

The 2017



First Prize: \$5,000

Register for FREE:

Now - October 06, 2016

www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org

Competition Dates:

October 07-28, 2016

Submission Deadline:

October 28, 2016

Entry Fee (per entry @ submission):

\$25 | student team

Awards Ceremony:

February 2017 (tentative)

Transforming The Tunnel: The Rail Park



Philadelphia's City Branch is an unused network of 115-year-old depressed rail lines that transported goods and people into and out of Center City Philadelphia. In 1992 the tracks were taken out of service and now lay dormant.

Friends of the Rail Park, a non-profit advocacy and fundraising group, has developed a vision for a 3-mile linear park and multi-modal transportation corridor on the unused rail lines that connects 10 neighborhoods with Center City, Fairmount Park, and some of Philadelphia's most important cultural institutions along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. They envision the park as a series of interconnected neighborhood gathering spaces with a focus on health and wellness, arts and culture, and environmental and educational programming, as well as serving as a bicycle and pedestrian thoroughfare.

Beginning near 21st Street, at the western edge of the depressed "Cut" section of tracks, is a covered "Tunnel" section (50 feet wide by 25 feet high) which extends five blocks before the tracks reemerge and slowly ramp back above ground by 31st Street. **Taking into consideration the three-mile vision for the park, what design interventions could improve access to, transit through, lighting in, and programming for the Rail Park Tunnel, making this covered section a useful, fun, and safe public space for all?**

Registration is FREE and open to all! Registration does NOT obligate you to participate – the process simply ensures that you receive all competition-related materials as they are made public, including helpful resources and, on October 7th, the Official Competition Packet (with full rules and regulations). The competition is open to all undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students who are actively matriculating at a college or university during the run of the competition (October 7-28, 2016). As you think about this challenge, be sure to consider:

Access

How will people gain access to the Tunnel? Consider how access points might be created by connecting with the streets and cultural institutions above. How will your design address the abilities of users from different age groups and with different physical abilities, including users with limited mobility, sight, or hearing?

Mobility

How will your design address the needs of walkers, runners, bikers, and those interested in pausing in the tunnel? How will your design integrate into the larger visions for the City Branch, especially its value as a transit corridor protected from (but accessible to) the busy streets above?

Safety

How will your design address both the actual and perceived safety issues of transiting through a long, dark, covered tunnel in need of repairs? How will your design make the tunnel and street above both *feel* safe and *be* safe day and night? How will people exit the tunnel in an emergency?

Fun

How can your design transform the tunnel and streets above into both a civic commons and a useful passageway? What physical interventions and cultural programs could add elements of fun and education? What elements of your vision could be quickly and inexpensively built and tested, either at street level or in the tunnel entranceways?

Resources for Research:

["Unusual Spaces" Video](#) | [Friends of the Rail Park website](#) | [PowerPoint overview of "The Cut" and "The Tunnel"](#) | [Master Plan for "The Cut" section of the Rail Park](#) | [Fairmount Neighborhood Plan](#) | [Benjamin Franklin Parkway Plan 2004](#) | [Benjamin Franklin Parkway Plan 2013](#) | [DVRPC Transit Feasibility Report](#) | [City Branch article](#)

We STRONGLY encourage proposals from diverse teams that include individuals from a variety of fields: architecture, urban planning, design (industrial, graphic, etc.), landscape architecture, public health, economic development, real estate law, business, or other fields which might bring innovative ideas to your proposal. Proposals from diverse teams have historically done best in this competition.

For more information on the Better Philadelphia Challenge, including summaries of past competitions and images of winning entries, please visit: www.PhiladelphiaCFA.org. **Information in this brief in preliminary and details may change when the Official Competition Packet released in early October.**

About the Better Philadelphia Challenge

Founded in 2006 in memory of Philadelphia's iconic 20th century city planner, Ed Bacon [1910-2005], this annual competition challenges university-level students (undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students) from around the world to address real-world urban design issues in Philadelphia that have application not only to our city, but to urban centers around the globe. This challenge is organized by the Ed Bacon Memorial Committee of the Center for Architecture and Design.

About the Center for Architecture and Design

Founded in 2003 by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Center provides the public with a place to explore architecture, urban planning, and design, allowing you to understand how these disciplines affect us all in our daily lives. Using Philadelphia's distinctive breadth of architecture, pioneering urban design, and manufacturing heritage as the foundation for conversations, we educate through exhibitions, walking tours, guest speakers, hands-on workshops, design competitions, festivals, and children's programming. The Center also serves as the physical home for AIA Philadelphia, the AIA Bookstore, and the Community Design Collaborative.

About the Edmund N. Bacon Prize

Bestowed annually on an accomplished figure who has made outstanding contributions to urban planning, development, and design through conviction of vision, effective communication, and commitment to improving their community. This prize is presented at the same awards ceremony which honors the Better Philadelphia Challenge winners and features a keynote address by its recipient.

About Edmund N. Bacon

Philadelphia's most iconic city planner, Ed Bacon [1910-2005] was Executive Director of Philadelphia's City Planning Commission from 1949-1970 and is the only city planner to ever grace the cover of Time Magazine. His impact on Philadelphia's urban environment began with his epic 1947 *A Better Philadelphia* exhibition, which drew nearly 400,000 people over five weeks to its visionary displays covering two floors of Gimbel's Department Store.