The OWHC 2019 Theme: Sustainable Tourism

The Organization of World Heritage Cities’ (OWHC) theme for 2017-2019 is “Tourism and Heritage.” This theme will be explored with a special emphasis on “sustainable tourism” in various initiatives leading up to the 15th World Congress to be held June 2019 in Krakow, Poland.

The UN World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as tourism that “meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future” (1996, Agenda 21). Sustainable tourism recognizes the interconnectedness between the environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability of tourist destinations and their resident communities, and considers issues such as environmental carrying capacity, community engagement and ownership, ensuring long-term commercial viability, transportation and accessibility, and respecting local cultural values. The PHLCVB and Visit Philly are leading sustainable tourism efforts in Philadelphia and the World Heritage City Project supports their valuable work.

New PWHC Prospectus

On May 2, a new "Prospectus for Investment in the World Heritage Project" was issued. It is the product of extensive consultations with Project stakeholders. A powerful and business-like statement of the Project's work, it is organized around four missions and a series of individual projects associated with each mission.

The Prospectus seeks long-term (at least three years) investments, articulating what the Project plans to accomplish in this period, the funding required, and the benefits to be realized. Further info and copies are available on request.
Preserving & Celebrating Historical & Cultural Assets

This quarter saw a celebration on March 13th at the Philadelphia History Museum of the 48 properties that were added in the last year to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. This is a marked acceleration of the process, but much more is needed to address what most agree is the city’s deficit in historic preservation planning. Sponsored by the Preservation Alliance, the event attracted more than 100 celebrants, who watched a continuous slide show of the newly protected properties and heard from Bob Thomas, the chair of the Historical Commission, which oversees the designation of historic resources. With the increased staffing provided in the FY 2017 budget, the Commission is now poised to resume the designation of historic districts.

Another milestone was reached the next day, on March 14, when Mayor Kenney’s Historic Preservation Task Force released its first report, a white paper entitled "Preservation in Philadelphia." This report describes the current state of the legal and regulatory framework impacting historic preservation in Philadelphia. It is hoped that the task Force’s next two reports due out this year will dig more deeply into the difficult challenges that lie beneath the surface.

The Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) hosted their Annual Meeting in Philadelphia in April. The first day of the meeting, April 3, was designated "Philadelphia Day," and featured a panel discussion on sustainable solutions for Philadelphia’s heritage landmarks. Titled “Preserving Philadelphia’s Past and Investing in its Future: Sustainable Solutions for America’s First World Heritage City,” the panel was moderated by Steve Highsmith, formerly of PHL-17 and now Vice President of Institutional Advancement at Cabrini University.

The panelists included Melissa Stevens, GPA World Heritage Coordinator; Doris Fanelli, Chief of the Division of Cultural Resources Management at Independence National Historical Park; David Hollenberg, University Architect at the University of Pennsylvania; Kiki Bolender, Principal of Bolender Architects and co-founder of the Healthy Rowhouse Project; and Patrick Grossi, Director of Advocacy at the Preservation Alliance. The panel was recorded by the SfAA Podcast Project.

April 18th is designated as the annual International Day of Monuments and Sites by ICOMOS. This year, GPA promoted our UNESCO World Heritage site of Independence Hall, as well as other historic and cultural sites such as the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Laurel Hill Cemetery.

We also celebrated the opening of the Middle East Galleries at the Penn Museum in April. Featuring an array of cultural artifacts representing 10,000 years of human history, the Middle East Galleries are the first in a series of major gallery renovations taking place at the Penn Museum over the next several years. The Museum is also initiating a “Global Guides” program, in which immigrants and refugees lead tours and provide interpretation of their cultural heritage in their own voices.
GPA was delighted to celebrate the student artists awarded the 2017 “World Heritage City Prize” at a special event held for the students, their families, and their teachers at the Philadelphia International Airport on April 12th. The art is currently displayed until July in the Youth Art Gallery in Terminal A-East Baggage Claim (open to the public), where hundreds of thousands of passengers from around the world will see it. The celebration included a pizza party and a meet-and-greet with Airport CEO Chellie Cameron.

The 2018 “World Heritage City Prize” student art winners were chosen in April and recognized at the School District’s Young Artists Awards Ceremony on May 8th. Forty pieces of art were awarded, representing 1st through 12th grades. GPA is currently exploring options for displaying this year’s winning artwork in a special exhibition.

On March 17th, GPA co-hosted the Global Scholars Programs Workshop with the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association, the World Affairs Council, and the Penn Graduate School of Education. Participants learned about the emerging Global Scholars Program model, which is designed to encourage proficiency in the study of world cultures and foreign languages, and discussed how such programs could be implemented in Philadelphia area high schools. A GSP model is designed to be free or low cost and easily adapted and integrated into existing curricula.

GPA Education Consultant Sarah Sharp presented the teacher workshop “Using Primary Sources to Teach About Global Philadelphia” on April 14th at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The workshop presented teachers with ideas and opportunities for using HSP primary sources and the blog series about Philadelphia history written by Dr. Sharp to teach students about U.S. and World history and to examine race, gender, and class across time.

The Philadelphia World Heritage City film was presented to about 300 students during Abraham Lincoln High School’s 2nd Annual Culture Fest on May 3rd. GPA World Heritage Coordinator Melissa Stevens and GPA Education Consultant Sarah Sharp followed the movie with an interactive game that quizzed the students on what they learned. GPA also had tables at the Fest presenting information on the World Heritage Education Program as well as fun, interactive displays of Middle Eastern and East African culture, history, clothing, music, and dance. Lincoln High School’s students and faculty represent 42 different nationalities and the school proudly displays those 42 country flags in their atrium.
Building WHC Awareness & Ownership

We have been working to continue building awareness of Philadelphia’s World Heritage City status in order to ensure the general public is aware of this important designation.

Later this month, GPA will be hosting the third annual Philadelphia World Heritage Day, which was instituted by Mayor Kenny in 2016 to be celebrated on the 4th Thursday of each month and to be carried out in a different location each year. This year, it will be celebrated at the Philadelphia Zoo on May 24th. During the event, over 3,000 students will join us for educational programming and to learn about the World Heritage City message. Additionally, children will have the chance to receive their own World Heritage Coloring Book. The Zoo - which was the first in the nation - brings the world to Philadelphia through its global conservation, education, and research efforts.

GPA Executive Director Zabeth Teelucksingh recently appeared on the Tone and Tenor Radio Show to discuss GPA initiatives and Philadelphia’s role as a World Heritage City. During this time, she discussed the role of community and GPA’s involvement with the Parkside neighborhood, which is home to many historical and cultural sites. The positive economic impact that a World Heritage City designation provides was also discussed.

Another way we have worked to increase awareness is through our “hub and spoke” signage campaign along the city’s transportation lines, with core messaging in central locations. We have recently expanded the hub signage with another display at Suburban Station that compliments the existing signage that was installed in Dec (underground, 16th St. & JFK Blvd). This new mural’s messaging focuses on our core ideal that our “Our World Heritage City is a City of the World’s Heritages.” As thousands of passengers pass by this mural, awareness and pride will be increased in the important designation.

GPA is very pleased to welcome Gigi McGraw as our new Community Heritage Coordinator starting June 1st. Gigi received her MA in Theater from Villanova, has traveled and volunteered in South America and Africa, and previously worked in community outreach for the Free Library and the Please Touch Museum. Gigi will be designing and implementing community-based projects related to our World Heritage City Project.

There are several upcoming events that present opportunities to raise World Heritage City awareness. GPA will be participating in the West Park Arts Fest on June 9th. This festival celebrates Philadelphia’s diverse arts and culture community, and features visual artists, musicians, dancers, and craft vendors. Over the 4th of July weekend, GPA will be participating in the Wawa Welcome America Festivities which will celebrate and promote Philadelphia’s World Heritage.

Extending Philadelphia’s Global Reach

The Philadelphia International Airport continues to expand its direct flight options, including to a number of World Heritage Cities. Aer Lingus began service to Dublin on March 25th. American Airlines now offers flights to Budapest and Prague, and will begin service to Mexico City beginning in July.

The Perry World House hosted former Director General of UNESCO Irina Bokova as part of their “Cultural Lens” series on Jan 31st. The panel discussion
with Irina Bokova was moderated by LaShawn Jefferson, Deputy Director of Perry World House, and included GPA Executive Director Zabeth Teelucksingh and Dr. Brian Daniels, Director of Research and Programs for the Penn Cultural Heritage Center at the Penn Museum.

At the end of March, Zabeth Teelucksingh embarked on a journey to our fellow North American World Heritage City of Quebec, Canada. She participated in a meeting with Mayor of Quebec and OWHC Board Chair Regis Labeaume that included Quebec City officials and PA State officials from the Department of Community and Economic Development.

They discussed the ways that Quebec has leveraged its World Heritage City designation to attract more tourists and explored options for cross-branding Philadelphia and Quebec as North American heritage destinations. There was then a brief discussion regarding the economic development occurring in PA and the common companies situated in the state that both Quebec and PA share. They also made note of the opportunities for advancements in infrastructure and engineering that the two cities could collaborate upon.

While in Quebec, Ms. Teelucksingh also met with the staff of the OWHC General Secretariat, which is headquartered in Quebec. The meeting began with a discussion about the 2019 World Congress being held in Krakow, Poland, and its theme of Sustainable Tourism. Lee Minaidis, the Deputy Secretary General of OWHC, will lead a mini-advisory committee to explore possible sub-themes, including Green Maintenance, Respect of Buildings, and Religious Sites and Shrines. Some of the sub-themes will emanate from the Regional Secretariat meeting to be held in Amsterdam this Nov.

Ms. Teelucksingh also shared updates from the Philadelphia World Heritage City Project with the OWHC and discussed opportunities for Philadelphia to participate in several of the OWHC programs, including the education and distance learning programs. The OWHC was very intrigued by the Philadelphia World Heritage Education Program, specifically the Coloring Book, and would like to explore opportunities to share info on the Program with other OWHC member cities.

Philadelphia’s universities offer students multiple opportunities for international travel and global connections. This March, a group of Temple Fox Global MBA students visited with World Heritage City leadership in Berlin. They met with Ramona Simone Dornbusch, the World Heritage Coordinator for the Berlin Heritage Authority.

**Key Upcoming Events**

- May 24: Philadelphia World Heritage Day at the Zoo
- May 27-Jun 1: NAFSA Conference
- Jun 9: West Park Arts Fest
- Jun 28-Jul 4: Wawa Welcome America Festivities
- Sep 13: The 2018 World Heritage Celebration
- Nov 27-30: OWHC Regional Secretariat Meeting