Annual Meeting Report by
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It has been a busy and productive year for the Parkway Council Foundation.

Planning

In 2010, we completed the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)-funded Parkway Studies Tasks A & B, focused on increasing cultural activity in the Parkway Museums District, and the possible reconfiguration of Eakins Oval and the area around 25th Street, Kelly Drive, and Pennsylvania and Fairmount Avenues.

The studies, led by Econsult and a team of subconsultants, involved a large representative study committee, dozens of meetings with stakeholders and public officials, as well as public surveys soliciting ideas and feedback. The reports and recommendations (when formally approved by the board and DCNR) should prove very helpful in moving forward with both initiatives.

Late in the year, the Parkway Council Board “kicked off” planning for a major 2017-2018 celebration in honor of the Parkway’s Centennial. Themes, program ideas, potential partner organizations, and a timeline are being developed. The Board will have a full proposal to submit to foundations for a planning grant within the next six months.

Marketing

This past year involved a significant expansion in marketing efforts for the organization. We received an official trademark for the Parkway Museums District®. Our brand new Parkway Museums District website was launched in May, featuring beautiful images, information for visitors and residents, maps, walking/biking tours, downloadable brochures and coupons, a direct Parkway-specific events feed from phillyfunguide.org, and much more.

When compared to our previous Parkway Council site, our current statistics show that we are getting twice as many unique visitors, they are staying on the site four times as long, and they reside in 23 different countries. As we had hoped, most visitors are going to the specific member pages within the site for information.
We continued to expand our social media presence, building our Parkway Museums District Facebook fan base, and creating a Twitter list containing “tweets” from all Parkway Council members. These outlets bring exposure to all aspects of the Parkway Museums District, and currently reach nearly 300 people about three times each week. The hope is to double this number in the coming months.

Our Parkway Museums District brochure was redesigned, printed and broadly distributed via institutions, hotels, and key visitor locations, as well as on-line. We included coupons for discounted admission and shopping for the first time, and achieved impressive results with redemption in the first quarter of tracking.

The Parkway Council placed a half-page advertisement in the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau’s Fall/Winter Official Visitors Guide, a publication with a circulation of 700,000 and a readership of nearly 1.5 million. The intent is to reinforce the Parkway Museums District’s brand identity, and to drive traffic to the website.

Branding work is in process to create a logo for the Parkway Museums District, and revise the current Parkway Council logo.

**Relationship Building**

Several critical meetings were held with senior level City administration (including Mike DiBerardinis, Rina Cutler, Alan Greenberger, Darrell Clarke, and Bill Greenlee) as well as numerous community stakeholders to discuss the Parkway studies and to build key relationships.

A very well-attended “State of the Parkway” board meeting was held on February 1st, including several funders, leaders of neighborhood organizations, and City administration. Upcoming projects and priorities for the Parkway Council, its member organizations, and the neighborhood groups were shared, and common interests were discussed.

We continued to work closely with the leadership of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, partnering on common issues such as the homeless presence, zoning, and building reuse issues.

**Advocacy**

In 2010, the Parkway Council served as an advocate for (and “voice of”) the Parkway in various situations, including: the Family Court Building (1801 Vine Street) reuse; plans for the construction of a Mormon Temple (17th & Vine Streets), evolving plans for amphibious vehicle tours in the Parkway area, and the I-676 Vine Street Cover Replacement Project.

The Executive Director continued to serve as the Parkway Council’s representative on the City’s Combined Outreach committee, attending monthly meetings regarding homeless outreach and related issues.
Administrative/Membership

Parkway Council members and the Executive Director worked together to revise the organization’s 2010-2017 strategic plan and the Board’s annual list of top objectives.

Financially, it was a very tight budget year due to lower revenues, but we were able to be very productive nevertheless. Hopefully, corporate and foundation support will rebound in 2011.

The Executive Director conducted surveys of our Parkway Council institutions regarding their programs with the School District of Philadelphia, as well as their evening hours. The survey results reveal the Parkway’s extensive and impressive outreach to the City’s students and educators. Regarding the evening hours, there was no consistent pattern to the days of the week that institutions were open, but five of our members do offer evening programs on a regular basis.

Our Board membership saw some major transitions in 2010. Julian Rackow stepped down after several years of dedicated service, and new members Mike DiBerardinis (Commissioner of Parks and Recreation), Drew Becher (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society), George Gephart (Academy of Natural Sciences), Monsignor Arthur Rodgers (Cathedral Basilica), and, most recently, Penny Bach (Fairmount Park Art Association) joined the Board.

Looking ahead to 2011, as the Parkway is visibly enhanced with extensive capital improvements, we are hopeful that our priorities will be funded by new sources of revenue, and our Parkway advocacy will have a significant impact on the Parkway’s future.