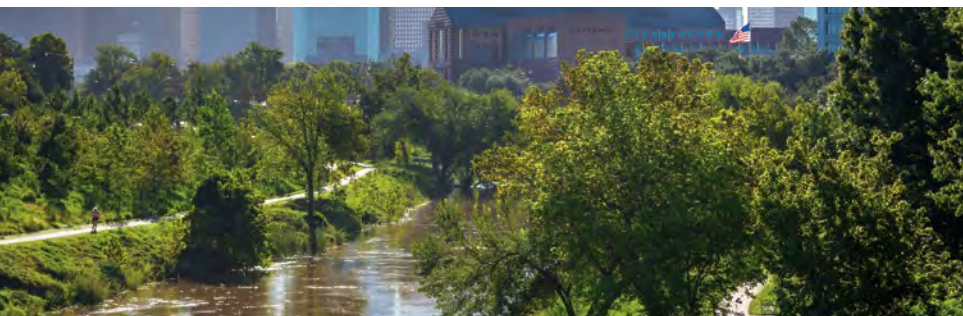




CITY PARKS

A Smart Investment
for America's
Health, Economy &
Environment

CASE STUDIES

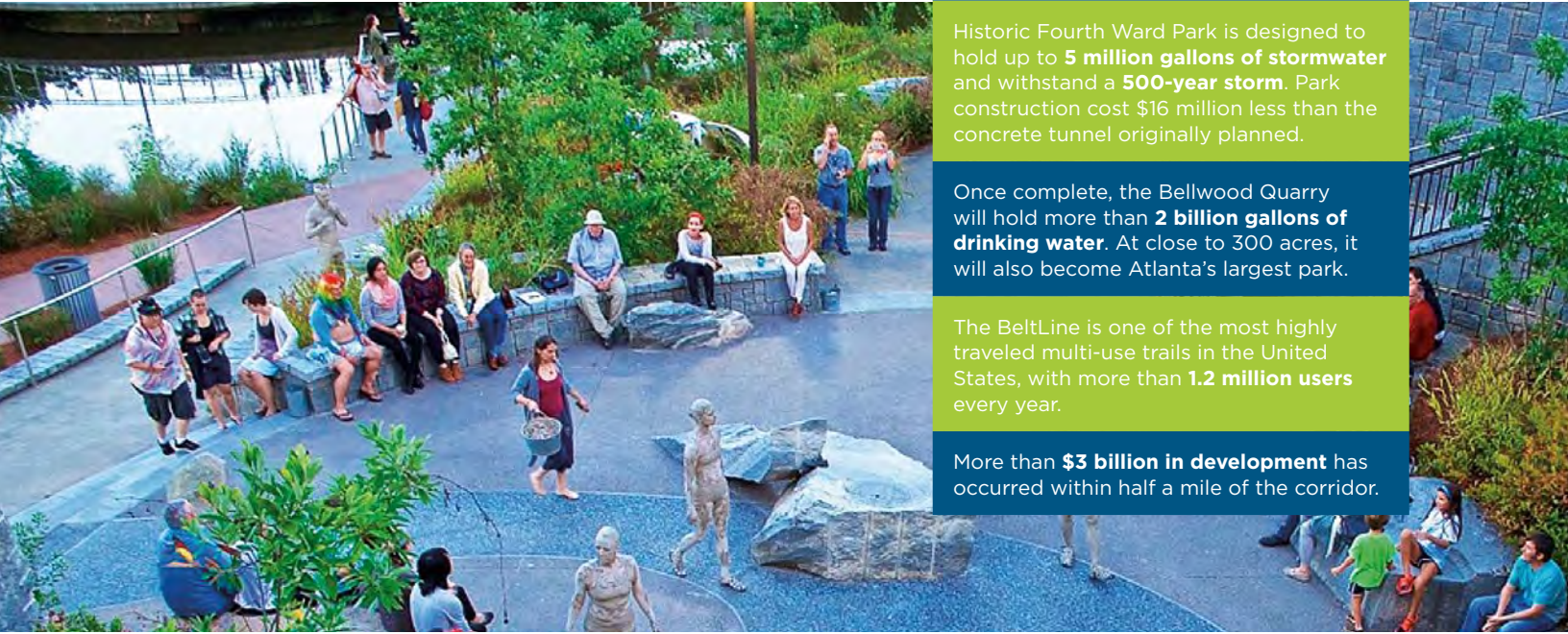


City parks play a vital role in the social, economic and physical well-being of America's cities and their residents.

As cities become more densely populated, and concern about the impact of climate change increases, planners, elected officials, and community advocates are taking a fresh look at parks and their potential to help address critical urban infrastructure and public health issues. City parks provide access to recreational opportunities, spur local economies, combat crime, and protect cities from environmental impacts. Parks are now recognized as powerful tools to address a number of challenges that cities face today.

Atlanta BeltLine

21st Century Infrastructure



Fast Facts ¹

Historic Fourth Ward Park is designed to hold up to **5 million gallons of stormwater** and withstand a **500-year storm**. Park construction cost \$16 million less than the concrete tunnel originally planned.

Once complete, the Bellwood Quarry will hold more than **2 billion gallons of drinking water**. At close to 300 acres, it will also become Atlanta's largest park.

The BeltLine is one of the most highly traveled multi-use trails in the United States, with more than **1.2 million users** every year.

More than **\$3 billion in development** has occurred within half a mile of the corridor.

The Atlanta Beltline has become a critical piece of Atlanta's infrastructure. The 22-mile loop around the city is designed to connect Atlantans with each other and the surrounding greenspace, while at the same time manage stormwater.

The walking and biking trail links neighborhoods and provides transportation options that have helped with the city's congestion. In addition to these benefits, the BeltLine parks are engineered to manage stormwater to ensure that Atlanta is resilient and ready for the challenges facing cities in the future. The Beltline parks serve as

critical infrastructure for the city of Atlanta. They are engineered to process stormwater more efficiently than concrete pipes—addressing chronic flooding, increasing tenfold the supply of drinking water, and enabling development of the previously flood-prone and neglected Old 4th Ward neighborhood.



GRAY
INFRASTRUCTURE

**\$40
Million**



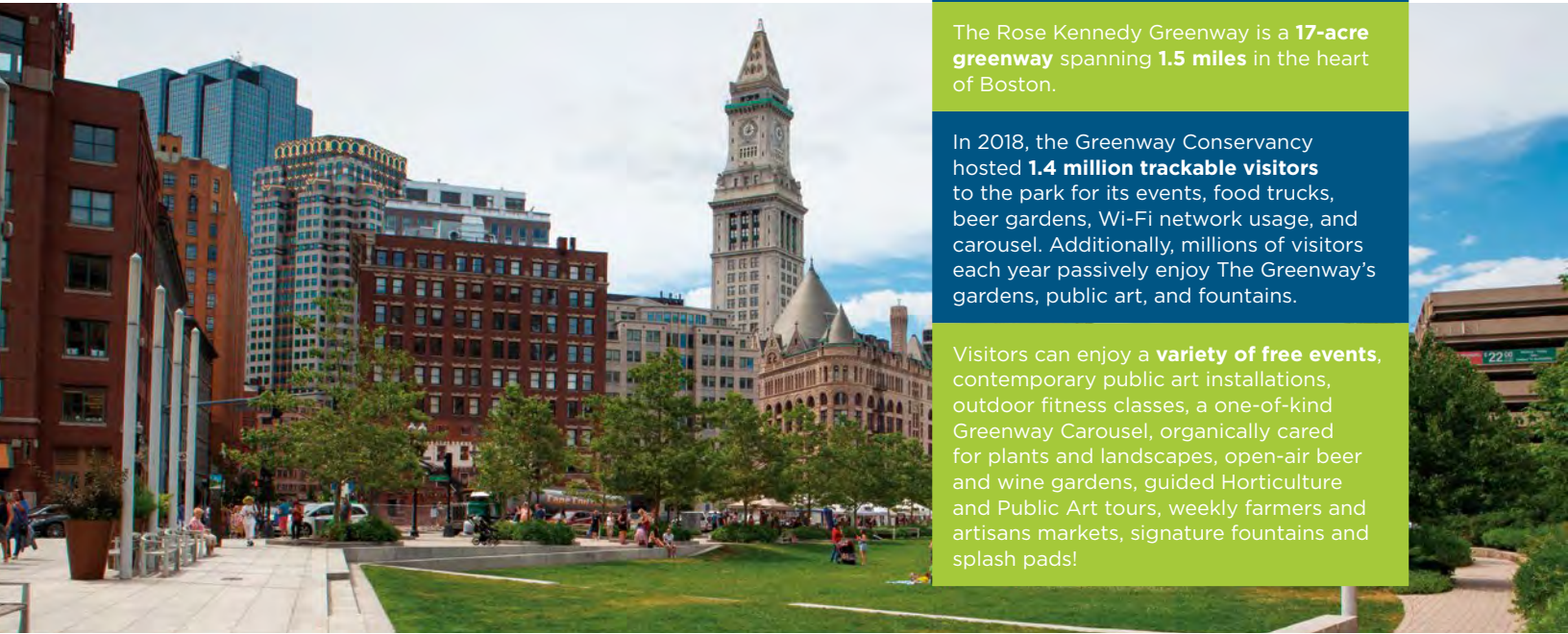
GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE

**\$24
Million**

Using just one park and investing in green infrastructure instead of gray infrastructure, the City of Atlanta is saving **\$16 Million**.

Rose Kennedy Greenway

Reclaiming the “Highway in the Sky”



Fast Facts ^{2, 3}

The Rose Kennedy Greenway is a **17-acre greenway** spanning **1.5 miles** in the heart of Boston.

In 2018, the Greenway Conservancy hosted **1.4 million trackable visitors** to the park for its events, food trucks, beer gardens, Wi-Fi network usage, and carousel. Additionally, millions of visitors each year passively enjoy The Greenway's gardens, public art, and fountains.

Visitors can enjoy a **variety of free events**, contemporary public art installations, outdoor fitness classes, a one-of-kind Greenway Carousel, organically cared for plants and landscapes, open-air beer and wine gardens, guided Horticulture and Public Art tours, weekly farmers and artisans markets, signature fountains and splash pads!

Located in the former footprint of an elevated highway, the Rose Kennedy Greenway stretches through the heart of Boston. The park has brought neighborhoods together, reconnecting the city and its waterfront. The park is a destination for tourists, a gathering space for residents, and an economic driver.

After decades of planning and construction, Boston's “Big Dig” relocated Interstate 93 into an underground tunnel. The reclaimed space is now the site of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a linear park that curves through downtown Boston near the waterfront. It is a commuting

corridor and an outdoor activity and play space, organically maintained.

Seeing that abutting properties benefited greatly from The Greenway, the Greenway Conservancy, the State, the City, and adjacent property owners negotiated a

Business Improvement District (BID) to support the Greenway Conservancy's care of the park. BID contributions are financed by an elective tax on properties one block off the park on either side. The BID contributes \$1.5 million to the Conservancy's budget each year.

Brooklyn Bridge Park

New Life for Six Urban Waterfront Piers



Fast Facts ^{4, 5}

Brooklyn Bridge Park's **85 acres** span **1.3 miles** of formerly abandoned shoreline.

More than **5 million people** per year visit Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Ninety percent parkland and 10 percent development, Brooklyn Bridge Park is **financially self-sustaining**. The 10 percent development on the park pays for 90 percent of the park's budget.

Where commercial piers once occupied Brooklyn's East River shoreline, residents and tourists now enjoy a world-class waterfront park with a wealth of recreational options, rolling hills, riverfront promenades, lush gardens, and spectacular city views.

Brooklyn Bridge Park is an 85-acre park on the Brooklyn side of the East River in New York City. The Park revitalized 1.3 miles of Brooklyn's post-industrial waterfront. Tourists and New Yorkers alike can be seen admiring the iconic cityscape across the East River while strolling along a continuous promenade of six diverse piers.

As a result, more than 7,000 people who live in the adjoining neighborhoods now live within a 10-minute walk to a park, which is the nationally recognized standard. A boon to people of all ages seeking recreation in a dense urban area, Brooklyn Bridge Park features playgrounds, athletic fields, a roller skating rink, fitness equipment, kayak

and canoe launch sites, and basketball, bocce, handball, and beach volleyball courts. With continued investment in Brooklyn Bridge Park, the surrounding neighborhoods and communities are likely to experience increased public health, community and economic development benefits for years to come.

The 606

New Life for an Engineering Masterpiece



PHOTO: ADAM ALEXANDER PHOTOGRAPHY

Chicago's 606 is the world's first raised multi-use trail and is a prime example of multi-use infrastructure. By investing in a park that can be used for a range of purposes and multiple times of day, precious public dollars are spent more wisely.

The Bloomingdale Line was a 20th century engineering marvel, moving freight safely and speedily above grade. But when the rail line fell into disrepair, Chicagoans saw the opportunity for different innovation, this one to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and link the neighborhoods the rail line had divided: the

world's first elevated, multi-use trail. Today, The 606 is an active transportation superhighway, linking four parks (with two more in development), bikeshare and transit stations, restaurants, schools, and businesses. The 606 is a prime example of how infrastructure can serve multiple purposes.

Fast Facts ⁶

In the first full year of operation, the trail averaged **3,531 trips per day**, with a high of **10,365 trips in a single day**.

Overall, an estimated **3.7 million miles** were traveled on The 606 in 2016.

64% of cyclists on the trail weekday mornings and evenings are using it for **transportation**.

The 606 is **integrated into Chicago's transit network**, with 6 train stations and 10 bus routes within 2 blocks of the trail and 2 bikeshare stations along the trail.

Confluence Park

A Riverfront Park in the Heart of Denver



Fast Facts ⁷

Confluence Park covers **4 acres** connected to a **42-acre greenway and park system**.

A 2009 study found that more than **170,000 Denver residents** were active enough in parks and other outdoor spaces to **reduce their combined healthcare costs** by an estimated **\$65 million**.

Every federal dollar spent on the park leveraged more than **\$2,000 in local public and private funds**.

Confluence Park is the birthplace of Denver and lies at the meeting place of two rivers where prospectors once searched for gold in the mid-1800s. Once an industrial dumping ground, Confluence Park and the South Platte River Corridor are now the premier outdoor recreation destination and educational resource for the city of Denver. The park's numerous accessible activities provide profound health benefits to nearby residents and employees as well as visitors to the city.

With its central location in downtown Denver and connections to many residential neighborhoods via a connecting greenway, Confluence Park provides a convenient location for outdoor physical activity. The park

features a canoe and kayak launch site and encourages walking, running, and cycling through the greenway and the connecting park system. It is not uncommon to spot someone fishing for the popular trout that have been

restored to the river. As the area has become increasingly attractive to development, several additions have been made over the years, including a plaza with public seating and access to a growing selection of retail stores nearby.

\$1.2 million of federal Land & Water Conservation grants for the South Platte River galvanized over \$2.5 billion in local public and private funding, an investment that has revitalized Denver's downtown and continues to drive economic development and job creation.

Buffalo Bayou Park

Safeguarding Houston from Future Floods

Fast Facts ^{8, 9}

The **\$58 million** park covers **160 acres** around a **2.3-mile** stretch of Buffalo Bayou west of Downtown Houston.

Today, there is approximately **\$2 billion in development** taking place in neighborhoods adjacent to the park.

The park is easily accessed by public transportation, including light rail; and approximately **44,000 households** are located within a 10-minute walk and approximately **500,000 people** within a 30-minute bike ride.

Large event lawns, public art, perennial gardens, and festival lawns support all types of **year-round activities**.

PHOTO: JONNU SINGLETON

Buffalo Bayou Park links a network of trails, open space, public art and other amenities for its residents to enjoy, while at the same time helps the city manage its stormwater runoff.

The 160-acre linear park stretches for 2.3 miles west of Downtown Houston along the region's most historic waterway. While preserving the corridor's sensitive ecology, the park serves as critical infrastructure for recreation and cultural venues. A \$58 million capital campaign transformed the park from a neglected drainage ditch to a citywide showpiece. Four bridges

and more than 15 miles of multi-use trails and footpaths promote a healthy lifestyle for Houston's growing population.

Careful attention was paid to the design of the park's components to ensure they are able to withstand the destructive forces of the bayou's flooding. The planting of 14,000 native trees, especially bald cypress, helps prevent erosion along the

bayou's banks, and slopes are angled to convey additional flood water. Two visitor centers were strategically sited at the only two park locations above the base-flood elevation.

Buffalo Bayou Park has breathed new life into a long-neglected area, and, most importantly, changed how Houstonians from all walks of life view their city.

Shelby Farms Park and Greenline

Big Impacts for one of the Nation's Largest Urban Parks



Fast Facts ^{10, 11}

The \$70 million investment in new amenities and improvements in recent years has nearly doubled the park's **economic impact** to more than **\$13 million annually** in increased jobs, concessions, visitor spending and tax revenue.

Built in 2010, the Shelby Farms Greenline is a **nearly 12-mile urban trail** connecting neighborhoods from midtown Memphis, East Memphis and Cordova to Shelby Farms Park and to one another.

Park improvements have resulted in a **5% increase in property values** within 500 feet of the park and Shelby Farms Greenline for a total of **\$67 million in property value added**.

Shelby Farms Park is one of the largest urban parks in the United States and includes a diverse array of attractions including open pastures, forested areas, an international award-winning playground, equestrian trails, a herd of bison, boat rentals, fishing lakes and the Wolf River. Bike and pedestrian trails connect nearby neighborhoods and allow for active transportation and recreation on the way to and within the park.

Located in Memphis, Shelby Farms Park spans 4,500 acres and serves nearly one million people who live within a 20-minute drive of the park. Formerly the site of

a prison farm, the public park now draws more than 3 million visitors annually.

The successful revitalization of Shelby Farms Park and Shelby

Farms Greenline sparked a wave of city-wide investment in and support for park conservancies, public trails, connectivity and public realm development.

Cumberland and Riverfront Parks

Re-envisioning Nashville's Natural Assets



PHOTO: HARGREAVES ASSOCIATES

Conceived as more than just recreational spaces, these two parks were intended to remediate brownfields, preserve floodplains, and revitalize downtown Nashville's cultural and natural resources. The parks fulfill a vital role in managing stormwater and making Nashville safer and more resilient.

Cumberland Park lies on 6.5 acres that were converted from surface parking. Riverfront Park occupies 12 acres of a remediated brownfield. Besides containing substantial

stormwater features, the parks are turning into transportation hubs, linking residents to the riverfront with off-street paths for walking and biking, as well as floating docks.

Fast Facts ¹²

Cumberland Park's underground cistern now **captures about 1 million gallons of stormwater** a year from surrounding streets and parking lots.

Water from Riverfront Park drains into a **375,000-gallon underground rain harvesting tank**.

Built for a combined cost of **\$61.5 million**, the parks have helped generate **\$1 billion** in new investment within just two blocks of their boundaries.

Lafitte Greenway

Rising from Katrina



PHOTO: HUNTER KING

A small investment in the Lafitte Greenway created a means of transportation for local residents, catalyzed development in the area, and increased environmental and economic development.

After Hurricane Katrina hit, community members in New Orleans re-envisioned the old Lafitte industrial corridor as a linear park that could function as a transportation route for local citizens but also manage stormwater, get people exercising, and provide space for community events and gatherings. The Greenway was built with multi-model transportation in mind. It is

located within walking distance to schools, grocery stores, theatres, museums and other amenities. Improved pedestrian crossings, a streetcar stop, and access to other transit along the trail make the greenway an important part of New Orleans' transportation network. The greenway also features bioswales and rain gardens to help manage stormwater in a city with an overburdened drainage system.

Fast Facts ^{13, 14, 15}

In its first full year of use, more than **272,000 people** walked or rode a bicycle on the Lafitte Greenway.

In a recent survey, **80% of people cycling** on the trail on a weekday were using the Greenway for **transportation**.

The Greenway is designed to handle **100% of rainfall** on-site from a 10-year storm, reducing the stress on the city's drainage system of pumps and pipes.

The High Line

Converting an Historic Elevated Freight Rail Line into a Vibrant Park



Lauded as one of the most innovative urban reclamation projects in modern history, New York's High Line has effectively paved the way for using public parks to catalyze economic development and community transformation.

Built on an abandoned elevated freight railway, the High Line is a nearly 1.5-mile linear public park that allows users to travel a span of 22 city blocks, while providing scenic views of New York City and the nearby Hudson River. The park has had a “halo

effect” on the surrounding blocks, elevating property values and tax revenues. Thirty new residential, commercial, or cultural developments have been constructed or planned for the area, which is now a booming residential, retail, and office center.

Fast Facts ^{16, 17}

The total cost of converting the freight corridor into a park was approximately **\$250 million**. The project generated **8,000 construction jobs**.

Redevelopment of the High Line has increased tax revenue by an estimated **\$1 billion**.

The High Line has resulted in more than **\$2 billion** in private investment and new economic activity, boasting **12,000 new jobs**.

Since 2014, more than **20 million people** have visited the High Line, which hosts almost **500 public programs and events** annually.

Fairmount Park

Enhancing Health and Mobility in Philadelphia



Fast Facts ^{18, 19, 20}

Fairmount Park is Philadelphia's largest Park, with **2,055 acres** and more than **10 million visitors** each year.

Between 2016 and 2018 **more than 5 million pedestrian and bicycle trips** have taken place on the Schuylkill River Trail in Center City.

In 2016, **48%** of all weekday bicycle trips and **44%** of all weekday pedestrian trips on the trail in Center City occurred during **commuting** hours.

Average daily traffic on the trail in 2018 was **4,560 people**.

More than 1.1 million people in the region receive water from the park. The park also features a **1-acre wetland**, which treats a portion of the **70 million gallons of stormwater** generated in the watershed each year.

Fairmount Park is one of the first examples of using park infrastructure to serve multiple functions; offering green space, delivering clean water, improving the city's air, providing transportation options and generating new economic development.

Fairmount Park is the largest municipal park in Philadelphia and consists of two park sections named East Park and West Park, divided by the Schuylkill River. In addition to serving as a critical part of the city's water system, the park has now

become an important piece of transportation infrastructure. A Schuylkill River Trail connects the city to the surrounding suburbs and will eventually become part of a 130-mile trail linking Philadelphia to rural Schuylkill County.



GRAY
INFRASTRUCTURE
**\$16
Billion**



GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE
**\$2
Billion**

Philadelphia is saving **\$14 billion** by managing storm water and preventing flooding with parks and green infrastructure instead of new pipes and tunnels.

CITATIONS

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and the many park leaders around the country who contributed to the report.
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City Parks Alliance is the only independent, nationwide membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks. Its mission is to engage, educate and nurture a broad-based constituency to support the creation, revitalization and sustainability of parks and green spaces that contribute to dynamic cities.



cityparksalliance.org

