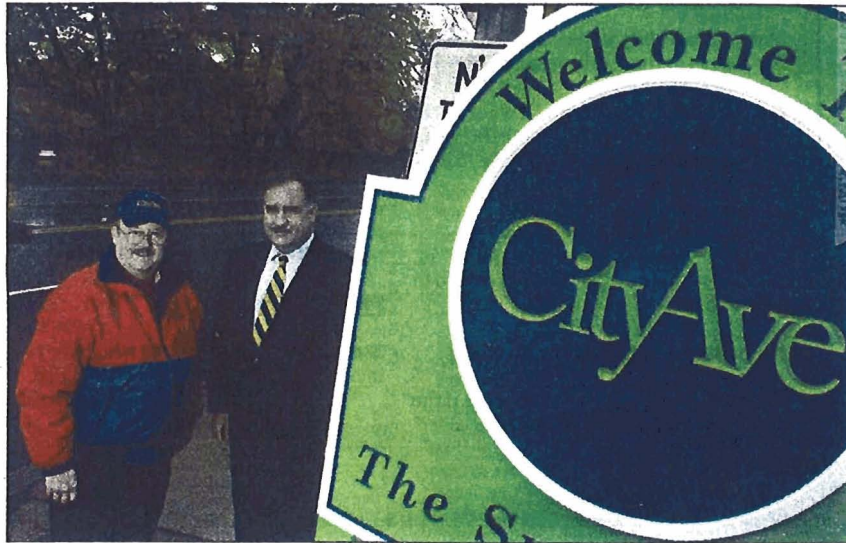


# Philadelphia Business Journal

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### (Front Page)



J. Peter Herzog (left), head of operations of the special district, and CEO Terrence Foley.

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## City Ave. putting on a new face

SEAN SCULLY  
SPECIAL TO THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Somehow, somewhere, City Avenue lost its way as a business destination, but the local business district is trying to turn that around. The City Avenue Special Services District unveiled a branding campaign this fall to highlight a number of important physical changes, including improved lighting and sidewalks,

increased safety patrols, and, eventually, a new multijurisdictional zoning plan that should update the area's antiquated suburban look.

"The problem is that the perception still isn't there that it's a super-safe place to be," said Terrence Foley, the CEO of the district. "We needed to do more in terms of changing

SEE CITY AVE., P.30

## CITY AVE.: Major artery will get promotion and face-lift to make it contemporary.

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the image."

It starts with a relatively simple change — gone is the squiggly old City Avenue logo, which Foley admits was less than a rousing success. In its place are a new name (It's "CityAve" now, please) and a clean new logo: A blue circle with "CityAve" inscribed inside.

*'We're trying to get the message out that things are changing.'*

**Terrence Foley**  
City Avenue  
Special Services  
District

The circle represents "the smart spot," Foley said. "You're smart to work here; you're smart to live here; you're smart to learn here ... and you're smart to play here. That's what that's all about."

There was a time when the area, long known familiarly as "City Line Avenue" because it's on the dividing line between Philadelphia and its inner-most western suburbs, was a major commercial hub. A 1965 article in the journal "Land Economics" described the strip as "ablaze with the passions of spectacular and creative land uses." But the rise of suburban shopping malls and changes in

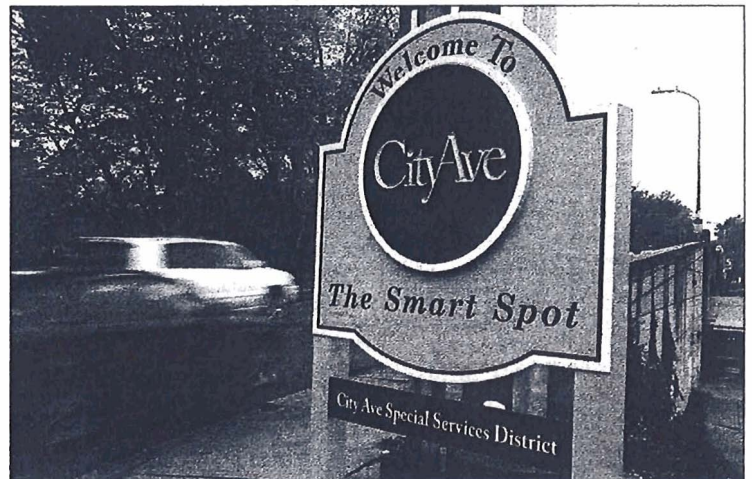
land-use fashion soon dimmed those passions and left a good part of City Avenue, as it is properly known, a declining zone of insular 1950s-style suburban development. Buildings are accompanied by vast swaths of parking lots and there's little street-level retail to liven up the scene and ward off crime and decay.

The opening of the new Target center near the Schuylkill Expressway interchange is the most visible sign of recent change. Under prodding from the local officials and the special services district, businesses have chipped in for better lighting and streetscape. New lights are already in place at the northern end of the strip, near Target, and are expected to go online at the other end, around St. Joseph's University.

"There definitely is a new energy on City Avenue," said Sharla Feldscher, who's heading the new marketing effort. "It's easy to do public relations when you're sharing honestly the truth about what's going on."

Much of City Avenue, particularly near Bala Cynwyd, never lost its vibrancy, she said, and the new Target development has given visible evidence of the renewal of the rest of the strip.

The special services district was created in the early 1990s and Foley joined 18 months ago. Most of its \$800,000 budget goes to hiring eight bicycle employees to patrol the area, similar to the guides and patrol officers in Center City. The City Av-



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Snappy new nomenclature, CityAve, is meant to signal that things are different.

enue employees are not sworn police officers, but they are in close contact with law enforcement and other government services to keep the area safe and clean, and to offer directions and advice to visitors, Foley said.

The next step, Foley said, will be a major revamping of the area's zoning, a daunting prospect since the district straddles the line between Philadelphia and Lower Merion. Planning officials in the two governments, however, are coordinating to

create a common zoning plan.

The old zoning, which dates from the 1950s, emphasizes a car-based, suburban plan, in which buildings are set well back from the road and isolated behind large parking lots. The new zoning will emphasize a vibrant streetscape with parking behind the stores.

"We're trying to get the message out that things are changing, things are happening, things are exciting," Foley said. ■