



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

BILL NO. 220941

Introduced December 1, 2022

Councilmember Jones

**Referred to the
Committee on Rules**

AN ORDINANCE

Approving a new plan, estimated costs and proposed method of charges of the City Avenue Special Services District for and concerning business improvements and administrative services to portions of the City Avenue area of the City of Philadelphia and Township of Lower Merion.

WHEREAS, The City Avenue Special Services District (CASSD) was incorporated under the provisions of the Municipality Authorities Act (Act) and was authorized by Bill No. 960561 (approved on December 18, 1996); and

WHEREAS, Following its incorporation, the CASSD adopted a five-year plan for business improvements and administrative services to the City Avenue area, which plan was approved by City Council in Bill No. 980749 (approved January 9, 1999); and

WHEREAS, Bill No. 020486 (approved November 13, 2002) amended the articles of incorporation of the CASSD and extended the term of the Authority until December 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Bill No. 030716 (approved December 4, 2003) approved a twenty year plan continued the term of the CASSD until December 31, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Bill 210549 (approved November 4, 2021) amended the articles of incorporation of the CASSD and extended the term of the Authority until December 31, 2042; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2023, the term approving the plan, estimated costs and proposed method of charges of the CASSD will automatically expire; and

WHEREAS, After sending each benefitted property and property owner and to each commercial tenant in the CASSD a copy of the Plans and costs and after a duly advertised public hearing held by the CASSD pursuant to the Act, legally sufficient written objections have not been received either from persons representing the ownership of one-third (1/3) of the benefitted

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properties in the District as proposed by this Ordinance or from benefitted property owners within the District as proposed by this Ordinance whose property valuation as assessed for taxable purposes amounts to more than one-third (1/3) of the total property valuation of the District; and

WHEREAS, As required by the Act, the Plan has now been submitted to City Council for its review and approval; and

WHEREAS, It is City Council's intent in enacting this Ordinance to take the action required under the Act to approve the Plan; now, therefore

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. The plan, budget and map for the City Avenue Special Services District (the "Plan") attached hereto as Exhibit "A," submitted by the City Avenue Special Services District (the "CASSD"), having been duly reviewed and considered, is approved.

SECTION 2. The CASSD is authorized to take such action as may be necessary to carry out the Plan. City Council authorizes the CASSD to proceed with minor changes in substantial conformity with the Plan. Any major changes must be approved by Ordinance of City Council.

SECTION 3. City Council resolves to cause the level of security and maintenance services provided by the City to the area served by the CASSD to be established in the future at the same levels as would have been provided in the absence of the services to be provided by the CASSD, unless there shall be a city-wide reduction in services.

SECTION 4. This ordinance shall take effect on December 31, 2023.

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EXHIBIT "A"
2024-2033 PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE
CITY AVENUE SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT



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City Avenue Special Services
District of Philadelphia and
Lower Merion

2024-2033

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Introduction & Mission

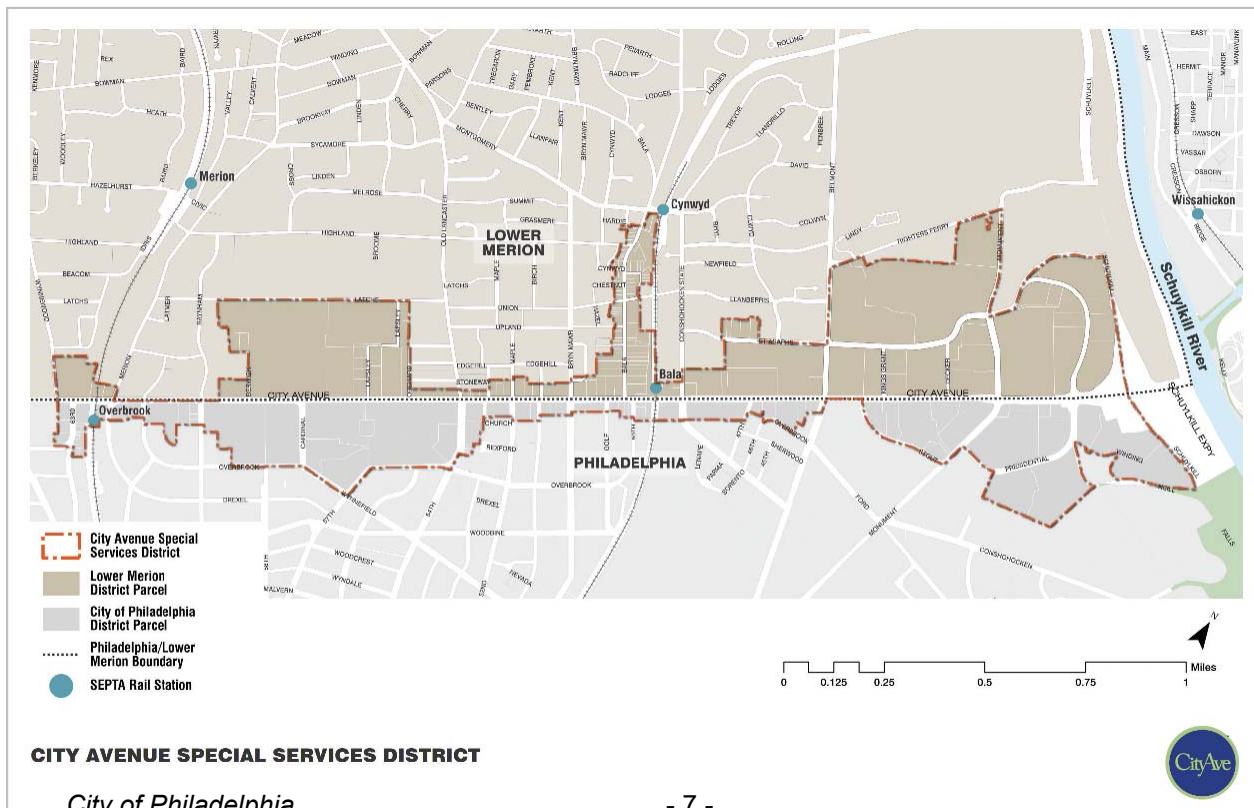
Located on the borders of the City of Philadelphia and the Township of Lower Merion, City Avenue Special Services District (CASSD) began operations in 1999 and is the driving force working to improve City Ave’s economic environment by making it more vibrant, attractive, and prosperous.

The nation’s first multijurisdictional special services district, CASSD has been praised for bringing together the City of Philadelphia and the Township of Lower Merion, with District officials often serving as the facilitator between the two entities to ensure a cohesive, forward-thinking vision for City Ave’s future.

Now in its 23rd year, CASSD continues to enhance and strengthen this important corridor through physical improvements, enhanced public safety, expanded economic opportunities, marketing and promotional services and ongoing aesthetic enhancements throughout the entirety of the District.

Service Area Map

City Avenue Special Services District encompasses the three-mile corridor along City Avenue, including properties on both sides, in Montgomery County, Lower Merion Township, and the City of Philadelphia.



KEY CITY AVE DISTRICT ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- New, critical zoning changes allowing for higher density, mixed-used and pedestrian-oriented development including six properties throughout the district.
- Secured more than \$15 million in funding for capital improvement projects.
- Completion of \$13 million Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program that enhanced overall safety and vibrancy along the corridor and created multi-modal access for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Increased community engagement and networking opportunities for real estate professionals, local businesses and residents.
- Recipient of more than 6 awards including GVF Planning Leadership Award, Mayor's Commission on People with Disabilities Access and green thumb awards.
- A 55% reduction in overall crime.

A Look Ahead

The development pipeline for City Ave is strong with numerous projects in construction or late stages of the approvals process. With the opening of six new, state-of-the-art residential properties over the last five years, resulting in nearly 1000 new units, more people are calling City Ave home. Additionally, City Ave boasts one of the region's largest workforces with more than 40,000 employees and 2.94 million square feet of office space. City Ave's residential and commercial development shows no signs of slowing down and will continue to reinforce the District as a highly attractive destination for residents, employees and visitors alike.



Safety

Public safety is a top priority for City Ave and plays a critical role in the continued growth and success of the District. The City Avenue Special Services District works with the Lower Merion and Philadelphia police departments, elected officials, property owners, building managers, and public safety directors to develop and implement strategies to ensure a safe environment.

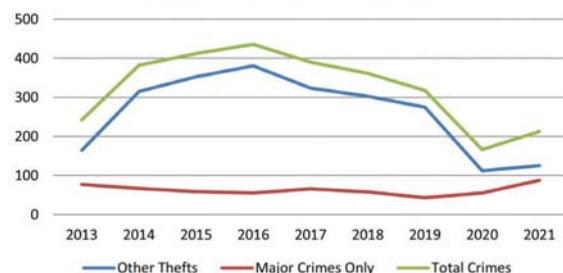


WITH THE HELP OF KEY PARTNERS,
CITY AVE DISTRICT HAS ACHIEVED:

- **Implemented Community Service Representatives (CSRs)**, where an average of eight uniformed CSRs patrol the District on bicycles six days a week. The CSRs have multiple functions: to be a visible presence, to assist people, and to identify areas of public safety concerns including road hazards.
- **Improved communications among cross-sector organizations** from Lower Merion and Philadelphia. This coordination was utilized during the social unrest that impacted many cities in 2020.
- **Decreased overall crime by 55%** through the efforts of the Lower Merion and Philadelphia police departments, private security patrols, and the District's CSRs.

- **Completed \$13 million Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program**, the largest and most significant investment in the District's 20-year history to address a series of traffic and pedestrian safety issues. Key enhancements included traffic signal updates, the installation of ADA ramps, lead intervals for pedestrians at crosswalks and improved pedestrian lighting.
- **Major crimes decreased remarkably by 80% between 2003 and 2020.**

Crime Totals: 2013 to 2021



Public Space Improvements

From the addition to multi-purpose paths and new public gathering spaces, to bike lanes and landscaped medians, City Ave District manages the design, construction and maintenance of projects that enhance the corridor's aesthetic.



TO DATE, THE DISTRICT HAS ACCOMPLISHED THE FOLLOWING:

- The installation and maintenance of a series of banners along City Avenue.
- Working with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society created and constructed a Northern Gateway at Presidential Boulevard and City Avenue and a Southern Gateway at 63rd Street and City Avenue. The District maintains these areas as well as several other public spaces.
- Oversight and management of street cleaning program including sidewalk cleaning, removal of illegally dumped trash along with graffiti, posters and stickers from public property including mail boxes, parking kiosks, and utility poles.
- Installation of 265 pedestrian scaled lights (Center City Light) on Bala Avenue, 54th Street, 63rd Street and City Avenue.
- Implementation of new decorative crosswalks at 7 intersections as well as bump outs at 4 intersections to provide safer pedestrian crossings.
- With new zoning that the District championed, creation of new multi-purpose paths and new public gathering spaces have been constructed.

The District will continue to collaborate with developers, property owners, Lower Merion Township and the City of Philadelphia on the creation of more multi-purpose paths and public gathering spaces, along with expanded cleaning and maintenance services. The District will work to improve the landscape and infrastructure along City Avenue for pedestrians and public transit users.

Capital Improvements

To date the District has secured **over \$15 million in grants and matching funds.**

Below are some key projects completed to date (not an exhaustive list):

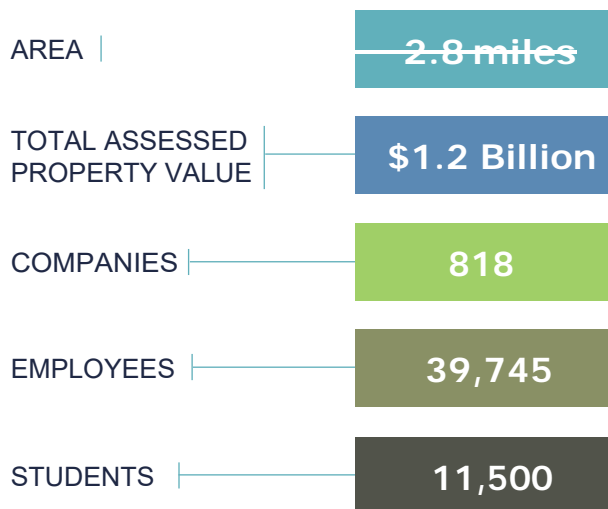
- 2009 54th Street Demonstration Project**
Improvements were made for pedestrian safety and to enhance the aesthetic character of the corridor. The project was a collaboration between CASSD and Saint Joseph's University.
- 2013 The 63rd Street Streetscape & Safety Project**
Installation of pedestrian-scale lighting, bump-outs, and crosswalks.
- 2013 Bala Avenue Streetscape & City Avenue Safety Project**
Included intersection improvements, roadway widening, congestion mitigation, and pedestrian crossings with push buttons and new ADA Ramps. Textured crosswalks were installed at intersections along Bala Ave. redbrick bump-outs, or curb extensions.
- 2015 CASSD embarks on a 3-Phased CASSD Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program.**
The program addresses a series of traffic and pedestrian safety issues that had plagued the area for decades, including heavy traffic volumes, intersections operating at low service levels, and a high number of reported motor vehicle accidents. The goal of these improvements is to enhance the overall safety and vibrancy along the City Ave corridor, while also creating multi-modal access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people of all abilities.
- 2017 Phase I of the CASSD Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program**
Improvements included: traffic-adaptive signal equipment installation, new pedestrian signal heads, new pedestrian push buttons, handman countdown timers and signage at all intersections, and passive pedestrian detection at select intersections.
- 2018 Presidential Blvd Redesign Project**
Improvements included a roadway diet, new paving and bike lanes. Plus, a mid-block crosswalk with signalization.
- 2019 Phase II Short Term Pedestrian Safety Improvements**
Installation of passive pedestrian detection at 3 intersections, pavement markings on City Avenue, speed minder signs, and traffic signal upgrades
- 2021 Phase II of the CASSD Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program**
Improvements included concrete mountable curb grass medians, drainage upgrades, intersection improvements, and enhancements to pedestrian safety.
- 2021 Phase III of the CASSD Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program**
Included pedestrian lighting from 52nd Street to Lapsley Lane. Improved pedestrian safety, mobility, and connectivity for pedestrian access to public transit.
- 2022 The battery backup installation for 17 intersections from Lancaster Avenue to I-76 have been awarded and will be complete in 2022.**
- 2022 The Presidential Boulevard Reopening Project will be constructed.**
It will reconnect Presidential Boulevard to Monument Road, Neill Drive and City Avenue. It includes new pavement, drainage, and lighting, a multipurpose path and a new traffic signal at Monument Road. This project is funded and is in design and engineering with a bid release of 2022.

Marketing & Communications

Committed to keeping City Ave in the spotlight and building on its reputation as an increasingly desirable place to live, work and entertain, City Ave District executes various marketing, event and community initiatives throughout the year. Key marketing programs include:

- Quarterly newsletter featuring the latest news, events and promotions happening across the District. It is distributed to more than 5,000 subscribers. In 2021, the District’s marketing team conducted a thorough analysis of CASSD’s newsletter program in order to maximize engagement, grow the subscriber base and develop more targeted communications.
- Following a redesign, the CASSD’s website communicates news and events in the District, lists local businesses in a directory, and provides resources for businesses. The website hosts a calendar of events that is generated by the content local businesses submit online.
- Community connection is facilitated through a dynamic social media program consisting of more than 5,000 followers. Of-the-moment news, promotions and happenings are shared across Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Throughout the entirety of the year, the District hosts a range of events to engage various City Ave stakeholders. Types of events include networking happy hours, Lunch-and-Learns, small business support, and community fundraising. The District holds its yearly Futurecast event that highlights and promotes current District improvements and/ or upcoming development plans for the real estate audience.

CITY AVE BY THE NUMBERS:



City Avenue Plan & Budget 2024-2033

	2024	2025	2026	2027
REVENUES				
Billing Amount (1)	\$2,086,920	\$2,191,266	\$2,257,004	\$2,324,714
Contributions (2)	\$228,867	\$235,733	\$242,805	\$250,089
Interest and Other Income (3)	\$13,308	\$13,707	\$14,119	\$14,542
Total Revenue	\$2,329,095	\$2,440,706	\$2,513,928	\$2,589,345
EXPENSES				
Public Safety and Street Cleaning (4)	\$330,075	\$339,977	\$350,177	\$360,682
Marketing and Promotion (5)	\$260,000	\$267,800	\$275,834	\$284,109
Economic Development, Planning, Streetscape Maintenance & Improvements (6)	\$285,920	\$336,236	\$346,324	\$356,713
General and Administration (7)	\$253,060	\$260,652	\$268,471	\$276,525
Human Resources (8)	\$1,200,040	\$1,236,041	\$1,273,122	\$1,311,316
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,329,095	\$2,440,706	\$2,513,928	\$2,589,345

- 1) Collection of assessments based on board approval annually.
- 2) Voluntary contributions by tax-exempt properties.
- 3) Interest on operating accounts and receivables i.e. fundraising.
- 4) Customer Service Representatives expenses excluding salary, contracted street and sidewalk cleaning, and graffiti removal.
- 5) Marketing and promotion that support business growth and community activities.

Assessment Formula

The Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act, the City Avenue Special Services District’s enabling law, allows the District to impose an annual assessment on each benefited property within the service area. This assessment is determined based upon the cost of the improvements and services provided, and the “assessed value” of each property (53 Pa.C.S.A. §5607(d)(27)). Given this formula for determining the assessment, it is clear that the amount charged to each property is determined by that property’s assessed value at the time the annual assessment is imposed.

The annual charge is computed by calculating the proportion of the value of all real estate taxes on your property in 2024 to the value of all real estate taxes on all properties within the City Avenue Special Services District (including the value of real estate taxes on property owned by non-profit organizations) in 2024, then multiplying this proportion by the City Avenue Special Services District’s 2024 district assessment to all properties.

2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
\$2,394,456	\$2,466,289	\$2,540,278	\$2,616,486	\$2,694,981	\$2,775,830
\$257,592	\$265,320	\$273,279	\$281,478	\$289,922	\$298,620
\$14,978	\$15,428	\$15,891	\$16,368	\$16,858	\$17,363
\$2,667,025	\$2,747,037	\$2,829,448	\$2,914,332	\$3,001,761	\$3,091,813
\$371,502	\$382,647	\$394,127	\$405,951	\$418,129	\$430,673
\$292,632	\$301,411	\$310,454	\$319,767	\$329,360	\$339,241
\$367,413	\$378,438	\$389,790	\$401,484	\$413,528	\$425,933
\$284,821	\$293,366	\$302,167	\$311,232	\$320,569	\$330,186
\$1,350,656	\$1,391,175	\$1,432,911	\$1,475,898	\$1,520,175	\$1,565,780
\$2,667,025	\$2,747,037	\$2,829,448	\$2,914,332	\$3,001,761	\$3,091,813

- 6) Economic development programming and planning initiatives that support business attraction and retention; beautification projects such as street lighting, tree plants, and overall streetscape improvements.
- 7) General office and administration expenses related to the management and operations of CASSD; office leasing, audit, and general legal fees.
- 8) Expenses related to payroll, including taxes for CASSD staff that oversee the plan implementation.

If the certifiable taxable assessed value of a property is reduced on appeal, the City Avenue Special Services District will allow a credit against this property’s next annual City Avenue Special Services District charge only if a request for a credit stemming from the certified reduction in the property valuation is received within the calendar year to which it applies.

If you own and occupy your property as your primary residence, you may be eligible for an exemption to the charge.

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City of Philadelphia

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