



VISTA 2025 Goal 5:

Support critical infrastructure in targeted corridors of opportunity

Goal 5 Team Meeting

March 9, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Diane Disney, Phil Eastman, Charles Fleischman, Matt Hammond, Michelle Kichline, Al Koenig, Steve Krug, Mike Hankin, Jim Horn, Gary Krapf, Greg Newell, Bob Norris, Bob Schoenberger, Jeff Valocchi, Chris Williams

Also Attending: Bob Grabus, Mike Grigalonis, Mary Frances McGarrity, Tim Phelps, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith, Randy Waltemeyer

Michelle Kichline

Welcomed the members of the Goal 5 team and called for introductions. She then asked if there were any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. Mr. Fleischman asked if the minute were sent out in advance and was advised that they were. No other comments were indicated.

Ms. Kichline then introduced Randy Waltemeyer, Transportation Director for the Chester County Planning Commission (CCPC), and asked him to describe the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process.

Randy Waltemeyer

Mr. Waltemeyer then provided an overview of the estimated cost of transportation needs for the Philadelphia region indicating a total estimated need of \$91.7 billion. He explained how the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) must compile the 25 year long range plan for the region. He stated that it is updated every two years with next update in 2017. The long range plan is then reduced to a 12-year program (\$15.5 Billion for the current 12 year plan). The 12 year plan's critical component is the 4 year plan which currently totals \$5 billion.

Mr. Waltemeyer reviewed a handout that explained the flow of how a project makes its way from "inventory" all the way down to construction. He went on to describe how Chester County uses a Transportation Improvement Inventory (TII) to identify and rank transportation projects in the County. He indicated that CCPC uses a scoring methodology to refine and prioritize. Perfect score is 62. Items like safety, congestion, environmental impact and municipal/legislative support are some of the factors considered. He indicated that it can take up to 7-8 years for a project to work its way onto a TIP. And then as much as 5 years to complete engineering.

He noted that Chester County has a current total need of about \$5 billion for 500 identified projects. He added that the large list is prioritized down to about 25 projects identified through a committee process and ultimately authorized by the Chester County Commissioners and the Chester County legislative delegation.

He noted that this list then becomes part of a regional list of projects looking to be funded with available transportation funds. He described how the projects from each county become part of the region's TIP which is used to allocate state and federal transportation funds. The current TIP is for the period 2015 through 2018.

Mr. Waltemeyer noted that the Chester County TIP was updated every 2 years. He indicated that work was underway on the 2017-2020 TIP and would conclude in the July/August time frame with the new TIP becoming effective in October.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Waltemeyer showed a word cloud from the recently completed "Take The Pulse" survey. He pointed out that responses to the question "What is the most significant traffic congestion related challenge?" were consistent with the current list of priorities. There were no real outliers or surprises.

He then shared a second "Take the Pulse" question and associated word cloud. In response to the question "What is most significant overall transportation issue?", lack of public transportation was the overwhelming response.

Al Koenig

Asked about transportation funding and the breakdown of federal vs state vs local. Mr. Waltemeyer responded that as a general rule, 80% of funding is federal, 10-15% is state and then about 5% is local.

Matt Hammond

Noted the importance of public support for Chester County's transportation projects given the competitive environment for funding. He noted that if it is not there from the beginning and maintained, the project will not go forward adding that PennDOT wants to do projects where they have support.

Diane Disney

Asked about how "emergency" type projects were handled. Mr. Waltemeyer explained that there are contingency funds to address those situations. Responding to unexpected major sinkholes was offered as an example. He added that if the demand was significant it could result in re-prioritization of projects.

Bob Norris

Asked suggested that once a project gets on the TIP, it does not mean you will necessarily move up the list and ultimately get to construction. Mr. Waltemeyer cited frequent confusion between TII "wish list" vs actually being on the TIP. It is rare for a project to actually be completely removed from the TIP.

Matt Hammond

Noted that sometimes a project can be "leap frogged" by another project.

Mr. Waltemeyer

Stated that Act 89 provided a significant and predictable increase in state funds that can be used to leverage additional federal funds. He noted that has helped advance the upgrade of the Route 30 bypass which is estimated to cost between \$600 and \$700 million.

Greg Newell

Asked if public/private partnerships get extra attention or "bonus points" in the decision on what gets funded. Or is private industry approached about helping to tackle some of the TIP projects. Mr. Waltemeyer responded that this typically doesn't happen because timelines are so much different for public versus private sector needs.

Chris Williams

Noted that TIP projects tend to be the very large projects. Developers can sometimes address the smaller scale projects; often through the land development process.

David Sciocchetti

Asked Mr. Waltemeyer to explain how PennDOT and DVRPC decide final allocation of what gets funded in the region? Mr. Waltemeyer responded that due to limited funding almost no new projects have been added to the TIP in the last decade. He added that that has now changed with Act 89 and new projects can now be accommodated. He further noted that DVRPC uses a ranking and scoring system similar to that used by CCPC. From the regional inventory, negotiations and compromise generate the final list with an underlying context of trying to think regionally.

Charles Fleischman

Asked how the impacts of transportation projects on other activities are assessed. Mr. Waltemeyer responded that we are planning a holistic system, not looking at projects in a vacuum.

Chris Williams

Asked if there is a focus on balancing the distribution of funding across the region. Mr. Waltemeyer cited example of 15 bridges being added and then 3 for each county.

Mr. Williams then noted the importance of working with CCPC to advance the TII projects. Mr. Waltemeyer concurred noting that it was important to get county projects on the 12 year program so that they can advance through the process.

Gary Smith

Asked about the relatively recent "3P" legislation and if there was a current "3P" project in Chester County. Mr. Waltemeyer first explained that a "3P" projects was a project where the private sector builds a project which is paid for with public bonds with bonds paid back with revenue from the project. He noted that the critical piece of "3P" Projects was the need for a revenue stream to pay for the improvements. A good example is a parking structure.

Diane Disney

Offered the idea of having non-profits raise money for certain projects to get them completed. "Bridge buddies" as example. Tax deductible contributions for people interested in making things happen.

Michelle Kichline

Noted that the County was responsible for 94 county bridges, many of which were structurally deficient and/or functionally obsolete according to PennDOT classifications. To address this issue, the County Commissioners approved the state authorized \$5 fee on vehicles registered in the county. She noted that these funds will go only to Chester County bridge projects.

Michelle Kichline

Asked Randy Waltemeyer and Chris Williams to update the team on the Route 30 multi-modal project.

Randy Waltemeyer

Provided reported that the Route 30 bypass Multi-Modal study was intended to resolve potential conflicts ahead of time. Because the ramps are going to be altered significantly to meet modern transportation standards, there needs to be a focus on making sure land use is key part of the process.

Chris Williams

Indicated that McMahon associates had been selected as the consultant to prepare the multi-modal study that will look at the Route 30 corridor and its various transportation connections, especially the Route 30 bypass ramps. He distributed a handout that summarized the information discussed at the most recent public meeting on the project. He noted that six municipalities are participating in the project that started in May of last year with initial results and recommendations presented in February 2016 and a final public meeting to be held in May.

He added that he was not the lead on this particular project and that questions should be addressed to Natasha Manbeck and that information was also available at the chescowest.com website.

Randy Waltemeyer

Noted that there was a related project being led by PennDOT and Gannett Fleming project focused on the Airport Road interchange improvements.

Chris Williams

Indicated the importance of considering the land use plans at the Route 30 bypass interchanges. He stated that by identifying the likely interchange improvements, local municipalities can be pro-active regarding any plans to build on land need for the interchange improvements.

Charles Fleischman

Asked about possible impacts of the project in Lancaster County. Mr. Williams responded that Lancaster County was not involved in the project as no major changes in traffic volume were expected to impact them.

Bob Norris

Asked if the county or DVRPC thinking about new technologies like driverless cars. Mr. Waltemeyer responded that DVRPC is heading up a group to consider impacts of new technologies.

Bob Grabus

Asked about the potential impact of the new Urban Outfitters warehouse in Gap on traffic through Chester County, especially on Route 41. Randy Waltemeyer responded that there were three projects on the TIP for Route 41 – all intersection based and designed to clean up some safety issues. He added that there was also an effort to seek a grant to upgrade signals in Avondale borough. The focus on all of the improvements was balancing preservation goals with the transportation goals and improving safety.

Michelle Kichline

Asked Mike Grigalonis to provide an update on the “Take the Pulse” survey of Chester County businesses.

Mike Grigalonis

Noted that the survey closed on February 19th and that over 400 responses had been received. He added that CCPC was analyzing the data and that a full report on the survey results would be available before summer.

Michelle Kichline

Asked if any of the goal team members had any additional items for consideration.

Charles Fleischman

Noted that the Keystone Principles regarding growth and development were an important consideration in the development of Landscapes 2 and were still relevant considerations that could impact funding for projects.

Tim Phelps

Informed the group of a transportation forum on March 17th and a state transportation breakfast on April 14th at the Desmond.

Steve Krug

Informed the group that DEP had an Alternative Fuel Program that was open to vehicle fleets.

David Sciocchetti

Briefly described the nature of the evolving goal team process.

Diane Disney

Noted the importance of identifying specific things for the goal teams to do.

Michelle Kichline

Thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting.