



If successful, the Parks Fund referendum will create a dedicated funding stream for equitable park restoration. Decades of underfunding has led to a minimum \$400 million capital project backlog and \$13 million annual maintenance deficit within the park system. The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has raised nearly \$126 million dollars in the past 20-plus years, but private donations, grants, and foundation support alone cannot restore the public park system, particularly the 160 community and neighborhood parks that do not receive Regional Asset Development (RAD) funding like the five regional parks.

Citizens, community groups, and leaders across the public and private sector have rallied around this initiative. A sampling of the organizations and excerpts from their public support are listed below.

Key Features of the Referendum

Park Investment — all parks would begin to see improved maintenance in 2020. Many parks would see the beginnings of rehabilitation projects and increased programming

Matching Private Funds — the Parks Conservancy is committed to raising funds to match the \$10 million that would be raised by a successful referendum. Over the past 10 years, the Conservancy has raised nearly \$8 million annually

Fund Distribution — the funds received would go directly to the City. Any funding that would be allocated to the Parks Conservancy would be through a Mayor/Council approved contract or agreement

Public-Private Partnership — the City and Parks Conservancy have worked together for more than 20 years. Public-private partnerships have been changing Pittsburgh for decades, beginning with the birth of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development to help improve the city’s air quality. Other public-private partnerships include Point Park, Mellon Square, Gateway Center, the Cultural District, the North Shore, the Zoo, and Phipps Conservatory

No Park Privatization — the Parks Conservancy does not own, nor will ever own, any part of the Pittsburgh park system

RAD — RAD tax dollars can only be used in the five regional parks; Frick, Schenley, Highland, Riverview and Emerald View. The other 160 parks in the system are ineligible to receive any of this money, which amounted to approximately \$7 million in 2018

Process Transparency — the Parks Conservancy and City of Pittsburgh have been working on this initiative for almost two years; assessing the park system, collecting and analyzing data, speaking with experts across the country and engaging residents through 200+ community meetings. All of this work can be found on the Parks Conservancy website:

www.pittsburghparks.org

Partial List of Endorsers

East Liberty Development Inc.	Grounded Strategies
Mayor William Peduto	Nine Mile Run Watershed Association
Operation Better Block	Overbrook Community Council
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society	Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project
Polish Hill Civic Association	The Trust for Public Land Action Fund

What People Are Saying

"It is vital that we have a balanced approach to funding our parks for future generations. We have not seen any positive results from discussions with our largest non-profits to dedicate funds to this cause. How much longer will our generous foundations and non-profits, in which we have relied on for so long to support past park initiatives, be expected to invest without a matching investment from others?"— **Fred Bonci, founding partner, LaQuatra Bonci Associates (landscape architects)**

"We are supporting this initiative because it's a community-driven process that will ensure equitable investment in parks across the City. For too long, our parks have seen a backlog in drastically needed maintenance and repairs. The smaller neighborhoods and those with the greatest needs have historically seen the least investment. This initiative will establish a dedicated funding stream that will guarantee fair investments in our parks so that we can enjoy them for generations to come." — **Kim Teplitzsky, president, Polish Hill Civic Association**

"As the largest permit user within the city's park system through our Pittsburgh Sports League (PSL) program, PUMP has a unique and broad vantage point of the needs in our parks system. We see firsthand how the lack of available funding and resources severely limits our city's ability to ensure and maintain a quality park experience for all who are here. Far too many of our parks have fallen into a state of disrepair and neglect from decades of limited investment. We have an historic opportunity to write a new and different story for current and future generations." — **Arthur Pang, chair, PUMP**

"We would like to make clear that we strongly and enthusiastically support the planned public referendum for this fall's election that is sponsored by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. The strategic plan that the Conservancy is advancing now — which will be made possible by passage of the referendum this fall — can take our park system to a new and very high level. All of us who believe in Pittsburgh and its potential must vote yes on this referendum." — **Margaret Ann and Maxwell King. Ms. King is a member of the board for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and Mr. King is the former president of The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments.**

"Allegheny Commons was created by civic-minded leaders who recognized that special tax financing programs were essential for the transformation of what was then a swampy public pasture into the park opened to all residents of Allegheny and Pittsburgh. Citizens throughout Pittsburgh realize how important the city's parks are and understand these spaces require money to make them accessible, manageable, and beautiful. It is this common commitment that should be the foundation for supporting the "Parks Initiative" in the upcoming election." — **John Canning, retired City schoolteacher**

"We are in support of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy's campaign to pass a ballot initiative to secure an ongoing stream of funding to maintain and improve our parks. The process leading up to this initiative has been very thorough. Fundamentally, this ballot initiative offers us a choice. Do we want to have a first-class park system that improves our quality of life and the city attractiveness as a place to live and work? I'll be voting yes on Tuesday." — **Brenda Lynn Smith, executive director, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association**

"Having good, safe places I could go to as a child was important growing up. This (McKinley Park) is disinvestment in action. Without parks, where are [kids] supposed to go? Play in the street?" — **Jamil Bey, president, UrbanKind Institute**

"We envision a city where every child and adult live within walking distance of a well-maintained and safe park" — **Ilyssa Manspeizer, executive director, Landforce**

"I see the impact from lack of physical activity on the physical and mental health of children daily. Being active reduces the risk of chronic illness that are now presenting in childhood. On top of that, the benefit increases when that activity is done outside. Encouraging outdoor physical activity is so important that the American Academy of Pediatrics has encouraged all pediatricians to prescribe outside play. I support the dedicated park trust fund initiative on November 5." — **Dr. Justin Schreiber, DO MPH Pediatrician and Child Psychiatrist**

"There is nothing so American as our national parks.' -Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Although FDR was referring to the national parks, I think the same is true of our Pittsburgh parks. These parks are our community jewel. They set us apart from other cities in their size and splendor. They are veritable urban oases!"— **Chaton T. Turner, Esq., Attorney, Blogger, Speaker, Influencer**

"Over the years, my park has fallen further and further into disrepair. I want to see the city come together and show support for the parks. The proposed tax will allow for not only my park to receive much needed maintenance and repairs but will also allow for the other 164 city parks to receive equitable improvements as well. I'll be voting Yes on November 5th." — **Lori Beth Jones, resident, District 2**

"I live in Marshall-Shadeland and I am voting YES for the park's referendum. I see parks as an invaluable asset that we must treasure, protect and invest in. I believe all neighborhoods in Pittsburgh should have equal access to safe spaces to play, exercise and connect with nature, family and friends.

My husband and I have built our life around the parks. We purchased our home in 2015 because of its proximity to Riverview Park and in 2017 we got married at the Chapel Shelter, a building that was slated for demolition until the Parks Conservancy rehabbed it and re-opened it up to the public in 2008. In the summer you can find me swimming laps at the pool, in the fall, winter and spring I take daily walks along the trails. I really cannot imagine a life without parks. If we do not put the money into protecting these spaces, they will continue to fall apart. I see the parks referendum as an opportunity to invest in something that can truly benefit us all." — **Anna Brewer, resident, Marshall-Shadeland**

"I'm supporting the parks referendum because I believe in the benefits that this option provides. I've volunteered in Riverview Park for many years and have firsthand knowledge of the need. The tax will not only allow for additional dollars to be invested in the parks but will also lead to job creation. This is a key reason why I support the parks initiative." — **Ben Brewer, resident, Woods Run**

"As the chair of the Friends of South Side Park I have learned firsthand the significant amount of investment that is needed to do even a small park improvement project. I support the parks referendum because it will help maintain community parks like South Side Park and allow for additional investments in community parks that need it most." — **Jamie Balseer, resident, South Side Slopes**

"I'm an avid park user and have seen the deterioration of Riverview Park, and other smaller parks throughout the city. Even though Riverview receives RAD dollars, it is clearly not enough to maintain the park, and it doesn't help the smaller parks. I support the parks referendum because it will create dedicated funding for ALL of our parks to bring them up to the quality they should be in for all to enjoy. Together, we have the power to create a better parks system for all of Pittsburgh." — **Danielle Graham Robinson, resident, Brighton Heights**