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West Chester named *Classic Town*

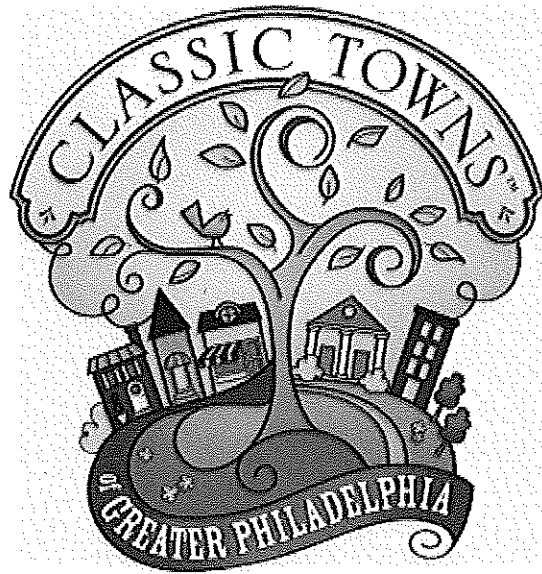
Andy Gotlieb
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PHILADELPHIA - The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) introduced a new marketing program today entitled *Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia* that is aimed at growing, revitalizing and supporting the region's older suburbs and urban neighborhoods. The initiative is designed to promote 11 Classic Towns as great places to live, work and play.

The inaugural Classic Towns that have been selected for this program are Ambler, Bristol Borough, Doylestown Borough, Lansdowne, Media and West Chester in Pennsylvania; the Philadelphia neighborhoods of Manayunk and Overbrook Farms; and Collingswood, Haddon Heights and Riverton in New Jersey.

"DVRPC has selected some of the best communities in the region as part of this initiative," said Barry Seymour, Executive Director of DVRPC. "It's designed to capitalize on the strength and diversity of our region and to rediscover these great towns. We want to help them attract new businesses, new residents, and to brand themselves as the best of what the Delaware Valley has to offer."



Approximately 100 City officials, tourism executives and representatives from the 11 Classic Towns attended the press conference and launch of the program. During the event, officials from each Classic Town signed a symbolic declaration presented by historic interpreter Benjamin Franklin. Chuck Christy, Vice-President of West Chester Borough Council, signed for West Chester. The declaration affirms a commitment to walkable neighborhoods that are accessible to transportation and feature a strong sense of community.

"This can only help our ongoing efforts to improve our community and retain our small-town charm," said Malcolm Johnstone, executive director of the West Chester Business Improvement District. "Chester County has received plenty of acclaim for its high-end growth, but West Chester remains its heart, so we need to let the public know about it."

More than one million people re-locate within the Greater Philadelphia region every year so this program highlights the "classic" communities and helps residents re-discover the beauty and diversity of our older towns.

Although the Greater Philadelphia region as a whole is promoted as a tourist destination and business center, many suburban communities lack the resources necessary to launch sophisticated and effective marketing programs that target specific demographic groups.

Understanding that the lifestyle and community amenities people desire may change as they move through different life stages, *Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia* was developed to appeal to three target markets: young professional/childless couples, young families and empty nesters.

The Classic Towns program's genesis dates to 2004 when, with funding from the William Penn Foundation, DVRPC launched the *Strategies for Older Suburbs Initiative* to stimulate and support reinvestment in the region's older suburbs and urban neighborhoods through multiple and varied efforts. As part of that

initiative, DVRPC worked with a team of marketing and branding professionals to develop Classic Towns.

A new Web site for *Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia* has been established at ClassicTowns.org. The website will allow individuals to learn more about these communities as a whole, as well as specific neighborhoods and their amenities.

About the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

DVRPC serves as the official planning and review agency for the nine-county metropolitan region, which comprises Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey. Through data collection, research, coordination, and planning efforts, DVRPC sets a framework for governmental decisions affecting development within the Delaware Valley. DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities.

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