



CPDC members attend quarterly general meetings that feature panel discussions and research presentations on timely subjects that are of interest to the business community.

Central Philadelphia Development Corporation Overview

The Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) is a member-based business organization committed to advancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of Center City Philadelphia. For decades, CPDC has been a highly effective vehicle for private-sector leadership to shape the future of the downtown through research, planning, advocacy and civic engagement.

History

CPDC's story starts in 1956, when Philadelphia business leaders founded the Old Philadelphia Development Corporation (OPDC). Its beginnings came at a time when downtown revitalization efforts were critical to reversing decades of decline and disinvestment.

Initial work focused on coordinating public and private efforts to revive neighborhoods, preserve historic assets, and reimagine Center City's potential. Through planning initiatives that shaped the city's development trajectory, OPDC established a model of business-led civic engagement that would influence urban planning for generations.

OPDC's name changed in 1985 to signal its broader focus while maintaining the core mission to champion policies, projects, and partnerships that strengthen Center City for everyone who lives, works, and invests in Philadelphia's downtown.





Hundreds of attendees come to the annual unveiling of State of Center City, CCD/CPDC's largest research report.

Structure

CPDC operates as a 501(c)(3) organization supported by a wide range of business, civic and cultural institutions including leaders in the real estate, financial services, design, legal, insurance, arts and culture, hospitality, and communications sectors.

Members of CPDC have access to exclusive tours, networking opportunities, and resources that help businesses succeed in Center City Philadelphia.

While affiliated with and managed by the staff of the Center City District, CPDC maintains a distinct role as a planning, advocacy and civic engagement organization.



CPDC runs a Young Professionals Network that offers forums, building tours, and networking opportunities with peers.



Among the member-exclusive events is the yearly State of Center City report presentation attended by business and civic leaders from around the region.



CPDC organizes opportunities for members to enjoy after-work social hours as well as hard hat tours and behind-the-scenes visits to development projects throughout the year.



Quarterly membership meetings feature panel discussions and presentations with local and national experts in urban planning, development, and demographic trends.



State of Center City is an expansive CCD/CPDC report used as a business attraction tool for real estate brokers, hospitality professionals, and others.

Focus Areas

Planning & Research

CPDC produces data-driven research and comprehensive studies that inform decision-making. The annual State of Center City report and specialized analyses of office markets, retail trends, residential growth, employment patterns, and downtown dynamics serve as valuable tools for business leaders, policymakers, and investors.

Policy Advocacy

Advocating for policies that enhance Center City's competitiveness is core to CPDC's mission. From tax reform and public transportation funding to zoning changes and infrastructure investment, CPDC's voice represents the collective interests of downtown stakeholders in conversations with city, state, and federal officials.

Economic Development

In partnership with the city's Commerce Department and the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, CPDC supports business attraction and retention initiatives, promotes downtown as a destination for startups and tech firms, and advances Center City's role as the region's premier location for commerce and innovation.

Civic Convening

CPDC brings together business leaders, property owners, civic organizations, developers, and public officials around shared goals and areas of interest, facilitating the collaborations and partnerships necessary to tackle complex challenges and seize emerging opportunities.



Legacy & Impact

Some of the CPDC efforts that have fundamentally shaped Center City Philadelphia:

- Cultural Corridor Development**
 Developed a comprehensive master plan in the early 1990s to revitalize South Broad Street, which led to the establishment of the Avenue of the Arts
- Infrastructure & Connectivity**
 Advocated for the improved design of the Vine Street Expressway and connections between key downtown districts
- Institutional Innovation**
 Spearheaded the creation of the Center City District in 1990 as Philadelphia's first business improvement district
- Strategic Planning**
 Developed master plans for improvements to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and initiatives linking Center City with University City
- Policy Advocacy**
 Championed the City of Philadelphia's 10-year tax abatement program, which catalyzed downtown residential development and diversified Center City land use

