

CENTER CITY DIGEST

Finding Common Ground on Homelessness

On June 7, 2011 in City Council chambers, advocates and representatives of the business community compromised on how to respond to the disruptive behavior of a relatively small number of mentally ill and addicted individuals on downtown streets.

The hospitality industry was prepared to offer harrowing tales of visitors accosted and conventions that cancelled. Building managers were ready to testify about fires set in ATM lobbies; subway corridors and office stairways used as toilets. Restaurateurs had ready stories of individuals walking into restaurants, snatching food from customers' plates.

Advocates had prepared passionate pleas for more funding, heartening cases of successful recovery and accusations that the proposed changes sought to sweep the unfortunate out of sight and criminalize poverty. In the end, there was minimal testimony when a compromise was quickly codified, approved by Council's Rules Committee and scheduled for final vote by the end of the month.

What generated the controversy?

An amendment introduced by Councilman Frank DiCicco at the request of the business community sought to revise the Sidewalk Behavior law. This 1999 legislation requires police to give oral and written notices and call civilian outreach teams, who must concur before officers can do their jobs when encountering anyone they believed to be homeless. If no outreach is available, police currently can't act. If outreach comes and individuals refuse services, police can only write the equivalent of a parking violation. If offensive conduct stops when outreach workers arrive, but resumes when they leave, police can do little. This is what has



frustrated retailers, hotel and building managers, workers and residents: not the tragedy of homelessness, but the anti-social behavior of a disturbed few.

The proposal first sought to remove the requirement that police call and wait for outreach teams before enforcing against *aggressive panhandling* in which individuals repeatedly ask, physically block or intimidate people; panhandle in front of businesses and outside of ATMs. Second, was the insertion into the Sidewalk Behavior bill of provisions from the State law governing *disorderly conduct* — fighting in public places, threatening others, using obscene language and making unreasonable noise — and to exempt this too from the 1999 procedures.

Businesses were prepared to accept that if someone is sleeping or sitting quietly on the sidewalk, the current procedures would remain in place. But they wanted the police empowered to enforce standards of public behavior when it comes to aggressive, threatening and disruptive behavior.

The funding context:

Philadelphia government spends \$108 million each year on homelessness. Charities contribute millions more. On any given night, about 6,000 people are homeless in Philadelphia. Annually, 15,000 to 20,000 experience episodes of homelessness. Half are families with children, eager for shelter. Almost equal in number are single adults in recovery in shelters and transitional housing. But 5%

to 8% remain on downtown streets even when options are offered.

Dedicated outreach workers try. With extraordinary patience, they repeatedly visit the few hundred on the street, but succeed only 35% of the time. Those remaining are often deeply-troubled, suffering from mental illness, hearing voices, often failing to take prescribed medications. In the throes of addiction some commit petty crimes. Others accost and intimidate pedestrians; many keep to themselves. A 1990s study found their mortality rate four times higher than non-homeless peers.

Shelter-Resistant:

During extreme weather, for life-safety reasons, advocates have concurred for two decades that police should bring those with impaired judgment inside if they won't come on their own. Arrests are not made, but public authority is used to move people from the street to safety. The DiCicco amendment sought to make that a year-round practice. Advocates charged that it criminalized the status of homelessness and created a criminal record that could limit access to public welfare benefits.

The CCD countered that proposed changes only restored the approach that worked in the late 1990s before the passage of the Sidewalk Behavior bill when Philadelphia came close to eliminating street homelessness. At the time, the police used the potential enforcement of the state's *obstructing the highway* law

to persuade those on the street to move voluntarily. The chart below shows the average annual monthly overnight counts of homeless individuals conducted by the Outreach Coordination Center between 1996 and 2007.

Between 1997 and 2000 there was a dramatic increase in funding for services for the homeless, including the development of many shelter plus care facilities. During this period of time, trained police officers also worked in tandem with outreach workers to transport individuals to shelter.

In early 1999, after the Sidewalk Behavior bill was passed and following the settlement of a suit brought by advocates challenging enforcement procedures, police were directed to end enforcement of *obstructing the highway* procedures, not to enforce Fairmount Park's overnight curfew, and to treat nearly all forms of aggressive behavior by those who appeared to be homeless by following the procedures of the Sidewalk Behavior bill. It is important to add that 2001 began a period of economic expansion and job growth in Philadelphia and when additional public funds were committed to outreach. With regard to trends after 2001, the chart speaks for itself.

Philadelphia's Community Court demonstrates how coordinating and balancing law enforcement with social services can produce favorable results. At the Court, prosecutors and defenders join with police, social workers and judges in a comprehensive response to quality of life crimes. Instead of jail, defendants get help and do community service. Be-

tween 2007 and 2009, 70% of those brought before the Court for misdemeanors took advantage of its medical, social and job counseling programs. On successfully completing their community sentence, the arrest is deleted from their record. Two-thirds have not been arrested again.

The June 7th compromise:

Advocates and business representatives concurred that the focus should be on *problematic behaviors* and not on anyone's *status in life*. Businesses agreed that in the enforcement of "Aggressive Panhandling" police would still be required to call an outreach team before they act. But in return, a new provision was inserted in the Sidewalk Behavior ordinance that affirms that when confronting those behaviors defined by state law as *Disorderly Conduct* police have the authority to respond immediately without having to call an outreach team, though they still may elect to do so.

Implementation:

Next comes the drafting of new directives for police, revised training and broader communication to the public. No doubt, many people on the street who exhibit these behaviors have mental health or addiction problems and need help. But it is inaccurate and demeaning to the 6,000 men and women who are homeless in this city and in recovery in shelter and transitional housing to say that just because a person is homeless, they are unable to observe basic standards of civil conduct.

In our democracy individuals exercise liberty up to the point where they harm themselves or infringe on rights of others. With increasing frequency in Center City, shelter-resistant individuals had been crossing that line. The new compromise leaves largely in place the City's compassionate approach of help and housing first. But it now adds better procedures to protect the place that provides 39% of Philadelphia's jobs and nearly half of its local tax revenues.

Paul R. Levy
President

plevy@centercityphila.org

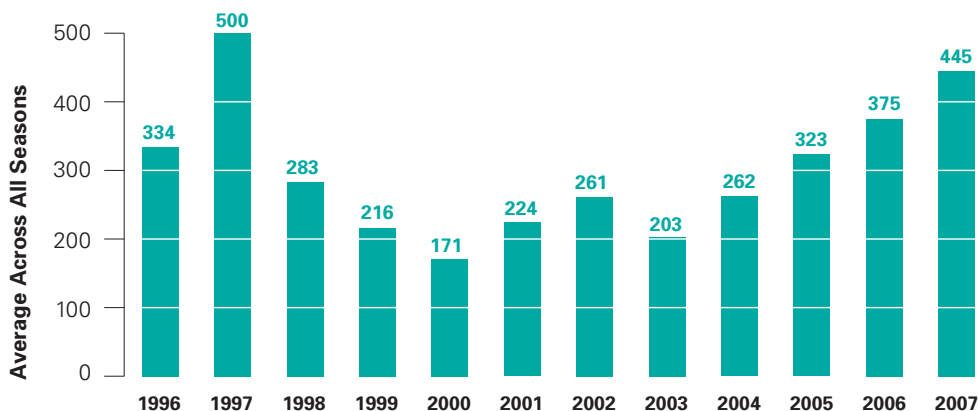
Disorderly Conduct Defined

"A person is guilty of disorderly conduct if, with intent to cause public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm, or recklessly creating a risk thereof, he (1) engages in fighting or threatening, or in violent or tumultuous behavior; (2) makes unreasonable noise; (3) uses obscene language, or makes an obscene gesture; or (4) creates a hazardous or physically offensive condition by any act which serves no legitimate purpose of the actor."

How many are on the street during the day?

The CCD's uniformed Community Service Representatives (CSRs) survey every other week, 26 weeks per year, to determine how many people are homeless on downtown streets during the daytime. Every week they do a second count of panhandlers. On average in the last two years, in the warmer months between April and September, CSRs have counted **65 homeless individuals and 39 panhandlers on Center City streets** during business hours. In the colder months between October and March the average counts are **39 homeless individuals and 15 panhandlers**.

Overnight Street Homelessness in Center City, by Year



Pedestrian Friendly

The Center City District has installed pedestrian lighting on the highly traveled 12th Street corridor between Spruce and Locust Streets. This is part of an on-going partnership with the Washington West Civic Association that in the last several years has raised funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, from generous individual donations and from City of Philadelphia resources secured by Councilman Frank DiCicco. With the 10 pedestrian-scale CCD-style lightpoles on 12th Street, the CCD has completed nine blocks for the community group on a fee-for-service basis immediately adjacent to the CCD.

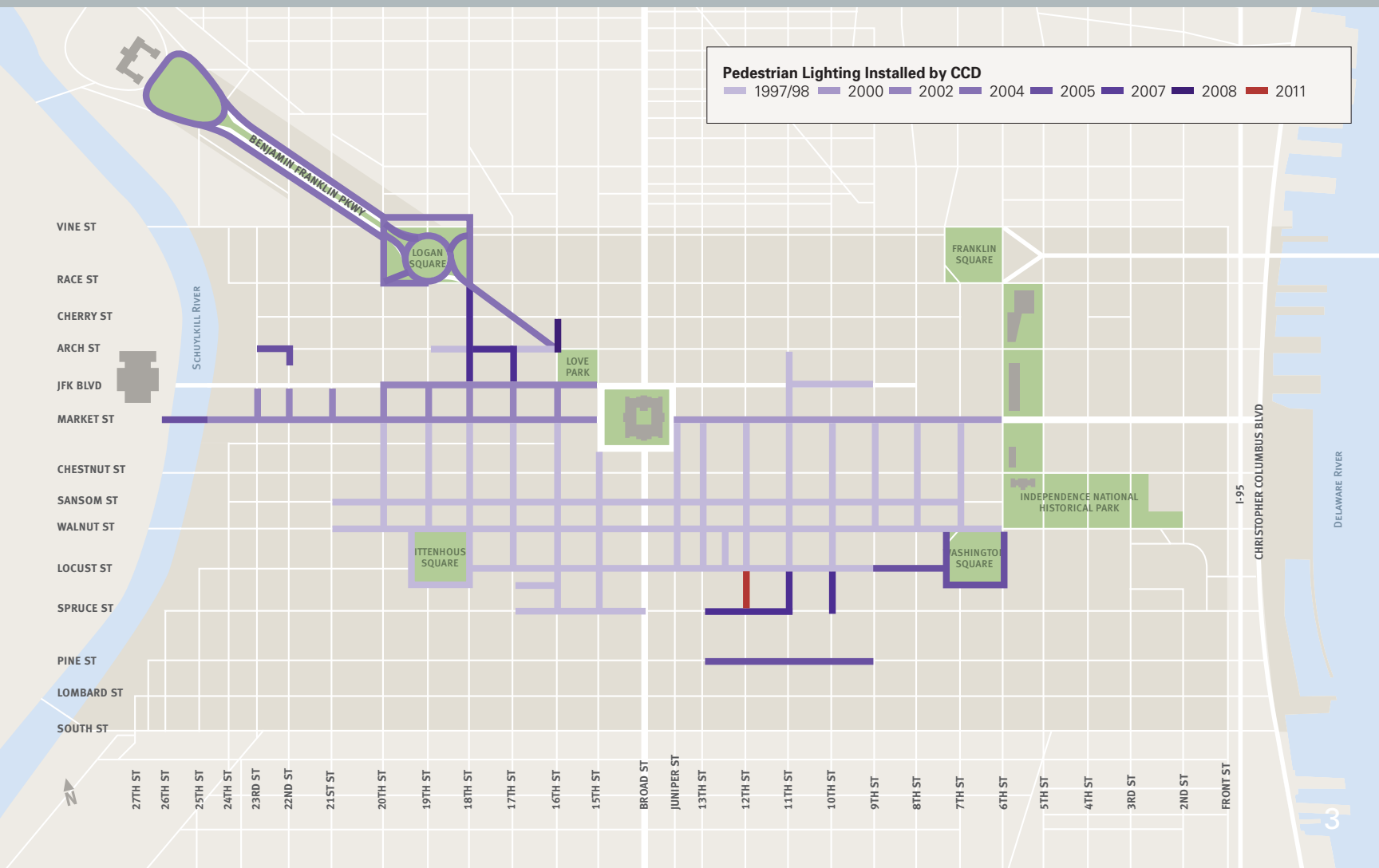
Designed and engineered by Urban Engineers, the 12th Street lights were installed by Seravalli, Inc., general contractor, and Carr and Duff, Inc., electrical contractor.

Since 1997, the CCD has added 2,056 pedestrian light fixtures on 70% of the CCD's 233 blocks, in addition to lighting along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and in adjacent neighborhoods. The CCD has set the goal of completing the installation of lighting throughout the district in the next 5 to 7 years.

Since 1997, the CCD has installed 2,056 pedestrian light fixtures.



Pedestrian Lighting Installed by CCD, 1997–2011





Directional Sign



You'll Never Be Lost with the CCD's Many Helpful Signs

Philadelphia's innovative and attractive pedestrian sign system, known as Walk!Philadelphia, was designed to help guide visitors to Center City. Created by Joel Katz Design Associates, the CCD began installing the system in 1996 as part of a \$26 million Streetscape Improvement Project.

Walk!Philadelphia's disk maps and directional signs form the largest comprehensive pedestrian way-finding system in North America, with more than 1,000 signs located in and around downtown: from the Delaware River and extending west to 42nd Street, through the efforts of the University City District.

Disk Maps are simplified, diagrammatic maps of Center City that use a "heads-up" orientation so when a person faces the sign, that direction is always at the top of the map. These easy-to-follow maps divide Center City into five color-coded districts: The Rittenhouse Square area is green; Washington Square is purple; the Convention Center area is aqua; the historic area of Old City and Society Hill is brick red; and the Parkway area is royal blue.

Directional Signs, color-coded companions to the Disk Maps, are located at each street corner, displaying six to 10 listings of nearby destinations.

In addition to Walk!Philadelphia, the CCD has created other sign systems: the Benjamin Franklin Parkway interpretive sign system; Ride Philadelphia, which includes bus shelter signs and transit portal signs, and Phlash signs, which mark more than two dozen stops for the purple trolleys that circulate among the city's many cultural institutions.

Each year, the CCD conducts a survey to determine which signs are damaged, vandalized, missing, or out of date. For example, the newly expanded Pennsylvania Convention Center, with a grand entrance on North Broad Street, made new signs necessary. As a result of this and other developments, the CCD is updating or replacing more than 200 signs this year.

A Clean Center City: The Numbers

- 3 power washers with 20-horsepower engines
- 14 diesel Green Machines for sweeping sidewalks
- 25 pan-and-broom sweepers per day
- 69 percent of respondents to the CCD's annual customer satisfaction survey say the downtown is much cleaner than the rest of Philadelphia
- 70 thirty-gallon trash bags filled per day
- 233 blocks of sidewalk cleaned each day
- 320 hours a month cleaning graffiti
- 960 hours a month spent washing CCD sidewalks
- 2,400 hours weekly maintaining the 3.5-mile underground concourse
- 3,000 pounds of water pressure applied to sidewalks when washing

Providing Opportunity

The CCD deploys about 100 men and women to clean Center City's sidewalks, to clean subway concourses and the regional rail stations and to clean adjacent neighborhoods. 51% are either formerly homeless, individuals who have made the transition from welfare-to-work or ex-offenders. They are paid union-scale, wages with full-benefits. Nearly all of CCD's cleaners come from Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

CSRs: Evening in Center City



CSR Manager
Mary Hannah

Mary Hannah, a Community Service Representative Manager for more than a decade, knows that summer evenings in Center City are special. People stroll among the sidewalk cafes, tourists visit the many sites, and families linger with the light.

“The outdoor cafes, the parks, Rittenhouse Square, on a nice evening is really, really busy,” Hannah says. “There are a lot of restaurant questions, theater questions, public transportation...how to get from one place to another throughout the evening in the warmer months.”

Summer crowds also bring scores of questions about parking, and sometimes visitors mistake the uniformed CSRs for representatives of the Philadelphia Parking Authority. That’s a distinct disadvantage when a visitor has just discovered a ticket tucked under the windshield wiper.

“We tell them we’re not from the Parking Authority, and they cool out pretty quickly,” she says. We have always gotten very positive feedback from the public in general. In the summer, when we assist people from out of town and we’re help-

ing them, they’re just amazed and totally enthusiastic about what we do.”

Hannah has met and helped so many people who have inspired her to travel to their cities — places like Amsterdam, Netherlands. As a tourist abroad, she understands why people appreciate CSRs. “If you’ve ever been lost in a big city and someone comes to your rescue,” she says, “that makes your day! The reward is simply thank you.”

Hannah says summer evenings are also filled with 911 calls for police or medics if it is necessary. “People fall down crossing the street, have accidents, seizures... So we are often the first responders in the event of an accident.” Hannah, a 20-year veteran of the Air Force Reserve, would love to live in a Spanish-speaking country someday. For now, she loves her job and has since Day One. One of the best things about working at the Center City District, she says, is the diversity of the staff.

CSRs have a one-hour lunch period included in their shifts. They are encouraged to support restaurants, snack bars and cafes in the Center City District. So, if you see a CSR having lunch or dinner, stop by and say hello!



PHILADELPHIA CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

Fourteen years ago, the Center City District established the Philadelphia Crime Prevention Council, a coalition of 300 members representing all levels of local, state, and federal law enforcement, and all sectors of the private industry. The Council serves as a critical link between the public and private sectors.

At each meeting, information is shared about crime patterns, trends, counterterrorism initiatives, emergency preparedness, new technology, and other critical information.

Because the Council had been functioning for several years prior to September 11, 2001, it was able to quickly come together to focus on counterterrorism education, preparedness and response. Council members participated in joint terrorism exercises and responded quickly to bomb threats and anthrax fears. The Center City District established a critical communications network within weeks of the attacks, and it continues today.

In addition, post 9/11 the Council network continues to play a critical role in the planning and response to major events in Philadelphia, including the Bio International Convention, National Governors Association Conference, Phillies Championship Parade and other events.

When a crime pattern emerges on the CCD’s GIS maps, or critical incidents occur, information is rapidly disseminated between law enforcement and corporate and private security. So in addition to being a direct service provider, the CCD also plays a coordination and communications role among the diverse parties concerned with security downtown.



Ceremonially breaking the ground are from left: Mark A. Focht, Brenda Barrett, Councilman Darrell L. Clarke, Councilman William K. Greenlee, Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Paul R. Levy and Donald Kimelman.

Groundbreaking for Sister Cities Park

On May 10, under a brilliant spring sky, the Center City District broke ground for Sister Cities Park at 18th Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. CCD President and CEO Paul R. Levy presided over the event that began with music provided by the Friends Select Upper School choral group.

The lineup of speakers included Mayor Michael A. Nutter; former Governor Edward G. Rendell; Councilman Darrell L. Clarke; Brenda Barrett, Director of the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; PennDOT District Executive Lester C. Toaso; Donald Kimelman, Managing Director, Information Initiatives and the Philadelphia Program, The Pew Charitable Trusts; and Mark A. Focht, First Deputy Commissioner, Department of Parks and Recreation.

By spring of next year, Sister Cities Park will be transformed into a richly planted, well-illuminated and welcoming civic space for people of all ages as part of an ongoing \$20.9 million makeover of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The renovations will include an attractive new café, a new fountain that will pay tribute to the

Sister Cities program and an active, educational play garden in a natural setting for young children.

Since 1976, Sister Cities Park has commemorated Philadelphia's relationship with cities across the globe, first with Florence, Italy, then Tel Aviv, Israel, and eventually eight more cities.

The renovation is being undertaken through a lease from the Philadelphia Department of Parks & Recreation, and with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the State Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. The design team includes DIGSAU architects, Pennoni Engineers, Inc., and Studio|Bryan Hanes, landscape architect.

Philbert ♥ Plant!Philadelphia

At the Reading Terminal Market, Philbert, the hungry pig (*Sus scrofa domesticus*) that devours coins and dollar bills on behalf of The Food Trust, worked up his appetite for Plant!Philadelphia for a few weeks in April. Philbert brought the CCD's tree-planting program \$173.00. Thanks to the Reading Terminal Market and to The Food Trust for lending us Philbert!

The Center City District created Plant!Philadelphia so individuals and businesses can help expand Center City's canopy of healthy street trees and contribute to the citywide goal of planting 300,000 trees by 2015. There are more than 2,600 street trees within the CCD's boundary and for more than a decade, the CCD has maintained about 800 of them from Vine Street to South Street, river to river.

Over the winter, about 30 trees in Center City died, due to cold weather, too much salt exposure, disease and other damage. This spring, the CCD's crews replaced those trees with several varieties, including Hackberry, Honey locust, Chinese elm and American elm. The trees, about 3 inches in diameter, are planted at night to reduce the impact to pedestrians and businesses. Throughout the summer and into the fall, the trees will receive gator bags (bags that slowly drip water).

Like to make a donation to Plant!Philadelphia and grow more trees in Center City? Just go to PlantPhiladelphia.org.



The Lyrical Side of Summer

Two concert series will keep delightful music wafting through the air in Center City for the summer and beyond.

Chestnut Park

With the reopening on April 20 of the renovated Chestnut Park on the 1700 block of Chestnut Street, the Center City District initiated a series of intimate-scale concerts every Wednesday and Friday, between noon and 1:30 p.m. The concerts, featuring a variety of instrumentalists, will continue until October 28.

Umar Raheem (photo) provided the dulcet sounds of his soprano saxophone on April 22. Park hours are Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Tuesday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 6:30 p.m.

For more information, please go to CenterCityPhila.org/about/chestnutpark.php.

Throughout Center City

On June 1, the Center City District Lunchtime Concert Series presented by TD Bank returned, offering 90 minutes of music, from noon to 1:30 p.m., in a variety of musical genres – Latin, salsa, reggae, pop, blues and jazz. Every week the locations change and, no worries, if it rains, there's an indoor venue awaiting you. The concerts continue through August 31.

To find a complete list of the Center City locations and musical groups that will perform, please go to CenterCityPhila.org/life/LunchtimeConcerts.php.



PHLASH Bus Service Is Back!

On May 1, the purple PHLASH trolleys that offer convenient rides to most major cultural and historic attractions in Center City returned to their routes. The colorful vehicles provide easy access to 27 destinations downtown and in the Centennial District, including the Independence Visitor Center, the African American Museum in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Zoo and the Please Touch Museum.

The fare per ride is \$2. Individual all-day passes are \$5 and all-day family passes for two adults and two children 6 to 17 years old are \$10. Children under six and seniors ride free. Tickets can be purchased at several locations along the route or aboard the trolley. SEPTA's One Day Independence Passes (\$11) and One Day Family Independence Passes (\$28) and SEPTA TransPasses and TrailPasses

can also be used for an unlimited number of trips.

PHLASH is funded by grants from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Federal Highway Administration through PennDOT. It is managed by the Central Philadelphia Transportation Management Association, a subsidiary of the Center City District, which contracts with Philadelphia Trolley Works to provide the service.



"State of Center City, 2011" Now Available

Paul R. Levy, president and CEO of the Center City District, presented "The State of Center City, 2011" on April 19 at the Union League. Printed copies of the full-color, 72-page bound report are still available. The first copy is free; subsequent copies are \$10 each and can be ordered by downloading an order form found at CenterCityPhila.org/docs/CCDOrderSOCC2011.pdf.

Also, the entire report, as well as individual chapters, can be downloaded at CenterCityPhila.org/socc/.

A new addition this year is the slideshow presentation of "State of Center City, 2011" with synchronized audio of Levy's presentation to the CPDC. This is an excellent presentation for residents, clients, students and out-of-towners who are interested in all the details, facts, and figures about Philadelphia's unique downtown. Find it at slidesha.re/juSSKR.

Don't forget to follow the Center City District on Facebook and also on Twitter @CCDphila.

CENTER CITY DIGEST

Center City District and
Central Philadelphia
Development Corporation
660 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
www.CenterCityPhila.org

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State of Center City, 2011



CENTER CITY DISTRICT | **CENTER CITY DISTRICT SIPS HAPPY HOUR**
20 YEARS | \$4 COCKTAILS. \$3 WINE. \$2 BEER. HALF-PRICED APPETIZERS*
 JUNE 1 - AUG 31. WEDNESDAYS, 5-7

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For a full list of participating bars
visit **CENTERCITYPHILA.ORG**
All attendees must be 21 years of age or older.



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.