

Philly is brought to you by....

City Mulling partnerships to raise \$

Mark McDonald

Imagine driving into the city, enormous signs greeting you, "Welcome to Philadelphia, government powered by Microsoft." Other signs announce, "Pepsi=the drink of choice for Philadelphia." Passing city rec centers, the Nike swoosh is everywhere, and arriving at the Municipal Services Building, you see the building sponsored by Deloitte & Touche. Inside all city buildings, the only beverages available in the vending machines come from Coca-Cola.

Fairmount Park is now sponsored by Columbia Sports and if you want to throw a wedding how about renting the Toyota Japanese House. Well, why not? We plaster corporate logos all over our clothing; billboards are everywhere; movies have 10 minutes of advertising before the feature film. Yesterday, the Street administration made the first small step toward this new frontier, telling a City Council budget committee that it's undertaking a "strategic marketing" initiative that it hopes will pull in \$12 million in the next five years.

But if city officials have their way, the numbers could be much larger. Facing an \$834 million deficit within five years, the Street administration is looking at various business partnerships. An example might include exclusive product rights- a software maker's right to serve the city in exchange for a generous price break and advertising opportunities. Other partnerships might include sponsorship of special events or public facilities.

And don't forget the use of city space to do good old-fashioned advertising. The city's 12-year contract on street furniture, bus kiosks and the like, ends next year. It now brings in \$400,000 a year plus plenty of green ad space for nonprofit groups. But budget director Rob Dubow said the city wants to increase that to about \$3.2 million per year by 2008.

Within two weeks, the city want to put out a request for proposal seeking a consultant who can help identify ways to make all this happen, according to Finance Director Janice Davis. She wants to use the purchasing power of the city to attract corporate sponsors. "I don't think you're going to see the golden arches on top of City Hall," Davis said. "We're not saying we're going to wrap City Hall in the logo of Verizon...But we're looking at the opportunites to have our name associated with a corporate entity to the benefit of the city."

Top 10 proposed city sponsors

10. Terminix Veterans Stadium

9. The A. Charles Peruto Jr. Criminal Justice Center, DUI wing

8. The Amazon.com Gree (plus shiping and handling) Library.

7. The Trojan Greek Picnic
6. la Cage Aux Folles, The Musical presents: The 104th Mummies Parade!
5. Synterra International Airport.
4. CSI on CBS: the Medical Examiner's Office
3. The Ballard-Spahr City Solicitor's Office.
2. The "Better get Maaco" Schuylkill Expressway
1. The Robert Downey Jr. Police Administration Building.