



# Park Stewardship Learning Cohort: Right-Sizing Requirements and Streamlining Systems

April 17, 2025

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

# Welcome!

In the chat, share:

- Your name
- Your city
- Your agency
- Your favorite thing to see or do in your parks in the spring!



# Agenda

- Session 1 Recap
- Unraveling “Red Tape”
- Opportunities to Right-Size Requirements: Q&A with Design Trust and Pittsburgh City Planning
- Defining Risk Exercise & Discussion
- Peer City Discussions
- Next Steps







# What is Park Stewardship?

In this Learning Cohort, we're focusing on the aspect of park stewardship that is...

*Community-driven leadership and participation in the care, activation, and preservation of public parks and green spaces.*

Community relationships facilitate the development of community identity, which is a foundation for building community power.



## Form relationships

Hire **community organizers**

Spend time at existing **community events**

Build **trust with residents** who have close ties to the community

Communicate in **accessible languages**

## Build place identity

Activate the site with **consistent programming**

Identify and invest in **community skills and assets**

Intentionally organize around **arts and culture**

## Seed community power

Include community members in strategic **decision-making**

Support the establishment of park **stewardship groups**

**Transfer knowledge** on navigating public processes

# Unraveling Red Tape

*What are the greatest barriers to community park stewardship faced by public agencies?*

Permitting  
Requirements

Complicated Systems

Limited Staff Support

Inter-Agency  
Coordination

# Unraveling Red Tape

*What are the greatest barriers to community park stewardship faced by public agencies?*

## Permitting Requirements

- Outsized insurance & liability requirements
- Unclear or inconsistent rules & requirements
- Limited flexibility
- Individual processes for every event

## Complicated Systems

- Opaque, difficult to navigate – lack of clear instructions or process for users and agencies
- Individual systems for each agency
- Designed for agency system, not user experience

## Limited Staff Support

- Processes require staff discretion – potential for inconsistency & longer approval timelines
- Lack capacity & resources to properly support residents

## Inter-Agency Coordination

- Users are responsible for coordination, rather than agencies
- Lack of integrated systems or shared infrastructure
- Limited capacity & relationships slow communication





# Reflection

Think about the stewardship activities that take place in your public spaces. Which ones would you consider high risk? Medium risk? Low risk?

For the next few minutes, quietly brainstorm:

- *What defines a high- vs. medium- vs. low-risk activity?*
- *(How) Are these tiers of activities handled differently by your agency?*
- *Where are there opportunities to “right-size” the requirements of each of these tiers?*

**In a moment, you’ll be split into breakout rooms to discuss. *Questions?***

# Group Report-Out

*What did you hear?*



# Peer City Groupings

**Establish a  
Citywide  
Stewardship  
Network**

*Baton Rouge, LA  
Camden, NJ  
Scranton, PA*

**Right-size  
Support to  
Stewardship  
Groups**

*Baltimore, MD  
Houston, TX*

**Interagency  
Coordination  
and Funding**

*New York, NY  
Austin, TX  
Philadelphia, PA*

**Build Social  
Cohesion and  
Community  
Leadership**

*Raleigh, NC  
Chicago, IL*





# Peer City Discussions

With your peer cities, discuss:

- *What is a takeaway that you have from the 'defining risk' activity?*
- *What surprised you about how other cities approach defining risk?*
- *Where are you most poised to take action based on what you've heard/discussed?*

**In a moment, you'll be split into breakout rooms to discuss. Questions?**



# Action Planning

**Scan the QR Code or use the link in the chat to open the Action Planner**

- Complete the reflection questions individually
- In your breakout rooms, briefly report out on the first 3 questions and set action items together

***Wait to click “Submit” until the end of your breakout room***

*Responses will be sent to the email address you provide.  
Kate, Christina or Sophie can resend responses as needed.*





Since 1972, TPL has protected 4 million acres of public land; created 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places; raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands; and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors.

To learn more, visit [tpl.org](https://tpl.org).

Connecting everyone to the outdoors™

**Christina Jang**

[christina.jang@tpl.org](mailto:christina.jang@tpl.org)

**Sophie Neuhaus**

[sophie.neuhaus@tpl.org](mailto:sophie.neuhaus@tpl.org)

**Kate Gannon**

[kate.gannon@tpl.org](mailto:kate.gannon@tpl.org)

# Next Steps

- Submit your Action Planning Form
- Complete your assigned tasks
- Report-Out Slides & Recording

- **Session 3: May 15, 2025**

Building and Sustaining  
Community Leadership

# Thank You!