

## **2006 Year in Review**

North – Central Elm Street Report  
Lancaster, PA

Administered by the James Street Improvement District

The City of Lancaster and the James Street Improvement District (JSID) received Elm Street designation from the PA Department of Community & Economic Development (PA DCED) in January 2005. The North-Central Elm Street target area is generally bounded by Prince, Lemon, Christian and Clay streets and is located adjacent to Clipper Magazine Stadium, Lancaster General Hospital and Lancaster's central business district.

Building on a solid foundation from its first year, the North-Central Elm Street program shifted into implementation mode, with substantial progress made in all areas of the five point plan, particularly in the areas of enhancing facades and engaging the community.

The following is a summary of the James Street Improvement District's activities in the areas of planning/neighborhood organizing, residential reinvestment activity (façade improvements and streetscape enhancements) and administration.

### **Planning/Neighborhood Organizing**

In year one, the JSID initiated a grassroots neighborhood leadership team (Elm Street Advisory Council) to help develop and provide input on Elm Street grant activities and to guide and engage the neighborhood in a planning process. The group has become more independent, establishing a new Chairperson in May 2006, in an effort to develop a long-term and sustainable organizational structure. The group continues to meet monthly to plan and implement several specific activities and to oversee the five key components of the Elm Street program.



In May 2006, the Elm Street Advisory Council sold flower boxes in the neighborhood. The Project Manager and the Council collaborated with local gardening vendor Space to Grow to assemble the flower boxes at cost. 33 property owners/residents purchased the boxes. Members of the Advisory Council assembled them and installed them free of charge. This exercise was helpful as members start thinking about future beautification and fundraising opportunities.

In August 2006, the Council decided to call itself the North – Central Neighbors Alliance, in an effort to create a sustainable identify. One of the members created the logo.



Ensuring the neighborhood is ‘clean and safe’ continues to be a priority of the Program Manager and the North-Central Neighbors Alliance. In September 2006, the Alliance participated in a neighborhood safety audit in partnership with the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition. Additionally, several Alliance members have played an active role engaging with Lancaster police as a result of several random crime incidents.

In October 2006, the Alliance helped to coordinate an Open House at Clipper Magazine Stadium for area residents. This event is the third year where the JSID, the neighbors and the Lancaster Barnstormers have had a chance to talk informally and to discuss any issues related to the stadium’s impact on the community.

The neighborhood group is establishing its independence and demonstrating the participants’ growing commitment to their community. The “Neighbors Alliance” has three main goals for 2007. First is focusing on a communications plan and neighborhood recognition strategy for the group so it can expand and engage more stakeholders. Second, they hope to grow into an entity that has the capacity to raise funds and plan events. Third, they will also reach out and coordinate with surrounding neighborhood groups.

## **Residential Reinvestment**

### **Façade Improvement Program (FIP)**

The Façade Improvement Program has been highly effective in the North – Central Neighborhood. To date, 55 projects have been completed representing \$200,000 in grant funds and \$150,000 in owner investment. In 2006, many large and highly visible projects were completed in key locations. A deliberate effort was made to cluster projects and to bring exposure and recognition to the Elm Street program. Important details are now being incorporated into each project such as exterior lighting, alley gates and technical assistance to solve problems with formstone removal and trash storage. The Project Manager continues to work closely with a Façade sub-committee to review projects and to engage City Building officials, including the City’s Historic Preservation Specialist. Daily contact is made with contractors to coordinate efficient, code-compliant and attractive project outcomes which maintain and accent the historic integrity of the neighborhood buildings.

Before, During and After Examples of Façade Projects Completed in 2006



Corner of Queen and New Streets



Removing formstone to expose brick



BEFORE

SE corner of major neighborhood five point intersection and City gateway from North and West



AFTER



BEFORE

Corner of Prince and New and directly across from main pedestrian entrance to Clipper Magazine Stadium. This property has no back yard, so the idle porch was removed to build a locked trash enclosure.



AFTER



BEFORE

Large warehouse building on W. New Street being converted into office space.



AFTER

### Streetscape Enhancements

In April 2006, the City of Lancaster and the JSID received a grant for \$360,000 to install pedestrian oriented lighting along the main corridors of the North – Central Elm Street Neighborhood. Based on initial cost estimates, the Project Manager coordinated multiple meetings with the City of Lancaster and PPL Electric Utilities to engineer 89 lights along the first block of W. James and the length of Queen and Prince Street through the North – Central Elm Street target neighborhood. Construction is expected to begin in early 2007, weather permitting.

JSID has also coordinated with the Lancaster Community Safety Coalition to assess costs related to the installation of security cameras throughout the neighborhood. Neighbors have long expressed an interest in this type of security enhancement and their desire was further supported by the results of the Neighborhood Safety Audit. The source of funds is the balance of grant monies as a result of final costs associated with the Pedestrian Light project.

There have been extensive conversations with the City to ensure the installation of pedestrian lights will not interfere with future streetscape improvements. Coordination with PPL has resulted in a plan to trench and install the needed infrastructure four feet off the curb to allow for the planting of street trees and other future improvements. An engineering firm has been retained to map out placement of new trees in Spring 2007. Current plans call for Lancaster City's Arborist to use an existing City tree planting program for installation of new street trees in the Fall 2007.

The JSID also has received permission from DCED to execute a contract with HRG, Inc., an engineering firm, to complete a sign consolidation study and make recommendations on how to reduce sign clutter in the North – Central neighborhood. The study is expected to be complete by March. The consultant and Project Manager will work with the City of Lancaster to ensure that all recommendations meet City, PA DOT and US DOT requirements.

### **Summary**

The JSID is proud of the strong working relationship it has developed with the City of Lancaster and the PA DCED in administering the North-Central Elm Street program. The focus in 2007 will continue to be on creating a sustainable neighborhood association and advancing even more 'bricks and mortar' projects. The growth of the Neighborhood Alliance is among the most exciting and rewarding program components, exceeding our early expectations.