

CITY PARKS ARE A  
**SMART INVESTMENT**  
FOR AMERICA'S  
**HEALTH,**  
**ECONOMY,**  
& **ENVIRONMENT**



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**City parks play a vital role in the social, economic and physical well-being of America's cities and their residents.** As cities become more densely populated, and concern about the impact of climate change increases, planners, elected officials, and community advocates are taking a fresh look at parks and their potential to help address critical urban infrastructure and public health issues. City parks provide access to recreational opportunities, increase property values, spur local economies, combat crime, and protect cities from environmental impacts. **Parks are now recognized as powerful tools for urban communities and local economies.**

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# City Parks Improve Health and Reduce Costs

## PHYSICAL BENEFITS



Nearly **HALF** of all adults in the U.S. have **chronic health conditions**, such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity.<sup>1</sup>

About

**1 in 3**

children in the U.S. is either **obese or overweight**.<sup>2</sup>



People **EXERCISE MORE** if they have access to **PARKS** and other safe outdoor places. **Physical activity can reduce or prevent serious health problems**.<sup>3</sup>

## MENTAL BENEFITS

**Mental illness** affects over

**43**

**MILLION**

adults in the U.S. according to the National Institute of Mental Health.<sup>4</sup>



## PARKS SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



People with access to parks are more likely to exercise. **Exercise reduces anxiety and depression and can help alleviate symptoms of a variety of mental health conditions, including dementia and Alzheimer's**.<sup>5, 6</sup>

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Greening of vacant urban land has been shown to decrease crime.<sup>7</sup>

## COST SAVINGS



The **high costs** of chronic diseases each year in the U.S. include:

**OBESITY**

**\$147 BILLION**<sup>8</sup>

**DIABETES**



**\$245 BILLION**<sup>9</sup>

**HEART DISEASE**



**\$108 BILLION**<sup>10</sup>

## PARKS HELP TO REDUCE THE COSTS OF HEALTHCARE



Maintaining a **healthy weight** saves

**\$1,500** per person in healthcare costs a year.<sup>11</sup>

# City Parks Provide Economic Benefits

## PARKS ATTRACT RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES



Nashville's investment in downtown parks has contributed to a 50% increase in the number of **25 to 34 year olds with college degrees** moving to the city over the last decade.<sup>12</sup>

## PARKS INCREASE PROPERTY VALUES



Houses near parks or trails have **5-20% higher property values** than those in the surrounding community.<sup>13, 14</sup>

## PARKS INCREASE REVENUE FOR CITIES

**Property tax** is one of the most important revenue streams for cities. Cities receive an increase in property tax revenue from people moving back to the cities.

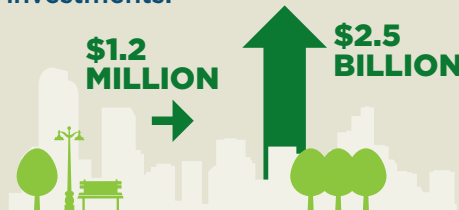


Since 2000, the number of young, educated adults moving to livable, walkable urban neighborhoods has increased

**37%.**<sup>15</sup>

## PARKS SPUR PRIVATE INVESTMENT, INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

In Denver, \$1.2 million in federal park grants galvanized over \$2.5 billion in local public and private investments.<sup>16</sup>



## PARKS LOWER INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS FOR CITIES

Cities are creating and using parks as a green infrastructure approach to **managing stormwater** and **preventing flooding**.



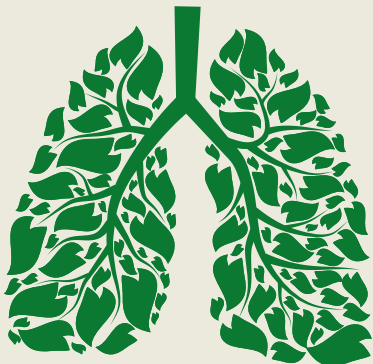
Philadelphia is saving

**\$14 BILLION**

by managing storm water and preventing flooding with parks and green infrastructure instead of new pipes and tunnels.<sup>17</sup>

# City Parks Provide Environmental Benefits

## PARKS CLEAN THE AIR



Trees in urban parks **remove toxins** from the air, such as carbon monoxide, that can pose serious health risks to people.

## PARKS PROVIDE \$3.8 BILLION IN AIR POLLUTION SAVINGS

Urban trees in the U.S. **remove 711,000 TONS** of air pollution annually, at a value of **\$3.8 BILLION** not only **saving money** but also **improving public health**.<sup>18</sup>



## PARKS CLEAN THE WATER

Parks and green space filter rain which reduces water pollution, protects drinking water and decreases rates of waterborne illness.

**Parks improve environmental health and save communities money.**



## PARKS KEEP CITIES COOLER

Parks help to **cool cities** by reducing the heat island effect.



## PARKS MAKE CITIES MORE RESILIENT

Nationwide cities are confronted with the impacts of **climate change and increased flooding**.<sup>19</sup>

Hurricane Sandy caused up to **\$70 BILLION** in damages to communities.

## PARKS SAVE MONEY ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Cities are creating and using parks as a green infrastructure approach to **managing stormwater** and **preventing flooding**.



Using just one park and investing in green infrastructure instead of gray infrastructure, the **City of Atlanta is saving at least \$16 MILLION**.<sup>20</sup>



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