

CENTER CITY DIGEST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER CITY DISTRICT AND CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SUMMER 2006

On May 16, Paul R. Levy, president of the Center City District and executive director of the Central Philadelphia Development Corp., received the 85th Philadelphia Award. Established in 1921 by philanthropist Edward Bok, the award is presented annually to a citizen of the region who has done the most "to advance the best and largest interest of the community." Previous recipients include Gov. Rendell, Mayor Street, Sister Mary Scullion, Edmund N. Bacon, Louis I. Kahn, Rev. Leon H. Sullivan and Marian Anderson. The following is an excerpt from Levy's remarks on accepting the award.

I want to talk this evening about the intersection of personal life and civic life and focus first on three dates: 1955, 1975 and 2005.

I was eight years old in November 1955 when my family moved out of Newark, New Jersey to the suburbs where they bought their first house. On October 30, 1975, I was a graduate student at Columbia University. New York City was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and reached out to the federal government for assistance. The response was captured in a famous *Daily News* headline: "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD." That was the nadir for New York City. Contrast that to September 2005, when my oldest daughter, a junior at New York University in Manhattan, moved into an off-campus apartment on 3rd Street, between Avenues A and B. In 1975, 3rd Street between Avenues A and B was a place even armed criminals feared to tread. Today the street is thriving with young people, boutiques, restaurants, outdoor cafes and overpriced apartments!

1955 to 1975 was a 20-year period of rapid decline in the life of our cities. 1975 to 2005, a 30-year period from the absolute bottom to a moment when signs of revival are everywhere, not simply in Philadelphia, but across this country. It leads me to be very optimistic about

where our cities can be in 2026 when my youngest daughter will be 30, the average age at which Americans buy their first house.

1955: From City to Suburbs

In 1955 Dwight Eisenhower was in the White House. Newark, New Jersey had 10 department stores and several thriving movie palaces. Television was filled with westerns: *Lassie* and *the Lone Ranger*. *Ozzie and Harriet*, the Nelsons, were the typical American family: mom, dad and two kids in the suburbs.

My parents had grown up in Newark, both children of immigrant families. Both had gone to public school in Newark. They got married in Newark. My dad graduated law school in Newark and enlisted in the Army in Newark in 1942. My mom worked in the print shop at the Newark Museum. As a seven-year-old, I sometimes took a bus by myself downtown after school to her job. I don't remember anyone being worried about my safety. I don't recall signs of Newark being in decline.

But profound trends were reshaping regions. In 1953 my father bought his first new car. In 1956 Eisenhower approved the Interstate Highway System. All of Newark, like every older American city, had been redefined by the Federal Housing Administration since 1934. So when my dad, a World War II veteran, went to buy his first house with a Veterans Administration guaranteed mortgage, there was only one choice: new product in suburbia.

We moved to a small town in New Jersey, filled with woods, fields and streams that were systematically being cut down, piped and paved over for housing development. I like to think of myself as an early practitioner of smart growth. My friends and I used to pull up the surveyors' stakes in the vain hope that we could stop the wave of suburbanization. We were also early practitioners of recycling, raiding

construction sites for leftover lumber to build tree houses.

My family didn't completely disconnect from cities and made weekly pilgrimages to the Newark Public Library and to concerts, plays and operas in New York City. It was clear from my parents that culture and the city were synonymous and they passed that on to my brother and me.

Cities in Decline

But clearly Newark was in decline and by 1967, a summer of riots, the city was in flames.

After graduating from college, I moved to Manhattan in fall 1968 to begin graduate work at Columbia. To support myself as a graduate student and to fulfill my bent for civic activism, I taught in the New York public schools in Oceanhill-Brownsville in Brooklyn.

It was exciting to be back in the city and while New York had great Chinese and



With Center City clean, safe and attractive, downtown is booming. But much remains to be done.

Cuban restaurants, graffiti was everywhere. The subways were sweltering and smelly. Crime was a reality that cut very close and very personally. It was not a great time for cities.

In 1972, after getting laid off by the public schools during budget cuts, I gave up on Manhattan and moved to a farm in upstate New York. I did continue to come back into the city for research and teaching and lived there intermittently between 1972 and 1976.

1975: Hitting Bottom

My wife is a film critic, so I've been influenced by her way of seeing things, how movies provide a commentary on life. Think of the image of cities presented in the following movies: 1971, *French Connection* and *Dirty Harry*; 1973, *Serpico*. In Charles Bronson's 1974 *Death Wish*, the only way to survive in the city is as a vigilante with baseball bat and gun. In 1975 when President Ford told New York to "DROP DEAD," Al Pacino was an Oscar nominee for his manic performance in *Dog Day Afternoon*. The city was a place of madness and chaos. By 1981 in *Escape From New York*, Manhattan had become a penal colony run by the convicts.

In 1976, just before my thirtieth birthday, I finally gave up my 1960s communal fantasies and left the farm to move to Philadelphia. I was walking on 4th Street, crossing Pine Street, when one of the historic trolleys that was painted red, white and blue for the Bicentennial went rolling by and I said to myself, "Any city that has preserved such great historic homes and trolleys must be OK." So I moved here on impulse without a job.

The Changing Image of Cities

There were early signs that things were changing for the better. In 1976, Sylvester Stallone made *Rocky* and celebrated the streets of Philadelphia. In 1977, Woody Allen made *Annie Hall*, which is set in 1975 in the midst of the city's financial crisis. In 1979, he followed with a love letter to the city in *Manhattan*.



New York City has provided generous recreational amenities along the Hudson.

In 1984, Bill Cosby's Huxtables appeared on network TV portraying a model middle-class, African-American family living in a townhouse in the city. In 1984, Robin Williams starred in *Moscow on the Hudson*, a film in which African-Americans, Cubans, Latinas and Russian immigrants, all disconnected from family and homeland, get along, get mugged, fall in love and support each other and celebrate city life.

Then in 1990 *Seinfeld* appeared on TV, set on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, right around the corner from where I had lived near Columbia. On *Seinfeld*, the city is filled with interesting and delightfully crazy characters, young and hip singles. In 1993, *Sleepless in Seattle* offered romantic images of Seattle, Baltimore and New York. In 1997, *Ally McBeal* appeared on TV and in June 1998, *Sex and the City* premiered. Single women walked safely on the streets of Boston and New York. Crime is never mentioned. Urban life is safe, cool and exciting. Think how far we've come.

2005: Cities are Back

Here in Philadelphia, 30% of downtown's population is age 25-34; 79% have col-

lege degrees. Empty nesters are flocking back. After declining for decades, the number of school-age children is up by 43%. We have 212 fine dining restaurants; 167 outdoor cafes; streets alive and animated not just on weekends, but on Tuesday and Sunday nights.

For once, demography is on our side. Nationally, mom, dad and kids at home, like TV's Nelsons, the so-called typical American household, is just 24% of the U.S. population. Married couples, no children, are the largest household type; single-person households are the second largest type. That these people want to live downtown didn't happen by accident and it didn't happen because of TV or the movies.

Many people had much to do with this extraordinary recovery. But I am convinced that it began with *clean and safe*. I am a total believer in the theory of the *tipping point*. Dirty, graffiti-covered streets, a public environment in disarray, broken car windows, aggressive panhandling all send the message that no one cares; that no one is in charge.

Litter and disorder not only depress the spirit, they depress real estate values and job creation. By fixing broken windows, by making improvements to the public environment, you can produce a dramatic effect on the psyche of those who live and work in the city. Petty crime has been cut by 80% since 1994; serious crime has been cut in half.

Put a well-trained, customer-oriented, uniformed staff on the sidewalk, eliminate

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New office buildings, a convention center and the Kimmel Center are all essential, as are 8,200 new units of housing and the 5,300 now under construction. All are part of the mix. But what the CCD did was set the stage and then steadily raise public standards and expectations.

To say that Center City looks good when compared to the most distressed communities in Philadelphia is true. But it's just not good enough. Our standard of comparison, the benchmark for competition, has to be New York, Chicago, London and Barcelona. Because the people and businesses we want to attract have choices.

When Milwaukee and Camden N.J. have better waterfronts than we do, we ought to be embarrassed and prompted to action. Chicago puts our public landscaping to shame. Washington D.C. has real-time information at all its public transit stations. The city manager from Vancouver said it very well: "If we are going to get North Americans to live and work in high-density cities, we are going to have to provide them high-quality public spaces."

2006: Challenges Remain

The good news: the tide has turned. The old story of decline has ended and we are laying the foundation today for expanding the revival across the entire city and region. But we cannot simply pat ourselves on the back or sit complacently on our rear ends. However good it is downtown, 23% of Philadelphia's population lives at or below the poverty level. In a



Vancouver has made a commitment to high quality public spaces.

knowledge economy, 62% of adults downtown have college degrees. But city-wide, only 18% of adults have college degrees. That is a disturbing and alarming gap.

We cannot fall into that perennial Philadelphia trap of downtown versus neighborhoods or business competitiveness versus social services. That is a misleading and divisive choice that we have to banish from the coming mayoral election.

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Only 4% of the electorate lives downtown and for anyone to get elected citywide, they have to focus on the 96% who don't live in Center City. But one very small piece of geography — Front Street to 40th Street, Spring Garden to South Street — generates 57% of all wages paid in Philadelphia and those salaries go to residents of every neighborhood of this city.

Each time we fill an office building the size of Liberty Place, we generate 4,000 jobs. And \$6.4 million in salaries from those jobs will be paid to employees living in North Philadelphia with millions more to every other neighborhood across the city and region.

So any agenda for prosperity and growth has got to combine business competitiveness to create more jobs with quality,



Chicago has set the standard for streetscape enhancements.

public education and quality, well-funded public transportation to connect our residents to those jobs.

Today, we live in what Neal Peirce has called "the post-federal era." We can't look to Washington D.C. to bail us out. The federal doctor simply doesn't make house calls in Philadelphia anymore.

That makes downtown the primary source of the resources we need for redistribution. Every time we fill an office

building the size of Liberty Place, we generate enough local taxes to hire 514 new caseworkers in the Department of Human Services, or put 372 new police officers on neighborhood streets. What we do downtown creates opportunity in every neighborhood in the city.

1955 to 1975 was a period of profound decline for all American cities. We probably hit bottom in Philadelphia somewhere between 1985 and 1990. But the last 15 years have shown us what is possible when we stop looking in the rearview mirror and start believing in our future. We've almost learned to stop asking, "Who's going to live in all these condos?" Or worse, "Why would anyone want to live in Philadelphia?"

What we need to start asking is "How are we going to fund the playgrounds, parks and schools and the Delaware Riverfront trail for the next 10,000 people who move in?"

We have come very far. We still have much to do. I am excited by the city we can become in the next 15 years. I am excited by the city we can leave to our children and to our grandchildren.

Thank you for this honor. Thank you for this opportunity.

Paul R. Levy
President

plevy@centercityphila.org

CPDC Forums: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In celebration of its 50th anniversary year, CPDC has completed three of six forums that reflect upon significant accomplishments in Center City over the last five decades and look toward the challenges and opportunities of the coming years.

Guest speakers have addressed Center City's residential revival, the office sector and transportation from a variety of perspectives. A short topical video, commissioned for the occasion and produced by WHY?Y, accompanies each forum and highlights the accomplishments of the last 50 years through historical footage and contemporary interviews looking back at a half-century of downtown developments.

The following is a brief recap of the three forums so far.

Center City's Residential Revival

Data show that Center City is among the nation's strongest residential downtowns and demographics point to continued growth. But the challenge remains to grow knowledge industry jobs to assure future prosperity.

Speaking at CPDC's first forum in February, Eugenie Birch, chair of the Department of City & Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania, noted that Center City leads the nation in the number of households downtown and is among the highest and fastest growing in home ownership. Philadelphia and its comparable city downtowns — Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Lower and Midtown Manhattan — have all experienced continuous household growth for the past 30 years, with Center City up 13% to lead the nation at 47,500 households and

88,000 residents. Chicago and Midtown Manhattan are close behind, but Philadelphia is far ahead of the other top 10 cities.

Downtown residents in all these cities are more likely to be single, older — with the fastest-growing cohort the 25 to 34 year-olds — and more highly educated. "Downtowns," noted Birch, "are racially and ethnically more diverse than 30 years ago. They are far more diverse than their surrounding suburbs, but less diverse than the cities of which they are part. Philadelphia and its peers are similar."

Robert Weissbourd, president of RW Ventures in Chicago and former executive vice president of Shorebank Chicago Companies, emphasized that contrary to conventional wisdom, a city's prosperity is not contingent on population growth. While quality of life and amenities are important, they too are not prime determinants of prosperity.

Instead, he said, what matters are quality, high-skilled jobs and "human capital" — educated workers to fill the jobs. "Good weather and nightlife are not nearly as important to college graduates as employment," Weissbourd added. While the demographics of Center City are excellent, the rest of Philadelphia needs to improve both the educational attainment of the existing population and to reduce the out-migration of college graduates. He urged policymakers to continue to focus on improving public education and training and to create a competitive environment for professional and business service firms, health care and educational institutions.

Creating a Competitive Office Sector

Christopher Leinberger, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, was the keynote speaker at CPDC's April forum. Leinberger suggested that market dynamics and consumer preferences are now tilting in favor of walkable compact cities, with one-third to one-half of consumers expressing a preference for "walkable urbanity."

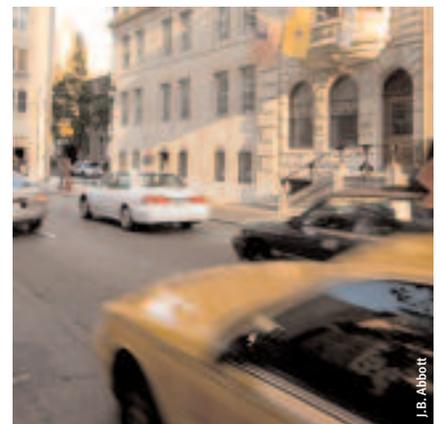
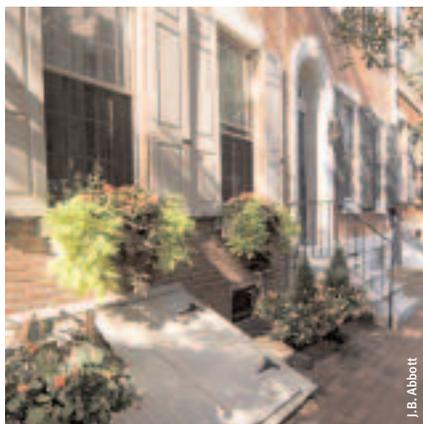
Low-density, suburban, car-dominated development tends to lose value as sprawl pushes further into the exurbs creating greater traffic congestion, he said. In the suburbs, he noted, "More is less." By contrast, pedestrian-oriented, urban areas increase in value as they increase in density. In the city, with greater diversity of employment and entertainment, "More is more." Leinberger also noted that transportation dictates development: "Build only roads, you get low density. Build a balanced transportation system that is pedestrian-oriented once you arrive, you get high density."

John Gattuso, senior vice president, national development of Liberty Property Trust, which is developing the Comcast Center, echoed those themes, adding "a lot of barriers we've perceived to investment in this city are falling rapidly ... and finally propelling Philadelphia to the place we all think it is capable of being."

The Car in the City

With its cool climate and grey skies, one wouldn't think of Copenhagen as a city where people gather outdoors year-round at cafes and public squares or stroll and bike on pedestrian-dominated streets.

Yet since 1962, the Danish capital has



CPDC forums so far have considered the residential and office sectors and transportation. Upcoming: retail, arts and culture and the waterfront.

transformed parking lots into squares and removed cars from former thoroughfares, creating seven times more of what Jan Gehl calls “people space” and bringing throngs out into the open. With a city-wide network of bicycle lanes and bicycle signals that turn green six seconds before car signals, bicycle use in Copenhagen has grown 100% in the past 15 years.

Gehl, a Danish architect and foremost thinker on the relationship among transportation, public spaces and urban life, spoke at CPDC’s third forum in late May, noting that “reconquered” cities willing to put constraints on vehicular traffic can create high-quality public spaces that will be eagerly used, regardless of weather.

Also speaking was Walter Kulash, renowned traffic engineer, who succinctly framed the challenge before 21st-century cities “not just to move cars, but to move people.”

To see more from the previous three forums, visit www.centercityphila.org to download speakers’ full presentations and the forum videos.



FORUMS ON THE FUTURE OF CENTER CITY

Mark your calendar and watch for more information on the second half of the series:

September 12: Improving the Retail Mix

October 17: Arts & Culture

November 14: Reclaiming Center City's Waterfront

All sessions are at 4p.m. at the Union League and all are open to the public.

Visit www.CenterCityPhila.org/forums for more information.



Preventing Crime in the Summertime

Long days, balmy temperatures and a wealth of outdoor activities make summer the ideal time to get out and around in Center City. While petty crimes have been reduced by 80% in the last 12 years, summer has always been a peak season for pickpockets and other petty criminals.

Deployment of police and the CCD’s community service representatives has played a major role in putting criminals out of business, but you can do your part as well:

- Seated at an outdoor café, in a restaurant or at the movies or other events, don’t place your purse, wallet, cell phone, shopping bags, backpack or other valuables on the seat next to you, on the ground or hanging from the back of your chair. Instead, aim to keep your purse in your lap, cell phone in your pocket and shopping bags or backpacks at your feet where you can see them at all times.
- Wallets should be kept in your front pants pocket or the inside pocket of your jacket (if it’s not too hot!). If you carry a handbag, wear the strap across your shoulder with the clasp facing inward and avoid purses that don’t close at the top.
- When parking your car, be aware of your surroundings. Don’t leave anything — cell phone, money, CDs, packages, etc. — exposed. Secure your valuables in your trunk and only leave the valet a valet key.
- At home, use alarms and window pins or locks to restrict how far your windows can be opened. Secure window air conditioners so that they can’t be pushed in and used for entry into your house. When planning a summer vacation, be sure to stop mail and newspaper deliveries so that they don’t pile up — a sure sign that occupants are away.
- If you are a business owner who plans to close for a summer vacation, place a sign on your window saying you are closed for renovations (not vacation) to discourage thieves from targeting your business.
- For more information on crime prevention, visit the publications page of the Center City District’s Web site, www.CenterCityPhila.org, where you can order a Crime Prevention Services Brochure and Smart Tip Cards for proven tips on how to spot and stop car, office, street and travel theft. The CCD’s Retail Crime Prevention Guide (1996) on how to spot and stop business crime is also available. For additional information, contact Stacy Irving, senior director of Crime Prevention Services at sirving@centercityphila.org.

New Graphics Coming to the Parkway

By year's end new directional signs will guide pedestrians along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and provide information about the institutions, the public sculpture and the history of the diagonal boulevard. The Center City District recently received final approval from the City's Art Commission and the Fairmount Park Commission to proceed with 26 new interpretive signs along the 1.1-mile Parkway from City Hall to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The CCD commissioned Cloud Gehshan Associates to design the new wayfinding and interpretive signs, working with Parkway stakeholders and the Fairmount Park Art Association to determine themes for interpretation, iconography and content. The project is part of CCD's ongoing work to establish the Parkway as an animated cultural campus for Philadelphia.

The new sign system will include:

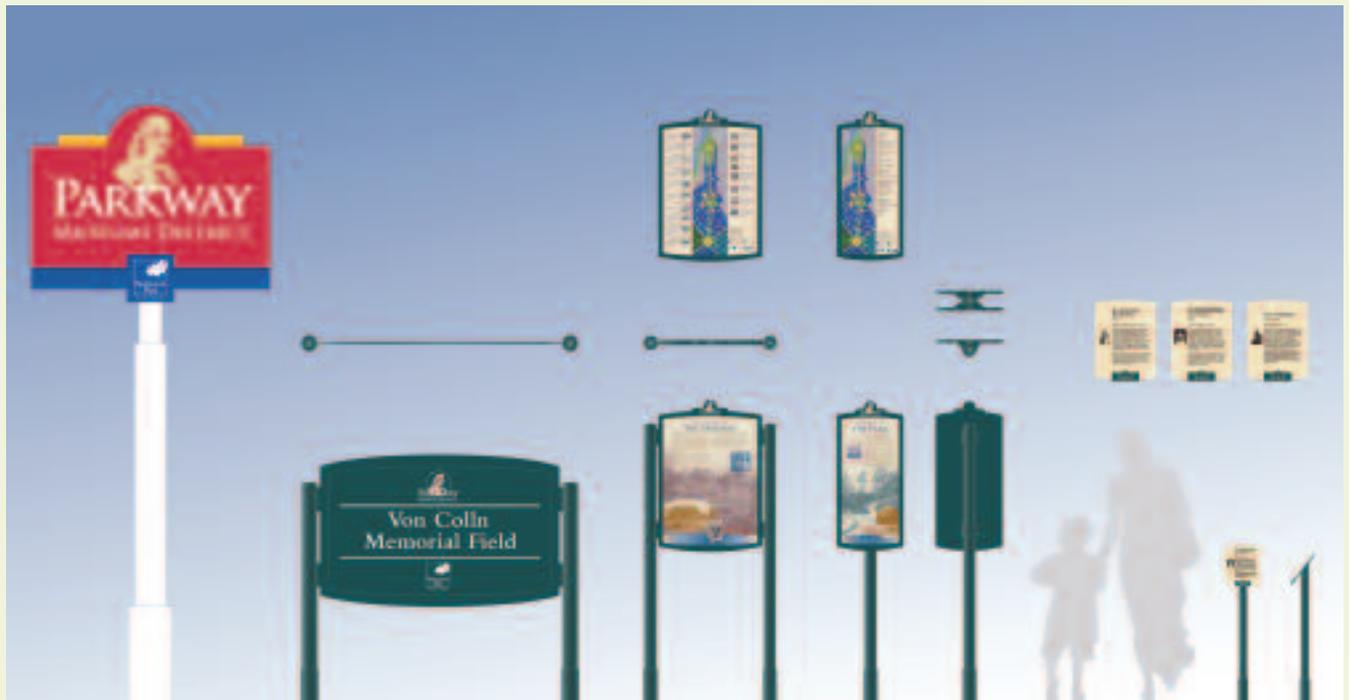
- Gateway signs that mark the arrival to the Parkway museums district, including a Fairmount Park logo, an iconic image of Benjamin Franklin and new typography.
- Maps of the Parkway that highlight major destinations.
- Short interpretative stories that tell the history of the Parkway and highlight the importance of water in the creation of the place.
- Identification signs for 17 Parkway sculptures, all of which have been illuminated by the CCD in the last several years.

The new signs will be fabricated this summer, with installation expected in November. The CCD has established a maintenance plan for the new signs in conjunction with Parkway institutions.

The project is funded with support from the William Penn Foundation.



Cloud Gehshan



Cloud Gehshan

New signs will orient and inform visitors to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway by year's end.

Think Cool Thoughts: Restaurant Week, September 10–15

Summer's heat is upon us, but don't forget to stir yourself in August to make reservations for the next Center City Restaurant Week presented by Mercedes-Benz: September 10–15. And while you're at it, mark your calendar for the following Restaurant Week, January 28 to February 2, 2007.

Seventeen new restaurants bring to an even 100 the downtown eateries offering three courses for only \$30. They are: Amada, Astral Plane Restaurant, Bridget Foy's, Cafe Habana, Cafe Spice, Crescent City, Devil's Alley, Django, Ernesto's 1521 Cafe, Estia, GiGi Restaurant & Lounge, Marmont Steakhouse & Bar, Solefood Restaurant at the Loews Philadelphia, Ted's Montana Grill, The Grill at the Ritz-Carlton Philadelphia, The Grill at the Westin Philadelphia and Warsaw Cafe.

As always, participating parking facilities offer diners discounted parking for \$8.50 or less from 5p.m.-1a.m. with a voucher from participating restaurants.

In addition to our presenting sponsor, Mercedes-Benz, the Center City District also welcomes American Express, Level Vodka and Plymouth English Gin as new



Restaurant Week sponsors, joining TD Banknorth, the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, OpenTable.com, Rittenhouse Row, the Philadelphia Parking Authority, the Philadelphia Parking Association, *Metro*, *PW*, *Where*, *Philadelphia Magazine*, *the Philadelphia Sunday Sun* and WJZZ 106.1.

For all things Restaurant Week, including online reservations (starting August 1), parking information and a list of participating restaurants, along with year-round food-related events, a featured restaurant coupon, and more, visit www.CenterCityPhila.org/RestaurantWeek.

Thanks to TD Banknorth for our Yearlong Partnership

With 12 downtown branches, a high-profile new marketing campaign, and as the Center City District's yearlong events sponsor, TD Banknorth is quickly making a name for itself as an invaluable member of the Center City community.

Philadelphians first saw the new TD Banknorth name in Center City in May after TD Banknorth, Inc. finalized the organization's January 2006 acquisition of Hudson United Bancorp, Inc., the parent company of Hudson United Bank. With its commitment to community involvement, it was an easy transition for TD

Banknorth to continue a primary sponsorship role at CCD.

"The CCD is delighted to welcome TD Banknorth as a new business and as a partner in promoting excitement and vitality yearlong in Center City," said Michelle Shannon, the CCD's vice president of marketing.

Visit the TD Banknorth table at Summer in the City events all season long, where bank representatives are handing out information and promotional items. You'll also see the TD Banknorth logo on CCD publications and on 25,000 CCD

shopping bags. TD Banknorth is also a proud sponsor of Center City Restaurant Week presented by Mercedes-Benz.

Headquartered in Portland, Maine, TD Banknorth has over \$40 billion in assets and provides financial services to over 1.5 million households in the Northeast.

"TD Banknorth is proud to carry on our commitment to the community and we are proud to partner with the Center City District to bring residents, workers and visitors to a host of events throughout Center City," said Jeannie Fallon, regional vice president, TD Banknorth.



Banknorth

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TD Banknorth

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SUMMER IN THE CITY

Summer in the City, the Center City District's annual roster of great seasonal events, is in full swing.

Take a break from the workday and come out to enjoy free lunchtime music — everything from blues to beach style — at the 10th annual Sidewalk Soundbites Concerts. The free performances are set for noon to 1:30 p.m. every Wednesday through August 30 at locations throughout Center City. This season's schedule also includes a special post-Labor Day Fall Fling concert, sponsored by Kleinbard, Bell & Brecker.

When work is done, the night's still young on summer Wednesdays with more than 35 downtown bars and restaurants

participating in the popular Center City Sips Happy Hours. There are \$4 cocktails, \$3 wine, \$2 beer, plus free appetizers, from 5 to 7 p.m. every Wednesday through August 30.

For more information on all Summer in the City events, including the Sidewalk Soundbites Concert schedule, a list of participating Center City Sips locations and happy hour specials and more, visit www.CenterCityPhila.org.

The 2006 Summer in the City is produced by the Center City District and is sponsored by *Philadelphia Weekly*, *Philadelphia Style*, Smooth Jazz WJJZ 106.1, Sunny 104.5, TD Banknorth, Q102, and LEBLON.

GET BREEZY.



SUMMER IN THE CITY

The *Center City Digest* is a publication of the Center City District (CCD), a private-sector sponsored municipal authority committed to providing supplemental services that make Philadelphia's downtown clean, safe and attractive; and of Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) with 50 years of private-sector commitment to the revitalization of downtown Philadelphia. **Editor:** Elise Vider **Designer:** Amy Newnom