Annual Meeting Report by  
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The year began with the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the spotlight, as the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce hosted a panel discussion on the Parkway, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gail Harrity and Mark Silow, both Parkway Council board members, served on a panel that discussed the challenges and opportunities ahead for the Parkway. It proved to be an excellent venue for raising the profile of the Parkway Council with the Philadelphia business community.

The Parkway Council’s Board of Directors experienced both growth and transition this year, as two new members joined, and one member departed. Joseph Dworetzky, of Hangley Aronchick Segal & Pudlin, and Sally Elk, of the Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site both joined the board in 2005, bringing the total number of board members to thirteen. Longtime Parkway Council member Robert Cima (of the Four Seasons Hotel) departed the area, and Harry Gorstayan ably assumed his board responsibilities.

The year 2005 was also a time of expansion in other areas. In an effort to increase our funding, as well as engage our corporate neighbors in Parkway issues, the Parkway Council created a new membership category called “Parkway Champion.” In 2005, we successfully recruited four Parkway Champions, and three other corporations chose to support our organization at a lower level. The new Parkway Champions include: PNC, Granary Associates, Public Financial Management, and GlaxoSmithKline. Additional financial support was received from the William Penn Foundation, Morgan Lewis LLP, the Keating Group, and Fox Rothschild LLP. We anticipate that corporate and grant support will grow as we continue to establish ourselves as an important advocate for the institutions, residents and businesses on the Parkway.

The Parkway Council was founded in 2003 in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and 2005 was a good example of both. This past year, the cultural institutions on the Parkway joined together to host a variety of Lewis & Clark-themed programs, in support of the National Bicentennial Exhibition, at the Academy of Natural Sciences. In addition to the Academy, four other Parkway institutions, the Franklin Institute, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Moore College of Art and Design, and the Free Library, as well as the Four Seasons -- all members of the Parkway Council -- offered Lewis & Clark-related programs. In the coming year, many of our institutions are offering programs with the common theme of Benjamin Franklin, as a part of
the Ben Franklin Tercentenary celebration. Additional 2006 collaborative efforts are being strongly encouraged by the Parkway Council.

In the spring of 2005, the Parkway hosted the first Logan Square Fair, which was managed and funded by the Center City District. Although not run by the Parkway Council, the Fair was a good example of an effort to work collaboratively, and bring a lively family activity to the Parkway, which does not involve shutting down the Parkway (or restricting access to the institutions). The event brought a lot of exposure and free publicity to the Parkway, particularly the institutions on Logan Square, via extensive newspaper coverage, print advertising, and a large mailing.

It proved to be an eventful year in many ways on the Parkway, with the arrival of Parkway-based Segway tours, a Wireless “cloud” above our cultural campus, and the July 2nd Live 8 concert. Despite the fact that the Parkway was primarily used as a Live 8 backdrop (and not highlighted as a treasure trove of culture), the event was deemed a huge success, exposing our Parkway and the city to a worldwide audience.

At the Parkway Council Foundation’s annual board retreat in August 2005, the Board of Directors agreed that a major goal of the organization was to identify the best long-term management strategy for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and to work toward the long-term goal of establishing a Parkway Cultural District.

The Parkway Council continued to work closely with a variety of key local organizations, such as the Center City District (CCD), the Fairmount Park Commission (FPC), and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). All of these organizations are involved in current Parkway improvement projects, such as the Logan Square restoration (PHS), the Aviator Park and Parkway signage and way finding projects (CCD), and the development of Parkway site improvement standards (FPC). Each of these groups has sought the Parkway Council’s input in the development of these projects, and regards our members as critical stakeholders. All of these projects will result in a greatly enhanced Parkway.

In the year ahead, the Parkway Council hopes to receive substantial foundation and corporate funding, which will allow us to build the capacity of the organization. If we are successful in growing both our staff and budget, we will be able to assume a larger role in enhancing, promoting, and providing leadership for the Parkway.