



UCD Celebrates 75,000 Jobs Milestone at State of University

On Wednesday, November 18th University City District held its annual State of University City event at World Cafe Live. The event is an opportunity for stakeholders and civic leaders to gather and celebrate the many accomplishments achieved by the partners who work together to make University City such a dynamic place. This year the focus of the event was celebrating the milestone of 75,000 jobs in University City, and the continued evolution of entrepreneurial, civic, and opportunity infrastructure in the neighborhood. UCD

Executive Director Matt Bergheiser highlighted major accomplishments from UCD partner institutions, and stressed the need to connect residents in West Philadelphia to jobs with the major anchor businesses and organizations through UCD's West Philadelphia Skills Initiative.

More than 300 guests were joined by many members of UCD's board of directors, city government including City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and Mayor-elect Jim Kenney, and other key (continued on page 6)

Market Street Bridge Undergoes Major Improvement



A partnership among University City District (UCD), Center City District (CCD), the Schuylkill River Development Corporation (SRDC), and the design group Groundswell brought about major improvements to the Market Street Bridge, one of the key gateways between University City and Center City.

University City District engaged Groundswell Design Group—the landscape architecture firm behind Spruce Street Harbor Park and the revamped Porch at 30th Street Station—to enhance the walking experience along the Market Street Bridge. The work was approved, custom-designed, and locally fabricated in just eight weeks.

The new elements added to the bridge include: lush greenery; 120 custom, lightweight planters; bleacher seating that offers optimal views of the Schuylkill River; and four large gateway pergolas positioned at the main points of entry. The new (continued on page 6)



From the Desk of the Executive Director

I probably say this every year, but our recent State of University City celebration was my favorite since the inception of the event six years ago.

We focused on a specific number - University City's realization of the 75,000 jobs milestone - and its ramifications for University City's place in the region and in the nation.

Why is 75,000 a magic figure? It means that from nanofab equipment specialists to neonatologists, from software development engineers to clinical programmers, and from carpenters to electricians, University City institutions and businesses are fueling the growth of the regional economy. University City is not simply producing jobs, we're producing good jobs. From 2008 to 2013, in fact, we've seen an 80% increase in middle- to high-wage positions. In a city whose progress has been constrained by tepid private sector job growth, the magical mix of academic, research and commercial partners in University City is leading the region - and much of the country - in the acceleration of economic activity.

As we enter an age of innovation districts, when the cities that succeed are the ones that cluster research and knowledge institutions with talent and start-ups and business accelerators, University City boasts an astonishing 30,000 jobs per square mile. By comparison, Cambridge, MA - always a benchmark for anchor institution-driven development - contains 19,000 jobs per square mile. With job density comes commercial vibrancy. Indeed, eastern University City has seen a 24% increase in food and beverage establishments over five years and a recent construction boom resulting in nearly 13 million new square feet of office product. Remarkably, even as office inventory has grown by 26% in less than a decade, University City has a region-leading 97.4 office occupancy rate. And, as the neighborhood transforms palpably into a dynamic, 24/7 urban center, nine major residential projects have driven a 10% increase in population since 2013. While job growth, construction figures and commercial

vibrancy tell a substantial part of the University City story, qualitative measures revealing a neighborhood of choice abound. Institutions, businesses, community members and civic intermediaries like University City District fully understand that booming commercial infrastructure must be accompanied by commensurate investments in beautiful civic infrastructure. The sustained boom in the development, evolution and improvement of parks, public squares, vibrant streets and attractive transit infrastructure heralds a future University City admired as much for its quality of place as it is for its quantity of jobs, institutions and building projects.

It seems consequential to talk about 75,000 jobs and the associated impact of this growth at a macro-level. But the most meaningful part of our story, and of the State of University City event, is evident when we look closely at individual transformations. I invite you to view the story of three jobs and three employees in University City's growing economy at www.universitycity.org. The stars of this video came through UCD's West Philadelphia Skills Initiative and changed their lives in University City. What's particularly powerful is that everything that the institutions and private firms and civic organizations are doing in University City has the potential to create life-changing opportunities for hundreds more who follow their lead. Everything we're doing has the potential to uncover new cures and build economic value for the city and region. And everything we're doing can create a new first and lasting impression of a 21st century metropolis for the many thousands who first experience Philadelphia right here in University City. That is worth celebrating, and it's also worth amplifying our efforts to create the best University City we can possibly imagine.

Sincerely,

Matt Bergheiser
Executive Director
University City District

UCD Unveils Porch 2.0



Since its introduction in late 2011, the Porch at 30th Street Station has become one of Philadelphia’s most vibrant public spaces, with amenities such as flexible seating, seasonal horticulture, and performances. Four years after its development, UCD introduced a major set of upgrades that have furthered the Porch’s evolution, including elements designed by Groundswell Design Group and Gehl Studio as well as a new food and beverage partnership with restaurateur Michael Schulson.

The Porch was Philadelphia’s first “lighter quicker cheaper” public space, and involved simple, cost-effective, and fully removable elements. After witnessing increases in usage and enjoyment as new amenities were added over time, UCD concluded it was time to do a thoughtful but major upgrade, leading to a combination of new physical amenities and programming that will advance the evolution of the space to accommodate nearby residents, commuters, workers, and visitors.



Updated Landscaping by Groundswell

Groundswell Design Group—the firm behind Spruce Street Harbor Park, Morgan’s Pier, and the Independence Beer Garden—introduced a series of tiered wooden platforms, intermingled with planters and vine canopies that offer a variety of comfortable and intimate spaces for people to sit and enjoy each other’s company, savor food and drink, or simply lounge and linger. Overhead festoon lighting adds charm and vitality to the space after dark and helps increase the site’s usage at night and on weekends. Groundswell’s improvements to the Porch were made possible by a generous grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation as part of their Knight Arts Challenge grant.

Custom “Porch Swings” Designed by Gehl Studio

Another major upgrade to the Porch is the addition of unique, vibrant, and custom-made swings from Gehl Studio. The new swings are a result of UCD’s continued mission to be a leader in innovative social seating. UCD worked with San Francisco-based Gehl Studio to create the custom-made swings designed exclusively for the revamped Porch at 30th Street Station. The results are 14 slatted, wooden swings made from mahogany plywood, set into a canopy constructed of brightly colored translucent polycarbonate. The Porch swings were made possible by an ArtPlace America grant.



Michael Schulson’s Rotisserie at the Porch

UCD and Chef-Restaurateur Michael Schulson collaborated to develop Rotisserie at the Porch. The new venture included a parked food truck serving lunch during the work week, plus a beverage trailer serving drink options in the evening. The addition of The Rotisserie helped transform the Porch from a destination for the working crowd to a space animated throughout the week and into the evening.



SIGNATURE SUMMER EVENTS IN UNIVERSITY CITY

University City District brought a full, diverse slate of programming to the neighborhood this summer, including two Baltimore Avenue Dollar Strolls, another successful edition of University City Dining Days, five collaborations with the University of Pennsylvania and the Rotunda for the 40th Street Summer Series, and a hugely successful run of free movies in Clark Park.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN TRAN



**UCD
Installs
Philadelphia's
Largest Parklet**

UCD and Shift_Design collaborated to install the city's largest Parklet, measuring 60 feet long, at 40th and Sansom in University City. UCD's Parklets - the innovative, temporary seating platforms that provide residents and visitors with a space to take in the area's lively streetscape-are landscaped with planters and a decorative railing, furnished with movable café tables and chairs, and add a distinct vibrancy to the neighborhood.

Last winter, UCD gained national attention through its publication of **The Case for Parklets: Measuring the Impact on Sidewalk Vitality and Neighborhood Businesses**, a study that provides data and recommendations based on the analysis of six University City Parklet locations in the 2013 season. Key findings from the report demonstrate the Parklets' ability to bring more pedestrians and vitality to public spaces and boost revenue for surrounding businesses. This led to the creation of the larger Parklet this past year, which proved to be a huge success. UCD's Parklet's are open for public enjoyment during the warmer months.

News from the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative

2015 was a great year for the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative. For the past 5 years we have been connecting unemployed West Philadelphians to opportunities with University City's premier employers. More importantly we have surpassed an important milestone by serving more than 500 participants. Here are some highlights on our progress in helping put West Philadelphians back to work:



- Before joining our program, our average participant was unemployed for 53 weeks, more than a year. Some have been unemployed as long as 17 months.
- During our program our average cohort (15 participants) received 71 call backs from employers that they had applied to and 31 in-person interviews. And that is before the guaranteed interview that they have with the cohort's employer partner.
- 91.5% of our graduates gained employment after graduating from our program
- Program graduates found employment that paid on average \$13.58 per hour. For an average graduate that's an increase of 32% over the wages they were earning before they enter our program, and 87% higher than Philadelphia's minimum wage.

WPSI works! We think Tyrel Jones who participated in our program for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia says it best:

“WPSI has completely changed my life. I am more focused on my goals. I have more confidence in my decision-making. Because of this program I have been on 7 interviews and have multiple job offers in less than 3 weeks. I am a completely different man today than I was when I started this program.” – TYREL JONES



EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2016

Beginning in January, the Skills Initiative will start recruitment for our next program. University City is dominated by the medical and educational industry, both of which are supported by a large infrastructure of bioscience research laboratories. We have partnered with one of the largest local institutions to build a pipeline program that will build the opportunity to gain employment as a Laboratory Technician. If you are a high school graduate who's always been interested in the fascinating world of science this may be the right opportunity for you!

This January, University City District will officially launch our new social venture, Green City Works. This social venture represents the intersection of workforce development and UCD's investments in public space creation and maintenance. It also represents a new opportunity for unemployed West Philadelphians. We will be looking for 12 men and women with a love of the outdoors and who want to build careers in the landscaping industry to join our training program.

We recently produced two videos featuring WPSI graduates speaking about the impact of the program on their lives. Visit universitycity.org to view these powerful stories!



UCD Works with Message Agency for Revamped Website

This summer, UCD launched a new version of our website. Working with local interactive studio Message Agency, we took the existing site and gave it a glossy makeover. The improved site boasts a cleaner, faster design that's easier to navigate, and provides quick access to our social media content with a landing page that will be refreshed frequently with new content. Please visit www.universitycity.org to see the changes.

BECOME A PART OF THE 40TH STREET TROLLEY PORTAL

Over the past several years, we have worked closely with local residents, SEPTA, and the City of Philadelphia to develop a plan to transform the 40th Street Trolley Portal from a blighted concrete slab into a vibrant community park and transit hub that is safe, sustainable, and social.

Thanks to support from public and private sources including the William Penn Foundation, the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, PECO Green Region, and community members like you, we have raised more than \$1.7M to create the new Trolley Portal—a remarkable testament to the power of a community.



If you have not made a gift yet but would like to, there is still time to support this remarkable project! With a donation of \$250, UCD will thank you by etching an 8" x 8" asphalt paver with a dedication message of your choosing. Perhaps you would like to honor a friend or family member, or join together with neighbors to make a gift on behalf of your block.

This is an unparalleled opportunity to demonstrate your love for our neighborhood as we build this new community asset together. To donate, please visit: universitycity.org/40th-street-trolley-portal-campaign or contact our Director of Development Sarah Davis at 215.243.0555 x 226 or sarah@universitycity.org. Thank you in advance for your support.



Science Center & Wexford Launch uCity Square

The University City Science Center has unveiled plans for uCity Square, a collaborative, multi-use legacy campus. Joining forces with Wexford Science + Technology, uCity Square aims to be the destination brand for a 6.5 million-square-foot integrated campus of office, lab, housing, and retail space. Powered by the Science Center and Wexford, uCity Square will be a center of economic growth in University City by creating a dynamic environment for innovation and collaboration between the private sector and top-tier research institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. uCity Square will include 6.5 million square feet of mixed-used development, featuring state-of-the-art lab and office buildings, new residential apartments, and retail shops. The first part of the project, Innovation Plaza, recently opened on 37th Street between Market and Chestnut Streets. This pocket park offers a new space to gather and support a creative culture, with a landscaped walkway, game tables, an entertainment zone, and seating.

The State of (continued from cover)

stakeholders from the University City business community.

The State of University City event serves as the official release of *The State of University City* publication, a document made up of nearly 80 pages of charts, statistics, photographs, and stories demonstrating why University City and its concentration of economic activity are setting a national pace for opportunity. The report gives an in-depth guide to the developments – academic, commercial, public, residential and more – that are driving the growth and expansion in the neighborhood. To obtain physical copies of the publication, please stop by our office at 3940 Chestnut Street or email us at ucd@universitycity.org.

Market Street Bridge (continued from cover)

elements will also help soften vehicular traffic noise, and are designed to be reversible.

The project came about due to a collaborative planning effort between University City District, Center City District, and the Schuylkill Development Corporation. More than six thousand people walk across the Market Street Bridge every day, making it a critical connection between University City and Center City, and a key gateway to the Schuylkill River Trail.

The improvements to the Market Street Bridge were made possible in part thanks to a grant made to the University City District by the William Penn Foundation. The William Penn Foundation funding is part of a larger UCD effort to study and improve civic infrastructure in eastern University City.

Help us keep working for you. Support UCD.

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To make a secure, online donation to UCD, please visit:
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UCD STAFF UPDATES



We are excited to welcome **Queen Aniatang** as the new West Philadelphia Skills Initiative's Program Coordinator. Queen will serve as the registrar and data systems administrator for WPSI. Before joining WPSI, Queen worked at the Health Federation of Philadelphia, Early Head Start Program as its Data Specialist. Queen has an MS in Human Resources Development from Drexel University and a BA in Pre-Law Philosophy from Temple University.

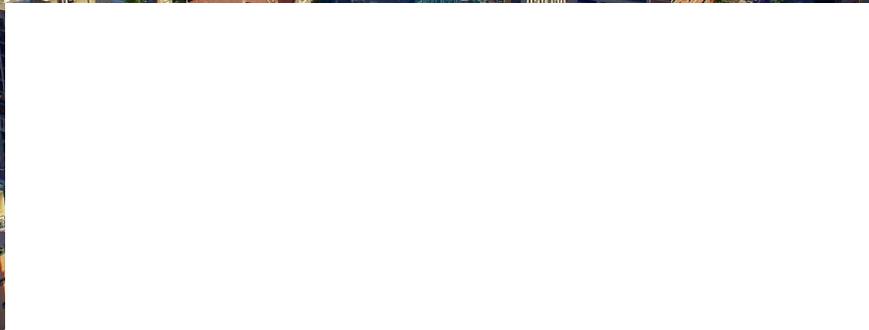
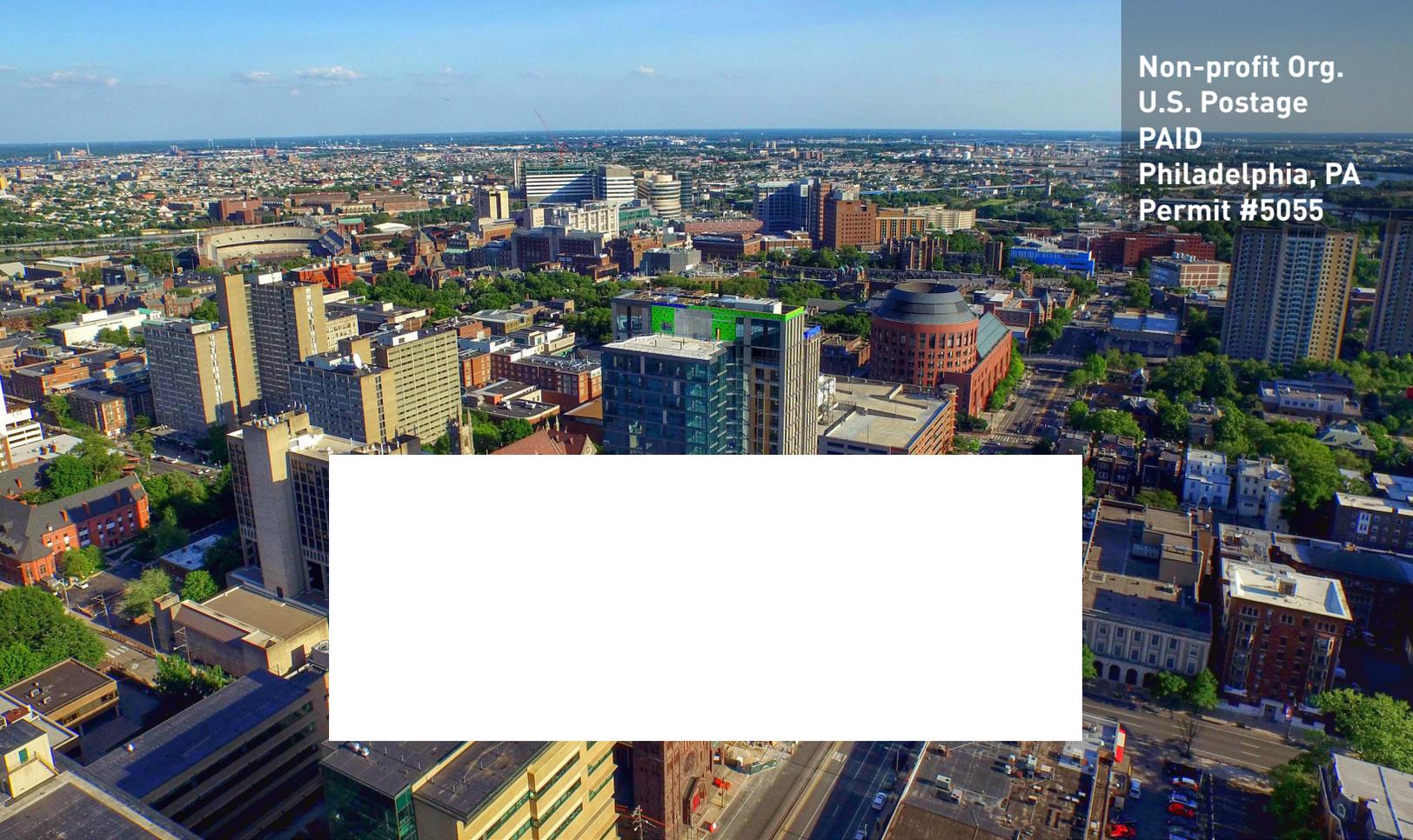


Joshua Park joined University City District as the Training Center Manager for the West Philadelphia Skills Initiative in October 2015. Previously Joshua served as the Executive Director of Sylvan Learning's Philadelphia territory, where he promoted educational programs and services to parents, schools, and the community and developed strategic partnerships to promote Sylvan's brand. Joshua brings this wealth of experience in educational supports and teaching to the table at the University City District.

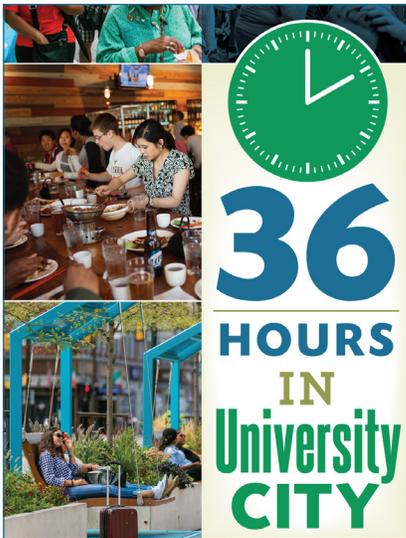


Alissa Weiss joined University City District in October 2015 as Strategic Initiatives Manager. Prior to starting at UCD, Alissa worked in Philadelphia nonprofits and New York City government, and she has had the opportunity to work on a range of urban policy issues, from health care to food access to workforce development. Alissa has a BA in history from the University of Pennsylvania and a Masters of Science from Harvard School of Public Health.

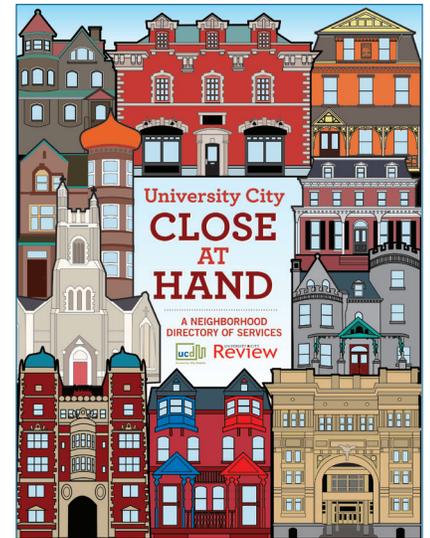
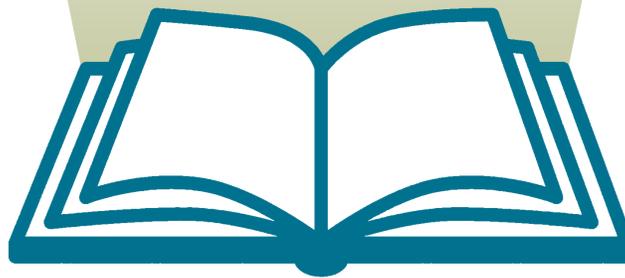
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UCD Releases Two New Neighborhood Guides



UCD is pleased to announce the arrival of two new resources that will help visitors and residents alike take advantage of all that the neighborhood has to offer. Inspired by the *New York Times*' 36 Hours series, **36 Hours in University City** is a guide filled with suggestions about how to best spend 36 hours in the neighborhood. It's a great resource for visitors to the area and residents looking for something new and different to do in their neighborhood.

Close at Hand, produced in partnership with the University City Review, is a comprehensive directory to the local businesses, amenities and resources available in the district. It covers a wide range of businesses, from food and retail to dentists and gyms to carpenters and locksmiths and more. We encourage you to grow your community by supporting these businesses. Both of these resources can be found free of charge at UCD's office at 3940 Chestnut Street and around the neighborhood. They are also available at universitycity.org/publications. Pick one up and learn more about your community!