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Welcome to the Porch at 30th St. Station, Philadelphia's newest public space

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University City District and other groups unveiled a new public space outside of one of Philadelphia's busiest hubs, called the Porch at 30th St. Station, last week. It was quite a festive unveiling, featuring jugglers, humongous puppets from the [Spiral Q Puppet Theater](#), acrobats, cake, and plenty of speakers representing community groups, city government, and business. The Porch is a 40-foot swath of sidewalk between the station and Market St. with tables, chairs, new vegetation, and the potential for so much more.

Prema Gupta, the Director of Planning and Development at the [University City District \(UCD\)](#), is excited about the possibilities that the Porch provides. She emphasizes that the area is currently in a testing phase, which is why it can look a tad barren. However, Gupta envisions farmers markets, performances, and even yoga on the Porch. While the winter might be a slow time for the new public space, there are a series of spring performances scheduled.

For anyone who has spent even a little bit of time around 30th St. Station, it is a supremely frenetic environment. UCD's Executive Director, Matt Bergheiser, says that 1,800 pedestrians on average stroll along the sidewalk every hour on weekdays. In addition, the streets surrounding the station see seemingly ceaseless congestion from cars, trucks, and buses. Gupta sums up UCD's goal in the face of all this activity, which is to "bring a sense of human scale to this space."

The District also hopes to narrow the gap between University and Center City. In a similar vein to the recently opened [Penn Park](#), Bergheiser confirms that the Porch is "part of the connective tissue of the city." This means that Amtrak riders who cross the Schuylkill River between University and Center Cities now have a place to take a break, munch on lunch, be wowed by a performance, or maybe even partake in some outdoor yoga. As well, Center City residents, Penn and Drexel students, or anyone else walking between downtown and Left of Center can take advantage of the new public space.

The name of the public space was the result of a contest that saw over 500 entries. In addition to having their name grace the second busiest train station in the nation, the winner of the contest also won a \$500 Amtrak gift certificate. The University City District also hopes to crowdsource future decisions about the park, including the type of performances. While the next few months might be relatively quiet for the city's newest Porch, expect some new fun ways to relax come spring.

Sources: Matt Bergheiser and Prema Gupta, University City District

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