Legislation Details (With Text)

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On agenda:				**Final action:**	5/28/2026
Title:	Authorizing the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold public hearings on the condition of the City's public park system, including funding, maintenance, infrastructure, staffing, safety, and opportunities to establish sustainable long-term revenue streams to support Philadelphia's parks, recreation centers, and public green spaces.				
Sponsors:	Councilmember Phillips, Councilmember Gauthier, Councilmember Lozada, Councilmember Brooks, Councilmember O'Rourke, Councilmember Driscoll, Councilmember Ahmad				
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
5/28/2026	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed on This Week's Final Passage Calendar		
5/28/2026	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED	Pass	

Authorizing the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold public hearings on the condition of the City's public park system, including funding, maintenance, infrastructure, staffing, safety, and opportunities to establish sustainable long-term revenue streams to support Philadelphia's parks, recreation centers, and public green spaces.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia manages one of the largest and oldest urban park systems in the United States, overseeing approximately 11,516 acres of parkland, including watershed parks, neighborhood parks and squares, recreation centers, playgrounds, athletic fields, pools, trails, and community gardens; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's parks and recreation spaces provide critical public benefits, including opportunities for recreation, youth programming, social connection, environmental education, and community engagement, while also improving physical and mental health outcomes for residents across the City; and

WHEREAS, Parks and public green spaces play a vital role in climate resiliency and environmental sustainability by reducing urban heat island effects, improving air quality, managing stormwater, and mitigating flooding in vulnerable communities; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's parks, recreation centers, and public spaces serve as essential community anchors that support neighborhood safety, violence prevention, youth engagement, and overall quality of life for residents of all ages; and

WHEREAS, Despite the continued efforts of the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation and frontline Parks and Recreation employees, the City's park system continues to face longstanding challenges related to insufficient funding, deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, staffing shortages, custodial needs, tree maintenance, lighting deficiencies, and limited long-term capital investment; and

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WHEREAS, Councilmember Anthony Phillips and his office have worked collaboratively with Parks and Recreation leadership, frontline staff, and union representatives through a citywide working group process focused on improving transparency, communication, staffing, safety, and operational conditions at recreation centers and parks throughout Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Through this collaborative process, stakeholders identified critical needs across the park system, including enhanced maintenance capacity, improved lighting, municipal guard support, tree maintenance and removal, custodial staffing, and investments in safe, clean, welcoming, and functional public spaces for residents and families; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia continues to rank below the national average in park investment compared to peer cities, raising serious concerns regarding the sustainability, accessibility, maintenance, and usability of public parks and recreation facilities; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia spends approximately $112 per capita on parks, while peer cities such as Baltimore spend approximately $155 per capita, Pittsburgh spends approximately $176 per capita, and Cincinnati spends approximately $239 per capita on parks and recreation investments; and

WHEREAS, Studies continue to show that neighborhoods of color and low-income communities often experience significantly less access to quality park space, recreational amenities, and environmental investments, further exacerbating inequities in public health, environmental outcomes, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Across the United States, municipalities have implemented sustainable and dedicated funding mechanisms for parks, including trust funds, special taxes, conservancy partnerships, voter-approved levies, and other recurring revenue sources designed to protect parks from political and economic fluctuations; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's extensive and heavily utilized park network remains chronically underfunded both historically and structurally, leaving the system overly reliant on volunteers, grants, and inconsistent funding streams to address ongoing maintenance and operational needs; and

WHEREAS, Establishing dedicated, long-term funding mechanisms could provide Philadelphia with a more stable and equitable framework for maintaining parks, supporting recreation programming, improving safety and cleanliness, preserving environmental assets, and ensuring all residents have access to safe, healthy, and well-maintained public spaces; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the City Council Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to hold public hearings on the condition of the City's public park system, including funding levels, maintenance and infrastructure needs, staffing and operational challenges, equity impacts, and opportunities to establish sustainable long-term revenue streams to support Philadelphia's parks, recreation centers, and public green spaces, providing an opportunity for City departments, labor representatives, community organizations, environmental advocates, park users, and other stakeholders to present testimony, recommendations, research, and lived experiences related to the future sustainability and investment in Philadelphia's park system.

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