



VISTA 2025 Goal 5:

Support critical infrastructure in targeted corridors of opportunity

Goal 5 Team Meeting

December 1, 2017

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Vanessa Briggs, Charles Fleischmann, Matt Hammond, Mike Hankin, Jim Horn, Gary Krapf, Michelle Kichline, Steve Krug, Greg Newell, Tim Phelps, Ed Piscopo (for Phil Eastman), Bob Schoenberger, Paul Spiegel, James Turner, Jeff Vallochi

Also Attending: Dan Arbucias, Mike Grigalonis, Neil Fisher, James Logan, Brian O’Leary, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith

Michelle Kichline

Welcomed team members and asked for any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were received.

Noted the importance of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in Chester County as part of an overall strategy to preserve open space and have development occur in targeted growth areas. Commented that we are fortunate to have the Keystone Corridor as a major transit corridor through the heart of Chester County. Introduced Mike Hankin to describe their new TOD project at the site of the new Downingtown train station.

Mike Hankin

Stated that the new Brandywine Station development was a true TOD project, the first for the Hankin Group. Noted that it will encompass 68 acres, most of which was the former Sonoco paper plant. Explained that the project is scheduled to include 442 apartments and 14,000 square feet of retail.

Neil Fisher

Identified the boundaries of the project and noted how it will connect with area trails and parks including the Struble and the Chester Valley Trail.

Mike Hankin

Noted that the process of getting the project to this point required the participation of PennDOT, the Borough, the County, the School District, CCEDC and many others. Added that public support for the project included a RACP grant and the use of the LERTA program. Also noted that the demolition work on the site has begun

Stated that the project timing included 6 months for demolition with construction starting in the fall of 2018 and occupancy in 2019. Indicated that the project would be mostly 1 and 2 bedroom apartments with a price point still to be determined, but likely less than King of Prussia rents.

James Logan

Asked when leasing would begin and was advised that it would be soon.

Charles Fleischman

Asked how parking was being handled.

Neil Fisher

Responded that the issue was being addressed with the Borough but that he hoped some relief from traditional parking requirements will be available given the fact that anticipated automobile parking needs will be diminished due to the proximity to the train station.

Charles Fleischmann

Asked about the potential impact of autonomous vehicles and was advised that they are designing the site to be adaptable.

Matt Hammond

Asked if there was likely to be a large parking structure as part of the project and was advised that it would be likely.

Brian O'Leary

Asked about the connection of the development with the train station.

Neil Fisher

Responded that there are issues that PennDOT still has to resolve with the design of the train station before that can be finalized. Added that discussions are underway with PennDOT to address this issue.

Gary Smith

Noted the importance of a strong connection with the “Main Street” portion of Downingtown. Added that this development may expand possibilities for the former Amtrak rail yard, but that challenges still exist for that site.

Neil Fisher

Noted that the Johnsontown area of Downingtown was already in the process of revitalization as millennials take advantage of the nearby train station. Added that the additional residents in the Brandywine Station development will build the population base of Downingtown which will further support downtown revitalization.

Tim Phelps

Pointed out that the Keystone Corridor is not just about access to and from Philadelphia, noting that other communities like Great Valley are also emerging as significant destinations. Commented that no other county has five Amtrak stations. Noted the growing demand for additional SEPTA stops.

Brian O’Leary

Noted that the Chester County Planning Commission had asked SEPTA to expand their service further west into Chester County.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that VISTA 2025 had been authorized by Chester County Commissioners in late 2014 and that implementation had been ongoing for close to three years since then. Indicated that the draft progress report was intended to provide an update on the implementation of VISTA 2025 strategies from all five goals.

Reviewed the progress report slides on several Goal 5 strategies.

David Sciocchetti

Moved to a discussion of the Goal 5 draft strategy status report. Noted that the process to date included a review of each Goal 5 strategy with a focus on assessing the level of implementation. Indicated that five categories had been established and color coded for easy recognition:

- Done/Ongoing (Green)
- Ongoing (Green)
- On Hold/Active (Yellow)
- On Hold (Yellow)
- Eliminate (Red)

Stated that the next step in the review process was feedback from the members of the Goal 5 team. Identified possible issues to consider, including:

- Accurate assessment of progress
- Strategies to be modified
- Strategies to be added
- Strategies to be eliminated
- Strategy responsibility
- Strategy resource source
- Suggest change in timeline
- Suggest change in goal location
- Suggest merger with other strategies

Initiated review of individual strategies.

Strategy 5.1.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 5.2.1 Status - Ongoing

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.3.1 Status - On Hold/Active

James Turner

Noted that cooperation is critical for extension of water service.

Ed Piscopo

Noted that PECO looks for partners for extension of its service area.

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.4.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 5.4.2 Status – Done

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.5.1 Status - On Hold/Active

Gary Smith

Commented on the ongoing loss of ground in the county for commercial and industrial growth. Added that many parcels originally designated for these uses are being converted to residential.

Brian O’Leary

Indicated that pressure on industrial land is accelerating

Matt Hammond

Commented that affordable housing is a related issue noting the need for balance between where jobs are and where people live.

Charles Fleischmann

Asked if it was bad that the 88,000 projected new jobs for Chester County and the associated workers live elsewhere.

Matt Hammond

Commented that the millennials are the next generation and they are not as interested in driving as previous generations.

Steve Krug

Suggested that a policy balance that allowed more density in some areas was reasonable.

James Turner

Commented that today’s urban millennials are the next set of suburban families.

Michelle Kichline

Commented that in recent conversations with representatives of Philadelphia it was noted that the high quality of Chester County public schools is a major asset to the region.

James Logan

Commented on the need for industrial balance to preserve future job opportunities.

Greg Newell

Commented that the loss of ground for these uses decreases future options for our economy.

Michelle Kichline

Suggested that this should be a continuing policy discussion, particularly as it relates to any targeted marketing efforts for the county.

Ed Piscopo

Noted that this is not just a Chester County issue, that it is happening all over the region.

Brian O’Leary

Noted that Philadelphia had just completed a major analysis of their available industrial land.

Vanessa Briggs

Suggested that it made sense to have different business with different skill requirements and different wage scales.

Strategy 5.5.2 Status – Ongoing

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.6.1 Status - On Hold/Active

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.7.1 Status - On Hold

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.8.1 Status – Ongoing

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.9.1 Status - On Hold

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.10.1 Status - On Hold/Active

Strategy 5.10.2 Status - On Hold/Active

Strategy 5.10.3 Status - On Hold

Matt Hammond

Commented that the issue was a significant topic for Landscapes 3 noting the issue of defining what is affordable housing.

Tim Phelps

Suggested that one key is to encourage developer and community efforts towards further integration of affordability into more developments.

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.11.1 Status - On Hold/Active

Strategy 5.11.2 Status - On Hold/Active

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.

Strategy 5.12.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 5.13.1 Status – Ongoing

General consensus that strategy status is accurate.