the city, and this approach should be utilized strategically for greatest impact.

Describe the project's impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

- By the end of this, its third year, the project will have transformed 13 acres of vacant, trash-strewn land into well-maintained green spaces.
- Residents, community groups and businesses and the City are unanimous in their appreciation of this vast change in the physical landscape of the community.
- This project has helped stimulate business attraction activities as it has made the community a cleaner, safer place in which to do business.
- The project has discouraged short-dumping, graffiti, and other negative behaviors.
- The project has built the capacity of four community-based organizations to create and manage alternative strategies to the more expensive development projects (i.e. housing and commercial centers). These serve as interim as well as permanent strategies to revitalize their communities.
- The project was responsible for the City's development of new demolition specifications. When the City bids out demolition work now, it requires contractors to grade and seed the land in a manner consistent with this project. Thus demolition activities throughout the City now produce passive green spaces, rather than vacant, rubble filled lots.

Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

This project has served as a model that the City of Philadelphia now plans to replicate throughout its neighborhoods in concert with its Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI). NTI is a strategy to rebuild Philadelphia's neighborhoods as thriving communities with clean and secure streets, recreational and cultural outlets, and quality housing. Its six goals include: facilitating and supporting community-based planning; eradicating blight caused by dangerous buildings, debris-filled lots, abandoned cars and litter; preventing blight through targeted and coordinated code enforcement and abatement of

public nuisances; improving the City's ability to assemble land for development; stimulating and attracting investment in Philadelphia neighborhoods, and leveraging resources to the fullest extent possible and investing them in neighborhoods strategically.

- The project is already being replicated in the two other EZ neighborhoods, where we are experimenting with new ways to engage residents, particularly in communities where there is less CDC or other community-based organizational capacity. We are also exploring ways to reduce costs.

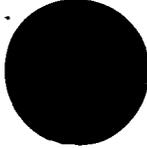
What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects of this project are:

- The creation of a dramatic change in appearance of the neighborhood;
- The Development of a replicable model for Philadelphia and other cities;
- The broadening of base of support from a residential to both a residential and commercial/industrial model.

The least successful aspects of this project are:

- The need to continue to develop to reduce costs
- The need to continue to build the capacity community-based organizations to manage land, or to identify alternative structures and mechanisms to manage the land.



PROJECT DATA

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Project Name: Philadelphia Green's Open Space **Project Location:** Eastern North Philadelphia

Owner: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (in partnership with Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha)

Project Use(s): Reclamation of vacant land and improvement of open space in a low-income, Latino neighborhood

Project Size: Neighborhood for which the CDC, Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha is responsible

Total Development Cost: Approximately \$ 700,000 for staff, material resources and administration

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate): N/A

Date Initiated: 1996 **Percent Completed by December 1, 2002:** Estimated at 60%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate): N/A

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name: Maitreyi Roy, MLA **Title:** Associate Director of Philadelphia Green

Organization: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (Philadelphia Green program)

Address 100 N. 20th Street, 5th Floor **City/State/Zip** Philadelphia, PA 19103

Telephone (215) 988 8873 **Fax** (215) 988 - 8810

E-mail mroy@pennhort.org **Weekend Contact Number** (for notification) 609 219 9293

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies	Philadelphia Empowerment Zone	
Professional Consultant	Wallace, Robert & Todd	
Developer	Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha	
Community Group	Residents of eastern North Philadelphia, e.g., of Hogar de Esperanza	
Other	N/A	

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

Direct Mail Magazine Advertisement Previous RBA entrant Other (please specify)
 Professional Newsletter Previous Selection Committee member
 Organization Magazine Calendar general knowledge

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ABSTRACT

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Project Name: Philadelphia Green's Open Space Project

Address: 100 N. 20th Street, 5th Floor

City/State/Zip Code: Philadelphia, PA 19103

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

The goal of Philadelphia Green's Open Space Project in eastern North Philadelphia is to transform the quality of the neighborhood's open spaces by engaging with the community and utilizing greening as a community revitalization tool. We contribute to the revitalization of this low-income, primarily Latino community by planning, improving and maintaining open space. This project benefits community residents by improving their quality of life. Further, the project advances other efforts to renew and develop the neighborhood.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture. Through its Philadelphia Green program, PHS works with community organizations and public and private entities to create, restore and maintain open spaces in the city.

Philadelphia Green's Open Space Project in eastern North Philadelphia represents a partnership APM, a community development corporation that oversees housing and economic development projects, along with education, health, and employment programs in this neighborhood. APM has invested more than \$51 million and completed 268 housing units and construction of 100,000 square-feet of commercial and retail space. The goal is to contribute to the revitalization of this low-income, primarily Latino community. Accordingly, we transform blighted abandoned land into pleasant well managed green spaces; apply appropriate landscape design techniques as part of improving existing landscapes; and promote well-managed open space as a major component of this community's vision for the future. The project utilizes greening as a community revitalization tool. It benefits the residents by improving their quality of life and advances ongoing efforts to renew and develop the neighborhood.

Begun in 1996, the project includes: the landscaping of affordable housing and commercial developments; the reclamation of thirteen acres of blighted vacant land along the American Street corridor; 100 "resident-driven" greening projects; and a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. In addition to the partners who contributed to this application, collaborators include the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone, the City of Philadelphia's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative and the Mural Arts Program, as well as local businesses, community institutions, and groups of residents.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

Like many urban communities that have suffered the loss of population and a faltering economic climate over several decades, this neighborhood has endured decades of decline. It has lost 20% of its population since 1980, and vacant, abandoned land—where industry and housing once stood—accounts for 40% of its total area. Despite these obstacles, the partnership has brought about dramatic change in this community's appearance, spirit, and overall quality of life. We inspired residents to plant trees and flowers along their streets. Vacant "pockets" of land have become serene community gardens. Using landscape design methods driven by the needs of the community, we enhanced APM's housing and commercial developments.

The uniqueness of the project lies in the nature of the community. It also lies in the nature of the collaboration among diverse entities, which have come together as equal partners. It is unusual to take on a project of this magnitude in a long-neglected community, which lacks resources and infrastructure. Philadelphia Green, APM and the other collaborators, however, saw the opportunity to create a climate for positive change and to integrate the various aspects of community development – affordable housing, economic growth and well-planned open space. We intentionally nurture the natural environment, support cultural expression, and promote sustainability through community stewardship.

In short, while conscious of the obstacles, we are excited by the possibilities. While some look at eastern North Philadelphia and see only overwhelming blight, we saw the opportunity to turn vacant land into a high quality asset. We took the chance and today, we have achieved a "critical mass" of "clean and green" spaces – carefully planned and designed, environmentally friendly, supportive of community development. The physical environment – long neglected – has begun to rebound. Hundreds of trees and other plants now serve as the lungs of the neighborhood, cooling the thermal mass of concrete and blacktop, while softening the hard edges of the built environment. These spaces have enormous social value.

Further, this is an interesting partnership. Originally, Philadelphia Green and APM tentatively came together in a relationship arranged by a major funder. Today, we have a strong partnership based on honesty, respect and a shared vision. In good times and in bad times, we choose to work together to make a profound difference. Accordingly, we have planned open space in a comprehensive manner – turning vast tracts of trash-strewn vacant land into refreshing meadows; creating community gathering spaces; transforming run-down avenues into attractive streetscapes, and helping neighbors to create bright floral displays and vegetable patches on formerly blighted land. From the very beginning, this project has been inspired by the people of this community.

We have exercised a level of skill and excellence in design normally associated with downtown landscapes and adapted it to neighborhood scale and local culture. With the assistance of Wallace, Robert and Todd, a top-notch landscape architecture firm, the community has planned for constructive use of its open space. While many of the residents came to eastern North Philadelphia after being forced out of other neighborhoods as a result of gentrification, we are committed to developing a livable, economically viable community for all of the people. We will show that it is both possible and desirable to retain the population, to attract new residents and to welcome people back to the neighborhood as the quality of life improves.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. How has the project impacted the local community?

Philadelphia Green involves the neighbors from the very beginning of the process, encouraging them to imagine and build their greening projects. Each project is based on the community's vision and its capacity to develop and to sustain the project. We work with residents to plant street trees and to create colorful green spaces. Together, we have transformed a number of blocks and improved the quality of life in affordable housing developments and in the community as a whole. In addition, Philadelphia Green helped residents to clean up trash-strewn vacant lots, creating community gardens. The result was much-needed communal green space for relaxation and social gatherings. In addition to the visual and environmental benefits, these efforts instilled community pride and helped neighbors build stronger relationships with each other. Further, the projects serve as catalysts for further positive community change.

Through the partnership, Philadelphia Green improved the quality of landscapes at housing and commercial developments, helping to shape the identity and appearance of APM's development efforts. Philadelphia Green managed the design and installation process, provided maintenance training, and assisted APM in developing maintenance plans and monitoring contracts.

These new landscapes have not only had an impact on the residents, but on the community development corporation's approach: "Traditionally when it came to new housing, landscaping was always thought of as secondary," remarks APM Project Developer Francis Vargas. "But once residents got involved in planting trees and creating backyards, we noticed the impact it had on the community." He added, "People interacted more and took ownership of their neighborhood. Now, landscaping is something that we consider from the start."

In the course of six years of hard work, we have achieved "critical mass". The neighborhood has gone from "no place to be somebody" to a struggling community that is clearly in the process of revitalization. It has gone from a neglected area with the odd patch of green here and there to a neighborhood in which greening is a prominent feature and hope is palpable. Vast acres of blighted vacant land have been transformed into grassy meadows edged by thriving trees. One of several affordable housing developments has been described as "the place with the beautiful flowers". Model blocks have a welcoming feel with their street trees, flower-filled containers, "pocket" sitting areas and gardens. The local supermarket features high quality landscaping. In many cases, we have combined greening projects with public art, amplifying the impact.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

Our values are summarized as follows:

- Each collaborator brings a unique perspective and special skills and there must be a place at the table for all interested parties. Successful partnerships are based on honest communication, and on respect and appreciation of each others gifts, perspectives and aspirations. Each partner has something special to offer and we all learn from each other, to the benefit of our mutual endeavors.
- Interdisciplinary work amplifies the impact of a project. Due to the synergy among greening, affordable and attractive housing, public art, traditional cultures and commercial development, the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.
- All projects must engage community residents in a meaningful way and contribute to their empowerment. The involvement of neighbors in all phases of the project is the key to success and sustainability. The sense of community developed by working together is even more valuable than the physical product. The goal is to revitalize the community – one project at a time.
- All communities – including low-income and traditionally neglected areas – are entitled to a healthy, safe, attractive environment that artfully combines the built and the natural environment. Residents have a key role in developing their neighborhoods. This is the secret of livable neighborhoods and viable cities.

There were few trade-offs. Often, we have to move more slowly than we would like and we have to make do with less-than-optimal resources, which we continuously struggle to access. Sometimes, we have to make hard choices based on availability of funding and other resources and on the capacity of the groups involved to develop and manage projects over the long term. Our process is not easy and it is not always smooth. Over the years, we have learned to listen carefully to each other. We share ideas and skills. We have come to have great respect and affection for each other. We are all better for it.

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. Philadelphia Green works with residents from the very beginning of each project and involves them in a flexible and meaningful way. Each project is based on the community's vision, taking into account their capacity for ongoing care of the site. Philadelphia Green helps residents to develop the skills necessary to sustain the projects, to access community resources and to develop supportive networks.

Philadelphia Green combines horticultural "know how" with community organizing skills. A successful greening project requires careful and inclusive planning, good design and skilled implementation. We also know that a greening project is only as good as its maintenance and so we give major attention to helping communities develop the skills and resources to care for projects over time. We know that working partnerships are required and that successful collaborations attention and commitment. We have also learned that the more we contribute, the more we gain from collaboration.

APM is a strong community development corporation. At the beginning of our partnership, we were conscious of our differences: APM focused on housing and economic development while Philadelphia Green was committed to the development of open space. However, as we worked together, we learned that high quality landscapes and greening projects enhanced affordable housing and commercial development. As we have reached a point of "critical mass", we have all come to recognize the powerful impact of an integrated and comprehensive approach to community development. We have also learned to work well with governmental bodies and public agencies. Again, initially, we viewed each other with some skepticism. We have learned, however, that we each play an important role in imagining, planning, implementing and maintaining projects.

An important element in our success has been the realization that vacant land can be transformed from a cancerous liability into a community asset. In Philadelphia's neighborhoods, more than 31,000 vacant lots are a horrendous blight that prompt residents to leave the city and dishearten those who do remain. In these cases, any semblance of community spirit and cohesion is a miracle. With a sphere of influence far larger than its physical boundaries, blighted vacant land depresses real estate values, discourages investment, and generally reduces the quality of life. Left untreated, it consumes whole neighborhoods, turning them into wastelands.

A decade ago, Philadelphia Green became convinced that the social, political and economic costs of neglected vacant were unacceptably high and that the survival of our city was tied up with solving this problem. Once we began to view vacant land as an asset – as potential green open space hiding under tons of trash – we began to see how to turn things around. Philadelphia has a vacant land mass so huge that if it were combined and dropped downtown, it would fill our entire Center City area. It was truly overwhelming – for City government and for the community-based organizations working in the neighborhoods plagued by it. Philadelphia Green began to collaborate with CDCs, City agencies and local businesses to develop workable models of vacant land treatment and management and also to influence public policy.

There have been many gratifying reactions. For example, during the second year of our large-scale work in the American Street Empowerment Zone, a neighbor approached a Philadelphia Green staff member as he stood on a vacant lot in the process of stabilization, and asked, "Hey, how do we get this on our block?" Further, when the City launched its Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, it made treatment of vacant land a priority and welcomed our advice.

In the APM area, the message was received and quickly translated into action. When we re-landscaped the housing development, Jardines de Borinquen, we overcame serious obstacles. An earlier landscape had failed because it was poorly planned and installed – all without community engagement. After experiencing success at Jardines, APM made landscaping a priority for Taino Gardens. Philadelphia Green planted trees, advised the design process, and helped residents green their yards, building their investment in their new community. Philadelphia Green also helped APM develop a landscape for Gateway Plaza, the community's first new shopping center in more than three decades. Further, we developed a workable maintenance protocol. As a strong symbol of progress, the Plaza is the foundation for future commercial development.

The Garden of Hope at Hogar de Esperanza, a rental complex for people with special needs, is the little jewel of this collaboration both in terms of design and community engagement. This intimate common space was designed with residents who wanted a peaceful place for interactions with their neighbors and families. The City's Mural Arts Program worked with them to create the garden's unique three-dimensional mural made of sculpted concrete and mosaics depicting images of hope: birds in flight, flowers, a ray of light.

Further, APM participates in the vacant land reclamation project managed by Philadelphia Green in the American Street Empowerment Zone. We worked with the City, and community-based organizations to transform vacant lots into striking green spaces. In three years, we have reclaimed 58 sites (13 acres); one-third of these sites are in APM's target area. This "revealed" land has made a dramatic impact on the neighborhood's appearance, and helped make the area more attractive. For instance, six vacant lots near Gateway Plaza had hindered APM's ability to attract investors. "[They were] an uninviting blight on our neighborhood," says APM's director of Housing and Community Development, Rose Gray. "But once they were cleared and greened, [it became] much easier ... to show the property."

3. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. Major funders are: the Fannie Mae Foundation; the William Penn Foundation; The Pew Charitable Trusts; the Elizabeth S. Hooper Foundation; Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone; Philadelphia Department of Commerce; and Philadelphia Neighborhood Housing Services.

4. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? The project addresses significant urban issues: the treatment and management of vacant land; open space planning, development and management as a key factor in community development; and greening as a community organizing strategy and a catalyst for the improvement of the quality of life in low-income urban neighborhoods. The models are adaptable to other urban settings, especially to older cities that have experienced the devastating impact of the relocation of industry, population migration, and urban decentralization.. We always emphasize documentation of our efforts and are currently producing a document on our experiences in eastern North Philadelphia.