

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, December 11, 2025

Contact: Justin Backover, [dcedpress@pa.gov](mailto:dcedpress@pa.gov) or 717-418-4014

## **Shapiro Administration Announces New Main Street Designation in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Highlights Continued Investments in Downtowns and Main Streets Across the Commonwealth**

*This new multi-county Main Street designation for the City Ave District, which runs through Philadelphia and Bala Cynwyd, provides up to \$225,000 in supportive grant funding.*

*In his [2025-26 state budget](#), Governor Josh Shapiro secured \$20 million to continue supporting and revitalizing our downtowns through the Main Street Matters program.*



**Bala Cynwyd, PA** – Today, **Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Secretary Rick Siger** joined local leaders to announce that City Ave District, which is located in Bala Cynwyd, Montgomery County, and Philadelphia, is receiving a new Main Street designation through the [Main Street Matters](#) program. **Governor Josh Shapiro** created Main Street Matters in 2024 and secured another \$20 million for the program in his [2025-26 state budget](#) to continue providing downtown business districts with the tools they need to create healthy, vibrant communities.

The multi-county designation will allow [City Ave District](#) to apply for up to \$225,000 in funding and free technical assistance to implement its approved five-year strategy. The strategy focuses on three separate nodes connected to City Avenue — Bala Avenue in Montgomery County, as well as 54th Street adjacent to Saint Joseph's University and 63rd Street next to the Overbrook Train Station, both of which are in Philadelphia. The plan aims to promote walkability, attract new retail and dining options, enhance greenspace, install new public art, and redevelop vacant and underutilized property.

Secretary Siger toured the Bala Avenue portion in Montgomery County and visited three small businesses: [Details Lighting](#), [Walls and Windows](#), and Brielle & Co. Salon.

“This Main Street designation for the City Ave District will create new vibrancy that supports the local economy, improving quality of life and creating real opportunities for residents,” **said Secretary Siger**. “Main streets and small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and the Shapiro Administration is committed to giving communities the tools they need to help these

crucial areas reach their full potential. That's why the Governor secured more funding for this vital program in his 2025-26 state budget."

Main Street Matters is also a key part of Pennsylvania's 10-year [Economic Development Strategy](#) to help revitalize downtowns, support small businesses, and strengthen local economies.

"I'm proud to see City Avenue get the recognition and investment it needs from the state's Main Street Matters program," said **Senator Vincent Hughes, Senate Democratic Appropriations** Chair. "This part of the city is already a major hub and home to many small businesses, but I know we can make City Avenue an even better place to work, live, and enjoy. New retail and dining options, improved infrastructure and walkability, and public art projects will bring the economic vibrancy of City Ave to full capacity. This Main Street Designation is about to go a long way in helping our area reach its full potential."

"The City Ave District is a growing staple of Senate District 17," said **Senator Amanda Cappelletti**. "Uniquely positioned between Philadelphia and Lower Merion Township, City Avenue is an exciting destination filled with business opportunities, residential living spaces, thriving institutions of higher education, and much more. This designation under Pennsylvania's historic Main Street Matters program is an exciting and worthwhile investment back into a bustling neighborhood, and a fantastic step forward in unifying the corridor across township lines."

"Funding these small but mighty pockets of walkability, greenery and traffic mitigation along City Avenue serves many safety and quality-of-life purposes for residents, students and drivers," said **Representative Mary Jo Daley**. "Thank you to Secretary Siger for visiting our City Avenue Corridor and recognizing Bala Cynwyd as an important and exceptional investment."

"I'm thankful for the vision of the Shapiro Administration to focus on business corridors like Bala Ave. with this Main Street Matters designation," said **Representative Morgan Cephas**. "It's particularly important in our communities like this to have services and shopping close by without needed travel to Center City. Revitalizing this area will do much more than give a boost to the local economy, it will uplift our surrounding neighborhoods with pride in their community and attract even more commerce and people to our City Ave. district through West Philadelphia, Bala Cynwyd, and beyond."

"These main streets – Bala Avenue, 63rd Street and 54th Street – serve so many communities across Lower Merion and into West Philadelphia," said **Representative G. Roni Green**. "They're easily accessible from several SEPTA routes and provide a variety of services and needs for nearby residents and others. Revitalizing these corridors is a strategic investment to preserve their prime locations for attracting businesses and folks from out of the area, giving a boost to the local economy, and keeping surrounding neighborhoods safe, healthy and bright year-round."

"Main Streets are the heart of local communities. They are where neighbors connect, where small businesses thrive, and where the character of a place truly comes to life. City Ave District believes deeply in the essential role that Main Streets play in both community identity and economic vitality," said **Bryan Fenstermaker, President and CEO, City Ave District**. "This designation will help us strengthen the small businesses that define our district, while expanding the spaces where people gather, shop, and spend time. We're grateful to the Shapiro Administration and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center for their support and we are excited to

work alongside our Main Street partners to bring new energy, investment, and opportunity to Bala Avenue, 54th Street, and 63rd Street.”

“The Main Street Matters program from the Shapiro Administration aligns with Mayor Parker’s vision of making Philadelphia the Safest, Cleanest, Greenest big City in America with Access to Economic Opportunity for All,” said **Karen Fegely, Acting Commerce Director, City of Philadelphia**. “We are proud that City Ave District has achieved a Main Street designation. City Ave District is unique as the first Business Improvement District in the United States to straddle two municipalities – not to mention two counties – and now they are bringing more resources to serving the businesses within their bounds, from towering hotels to mom-and-pop pizza shops. This designation recognizes the economic significance of commercial districts and complements Philadelphia’s strategy for neighborhood commercial corridor revitalization. ”

“The Main Street Approach for community revitalization is an ideal way to support neighborhood districts and commercial corridors of any size to encourage sustainable economic development and improve the quality of life for the local residents so that the district becomes the best and most authentic version of itself,” said **Julie Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Downtown Center**. “As DCED’s nonprofit partner and statewide coordinator for Main Street America, Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) looks forward to assisting Bryan Fenstermaker, his board, and staff at City Ave District with their commitment to this initiative.”

“The City Ave District is an exemplary partnership between Montgomery County and Philadelphia, and we’re proud to earn this Main Street Matters designation together,” said **Neil Makhija, Chair, Montgomery County Commissioners**. “Investments in this corridor will benefit not only the 400 businesses large and small, but also the 29,000 residents, 25,000 workers, and nearly two million annual visitors that City Ave gets each year.”

Main Street Matters received more than 229 applications requesting more than \$68 million in the latest application round, underscoring the demand for more strategic investments in Main Streets across Pennsylvania.

Main Street Matters competitive project grant amounts vary depending upon the application category. Funding can be used for community planning grants, façade grants, business improvement grants, district development grants and accessible housing grants.

### **Unleashing Pennsylvania’s Economic Potential, Streamlining Permitting to Drive Economic Growth, and Supporting Pennsylvania’s Small Businesses**

- Since taking office, Governor Shapiro has made Pennsylvania more competitive — cutting red tape, streamlining permitting and licensing, and attracting nearly **\$32.5 billion** in private-sector investment that has created more than **18,000** good-paying jobs across the Commonwealth. That includes the largest private-sector investment in Pennsylvania history — Amazon’s initial \$20 billion investment to build new AI and cloud computing campuses, creating thousands of high-tech and construction jobs.
- Governor Shapiro has made economic competitiveness and government efficiency top priorities, launching Pennsylvania’s first comprehensive [economic development strategy](#) in nearly two decades, cutting permit backlogs — including eliminating the Department of Environmental Protection’s backlog of 2,400 permits — and investing

\$550 million to prepare more sites for business expansion, strengthen main streets, and support small businesses and entrepreneurs.

- The Governor's [2025-26 budget](#) continues to make historic progress on permitting reform, funds key staff at agencies responsible for processing permits, licenses, and certifications, and invests in Pennsylvania's main streets.

Learn more about the **Shapiro Administration's** [efforts](#) to support Pennsylvania's workers and businesses and spur the economy, and discover how the Administration is [creating economic opportunity](#) to build a stronger, more competitive economy for all Pennsylvanians.

For more information about the Main Street Matters program and the Department of Community and Economic Development, visit the agency's [website](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

# # #