pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PCA Creative Communities
Letter of Interest Coversheet

Lead Applicant Information

Organization: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Address: 100 N. 20th St., fifth floor

City: Philadelphia **Zip Code:** 19103

Municipality: Philadelphia **County:** Philadelphia

Phone: 215.988.8761

Website: www.phsonline.org

FEIN: 23-1352265

Contact Name: Jeffrey Barg

Contact Title: Associate Director, Planning and External Policy Relations

Contact Phone: 215.988.8761

Contact Email: jbarg@pennhort.org

Organization Type: 501(c)3

☑ **By checking the box, you are indicating acknowledgment of and intention to comply with the local government resolution requirement, if your community is selected to participate in the Creative Communities Pilot Program. (See full application guidelines for more information on this requirement.)**

Letter of Interest (LOI) Submission Instructions: LOI deadline, Friday, June 28, 2019. LOIs must be submitted via email to RA-OAcreativepa@pa.gov.

a. Completed coversheet form with acknowledgment of and intention to comply with the local government resolution requirement, if your community is selected to participate in the Creative Communities Pilot Program.

b. Narrative (3 pages max.)
   - Brief community description.
   - Description of any existing cultural plans and/or experience implementing arts-based development strategies.
   - Description of successful community partnerships.
   - Description of community opportunity or challenge the organization would like to address through this program.

c. 3 Letters of Support (local government, planning, convention and visitors bureau (CVB), business improvment district (BID), chamber of commerce, local arts organization, etc.).

<u>Creative Communities Pilot Program: Project Narrative – Manayunk Pop Up Garden</u>

Project Description

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, plans to join with private and civic partners to open a Pop Up Garden in the city's Manayunk neighborhood in spring 2020. This project will be an exciting hybrid of past successful creative placemaking efforts and our 190-year history of connecting people to horticulture to build beautiful, healthy and sustainable communities.

The garden will marry two concepts in which PHS has proven leadership—creative placemaking and community gardening—on one compelling, historic site. Currently a vacant lot used for illegal parking, the site has a rich history. It is adjacent to Manayunk's train tracks, and a historic coal chute juts into the middle of the 17,000-square-foot lot. In the neighborhood's industrial history, trains would pull off the tracks to dump tons of coal into the storage bays several stories below. But the tracks stopped carrying coal decades ago. The coal chute has rusted, and the lot has been surrendered to illegal parking while it awaits development.

With the help of partners, PHS plans to transform this lot into a multifaceted community amenity. In one half of the lot, we will build a Pop Up Garden with lush plantings, gathering and performance space, green stormwater infrastructure, and exciting food and beverage service. In the other half, PHS will build a community garden with communal planting beds, and space for classes, workshops and varied programming. Design will be green and organic, and will thoroughly integrate the existing site features—particularly the historic coal chute. Planned materials include reclaimed wood, dramatic metal trellises, terraced palette seating and whimsical lighting to create a green space that's both a community treasure and a regionwide destination—and will be unlike any other garden in the country.

Partnerships

PHS's Pop Up Gardens succeed through thoughtful partnerships, and this one will be a strong example of that. PHS is a 501(c)3 organization, and has spent years cultivating private and civic partners that ensure project success.

1) *Devon Arms LLC*. We first met with the landowners roughly a year ago, when they were looking to activate properties that they were not yet ready to develop. We collaborated to find a site that would accommodate PHS's Pop Up Garden vision while not inhibiting neighborhood development. We have entered into a three-year license agreement that allows PHS multiple seasons to operate the Pop Up Garden, while keeping the landowner closely involved.

2) *Operating partner*. Since 2013 PHS has partnered with neighborhood-based restaurant and bar owners to run the day-to-day food and beverage service at its other Pop Up Gardens. While PHS designs, builds, programs and promotes the gardens, the operator provides the dining and hospitality component, with an emphasis on locally sourced goods. At this time we have not executed an agreement with one operator, but we are in talks with several Manayunk-based businesses about running the neighborhood's Pop Up. We hope to sign an agreement by this fall.

3) *Manayunk Neighborhood Council and Manayunk Development Corporation*. Planning for the garden has been in close consultation with the Manayunk Neighborhood Council (MNC), the registered community organization, and the Manayunk Development Corporation (MDC), the nonprofit responsible for the management, promotion and positive development of Manayunk's business district. We have met multiple times with the boards and membership of both MNC and MDC, have incorporated their input on topics ranging from operating hours to food and beverage partners to parking concerns, and have secured their support in our zoning applications. Their deep involvement from the earliest stages of the project helps ensure its successful implementation.

Community Context

The Pop Up site is on Jamestown Avenue, just off Manayunk's Main Street, a pedestrian-friendly specialty commercial corridor. As the Philadelphia City Planning Commission's latest comprehensive plan notes, "It is located on a heavily trafficked street at the base of Manayunk's steep topography and is accessible by multiple modes of transportation. As a historic district, the corridor features unique 19th-century storefronts."

Manayunk's population has skewed younger in recent years, with an influx in 18- to 34-year-olds and decreasing numbers of residents 65 and older. The comprehensive plan indicates that as a mostly residential and commercial neighborhood, Manayunk is short on green space, and Main Street "could benefit from a refurbished streetscape." In particular, it recommends updating the landscape on the 3700-4500 blocks of Main Street, which includes the block where Jamestown Avenue intersects.

Geographically, Main Street lies at the lower end of some of Philadelphia's steepest topography. In the past, this has caused flooding concerns for the neighborhood. For this project, it presents an opportunity to, as a downhill intercept, capture stormwater before it is dumped into the Manayunk Canal, while importantly educating residents about ways that they can use their own gardens and planters to improve stormwater management in the neighborhood.

Past Successes in Creative Placemaking

PHS created its first Pop Up Garden in 2011, at the corner of 20th and Market in Philadelphia. From the beginning, we set out to create beautiful, flexible gathering spaces that would activate vacant lots while providing opportunities for education, entertainment, social connections and a link to horticulture. With the addition of food and beverage service to the Pop Up model in 2013, our gardens set off a citywide summertime trend. Gardens that follow PHS's model now dot the entire urban landscape.

We have successfully expanded the Pop Up program to open multiple gardens each summer, and to return to especially successful spots for consecutive seasons:

- 2011: 20th and Market (Center City)
- 2012: 19th and Walnut (Center City)
- 2013: Broad and Spruce (Center City)
- 2014: 15th and South (Center City)

- 2015: 15th and South (Center City), 9th and Wharton (South Philly)
- 2016: 15th and South (Center City), 10th and Callowhill (Rail Park)
- 2017-2019: 15th and South (Center City), 36th and Filbert (University City)

We have also taken great strides to emphasize the "creative" in creative placemaking. Highlights include: artist-installed bicycle sculptures at the South Philly garden; *Bitter Homes and Gardens*, a 2015 commission of the Bearded Ladies Cabaret, performed at both the Center City and South Philly gardens; artistic and historic installations on the industrial history of the Callowhill neighborhood at the 2016 Rail Park garden; walking tours of West Philadelphia gardens from the University City site; a photo mural on the history of gardening in West Philadelphia, also at the University City site; plus live music performances, educational workshops, hands-on demonstrations and more at every one of our gardens.

The Manayunk site provides ample opportunities to continue these artistic interventions. The design of the garden will incorporate the unique and historic coal chute and the evocative industrial history of the adjacent rail line, much as our Rail Park garden did in 2016. With a multi-year lease, we will have the opportunity for longer-term art installations, and the community garden will allow more spontaneous arts programming even during times of the year when the Pop Up portion is otherwise closed. As with all of our arts initiatives, we will work closely with neighborhood residents to ensure that installations reflect the character, history and desires of those who call Manayunk home.

Multi-Year Planning

When PHS began its Pop Up Gardens in 2011, they were designed to be one-season bursts that would "pop down" at the end of the summer. Since then, we have seen the gardens become active community spaces, and have taken advantage of the opportunity to upgrade each site when we are able to return for another season. In the midst of our sixth season at 15th and South, and our third (and final) season at 36th and Filbert, we now seek out lots where we will be able to maintain a project for multiple years.

Fortunately, we have found a willing partner with the landowner of the Manayunk site. We have signed a three-year lease on the space, so we will be able to return and make continual upgrades over multiple seasons. PHS is committed to working with local residents and businesses to make the Manayunk Pop Up Garden a treasured community asset over the next few years. If the project is successful and if our partners are willing, we would be excited to extend the Pop Up even further into the future.

Enclosures

1) Site images (via Google): 106 Jamestown Ave., future Manayunk Pop Up Garden
2) Letter of support: Curtis Jones Jr., Philadelphia City Council, 4th District
3) Letter of support: Kevin Smith, President, Manayunk Neighborhood Council
4) Letter of support: Jane R. Lipton, President, Manayunk Development Corporation
5) Letter of support: Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer, City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
6) Letter of support: Eleanor Sharpe, Executive Director, Philadelphia City Planning Commission

106 Jamestown Ave.:

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CITY COUNCIL

CURTIS JONES, JR.
ROOM 404, CITY HALL
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107
(215) 686-3416 or 3417
Fax No. (215) 686-1934

COUNCILMAN - 4TH DISTRICT

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Committee on Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs

Member
Rules
Law & Government
Licenses & Inspection
Public Property
Transportation & Public Utilities
Ethics
Inter Governmental Cooperation

June 27, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) proposal for a Pop Up Garden at 106 Jamestown Avenue in the 4th Council District.

PHS's latest endeavor, for a Manayunk Pop Up Garden, has incorporated that same kind of neighborhood involvement that the organization always brings to its projects. They have met multiple times with the Manayunk Neighborhood Council, Manayunk Development Corporation and individual neighbors, and have sought and received support from the relevant neighborhood groups.

The Pop Up Garden will be a valued amenity in the community, and residents are looking forward to growing plants in the communal planting beds. The educational workshops and horticultural programming will help make Manayunk a greener neighborhood, while the garden design will make the neighborhood a regional destination for horticultural excellence.

PHS has a deep history of working with residents to make Manayunk a more beautiful, healthy and sustainable place to live. Past PHS engagement in the neighborhood includes:

- Tree plantings with the Roxborough/Manayunk/Wissahickon Tree Tenders
- One garden supported by their City Harvest program to help reduce food insecurity
- Dozens of home stormwater management projects from Rain Check program participants
- Half a dozen Gardening Contest Participants

We look forward to the Pop Up Garden in our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Curtis Jones Jr.
Councilman-4th District

Manayunk **N**eighborhood **C**ouncil, PO Box 4667, Philadelphia, PA 19127

www.ManayunkCouncil.org 215-487-2125

Kevin Smith, President
Adam Ertel, Vice President
Susan Shimp, Treasurer
David Bass, Recording Sec.
John Hunter, Trustee

Kathleen Lambert, Trustee
Alan Rosenberg, Trustee
Sean Pincus, Trustee
James Scott, Trustee
Arlene Jones, Trustee

Karl Blischke
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
16 Finance Building- Commonwealth & North Streets
Harrisburg, PA 17120

June 26, 2019

Re: Creative Communities Pilot Program grant application for The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Manayunk Pop Up Garden.

Dear Mr Blischke

Manayunk Neighborhood Council supports The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's grant application.

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is proposing to create a pop up garden in Manayunk by re-purposing an old industrial property consisting of old coal chutes and empty barren land.

PHS is proposing to convert this space to a community garden and outdoor restaurant.

We believe the garden will be a valuable community asset worthy of funding.

- The project activates a space formerly used for illegal parking
- The project helps preserve Manayunk industrial history (the coal chutes)
- The project creates an inviting out door green space in Manayunk.
- The project creates a community garden for neighbors.
- PHS is committed to local neighborhood greening projects.
- PHS will be serving the community with classes, workshops and other programming.
- PHS's activities, in the neighborhood, will support Manayunk Neighborhood Council's goal, from our Mission Statement, "*To promote a unified and sustainable community*".

Thank You,

Kevin Smith
President

MANAYUNK
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

Mr. Karl Blischke
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
16 Finance Building-
Commonwealth & North Streets
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: PHS Manayunk Beer Garden

Dear Mr. Blischke,

I am writing today on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Manayunk Development Corporation. The mission of our organization is to promote economic development along Main Street Manayunk commercial corridor. We've been working with the folks at PHS to bring on of their Pop Up Beer Gardens to our community for quite some time, and now it seems we may achieve our goal and get one in the spring of 2020.

For this reason our board is writing to you in SUPPORT of The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's grant application to the Creative Communities Pilot Program to help with the Manayunk Pop Up Garden. Our organization has been working closely with PHS to design and implement this project and we are excited to say that we believe that this project will bring many, many people to our district. Funding from your group would be incredibly generous and helpful.

Feel free to contact me with any questions about the project and its impact on our community

Sincerely,

Jane R. Lipton
Executive Director
Manayunk Development Corporation

4312 Main Street, Philadelphia Pennsylvania 19127 telephone 215-482-9565 fax 215-487-9137

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF ARTS, CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY
116 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-3989

KELLY R. LEE
Chief Cultural Officer

June 21, 2019

Karl Blischke
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
16 Finance Building – Commonwealth & North Streets
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Mr. Blischke:

I am writing to express the City of Philadelphia's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy support for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) Creative Communities Pilot Program grant application for its Manayunk Pop Up Garden. The project will expand the traditional commercial corridor of the Manayunk neighborhood and engage visitors in the area's extensive history. The project also aligns well with other city initiatives that enhance Philadelphia neighborhoods with innovative and accessible cultural programming.

PHS has been a long-time contributor to Philadelphia's cultural life. They produce the annual Philadelphia Flower Show, which draws 250,000 visitors a year and has a more than $65 million economic impact on the region. More recently, PHS has looked to engage with residents in their neighborhoods around horticulture, arts, and culture. Since 2011 PHS has brought its Pop-Up Gardens to vacant lots around the city, and these gardens have touched off a citywide revolution in summertime outdoor dining and cultural programming. PHS's Pop-Up Gardens connect tens of thousands of visitors every summer; transforming underused spaces with lush plantings, arts and cultural programming, and horticultural education. They have truly transformed Philadelphia's summer landscape.

The proposed Manayunk Pop-Up Garden will bring these exciting amenities to a new Philadelphia neighborhood. Their design includes creative reuse of older materials, and thoughtfully incorporates the dramatic historic features of the site. The community garden portion of the site will be a unique opportunity for all ages to get their hands dirty, and to add cultural programming to the garden setting. Additionally, we appreciate the steps that PHS has taken to engage community residents and businesses in the design and build-out of the site.

The Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy looks forward to the quality resources and programming that the PHS Pop-Up Garden will bring to Manayunk.

Sincerely,

Kelly Lee
Chief Cultural Officer
City of Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

PCPC

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June 28, 2019

Karl Blischke
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
16 Finance Building
Commonwealth & North Streets
Harrisburg, PA 17120

2019 Creative Communities Initiative: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Manayunk Pop-up Garden

Dear Mr. Blischke,

I am pleased to provide this letter of plan compliance for the 2019 PA Council on the Arts' Creative Communities Pilot Initiative grant application submitted by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). PHS plans to create a pop-up garden in the Manayunk neighborhood on a currently vacant lot. This project will activate the site with placemaking efforts as well as the creation of a communal garden.

This project complements the City's adopted comprehensive plan, *Philadelphia 2035*, by expanding vacant land management strategies in partnership with residents, businesses, and nonprofits including strategies such as community gardening and greening programs. Please let me know if you have any questions about this project.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Sharpe, AICP
Executive Director

Cc: Matt Rader, President, PHS
David Kanthor, Transportation Planner, PCPC
Matt Wysong, Community Planner, PCPC

One Parkway Building
1515 Arch St.
13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215-683-4615 Telephone
215-683-4630 Facsimile

www.phila.gov/cityplanning