VISTA 2025 Goal 5:

Support critical infrastructure in targeted corridors of opportunity

Goal 5 Team Meeting

September 7, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Art Bernardon, Diane Disney, Phil Eastman, Mike Fili, Neil Fisher, Charles Fleischman, Matt Hammond, Jim Horn, Michelle Kichline, Al Koenig, Gary Krapf, Steve Krug, Greg Newell, Bob Norris, Bob Schoenberger, Paul Spiegel, Coleen Terry, James Turner, Chris Williams

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Brian O'Leary, Tim Phelps, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith

Michelle Kichline

Welcomed those attending and asked for introductions. Asked if there were comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were received. Introduced Al Koenig noting the importance of access via the air to Chester County's economy.

Al Koenig

Identified the airport management team including himself as Chairman of the Chester County Airport Authority board of directors, Gary Hudson as the Airport Manager and David Jones as the Airport Engineer.

Noted the airport was established in 1959 and became the county airport in 1997. Indicated the airport is governed by a county authority consisting of seven board members.

Stated that the airport owned 352 acres of land and had a 5,400 foot runway suitable for light aircraft. Added that it is the only airport in the county that can handle small jets. Added that the airport has no control tower. Indicated that it has 19 corporate hangars important for Chester County businesses.

Reported that the airport is the 3rd busiest general aviation airport in Pennsylvania behind northeast Philadelphia and Allegheny with 48,000 operations per year. Described operations as a mix of light aircraft, jets and helicopters.

Noted that the airport had just completed construction of a light aircraft parking lot that will allow the tie down of 50 small aircraft at a cost of $7.1 million. Noted that additional capital improvements were needed including:

Control Tower - Reported that an application for a tower had been submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration in 2015 to start the process. Added there was a potential for a remote control tower that would significantly lower operating costs. (Estimated cost $6.2 million)

Longer Runway – Needed a 6,100 foot runway to accommodate larger corporate jets. Indicated the new runway will fit on the existing airport site south of the existing runway. The existing runway would be converted to a taxiway for the new runway.

Corporate Hangar Space – indicated that there is no real current space available and that many customers are turned away. (Estimated cost $2.9 million)

Terminal Building Expansion – Proposal is to add 6,000 square feet for a significant upgrade to improve customer service.

Reported that the authority has land available for development that would allow as much as 100,000 square feet of transportation related development that would make use of the airport facilities.

Noted that the airport authority receives a portion of the revenue generated by the airports users but that most of the revenue is committed to the operator of the airport.

Added that there are significant maintenance activities including tree-trimming, fence maintenance, runway repairs, etc.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about the relationship with Lockheed Martin/Sikorsky

Al Koenig

Indicated that the airport has a good relationship with Lockheed Martin which uses the airport for testing and training related to their commercial helicopters.

Diane Disney

Asked about the capital cost for the new control tower.

Al Koenig

Responded that it was a challenge but that it was necessary to prevent problems as the number and complexity of operations increases.

Michelle Kichline

Introduced Pat Bokovitz to discuss the County's Commercial Revitalization Program.

Pat Bokovitz

Reported that the CRP program was initiated in 2002 to assist the County's 16 urban areas with their infrastructure needs. Added that it was a complement to the County's open space preservation program. Indicated that since that time over $57 million had been provided to the urban centers.

Stated that the program had matching requirements and was connected to the Chester Planning Commission's Urban Center Inventory process that identified key needs in the urban areas.

Indicated that the program had had a significant impact in that assessments in the county urban areas had increased 15% on average.

Noted that an Urban Center Forum event to discuss marketing and image for the urban areas was scheduled for next week.

Jim Turner

Asked if funds were available for economic development planning or modeling.

Pat Bokovitz

Responded that the Planning Commission's complementary Vision Partnership Planning program did allow for such analyses.

Michelle Kichline

Introduced Brian O'Leary to discuss the process of developing Landscapes 3.

Brian O'Leary

Reported that Chester County looked to update its comprehensive plan every ten years and the process of updating the existing Landscapes 2 plan was currently underway.

Indicated that certain plan elements were required by law and that the plan was a guide to county action in many areas, especially those areas that transcend local boundaries.

Noted that there would be three stages to the development of Landscapes 3, the "tell us" phase where outreach and data collection is focused on understanding the issues facing the county: the "guide us" stage where the vision for the future of the county is generated; and the "work with us" stage where the focus shifts to implementation of the plan.

Reported that a new website will go live next week to provide an update on the development of the plan.

In response to a question regarding the future of office parks, responded that it is positive but that they will have to adapt to changing market demands. Noted that the Commercial Landscapes Task Force recommended by VISTA 2025 was looking at this issue and the related notion of municipal flexibility.

Phil Eastman

Asked about the relationship of Landscapes 3 and VISTA 2025.

Brian O'Leary

Responded that VISTA 2025 came about as the result of a recommendation in Landscapes 2. Added that that the Landscapes 3 process could highlight the need for updates to VISTA 2025.

Gary Smith

Commented that VISTA 2025 was intended to be an "evergreen" strategy that would adjust over time. Added that the goal teams were designed to help with that process. Viewed the Landscapes 3 process as complementary to VISTA 2025.

David Sciocchetti

Noted the importance of infrastructure to Chester County economic development and added that there was significant competition for state and federal infrastructure funds.

Michelle Kichline

Reported on the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's role in prioritizing transportation projects for the entire region. Noted the importance of identifying our priorities in Chester County and advocating for them.

Brian O'Leary

Noted that a process was in place in Chester County for prioritizing highway and transit projects but noted that sometimes funds are identified outside of that process offering the recent addition of funds to the Downingtown TOD project as evidence.

Diane Disney

Commented that infrastructure is not sexy but it is critical. Indicated the need to maximize benefits and minimize risks, especially on problems that cut across various jurisdictions.

Charles Fleischmann

Commented that infrastructure has consequences and that any process focused on improving infrastructure needs to look at both.

Jim Horn

Stated that Route 1 through southern Chester County is an important resource serves the entire corridor. Added that it is important to look at all the parameters. Offered potential New Garden development as an example of balancing the need for tax ratables.

Jim Turner

Noted that infrastructure investment is not limited to public funds. Suggested that PECO, Aqua, CWA and others are part of the process. Suggested that more coordination on infrastructure is needed if we are to effectively serve the approximately 150,000 new residents anticipated for Chester County.

Paul Spiegel

Suggested that Landscapes 3 and VISTA 2025 should guide us in terms of advocating for infrastructure and that specific projects can evolve from those guiding documents.

Tim Phelps

Commented that coordination of the private and public infrastructure investment going forward is a very good idea noting that a significant part of the investment in the growth of Great Valley as a corporate center was provided by the private sector.

Michelle Kichline

Thanked all for attending and called for adjournment.