In 2019, the Parkway Council continued to move forward with planning, marketing, relationship building and advocacy.

**Planning**

The most significant initiative in this category was the board’s commitment to strategic planning. Fairmount Ventures was selected as our consultant in June, and the planning process began in earnest soon thereafter, with extensive interviewing and research. Our September board retreat discussion and subsequent meetings helped to solidify the organization’s desired direction. The next series of steps in the process will focus on implementation, and this key question: what will it take to evolve from an organization that currently serves as an advocate, collaborative marketer and convener into a leader and collaborator, advancing tangible initiatives? A draft strategic plan from Fairmount Ventures spells out recommendations for a new mission and value proposition, defined goals, strategies and outcomes. A new organizational structure, revenue plan, and year one action plan are also included. The coming year will be devoted to implementing that action plan.

**Marketing**

In the area of marketing, we continued to build on our Parkway Museums District branding, while amplifying the marketing efforts of each of the Parkway Council institutions. This year, the board decided not to print our collaborative Parkway Museums District brochures, but it was updated and posted on our website. Separate one-page maps were created and distributed for use by information centers and visitor services staff members.

The Parkway Museums District website is constantly being updated as well. This past year, we saw a 14% increase in the number of site users over 2018. 15,000 individuals accessed our Parkway Museums District website this past year, with over 29,000 page views. The biggest spike in website visits, as in prior years, was around July 4th. Our website viewers are 56.6% female, with a broad range of ages, the largest group being age 25-34. The largest country of origin is the US, at 87.7%, with Canada at a distant number 2, at 1.8%, then France, at 1.2%, and South Korea, at 1.1%. Desktop users retain a slight edge over mobile and tablet users, at 48%. The largest source of referrals to our
website is Visit Philly, at 59.5%, followed by Facebook, the Cathedral, and our former Parkway100 site.

On the social media side, we doubled our Twitter followers in 2019, and our Instagram followers reached nearly 12,000 (up 20% in two years). Our Parkway Museums District Facebook page has over 13,500 followers, roughly half of whom reside in Philadelphia. The next largest geographical source is New York City, then various individual suburbs in the Philadelphia area. 68% of the followers identify as female, with the largest age group at 35-44 years old. Engagement was substantial on social media throughout the year, and it remains a fantastic (and inexpensive) avenue for Parkway promotion.

Other 2019 marketing initiatives:
- Throughout the year, the hashtag #ParkwayTreasures was used on social media to call attention to the many treasures of the Parkway, including the park spaces, cultural and educational institutions, and collection of public art.
- #ParkwayPicks posts for the Fall called attention to special exhibitions and offerings at Parkway Council institutions – individually, over the course of three weeks. #ParkwayPicks for the Winter will begin soon.
- A very successful seasonal Instagram-based photo contest was launched in June, called #MyParkwaySummer. The #MyParkwayFall contest ended a few days ago, and the Winter contest launches soon. The contests bring the Instagram photographers to the Parkway, focus on its unique beauty, and provide phenomenal images for use by the Parkway Council.
- In the week approaching the 2019 Philadelphia Marathon weekend, when 30,000 runners (plus their families) were in the immediate area, there was a strong push to promote all of the Parkway institutions as open and full of great options.
- Two very productive “marketing summits” were held with the Parkway Council marketing and communications counterparts (in February and November). Identifying potential collaborations and sharing information about upcoming programs were the primary focus.

**Relationship Building**

The Parkway Council hosted our annual “State of the Parkway” meeting in May. We had a significant number of City, community and non-profit leaders in attendance. Managing Director Brian Abernathy moderated an engaging panel discussion on the 2014 “More Park, Less Way” recommendations, and emphasized that the City and Parkway Council are partners. Panelists included: Kathryn Ott Lovell, Harris Steinberg, and Tim Clair.

For the third year, we invited five neighborhood association leaders to attend a portion of our annual planning retreat (held this year in early September). We shared information regarding issues of common interest, including the impact of the homeless presence, Parkway events, and Parkway area development projects.
The Parkway Council’s Executive Director represented the Parkway Council members at various 2019 events, including groundbreakings, dedications, press conferences, and other ceremonies and programs. Attendance at these events helps to reinforce our organization’s engagement with all Parkway-related initiatives, and to remain visible with elected and appointed officials.


democracy

The biggest change in this category was the creation of the Parkway Council Neighborhood Advocacy Committee. In partnership with neighborhood leaders, the Parkway Council is now speaking with one voice regarding a variety of Parkway-focused matters. An advocacy plan was created, and multiple Committee meetings were held with City administration regarding Parkway events, safety, and amenities.

On the safety front, we conducted a survey of Parkway neighbors, in order to identify specific areas of concern. The survey was distributed through neighborhood organizations, and there were 568 individual responses. The Advocacy Committee shared the results with the Managing Director’s Office, and held a follow-up meeting with the Managing Director to discuss them. A subsequent Committee meeting was held with the Complete Streets Director, who is directing the Parkway repaving project in Spring 2020. We are hopeful that many of the safety concerns expressed will be addressed as a part of this project. Better signage, less confusing crossings, traffic calming, safer bike lanes, etc. will all be addressed.

On the Parkway events side, we continue to meet with City administration and neighborhood representatives, following up on the recommendations of the events study we co-commissioned with the City. Although the total number of events has not been reduced, the Office of Special Events has held a moratorium on any new Parkway events, and has redirected new requests to other city venues. Additional alternative venue information has been added to their website. Noise and communications recommendations have also been addressed.

Our consultant, Chris Dezzi, continued to be our strong advocate with City administration on the issues mentioned above, as well as others. Meetings with City Council members have raised the profile of the Parkway Council considerably, and contributed to the administration’s better understanding of our priorities. Meetings are now being scheduled with newly elected members of City Council.