

The 2015 Better Philadelphia Challenge

First Prize: **\$5,000**

THE FUTURE OF PETTY ISLAND



A map of Petty Island (in yellow) and its surroundings



Petty Island today, view from Northeast (image © Google Maps)

Petty Island, the site of multiple development proposals over the centuries (even Louis Sullivan drafted plans for an entertainment complex on the island in 1907), languishes today as a nearly-forgotten storage site for petroleum tanks and cargo containers. **How might Petty Island - and the land adjacent to it on the Philadelphia side of the Delaware River - be developed as a visionary 21st Century complex that creatively addresses today's and tomorrow's cultural, environmental, and economic needs?**

Competition Takes Place: October 03 - 24, 2014

Awards Ceremony: February 2015 (tentative)



THE CHALLENGE

You are challenged to imagine an innovative future for Petty Island, which is located just North of Center City Philadelphia and surrounded by the tidal Delaware River ([Official Competition Site Boundaries](#)). As you develop your visionary proposal, you should be sure to address the following topics:

Site Programming

What types of activities and uses should new infrastructure support on the full site? What recreational options, housing, or business opportunities would make the best use of this land? [A history of Petty Island](#) | [The 1907 Island City proposal by Louis Sullivan](#) | [A timeline of Petty Island history](#) | [The Delaware River Waterfront Master Plan \(2011\)](#) (please note that the current plans for the Delaware River Waterfront are not required to be taken into consideration for this competition – teams are free to imagine other potential uses of the site)

Climate Change

With rising sea levels and increasingly chaotic weather, what kinds of investment and infrastructure are warranted for developing this island (and nearby shoreline) in the tidal Delaware River? Where should key infrastructure be located on the full site to keep it safe? [Interactive Sea Rise Map](#)

Transportation / Access

What types of transportation options should be offered for people to access the island from Philadelphia? Bridges? Ferries? Cable Cars? Tunnels? Something else? Consider using the largely undeveloped riverbank between Kensington and Port Richmond on the Philadelphia side of the Delaware River as a key access point. [Perspective map of competition site](#)

Environmental Sustainability

Petty Island is an important stop-over for migrating birds along the Northeast Corridor and a habitat for native plants. How will your proposal impact the natural environment of the island and can your proposal actually improve these conditions over the long-term? [Current Plans for Petty Island Preserve](#) (please note that the current plans for Petty Island are not required to be taken into consideration for this competition – teams are free to imagine other potential uses of the site)

REQUIREMENTS

The 2015 competition is open to students of all disciplines and academic levels who are currently matriculating at a college or university for the duration of the competition (October 03 - 24, 2014). Entries may be submitted by individuals or by teams of any size, as long as all members of the team are matriculating students. Teams may include students from one school or from several schools.

Entrants MUST electronically submit one (1) presentation board which measures 80” wide x 40” tall (203cm x 101.5cm) as a PDF document, optimized for web viewing (smallest file size possible). Turn off the “preserve layers” option when saving. Boards may be designed in full color or monochrome.

Your board **MUST** include:

- **Project Title** (title font must be *at least* 1.5” (4 cm) in height – suggested: Ariel font at 150pt)
- **Defining Image** which provides an overview of your vision for the competition site. This image is meant to help people unfamiliar with your project gain a quick understanding of your design solution. This image could be a beautiful site plan, a computer rendering, a fun sketch, a funky collage, an infographic – anything that best summarizes your vision. This image can be of the entire site, a section of the site, elements within the site, or represent abstract ideas about your solution. We want you to be creative with this image; just remember its purpose is to explain your vision succinctly. This image should be the first thing people notice about your competition board, so make sure its big enough, bold enough, and placed conspicuously - it could even take up the majority of your presentation board.

- **Renderings, diagrams, maps, and/or plans** which explain your treatment of:
 - a) **Site Programming** – how will you develop the land within the competition area?
 - b) **Climate Change** – how does your proposal take into account predicted sea-level rise and increased chaotic weather due to global warming?
 - c) **Transportation / Access** – how will people get to and from the Island from the Philadelphia side of the Delaware River?
 - d) **Environmental Sustainability** – how will your proposal impact the natural habitat on the island and nearby shoreline?

Your board **MAY** include:

- **Any graphical elements** necessary to convey your proposal, including drawings, photographs, charts, graphs, logos, renderings, etc.
- **Text to help describe your proposal and graphical elements.** All text on your board must be *at least 3/16"* (½ cm) in height (suggested: Ariel font @ 18pt).

Entrants MUST also electronically submit one (1) 10-slide PowerPoint or Keynote presentation.

The purpose of this slide show is to help tell the story of your proposal and will also become the basis of your public presentation at the awards ceremony, should your team win. Your slide show may also be turned into a 3-minute video (with narration) to be featured online and at the Philadelphia Center for Architecture.

- Slide shows must consist of exactly 10 slides
- The first slide in the presentation should consist of:
 - The title of your project in bold letters in the center of the slide
 - Your Defining Image as the background, sized to fill the frame (it's okay if you have to crop off edges of your image to make it fill the frame). You may want to fade this image out slightly so that you project title is easier to read.
 - No additional text or images
- Content for the remaining 9 slides must be taken directly from your Presentation Board. Each slide should consist of:
 - One main image or graphic (a set of graphs or charts is fine, as long as they are each large enough to read or understand)
 - Optional: one sentence of text or up to three short bullet points per slide (keep it brief!). Make sure all text on the slide is large enough to read when viewed in presentation mode.
 - Images used on slides should be low-resolution (72 dpi), to help keep the file size small
- Your presentation should also include 20-seconds worth of talking points in the "notes" section for each slide (these are visible to the presenter of the slide show, but not visible on the slide itself). These can be formatted as a paragraph or as bullet points, but should help the judges understand what you are trying to explain with the slide. These notes will also form the basis of the narration for your slide show if it gets turned into a video.
- Take care to organize your slides in the order which best tells the story of your proposal and lead viewers through your concept in a logical order.
- Your slide show should **NOT** include any transition animations between slides, nor should it include any timing (we will be manually advancing the slides during the judging process)

Your Presentation Board, Project Title, and Slide Show (including notes) MUST NOT include any personally identifying information including:

- Team members' name(s)
- Teachers' name(s)
- School name(s)
- School Logo(s)

Judges must be able to review your entry anonymously – any information that allows judges to identify you, your team, your school, or any of your teachers (other than the personal information required in the online submission form) will disqualify your entry.

SUBMISSION

- Entries must be submitted via: <http://PhiladelphiaCFA.submittable.com/submit>
- Entries MUST be received by **11:59pm EDT on Friday, October 24, 2014** (03:59 GMT, Saturday, October 25, 2014). Begin submitting your entry well before the cutoff!
- **\$25 fee per entry** to be paid by credit card online via submission website at time of file upload.
- Project Boards must be submitted as PDF files, optimized for web viewing (smallest file size possible), with “preserve layers” turned off.
- Project Board PDFs and slide show files must be named using the following standard:
ProjectTitle.ext
 - example: *OurVisionForPhilly.pdf* and *OurVisionForPhilly.ppt*
- **You may add, remove, or change team members at any time up until you submit your entry.** Simply include information about all your final team members in the “Team Members” section of the online entry form when you submit your final entry.

JUDGING

This year’s jurors will remain anonymous until after the winning entries are announced. Past jurors for the Better Philadelphia Challenge have included:

- **Thomas Corcoran**, President, Delaware River Waterfront Corporation
- **Alexander Garvin**, President + CEO, AGA Public Realm Strategies, Inc.
- **Alan Greenberger**, Executive Director, Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- **Rose Grey**, Vice President Community & Economic Development, Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha, Inc.
- **Paul R. Levy**, President and CEO, Center City District | Executive Director, Central Philadelphia Development Corporation
- **Diana Lind**, Executive Director, Next American City
- **Dennis Pieprz**, Principal, Sasaki Associates
- **Paolo Santis**, Visiting Researcher, MIT’s SENSEable Cities Lab
- **Gerard H. Sweeney**, President and CEO, Brandywine Realty Trust

Submissions will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Adherence to the requirements as described above.
2. The overall ability of your team to create and communicate a cohesive vision for the project site(s) that answers the following question: **How might Petty Island - and the land adjacent to it on the Philadelphia side of the Delaware River - be developed as a visionary 21st Century complex that creatively addresses today’s and tomorrow’s cultural, environmental, and economic needs?**
3. The ability of your proposal to articulate and address the needs of the community and the site’s sustainability in the mid-term (by the year 2060) and long-term (by the year 2110).
4. The quality of your visual information, especially your ability to cleanly and effectively communicate your ideas using images, graphics, and slides.
5. While we do not expect you to have a complete understanding of the financial implications of your design proposals, the more you can attach somewhat realistic cost estimates to phases of development the more favorably the jurors will review your submission.

The jurors’ decision will be final.

AWARDS

Award winners will be publicly announced in December 2014. First prize is \$5,000. Additional honorary (non-monetary) prizes may be awarded at the judges' discretion. All award winning teams will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 USD total towards travel and lodging costs to attend the awards ceremony if they are located outside the Greater Philadelphia region.

The ceremony honoring the student winners is tentatively planned to be held in Philadelphia in February 2015 (exact date and time to be determined), and will also feature a talk by the 2015 Edmund N. Bacon Prize winner, who will also be announced in December 2014.

Winning entries may be printed, mounted, and exhibited at the awards ceremony. They may also be exhibited at the Philadelphia Center for Architecture for 4-6 weeks during the late summer of 2015. Winning entries may additionally be displayed at other locations around Philadelphia or the world and will be available for viewing on the Philadelphia Center for Architecture's website.

QUESTIONS

Administrative questions about the competition can be directed to David Bender, Associate Director, at david@aiaphila.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You may find it valuable to review [winning entries from previous Better Philadelphia Challenges](#).

* * *

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 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. The competition assesses a \$25 fee per entry via our online submission platform, PhiladelphiaCFA.Submittable.com, at the time of submission.

About the Edmund N. Bacon Prize

Bestowed annually on an accomplished figure who has achieved outstanding results in 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 annual Better Philadelphia Challenge student winners and features a keynote address by its recipient.

About Ed Bacon

Philadelphia's most famous city planner, Ed Bacon 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.

About the Philadelphia Center for Architecture

Founded in 2003, the Center performs the charitable and educational work of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and serves as Philadelphia's hub for dialogue and programs about the built environment. The Center seeks to educate the public about the role and value of good architecture, urban planning, and design in our everyday lives through walking tours, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, competitions, festivals, and children's programming. The Center is also home to the AIA Bookstore and the Community Design Collaborative.