

CITY AVENUE SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT

BUDGET AND PLAN 2009-2013



BACKGROUND



The idea of the City Avenue Special Services District was born in the summer of 1997 with the mission to engage property owners, businesses, tenants and other stakeholders to retain and improve the economic vitality of the area. In the fall of 1998, property owners in the District, the City of Philadelphia, and the Township of Lower Merion approved the initial five-year plan to create the District and provide additional services and facilitate cooperation in the area.

Located on the borders of the City of Philadelphia and Township of Lower Merion, The District began operations in 1999, and it has been working to improve the image and the physical area of the City Avenue area since its inception. In 2002 the District was reauthorized for another 20 years of operation.

There have been a great number of accomplishments in the District in fewer than ten years of operation. The image of the area continues to improve as it evolves, the area is being revitalized, new resources have been brought in, and effective programs have been developed. The nation's first and only multi-jurisdictional special services district, the City Avenue Special Services District has been praised for bringing together the City of Philadelphia and the Township of Lower Merion.

PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Following the lead of other special services districts, the City Avenue Special Services District developed a program of Community Service Representatives (CSRs), where initially 8 uniformed CSRs patrolled the District on bicycle 6 days a week from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For the summer of 2008, two part-time CSRs were added and the patrol hours were extended to 10 p.m. to provide more coverage during the longer daylight hours. The CSRs are employees of the District who work closely with the police departments of both Philadelphia and Lower Merion, communicating via direct phone line. All of the CSRs have a background in security or hospitality or at least two years of college education.

Under the leadership of Pete Herzog, a former Lieutenant with the Lower Merion Police Department, the CSRs serve three major functions: to be a visible presence, to assist people in the area, and to identify areas of public concern.

For 2008, the District also decided to upgrade the CSRs modes of transportation. Now in use are two Segways, which will give the CSRs increased mobility, especially in inclement weather. It also creates greater visibility and helps increase public awareness of their role in the District.

As another safety measure, the District implemented a one-call system to alert businesses and property owners of any problems or concerns in the area. The call, which can reach many people at once, is a voice message that automatically transmits the information to everyone on the call list in a matter of minutes.

According to statistics maintained by the City Avenue Special Services District, the City of Philadelphia, and the Township of Lower Merion, crime has been down significantly in the last five years.



Changes in Part I Crimes 1998-2008

Period	Change
1998-1999	-2%
1998-2000	-32%
1998-2001	-23%
1998-2002	-26%
1998-2003	-36%
1998-2004	-45%
1998-2005	-41%
1998-2006	-16%
1998-2007	-47%
1998-2008*	-54%

*2008 figures are based on crime data through June 30, 2008 which have been prorated through December 31, 2008.

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PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM

The City Avenue Special Services District contracted with Urban Engineers to create a schematic pedestrian lighting plan for CityAve. The engineering and design have been completed and approvals have been obtained from Lower Merion Township and the City of Philadelphia.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The new light fixtures will replace the old, 30-foot street poles on City Avenue between Monument Road and 63rd Street, Bala Avenue and portions of 54th & 63rd Streets. The number one goal in replacing the lights is safety, both for pedestrians and drivers. The new lights will be 15 feet high and attractive in appearance, improving the aesthetic appeal of the District. This is the first part of moving the District to be a pedestrian-friendly community. The new system, using pedestrian-scale lighting, will also include installation of CCTV conduits which will allow the District to cut down even more on crime.

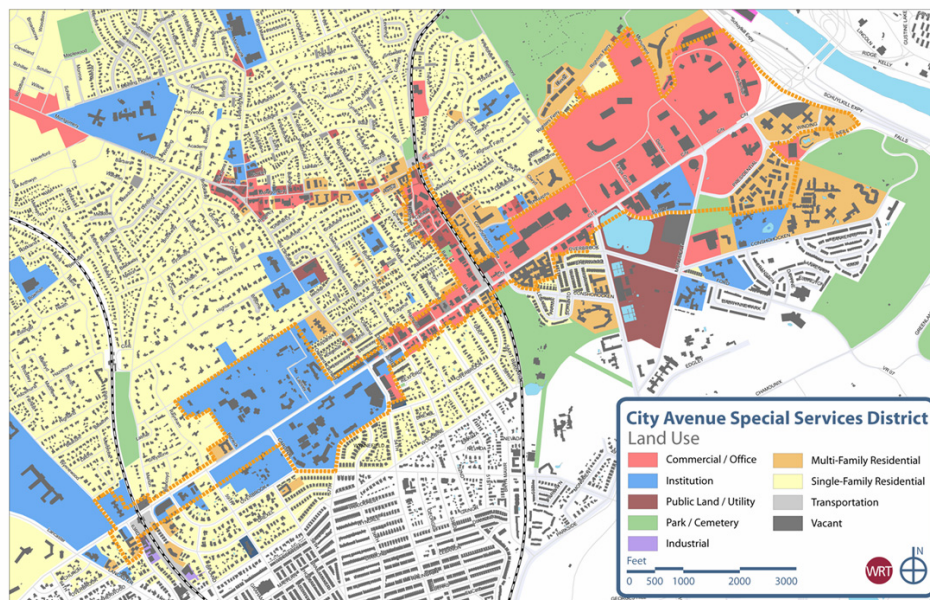
Additionally, the design of the streets and sidewalks will change to improve safety, visual appeal, and make the area more pedestrian-friendly. There will be medians with pedestrian refuges and coordinated signalization with crosswalks to help ensure people can cross the street safely. In the future, the streetscape will change the entire area to a pedestrian center, rather than just a busy road. It will be done in a way that slows traffic on City Avenue to encourage safer driving, but also will not impede traffic patterns or cause delays from those entering or exiting Route 76 in either direction. In addition to mitigating the current traffic congestion, the new streetscape will be beautiful and will help cut down on carbon dioxide emissions.

ZONING OVERLAY

The Zoning Overlay Project is an extension of public safety improvements and the beautification efforts of the District. It will transform City Avenue from a busy, auto-oriented drive thru to a pedestrian-friendly, successful, vibrant, highly desirable and diverse community.

Lower Merion Township Assistant Director of Building and Planning, Angela Murray, Michelle Webb of the Philadelphia Planning Commission and CityAve District CEO, Terrence Foley, are co-managers of the project. Kise Straw & Kolodner was the firm selected to complete the project. They are working with the project managers, a Steering Committee composed of local professionals, three representatives from each local civic association, and CityAve board members.

Currently, the District is zoned in a way that needs to be updated in order to meet the demands and growth potential. Below is a chart detailing what it looks like today.



PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

With zoning changes, it is expected that pedestrian- and public transit-oriented mixed-use development will create retail investment and upgrading. From there, the hopes are to have more high-end residential areas, a fresh sense of character, and an improved sense of public safety with the refreshed-looking buildings. As a further positive result, tax revenues should increase, which will help fund continuing capital improvements. It will also create a sense of place, and along with that, a better perception of safety. Bordering neighborhoods will also benefit from the positive changes in the District.

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ZONING OVERLAY

The execution of these plans can bring substantial changes to the economic situation of the District. Retail employment is expected to increase by approximately 1,000 jobs, retail sales could increase by up to \$120 million and retail property values could increase another \$120 million. Professional services employment is expected to increase by 2,900 jobs, with total business revenues potentially increasing by \$1.3 billion. Commercial property values may increase up to \$230 million. Property tax revenue, with these changes, could reach \$4.4 million in Lower Merion alone. The Philadelphia wage tax could increase by about \$1.8 million each year by 2017.

Below are potential improvements to the District through re-zoning and creating pedestrian-oriented centers.



PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Closely related to the Zoning Overlay are the public space improvements for the District. As the first very visible sign of aesthetic improvements, the CASSD spruced up the City Avenue pedestrian bridge. In March of 2004, the "CityAve" sign was unveiled with local politicians and board members present to celebrate. The next steps for the bridge were new paint and a new fence to complete the renovations.



In the fall of 2003, the Belmont Reservoir also received a new look. The old chain-link fence that had once surrounded the property was replaced with a sleek, custom-made wrought-iron fence that helps improve the image of the District.

In order to further beautify areas of the District, various projects have been underway to plant trees and other vegetation and update the hardscaping surrounding the areas as well. The Southern Gateway to City Ave, located at 63rd Street and City Avenue, completely changed. CityAve, working alongside the Philadelphia Horticultural Society, Saint Joseph's University and SEPTA, got a newly-designed entrance from All Seasons Landscaping. With

cobblestone sidewalk borders, flowers, shrubs and trees, the area is not only pleasing to look at, but it is good for the environment, too.

Going along with the theme of "greening" CityAve, in the fall of 2006, the District hired landscaping firm Charles Friel & Son to turn an old gas station into a green space at the corner of Merion Road and City Avenue. And, in November 2007, volunteers from the District, Lower Merion High School, Wynnefield Residents Association, the Education Advancement Alliance and CAMERA, Inc. partnered with the American Cities Foundation to plant trees along City Avenue. The District also maintains the gateway at Presidential and City Avenues as is evident by the vibrant landscaping and colorful flowers.

Apart from landscaping, building construction and renovation play an important role in the vitality of the District. With the Adam's Mark Hotel demolition came a new shopping center featuring a huge Target Store, Starbucks, a PNC Bank built using recycled and sustainable materials, Chipotle, Pei Wei, California Pizza Kitchen, and several other new businesses. Other areas in the District also saw construction. New Dorms were built and Saint Joseph's University acquired the Episcopal Academy campus in response to the needs of the students. Additionally, in response to both student and community needs, the University developed a new parking facility, Hawks Landing, which includes two new restaurants and a bookstore. 6ABC purchased land from the neighboring Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) to build new studios.

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PUBLIC SPACE, Cont.

The money PCOM received from the sale of the land is being endowed in a scholarship fund. As part of the Hawks Landing development, Saint Joseph's University partnered with the District to complete a Streetscape and Lighting demonstration project along 54th Street.

New in 2008 is the Overbrook Farms Farmers' Market at 63rd Street. The market features all locally produced foods and is supported by the Overbrook Farms Club, CityAve, Saint Joseph's University's Food Marketing Department, and The Food Trust.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

As part of an ongoing effort at the City Avenue Special Services District, the aesthetic improvements will continue in the future. City Avenue, 63rd Street & Bala Avenue will see more landscaping and lighting improvements to mirror the 54th Street demonstration project. And, with new construction still happening, the District wants to see even more along the Corridor to give the area a refreshed look. Higher-end retail shops will be attracted to the area and will have a positive economic effect on the District. In order for this to happen, improvements must continue to be made in the District, including making it more pedestrian-oriented (as detailed in the Public Safety Section), and refreshing the sidewalks and business fronts for the "curb appeal" the District needs to attract new businesses to the area. The longer-term goal is that as these changes are made in the District, new office retail and residential building will occur.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As home to two large television stations, plus numerous radio stations, CityAve has an instant connection with the media. To capitalize on this unique media hot spot, Sharla Feldscher Public Relations (SFPR) was hired in 2007 to help raise CityAve's profile through public relations efforts. Additionally, the formation of the Media Neighbors Group allows CityAve to work closely with the media and market the District in ways that directly can reach the greater public. This new group is an important step in developing the projects in the District and getting the support CityAve needs in order to improve the area.

Another significant project was the creation of City Avenue Business Association (CABA) which first met in June 2003. CABA was created in order to provide its members networking opportunities and access to business services and resources. With various networking and business events throughout the year, CABA connects businesses together and strengthens the unity of those living and working in the District.

With a quarterly newsletter, the CityAve District is able to communicate easily with residents, businesses, and retail shops about things that are happening in the District. A newly redesigned website and professionally designed brochures and newsletters also help to raise the visibility of the District. CityAve has worked hard since 2003 to actively promote the area, from the benefits of education to the retail and dining options, and anything in between.

Community involvement, most notably through volunteer beautification projects, is another marketing campaign that the District has worked to make strong. This goes hand-in-hand with public safety, the zoning overlay, and public space improvements.

The re-branding of CityAve is another major aspect of the marketing and communications efforts by the District. From the old logo, came a new, modern, clean design that represents what the District encompasses. With all of the plans in the works for large-scale improvements to the area, a new logo and new feel for CityAve was an important step in the entire process. With the phrase "The Smart Spot" as another aspect of re-branding, it emphasizes the important role of the District to both Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

CityAve will work to continue its current marketing and communications efforts and will expand on them. Using various alternative marketing ideas, SFPR will work with CityAve to develop unique programs and events to create both media and public interest. This may include radio station prizes, an art show, a spring festival, a "Cow Parade," a crafts fair, or a health fair. These alternative marketing and public relations ideas will serve to unite the businesses and residents in the area while drawing new interest to City Avenue.

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BUDGET, 2009-2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Income					
Billing Amount ¹	\$1,343,762	\$1,410,951	\$1,481,498	\$1,555,573	\$1,633,352
Assessment Income ²	\$954,071	\$1,001,775	\$1,051,864	\$1,104,457	\$1,159,680
Contributions ³	\$175,000	\$183,750	\$185,000	\$185,000	\$185,000
Interest & Other Income ⁴	\$15,000	\$16,000	\$17,000	\$18,000	\$19,000
Total Income	\$1,144,071	\$1,201,525	\$1,253,864	\$1,307,457	\$1,363,680
Expenses					
Public Safety	\$444,457	\$466,679	\$490,013	\$514,514	\$535,095
Marketing and Promotion	\$45,000	\$44,986	\$47,677	\$48,776	\$49,225
Streetscape Maintenance	\$58,473	\$57,987	\$64,866	\$71,687	\$72,488
Administration/ Operations	\$426,142	\$460,873	\$479,308	\$498,480	\$533,872
Professional Fees	\$20,000	\$21,000	\$22,000	\$24,000	\$23,000
Capital Program Initiatives ⁵	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Total Expenses	1,144,072	\$1,201,525	\$1,253,864	1,307,457	\$1,363,680

1. Total property assessments including exempt and residential properties
2. Assessment excluding exempt and residential properties
3. Voluntary contributions by tax-exempt properties
4. Interest on operating accounts and receivables
5. Capital program costs including matching funds for grants

Annual CASSD assessments to properties within the City Avenue District will be responsible for approximately 84% of the District's budget. The remaining portion of the budget will be sought from contributions. Individual assessments on properties will be derived by multiplying the annual total of District assessments by a ratio of the value of real estate taxes for an individual property from the previous year to the total value of all real estate taxes (including the value of real estate taxes on property owned by tax-exempt organizations) within the CASSD from the previous year.

Properties owned by tax-exempt entities will be assessed using the same formula as other properties in the District. Owners of these properties will be requested to make a voluntary contribution in the amount of the assessment.

As in past years, a provision will be made to enable owner-occupants of residential properties in the City Avenue District to not pay the District assessment, if they elect to do so in accordance with procedures adopted by the District.

In order for the District to complete the aforementioned public space and safety improvements it is working to obtain a capital funding grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and matching funds from the Federal Government, the Township of Lower Merion, Montgomery County and the City of Philadelphia.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

An 18-member of Board of Directors representing property owners and managers, institutional leaders and business owners governs the City Avenue Special Services District. Many elected officials also serve as Ex-Officio members. Terrence Foley serves as President and CEO for the District.

The Board of Directors is composed of nine representatives from Philadelphia and nine representatives from Lower Merion Township. To serve on the Board of City Avenue Special Services District one must be a commercial or industrial property owner, or merchant in the District.

Dennis Bianchi
NBC-10/WCAU-TV

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Neil Cain
Federal Realty Investment Trust

Lita Cohen*
Retired Pennsylvania State
Representative

James S. Ettelson*
Thorp, Reed & Armstrong

Representative Michael Gerber*
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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Tishman-Speyer Properties, L.P.

George Goldstone
Herbert Yentis & Co. Realtors

Commissioner Brian Gordon*
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*Ex-Officio

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Keystone Property Group

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