



GARDENING for the GREATER GOOD

A 10-Year Vision for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society



PHSVision 2027



Mission

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society connects people with horticulture, and together we create beautiful, healthy, and sustainable communities.

PHS Vision 2027

Dear Friend,

For almost 200 years, PHS has played a critical role in the Philadelphia region, using horticulture to inspire and educate, and more recently as a tool to solve social, economic, environmental, and health challenges. PHS is proud of its legacy of service, but we have much more work to do. The region continues to suffer from a chronically high rate of poverty, and fresh food remains hard to reach for 20 percent of Philadelphia families. Wide disparities exist in the health of our neighborhoods and the quality of life they offer residents.

At PHS, we believe that horticulture can and must help solve these challenges. In January 2018, the PHS staff and board, with the backing of the William Penn Foundation, undertook a strategic planning effort to reshape our work around identifying and delivering the impact most needed by our city and region. We asked ourselves and our stakeholders this question: "How can horticulture be used to advance the greater good?"

We spent a year conducting listening sessions throughout the community and analyzing what we learned. We looked at what people and organizations are doing around the world to use horticulture as a driver of social and environmental change. In the end, this work inspired a focus on four impact priorities that together deeply affect the health of individuals, neighborhoods, and our overall quality of life: increasing access to fresh food, creating healthy living environments, building deeper social connections, and growing economic opportunity.

PHS is and always will be a large, diverse community of people working together to make amazing things happen. Under our new strategy, PHS will engage everyone in our community and beyond with an invitation to "garden for the greater good." If you are already taking part in this effort, we thank you. If not, we look forward to welcoming you as a gardener, a donor, a PHS member, or an enthusiastic volunteer.

Thank you for your support.



Matt Rader
PHS President



Margaret McCarvill
Chair, PHS Board of Directors

PHS at 200: A Shared Vision



We envision a world where cultivating plants is seen as essential to life.

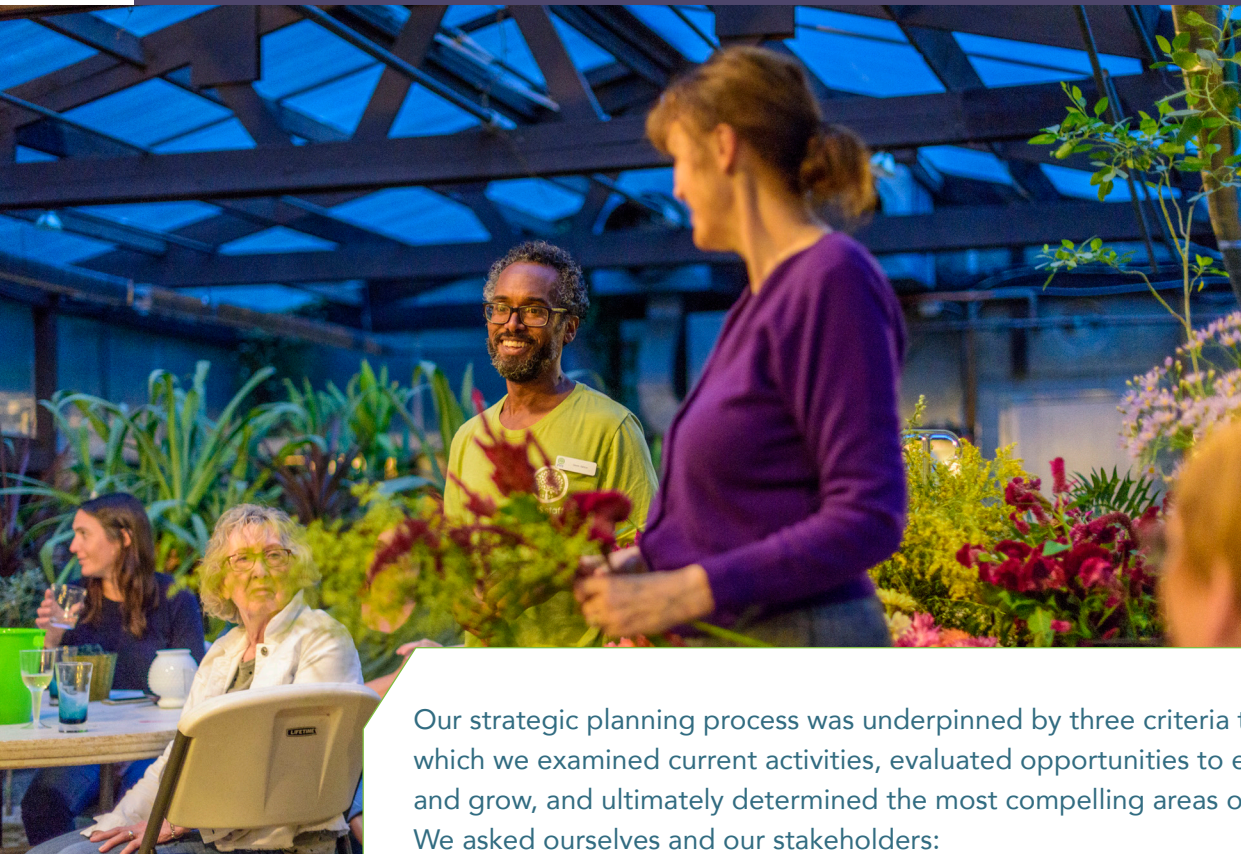
We see a world where all people appreciate the joy of plants and gardens in their daily lives.

We will awaken people to the transformative power of horticulture as a tool of social change.

We will use horticulture to cultivate social connection, livable environments, healthy food, and economic opportunity.

Across the region and the nation, PHS will be regarded as a thought leader and an agent of change, and people of all ages and backgrounds will join us in our cause.

Vision2027 Strategic Planning Process



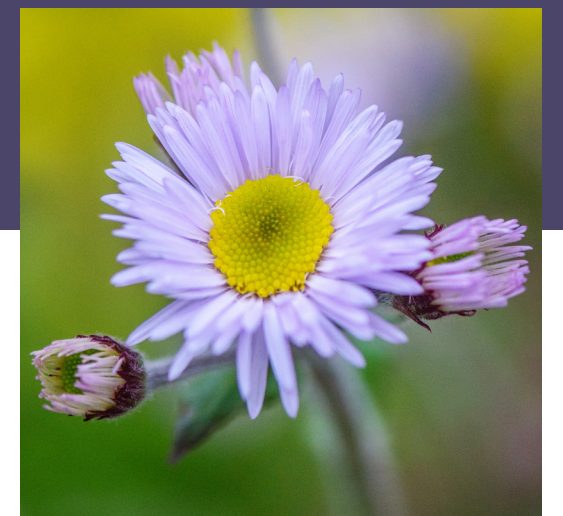
Our strategic planning process was underpinned by three criteria through which we examined current activities, evaluated opportunities to expand and grow, and ultimately determined the most compelling areas of focus. We asked ourselves and our stakeholders:

- **What are the unmet social, environmental, economic, and other needs in our region?**
- **Can horticulture be harnessed as a solution to these needs?**
- **Are there supporters willing to invest in our solutions and the impact we make?**

A large and comprehensive stakeholder engagement effort was integral to answering these questions. We conducted an internal program audit and review with our staff, and we convened working groups and advisory committees of staff, board, and external partners to guide our thinking. We also launched a large public outreach and engagement campaign in the spring and summer of 2018 and followed it with a targeted series of focus groups and quantitative research.

PHSVision2027 Stakeholder Engagement by the Numbers:

5	staff travel fellowships seeking best practices around the world	1,000+	online respondents to surveys of PHS members and non-members
4	Philadelphia region focus groups	550+	"on the street" interviews
		6	community group sessions throughout Philadelphia



Strategic Pillars

The planning process culminated in a series of organization-wide conversations through which we developed our long-term strategy, which is comprised of three pillars. Each pillar is a unique priority for change that PHS will pursue through 2027.



1 Create a Culture of Innovation and Accountability

- Focus all our work on activating horticulture to advance four impact priorities: creating social connection, livable environments, healthy-food access, and economic opportunity.
- Build a single framework for impact and business performance, rigorously assess all activities, and transform or eliminate activities that do not deliver on at least two priorities.
- Become a place where entrepreneurialism thrives and fiscal responsibility is the norm; establish a new-opportunity evaluation process that reviews potential projects and programs on consistent criteria.
- Establish credibility as a must-have partner for our impact priorities; partner with research institutions and universities to measure and analyze impact.

2 Onboard and Activate Agents of Change

- Embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion to build a network of staff, governance team, membership, and audience that reflects the communities we serve.
- Establish a PHS philosophy of horticulture that inspires people and advances our impact priorities through the Flower Show, public landscapes, and education.
- Build a membership and audience committed to our cause and actively supporting it with time, money, and passion.
- Build partnerships with businesses and institutions to advance our cause.

3 Implement a New Model of Urban Greening at Scale

- Unify and refine existing greening programs into a new, place-based model that delivers on all four impact priorities.
- Lead a limited number of large-scale advocacy and education projects that advance our impact priorities at the civic level.
- Expand/deepen reach to new places beyond the City of Philadelphia as impact need and business opportunity allow.

Growing Audiences and Delivering Impact

To better serve our communities and increase our impact, PHS reoriented its work within four major programmatic areas.



Healthy Neighborhoods

PHS recognizes neighborhoods as vital partners in making impactful change for people. PHS will develop a place-based urban greening model that targets its extensive suite of programs—community gardens, tree planting, vacant land management, and green stormwater infrastructure—in distinct neighborhoods recognized as having specific needs. Over the long term, PHS will work with academic and research institutions to document the impacts of these programs on health and well-being.



Gardener Engagement

Home gardeners have long understood the power of horticulture to make transformative change. Through a new Gardener Engagement initiative, PHS will create a movement among backyard gardeners by convening collective action projects and equipping the participants of these projects with the knowledge and tools they need to make a difference through their gardening activities.

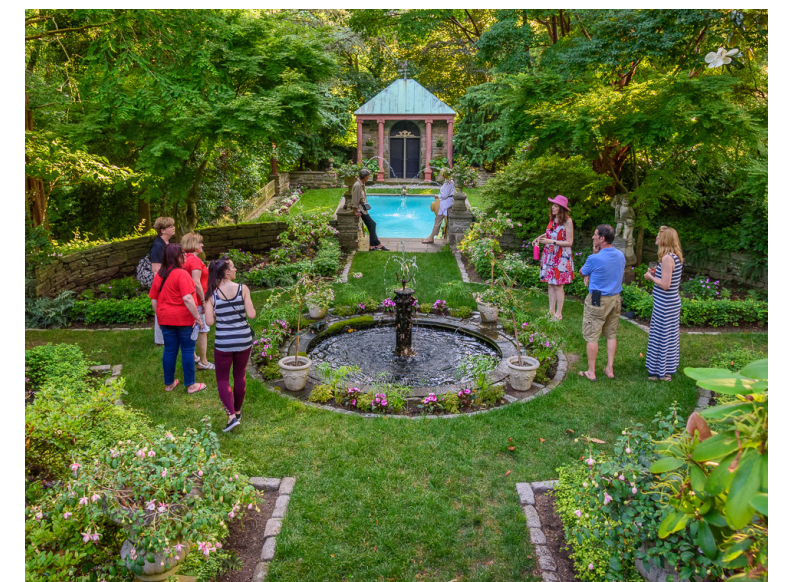
Shows and Events

The Philadelphia Flower Show will continue to be an integral part of our future. PHS will leverage the Flower Show as the nation's leading showcase for "gardening for the greater good," inspiring both "plant-curious" individuals and expert gardeners to put horticulture to work for good in their backyards and their communities. Beyond the Flower Show, we will launch other events and shows locally and outside the region to bring the joy and benefits of gardening to new audiences and motivate them to join our cause.



Public Horticulture

PHS will elevate and integrate its public landscapes and public gardens—including Meadowbrook Farm in Abington Township, Pennsylvania, and the PHS-maintained spaces at the Philadelphia Navy Yard and along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and Columbus Boulevard—into examples of horticultural excellence where visitors can find inspiration and learn about the best practices in gardening. This vast network of public spaces will visibly demonstrate the potential of horticulture to drive change by providing inspirational places where community members can volunteer, connect, and learn.



Impact Priorities



Looking ahead, our vision and strategy will guide an abiding, long-term focus on four impact priorities that our communities and stakeholders have identified as pressing needs and that PHS is uniquely positioned to address through horticulture. Together, these impact priorities are critical to the health and well-being of individuals and neighborhoods in the Greater Philadelphia region and beyond.

1 Increasing Access to Healthy Food

The ability to provide oneself, one's family, and one's community with fresh and healthy food is a basic human right. Yet lack of healthy-food access—and security—remains a pressing problem in our region: More than 20 percent of Philadelphians are currently food insecure. This condition differs from neighborhood to neighborhood, making it imperative that we **equitably increase access to fresh, healthy food.**

PHS has invested in community gardens for more than 40 years. Since 2006, PHS has served 150 gardens annually with seedlings and supplies to grow tens of thousands of tons of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables to share with neighbors and families in need.

With renewed focus and clarity of purpose, PHS will use horticulture to expand access to fresh food—and knowledge of how to grow it—through our system of community gardening programs, our engagement with home gardeners, and our extensive network of public gardens and landscapes.

MEASURING SUCCESS: To understand our progress in executing our vision and strategy, PHS will monitor and evaluate impact, engagement, and financial performance through new performance management systems and organizational dashboards and adjust course as needed. We will also seek to partner with renowned academic research institutions, such as the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University, to launch formal research studies that evaluate the external impact of PHS initiatives.

2 Creating Healthy Living Environments

The Greater Philadelphia region is heavily urbanized, and it continues to experience significant growth, development, and environmental change. Safe, beautiful, environmentally sound streets and public spaces are fundamental to the quality of life for residents and contribute greatly to people's health and well-being. By planting street trees, greening vacant land, and engaging people in gardening their front yards, PHS will enable community-driven change through education and hands-on support. Concentrating efforts on those people and places that have suffered ongoing neglect will **ensure that everyone enjoys the benefits of a high-quality, livable environment.**

PHS Philadelphia LandCare currently cleans and greens 12,000 vacant lots throughout the city. This work has been shown to decrease gun violence by 29 percent and feelings of depression by 69 percent for residents within a five-minute walk of a PHS LandCare lot.

3 Building Deeper Social Connections

It's no secret that person-to-person contact is an essential component to improved health and safety; it has even been linked to living longer. And yet individuals are suffering from increased feelings of isolation and loneliness. Our findings indicate that people have a strong desire to participate in community-driven initiatives that bring them closer together. PHS will **build deeper social connections between people** through gardening—incorporating collective action, community development, and outreach to build trust and bridge gaps among neighbors and between communities.

In 2016, in partnership with the Nationalities Service Center, PHS helped build the Growing Together Garden to provide a common space to bring together longtime neighborhood residents of Point Breeze, Philadelphia, with recent immigrants from Burma, Congo, and Bhutan, fostering social interaction and cultural exchange.


4 Growing Economic Opportunity

Just as horticulture can be a powerful tool to strengthen neighborhoods and social connection, so too can it offer a path to **growing economic opportunity through workforce development**, especially for underserved individuals and communities.

With the unmet need for labor in all sectors of the horticultural industry forecast to increase over time, we see opportunities to train and place a significant number of workers in jobs, with an emphasis on those workers who need them most, including the recently incarcerated. PHS will seek to play a central role in preparing people to take advantage of new careers in this emerging sector.

CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT: Our impact is made possible by the generous financial support of individuals, foundations, and government entities; yet, like many nonprofits, we also rely heavily on our own investment activities and must raise revenue from new sources each year to sustain our work. Cultivating and growing our audience into a larger, more engaged community of people with a shared passion for the greater good will be critical to realizing our vision. Without more people supporting our impact, we can't fund ongoing services for the community that we all value—like planting trees or supporting community gardens.

PHS knows firsthand the transformative effect that horticulture, gardening, and greening can have on our lives. Together with our partners—whether home gardeners, volunteers at the Flower Show, or neighborhood groups invested in creating positive change—PHS stands ready to lead an effort to get everyone in our region “gardening for the greater good” at home and in their communities. Join us!

 PHSonline.org

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN THIS WORK

PHS would like to thank the following for their support and encouragement:

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