



VISTA 2025 Goal 5:

Support critical infrastructure in targeted corridors of opportunity

Initial Goal 5 Team Meeting

April 24, 2017

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Art Bernardon, Diane Disney, Phil Eastman, Charles Fleischmann, Matt Hammond, Rob Henry, Michelle Kichline, Steve Krug, Tim Phelps, Paul Spiegel, James Turner, Jeffrey Valocchi, Chris Williams, Neil Fisher

Also Attending: James Logan, Mike Grigalonis, Ed Piscopo, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith

Michelle Kichline

Welcomed attendees and invited introductions. Asked for comments on meeting notes from previous meeting. No comments received.

Thanked all for attending. Noted continued interest evidenced by strong attendance.

Commented on importance of infrastructure and introduced PECO representatives to discuss Chester County Gas and electric infrastructure.

Phil Eastman

Described Exelon as a Fortune 150 company and a multi-area energy company. Noted that PECO is a part of the Exelon family of companies providing electric and gas to the Philadelphia region. Indicated that PECO had 1.6 million electric customers and 500,000 gas customers.

Stated that to date, PECO has invested \$95 million in smart grid and smart meter upgrades in Chester County and is currently working on a Network Refresh program that will further improve the system. Added that PECO has \$101 million of planned infrastructure improvements scheduled for Chester County over the next two years.

Michelle Kichline

Asked whether improvements would be above or below ground.

Phil Eastman

Responded that standard procedure is for aerial installation unless it is part of a planned new development.

Steve Krug

Asked about the safety and resiliency of underground installation.

Phil Eastman

Responded that underground is somewhat more resilient due to problems with foliage but that it is more complex and expensive in terms of repair and replacement.

Described how technology is improving the delivery of electricity. Noted that historically an outage was reported by a phone call and not until a number of calls came in from the same area could PECO distinguish a single household problem from a wider area outage. Noted that soon all meters will report problems directly to allow PECO to quickly determine the nature of any problem.

Steve Krug

Asked about the lead time on electricity to new developments

Phil Eastman

Responded that timing was driven by capacity which is driven by projections. Added that smaller developments (e.g. 20-50 homes) were not a problem. Noted that major industrial users with special voltage requirements were more of a challenge adding that a new sub-station was typically an 18-24 month delivery.

Ed Piscopo

Commented that one of the roles of economic development was to be pro-active and predictive regarding the need for new infrastructure.

Phil Eastman

Provided an overview of the gas delivery system in Chester County. Noted that there were 1,314 miles of gas mains in the County. Added that over the last 5 years an average of 7.6 miles per year of main extensions have been installed and over the next 18 years 106 miles of main is scheduled to be replaced.

Reviewed a map of the gas pipeline network in the county noting corridors where service was provided and areas where gas service was not currently available. Noted that the regulatory line extension policy for gas was different than for electricity, commenting that electricity was considered more of a necessity and gas more of an option. Noted that as a result, the burden for new line expansion falls on gas customers because costs are not able to be shared over the full customer base.

Matt Hammond

Asked about the impact of more energy efficient homes.

Phil Eastman

Noted PECO's support for energy conservation noting that the overall electrical load has not been increasing significantly. Added that distributed generation like solar is sometimes a challenge for the way the electrical grid is structured.

Diane Disney

Noted the unserved areas on the gas service map and questioned the impact of land preservation on gas distribution.

Steve Krug

Responded that gas follows density and more developed areas.

Phil Eastman

Added that gas mains are typically along public rights of way.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about impact of distance to a currently unserved area potential customer.

Phil Eastman

Responded that there were two options for currently unserved customers; 1) customer pays all costs for new service, or 2) PECO puts lines in and hopes that customers choose to connect adding that currently option 2 is only allowed for unusual construction costs.

Responded to a question about how the electrical grid is being protected noting that there are significant equipment standards that promote safety and that PECO views overall safety as a high priority. Added that cyber security is an emerging area that is now receiving a lot of attention.

Paul Spiegel

Asked about two way flow issues noting a denied solar application.

Phil Eastman

Responded that PECO supports solar energy production but that existing equipment in a specific area may have voltage or other problems that make it difficult to connect to the grid. Added that PECO is working on improved smart inverter technology.

Diane Disney

Noted that there has been a need for new gas mechanics and asked how that was being addressed.

Phil Eastman

Described PECO's internal gas mechanic schools and noted the recent agreement with the Delaware County Community College for a gas mechanics training program.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about the impact of Marcellus Shale on Pennsylvania's natural gas supply.

Phil Eastman

Responded that it has lowered the price of natural gas in the state, but that there is still a lack of infrastructure to get the gas from the Marcellus Shale areas to southeastern Pennsylvania. Added that one direct benefit is lower electric prices as a result of gas fired electric production being cheaper.

Gary Smith

Noted that areas unserved by PECO often use propane and asked whether that would likely remain the case.

Ed Piscopo

Noted an example of mushroom farmers who switched by paying for an extension of a PECO gas line to their businesses.

Michelle Kichline

Transitioned to the next agenda item – the Route 724 initiative.

James Logan

Described the effort to better understand the economic development needs of the 724 corridor, an area from North Coventry to Phoenixville along the county's northern border. Noted that efforts to reach out to corridor municipalities were underway. Added

that a 724 task force that had been established in 2004 was being relaunched. Indicated that the focus was on providing a resource to the communities. Reported that an initial breakfast relaunch event was scheduled for May 10 at the Coventry mall with action committees as a possible follow up.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about any connections between the 724 corridor and the parallel Route 422 corridor in Montgomery County.

Rob Henry

Commented that Ridge Pike in Montgomery County might be an example noting the concern for a business friendly approach.

Gary Smith

Commented that the Chester County side of the river was stagnant and that the local communities had suffered. Noted the example of the history of the Pennhurst property adding that a new owner is exploring a new development plan.

David Sciocchetti

Asked if the recreational potential of the Schuylkill River was a part of the effort.

James Logan

Responded that trails were a focus but not so much for the river.

Greg Newell

Commented on the uncertainties of impacts of new investment. Noted that there were some areas where residents welcomed cleanup efforts but that developers needed incentives.

Gary Smith

Commented that there was no real anti-growth sentiment especially as it related to brownfields sites adding that a holistic approach was critical.

Jeff Valocchi

Commented that how people view density is key.

Charles Fleischmann

Asked about the significance of the lines parallel to Route 724 on the sample map.

Mike Grigalonis

Responded that they had no significance other than demonstrating distance from the road.

Charles Fleischmann

Noted the importance of involving residents at an early stage.

Michelle Kichline

Noted area concerns over Route 422 generated congestion and the need to address this issue.

Chris Williams

Noted that Route 724 was not designed for high volume traffic.

Tim Phelps

Commented that Route 724 peels away from Route 422 as it heads southeast. Suggested that Route 724 today is similar to Ridge Pike 35 years ago.

Michelle Kichline

Noted that due to time constraints the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) topic would be moved to the next meeting.

Tim Phelps

Noted the upcoming TMACC breakfast event that would have presentations from four rail station TOD municipalities in Chester County (Coatesville, Downingtown, Exton and Paoli).

Michelle Kichline

Thanked all for attending and adjourned the meeting.