



Society Hill Master Plan

As part of a new master plan to protect Society Hill’s distinctive identity, Viridian prepared recommendations for preserving the neighborhood’s green spaces and equipped residents with a toolkit for sustaining and enhancing its character.

Philadelphia’s Society Hill is a beautiful historic neighborhood notable for the greenways bisecting its blocks like beautifully landscaped alleyways. The first thing residents wanted to know was “where to plant more trees.” But the first thing they needed to know was “what’s there and how to care for it.” Despite Society Hill’s prominence, there was little awareness of upkeep practices and responsibilities.

Our initial research included GIS data analysis, public records research, and stakeholder interviews to determine ownership of all green spaces, as well as an audit of existing conditions and maintenance practices. We discovered that there was no formalized method for maintaining the landscape. We created one to ensure any new trees – and the old ones – are adequately cared for.

To support the long-term sustainable care of these spaces, we created a forward-thinking, data-driven toolkit for the Society Hill Civic Association and residents. The Open Space Custodian Inventory Grid is perhaps the most significant piece in the toolkit. It synthesizes our research, providing a detailed overview of all open spaces in the district, clearly identifying the uses of spaces alongside ownership and maintenance responsibilities. This master document also provides detailed instructions for ongoing care alongside suggestions for future improvements.

Viridian’s work in Society Hill will not only help the Civic Association protect their cultural landscapes; it will position them as a national leader in the planning and preservation of historic open spaces.

- Location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Client:** Society Hill Civic Association
- Size:** 165 acres
- Cost:** N/A
- Status:** Completed 2017