

CENTER CITY DIGEST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER CITY DISTRICT AND CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
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Lighting at a Higher Level

In the 1870s and 1880s “nightlife” was still the preserve of the wealthy few. Within only a few decades, however, the landscape of the amusements and their place in the everyday life of the city changed dramatically. The expansion in commercial amusements could not have occurred without electrification. Nineteenth-century authors had described city streets after dark as sinister and filled with danger. Lighting transformed the city from a dark and treacherous netherworld into a glittering multicolored wonderland.

From David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements*

Not long ago, Philadelphia was a place where the sidewalks were said to roll up after dark. Among jokes retold in Bob Hope’s obituaries were several at our expense: “Philadelphia’s so quiet at night that once I was arrested for disturbing the peace just for cracking my chewing gum outside.”

In just a decade how much has changed! Since 1992, the number of downtown restaurants serving dinner at night jumped from 65 to 192. Outdoor cafes went from zero to 104. Hotel rooms are up by 55%. Four thousand seats were added along the Avenue of the Arts, an increase of 82%. More than 4,000 apartments were created in Center City through the conversion of vacant buildings. At least a thousand more are in the pipeline.

Many actors are responsible for these changes, but the stage was set by the installation of new lighting downtown. Beginning with the City’s investment in decorative fixtures on the Avenue of the Arts and expanding dramatically with the Center City District’s installation of 1,474 new pedestrian-scale poles, lighting levels doubled on downtown sidewalks. By positioning fixtures below the canopy of street trees and closer together on 120 downtown blocks, uniform levels of brightness replaced dark, shadowy zones. More pedestrians ventured out, retailers and restaurants expanded evening hours, and bright windows and sidewalk seating further animated the street. A virtuous cycle ensues as ever more people choose to live downtown near work and the thriving arts and entertainment scene.

In a city eager to retain college graduates, Center City has succeeded! One third of downtown residents are now between 18 and 29. An astounding



Aglow with light, the Avenue of the Arts draws a lively crowd.

79% of all Center City residents between the ages of 25 and 34 are college grads, compared to just 27% of this age group citywide. Equally important are “empty nesters” who’ve sold houses in the suburbs to return to the center of things.

Getting started was not easy. For years, city engineers focused on lighting just roadways for cars. Poles were placed 100 to 150 feet apart, leaving it to the headlights of cars to compensate for dark zones between. But like many mid-twentieth-century design decisions that gave priority to the car, this practice had extraordinarily negative consequences for the quality of pedestrian life.

What was required first was a culture change among city lighting engineers. By expanding horizons beyond the curb to the building line, spacing poles closer together and bringing fixture heights down from 20 to 15 feet, lighting can embrace pedestrians. Since most Center City roads are narrow, poles positioned to light sidewalks shed ample light on the street. Beginning in 1996, the Department of Streets began to accept ownership and maintenance responsibility for new fixtures—wherever they replaced traditional roadway lights.

But the design and installation of pedestrian-scale fixtures has been funded mostly from non-City sources: the CCD, federal grants or business and charitable contributions. Such is the case on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, where The Pew Charitable Trusts is supporting the costs of sidewalk lighting.

Given the limited resources budgeted for street lighting in Philadelphia, this is understandable. It costs \$100,000 per block in Center City to design, purchase, dig conduit and install pedestrian-scale fixtures on both sides of the street. Lighting the same block with the City's standard highway pole on just one side of the street costs a third less. Maintaining multiple fixtures and warehousing spare parts adds cost too. So as several residential groups in Center City and many business associations on commercial corridors in the neighborhoods now seek to replicate the lighting success in the central business district, the Streets Department is understandably reluctant to stretch its already constrained budget.

But consider this: in 1990, few retailers stayed open after dark downtown, not many restaurants flourished after five, arts and entertainment venues were limited in number and hotel rooms were scarce. What is the economic impact of the new evening economy? What is the benefit of adding several hours to the business day of restaurants, hotels and performance venues?

- Between 1990 and 2000, employment in Philadelphia's hospitality industry grew by 30%. In Center City, this sector now generates \$368 million in annual salaries to residents of Philadelphia neighborhoods and over \$10.5 million annually in wage taxes.

Funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts has enabled the CCD to go a step further and integrate vehicular and pedestrian lighting with façade, statue and monument lighting along the Ben Franklin Parkway. The aim is to augment important nodes, to create a unified sense of place, and to set the stage for new development and animation of this extraordinary, mile-long cultural campus.

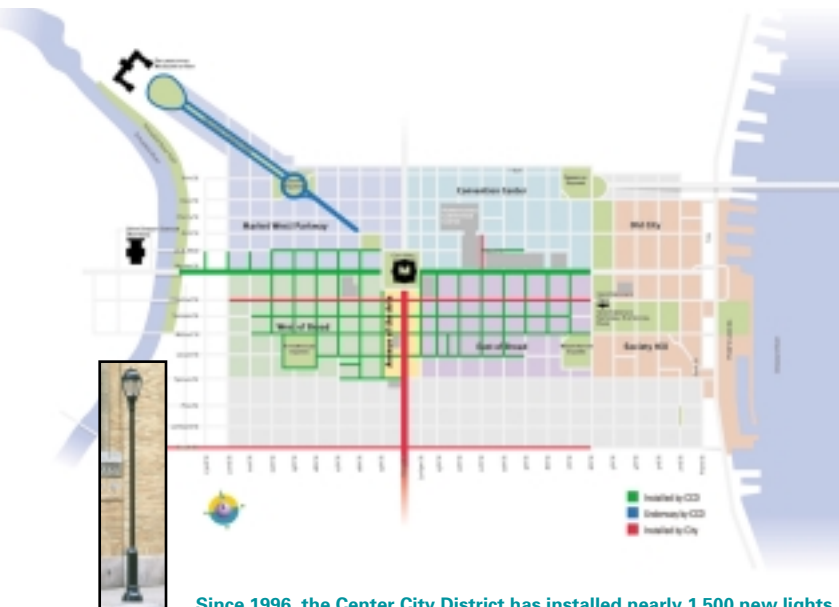


In London, they are applying this approach to a much larger expanse of the historic core of the British capital. The Pool of London Partnership, a private-sector business organization, has recently completed an exciting lighting master plan that focuses not only on roads and walkways, but also on underpasses, public spaces, gateways, monuments, building façades and river promenades on both sides of the Thames.

“The main aim of the master plan is to provide a unified lighting strategy that helps to improve the area’s attractiveness after dark, enhance important heritage and tourist landmarks, make the place safer and more exciting, and help to bring more evening trade to local businesses and create more jobs,” the report says. Citing reduced crime statistics from cities throughout England that have installed new lighting, the study also notes: “Research has shown that for every £100,000 invested in town center lighting, there can be savings over ten years of up to £5 million in the costs of crime and insurance to local authorities, businesses and individual victims.”

So, in the summer of 2004, when the lights turn on along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, think of it not as a finale, but as the first step in an overall plan to illuminate Center City as the vibrant, 24-hour hub of the Greater Philadelphia region.

Paul R. Levy
Executive Director
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Since 1996, the Center City District has installed nearly 1,500 new lights.

- Seventy percent of the residents moving into higher-end apartments downtown come from outside the city.
- In Center City, there are fewer crimes committed on sidewalks that are well lit.

So it's time to look again at the Streets Department budget and view the amount allocated citywide for lighting not as a service cost, like picking up the trash, but as an investment that yields returns through improved image, enhanced safety and expanding employment and business opportunities.

Illuminating the Parkway: \$5.3 Million in New Lighting is Under Construction

Visitors and residents will see the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in a whole new light with the installation of a dramatic new lighting scheme that will illuminate both walkways and roadways along the Parkway, as well as its architectural landmarks and public art.



Lighting concepts for the façades of the Franklin Institute, above, and the Rodin Museum, right. Below, at the August groundbreaking on the Parkway, from left, Gail Harrity of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Mayor Street, Rebecca Rimel, president, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Paul R. Levy, CCD executive director and City Councilman Darrell Clarke. Not shown: Joseph Certaine, Gov. Rendell's representative.



The Center City District began construction last month on a project which, when completed next summer, will double levels of illumination on the Parkway, replacing fixtures that were installed in 1969, enhancing safety and comfort and rendering the museum mile awash in light.

The \$5.3 million project is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts (\$3 million) and

the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (\$2.1 million from the Department of General Services and \$200,000 from the Department of Community and Economic Development). Plans for Parkway lighting were developed with the City's Department of Streets, the Fairmount Park Commission, the Art and Historical Commissions and with all of the cultural institutions along the Parkway.



The Lighting Practice

“The Parkway, with its extraordinary cultural and educational institutions, is a primary destination for 2.6 million visitors, the front yard for several adjacent apartment buildings and residential neighborhoods and a major gateway into Philadelphia,” said CCD Executive Director Paul R. Levy at the groundbreaking ceremony on August 6. “Yet the Parkway’s dim lighting has been a deterrent to vitality and growth. Lighting will help create a unified sense of place, further enhancing the Parkway as a cultural campus for the entire region.”

“I am proud that Philadelphia’s public and private leaders and institutions have the imagination, commitment and spirit of pride in our community to get this accomplished,” said Rebecca Rimel, president of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

When the project is completed next year, the Parkway, from JFK Plaza to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, including Eakins Oval, and 18th, 20th, Vine and Race streets as they border Logan Circle,

will be illuminated by 222 new ornamental pedestrian-scale lights (15-foot high), 132 new ornamental roadway lights (30-foot high), improved façade lighting of major cultural and civic buildings along the Parkway and new lighting for more than a dozen monuments and sculptures. All the international flags will remain in place.

The CCD’s project team includes: Cope Linder Architects, architects/landscape architects; Urban Engineers, Inc., civil engineers/construction managers; Grenald Waldron Associates, lighting design; The Lighting Practice, lighting design; Fairmount Park Art Association; Seravalli, Inc., general contractor and Nucero Electrical Construction Co., Inc., electrical contractor.

Since 1996, the CCD has installed nearly 1,500 pedestrian lights throughout Center City.

The impetus for the Parkway project came from The Pew Charitable Trusts after analysis showed that lighting levels for both pedestrians and vehicles were below safety standards and many cultural institutions and noteworthy sculpture were almost invisible at night.

The Parkway is home to seven major cultural and educational institutions that together employ 2,215 individuals (with a combined payroll of \$52.9 million in 2001) and attract over two million visitors each year. In addition, both the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Free Library are expanding their facilities, one new major cultural institution, the Calder Museum, has chosen to locate on the Parkway, and discussions continue about the possible relocation of the Barnes Foundation.

Clean and Safe

In every issue of **Digest**, we profile two members of the CCD's uniformed personnel, the community service representatives and cleaning crews, whose job it is to keep Center City clean and safe.



Sherron Dudley

When the Center City District was established in 1991, **Sherron Dudley** was one of the first of the pan-and-broom brigade, whose job it is to keep downtown's sidewalks clean. At first, she says, it was a challenge. With the volume of trash on the sidewalks, "there were places we never thought we'd get clean."

But 12 years later, Sherron still plies her broom on sidewalks that are much cleaner and easier to maintain. She also notices a big change in attitude and recognition. At first, the public didn't quite know what to make of the uniformed sidewalk sweepers. Now people are familiar with the CCD and its services, and many of the regulars along the way have a personal greeting for Sherron. Another change for the better, she says, is the reduced number of homeless living on Center City streets.

Sherron, a native Philadelphian, recently returned to CCD from a maternity leave after giving birth in May to a daughter, Keyara. She has three older daughters, including her oldest, a gifted boxer.



John Roberts

John Roberts's career at the Center City District began in 1994, when, as a newly minted graduate of Opportunities Industrialization Centers, the international network of community-based skills training programs, he joined the maintenance crew at the CCD's Spring Garden Street garage.

A year later, John joined the community service representatives. Today, he still gets great pleasure from helping workers, residents and, especially, visitors on Center City streets. "As hokey as it sounds, the most pleasure I get from my job is when someone walks away knowing where they are going. Everyone who has ever been lost in a city knows that experience," he says.

Besides directions, John, as a South Philly native, is especially well qualified to answer his most frequently asked question: Where can I get a good cheesesteak?

A highlight of his CCD career came in 2002 when he received a Crime Prevention Award for his assistance to a pedestrian who had been threatened by a knife-wielding assailant. John and his partner radioed for police assistance and stayed on the scene until help arrived.

In his free time, when he's not meeting, greeting and suggesting eating on downtown streets, John "lives and dies with the Eagles and the Sixers."

Introducing the CCD's New Commanding Officer: Capt. Thomas Collier



The Center City District Police Substation has a new commanding officer, **Captain Thomas Collier**, a 21-year department veteran. Capt. Collier takes a proactive approach to crime and is a firm adherent of the "broken windows" theory of fighting quality-of-life crimes to improve overall safety. That's why the unique partnership between the Philadelphia Police and the CCD is especially fruitful, he noted. As an additional uniformed presence on the street, the CCD's community service representatives are a deterrent to crime, he said. And the CSRs provide valuable liaison between the police and the downtown business community.

Most recently the Captain coordinated Mayor Street's successful initiative to reduce aggressive panhandling in Center City. The CCD's educational campaign to discourage pedestrians from giving money to panhandlers has been a tremendous help, he added.

Capt. Collier has moved up the ranks quickly since graduating from the Police Academy in 1982. Among his assignments, he has served in the department's Research and Planning Unit, Internal Affairs Division and in the Narcotics Unit. He took over command at the CCD Substation in July, following the retirement of Capt. Edward Chiodetti.

Community Court, 18 Months Old, Touches Lives

The Philadelphia Community Court opened in March 2002, bringing an innovative approach to quality-of-life crimes by combining community sentences with needed social services.

Today, after 18 months in operation, the Court has passed some important milestones. Offenders have performed more than 35,000 hours of community service, repaying harmed neighborhoods through constructive tasks.

Most important, more than 1,700 defendants have been seen by the Court's on-site social services staff. Eleven hundred have participated in drug treatment readiness or anger management classes. More than 550 have had full drug and alcohol assessments. Of those, 84 have received intensive treatment.

But more powerful than the numbers are the stories of those whose lives have been turned around by the Community Court.

TOM

Standing before the Court, Tom, smiling, neatly dressed and a healthy 200 pounds, was free to go.

Nine months earlier, Tom, 50, stood in the same courtroom, wearing tattered clothing, weighing only 150 pounds, hanging his head in shame. He had been arrested the day before for possessing crack-cocaine. This was not Tom's first drug use, but rather the end of a 30-year run with drugs and alcohol. Tom agreed to Community Court stipulations: substance abuse treatment, community service and Court costs. Tom was evaluated by social service staff and referred to a long-term treatment facility outside Philadelphia where he remained for four months. While in the facility, Tom completed his community service, wrote letters to loved ones whom he had harmed and became a role model for the treatment community.

After release from the inpatient facility, Tom went into an intensive outpatient program. He decided to complete his college education and enrolled at Philadelphia Community College to pursue a degree in counseling. He has

begun to rebuild a relationship with his 23-year-old son and two-year-old granddaughter. He has had job offers from his former employer of 25 years. At age 50, Tom said, the shame of arrest and the professionalism, care and acceptance from the Community Court staff have given him a new start in life.

DEBBIE

Debbie, 35, had a \$200-a-day crack-cocaine habit, an untreated mental illness and children she barely cared for. Debbie had several previous treatment episodes, but had not been able to maintain sobriety. She had never addressed her personal history of physical and sexual abuse within her dysfunctional family.

At Community Court, where she was brought for prostitution, Debbie was referred to and completed a long-term inpatient treatment program to address the root causes of her addiction. She subsequently was "stepped down" to an outpatient program for women with children to deal with her needs and family responsibilities. The day Debbie completed her legal stipulations, she stood before the Court, embracing her public defender, and proclaimed, "Community Court saved my life." That was months ago. Today Debbie remains sober, has her very first legal job to support her children and an apartment of her own.

HARRY

Harry, 36, was arrested for "scattering rubbish." At Community Court, he admitted to "a little problem" with drugs. The Court's social service staff saw something else: Harry's eye contact was poor and his demeanor expressed shame. He was filthy, his teeth were either missing or badly stained and his hair had debris in it.

Harry came from an abusive and addicted family and had been in and out of treatment for ten years. This time, the Community Court placed him in a six-



Community Court defendants benefit from one-on-one counseling, to address the root causes of crime.

month inpatient program, followed by an outpatient program. After three more months, Harry got his first legitimate job, paid off his Court costs, performed community service in Chinatown and satisfied all of his legal stipulations. No one recognized Harry when he returned to Court clean and properly dressed for the weather, with a haircut, teeth taken care of by multiple dental appointments and a big smile on his face.

More than a year later, Harry is sober, working and pursuing a GED.

ELEANOR

Eleanor, 29, was arrested for stealing \$140 of food from her local supermarket. Eleanor suffers from chronic and persistent depression, for which she takes medication and attends a local mental health outpatient program. With three young children to support, Eleanor told the Court that her theft was motivated by lack of money. The Court stipulated monitoring of her outpatient treatment and 24 hours of community service.

But with her young children and treatment schedule, Eleanor was not able to perform community service at any of the Court's pre-approved work sites. Instead, staff arranged for Eleanor to perform her community service at a local church. When Eleanor completed her court requirements, the church hired her part-time. The job is Eleanor's first, allowing her to supplement her welfare benefits and begin to care adequately for her family.

C E N T E R C I T Y D I G E S T

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Center City Restaurant Week

More than 40 of Center City's finest restaurants are cooking up something special for the first-ever **Center City Restaurant Week**, September 14-19. The restaurants are offering three-course dinners at a discounted fixed price of only \$30, not including tax, alcohol or gratuity. The special promotion also includes parking for \$7 or less from 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. at participating Philadelphia Parking Association facilities. To learn more, go to www.centercityphila.org or call 215-440-5500.



Center City
RESTAURANT WEEK

Sunday, Sept. 14 thru Friday, Sept. 19

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 over 40 years of private-sector commitment to the revitalization of downtown Philadelphia.