



## **An Open Letter to the Mayor and City Council**

CDAG, the Central Delaware Advocacy Group, welcomes the new members of City Council, and wishes the Mayor and all members of Council the best in this new term and new year.

CDAG consists of 21 community groups and nonprofits dedicated to the preservation and improvement of our Delaware River waterfront, from Allegheny Avenue to Oregon Avenue. We believe it can become one of the nation's premier waterfronts: a place to live, invest, work, and play, guided by the principles of the *Civic Vision for the Central Delaware*.

Crafted in 2007 through an historic public process, and followed in 2008 by a 10-point *Action Plan*, the *Civic Vision* has served as the blueprint for the creation of the ***Master Plan for the Central Delaware***, by the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC). The plan is available online at <http://www.plancentraldelaware.com/project-info/current-work>.

Already we have seen new waterfront sites like the Race Street Pier, Washington Avenue Green, and the Race Street Connector; and work has begun on other important initiatives linking neighborhoods to the river. These achievements and future projects will enhance adjacent communities, and reap significant economic benefits for the City of Philadelphia.

At the same time, the City's new Zoning Code will go into effect in August, and there is not yet a zoning overlay for the Delaware Waterfront that would codify the Master Plan into law. Even with an overlay, the new Zoning Code will create some degree of uncertainty during "conversion," when new zoning rules will apply to properties that have not yet been remapped.

***This is a crucial time of transition for our waterfront. We are optimistic about the future, but significant risks lie ahead. All the volunteer work, political will, and precious resources put into the project so far could be undermined if you, our elected City officials, do not remain vigilant in the coming months.***

It is imperative that the Master Plan's concepts, principles, and standards be given the force of law, and that no development in conflict with the Plan slip through the cracks during this transitional period.

Accordingly, CDAG makes the following requests:

- We urge the Mayor and Council **not to introduce, pass, or sign into law any bill that would remap individual parcels for a specific development project**, unless such remapping is consistent with the Master Plan.
- We urge the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) and DRWC to continue to work together to ensure that **the waterfront overlay can be introduced and passed by Council during this session**, prior to the effective date of the new Zoning Code.
- We urge the PCPC and the Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) to review carefully all permit applications and Plans of Development for the waterfront district, **to ensure that the concepts and principles of the Master Plan prevail in all permitting decisions** made prior to the remapping of the district.
- We join with the Zoning Code Commission in urging the Zoning Board of Adjustment to **reduce so-called “use variances” to an absolute minimum**, and to consider carefully any requested dimensional variances in close collaboration with PCPC staff.
- Finally, we urge all administration, Council, and DRWC officials and staff to continue to **support the articulated principles of the Civic Vision and Master Plan.**

As citizen stewards of the Central Delaware and the Civic Vision, CDAG welcomes the opportunity to maintain and deepen collaborative relationships with City officials, the DRWC, and concerned citizens and organizations throughout the region. We look forward to seeing the people’s vision of a new waterfront become a reality over the coming months and years.

In Partnership,  
The Central Delaware Advocacy Group  
February 15, 2012