



VISTA 2025 Goal 5:

Support critical infrastructure in targeted corridors of opportunity

Goal 5 Team Meeting

June 26, 2018

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Jim Horn, Michelle Kichline, Greg Newell, Tim Phelps, Bob Schoenberger, Jeff Vallochi, Chris Williams

Also Attending: Dan Arbucias, James Logan, Brian O’Leary, Mary Frances McGarrity, David Sciocchetti,

Michelle Kichline

Welcomed team members and asked for any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were received. Introduced James Logan, who is working on the Rt. 724 Corridor Initiative.

James Logan

Explained that the Rt. 724 initiative purpose is to advance the economic opportunity of the Rt. 724 region by implementing initiatives identified by area stakeholders. Noted that there are 35 participating stakeholders and 9 townships that are part of the initiative. Added that Commissioner Kichline and Alan Brink are co-chairs for the initiative. Noted that several meetings have already been held.

Commented that one aspect of this initiative is to use regional mapping to identify areas of interest for development. Noted that these sites have to be in targeted growth areas along the Rt. 724 Corridor. Stated that the initiative has identified 35 sites with over 446 acres in five different municipalities for potential growth. Added that an Opportunity Sites map was developed in May of 2018 and is now available. Commented that the initiative is also working with Aqua to identify the areas that have water. Further noted that most property owner have been supportive.

Reported on one impact of the initiative that resulted in saving a regional landmark (train trestle) that crosses over the Schuylkill River between Spring City and Royersford, connecting to the Schuylkill River Trail.

Greg Newell

Asked about the participation of the municipalities along the Route 724 corridor.

James Logan

Responded that of the nine townships that originally expressed interest, only 5 are still working with the Rt. 724 Corridor Initiative.

Chris Williams

Commented that the current status of Route 724 as a two lane road may pose challenges for any larger scale development and questioned whether PennDOT was included in the process.

James Logan

Responded that they were not a part of the process yet.

Tim Phelps

Commented that it will be interesting to see how the Rt. 724 Corridor gets affected after the 422 construction is completed. Questioned how issues relating to water and sewer are being addressed.

James Logan

Responded that they are currently being handled on a case by case basis. Added that a conversation with Valley Forge Water and Sewer Authority did take place to inform them of the initiative.

Mary Frances McGarrity

Noted that there have been a few municipalities that have worked with sewer authorities regarding commercial and mixed-use developments. Added that Aqua and PA American are also in the loop.

Provided an overview of the Opportunity Sites website, which allows for a search by municipality, infrastructure, parcel information, etc. Added that the website also allows the use of regular GIS data (adding layers, contours, hydrology, parcel outlines, and zoning information). Explained that we are trying to get everything a developer would be interested in finding all on one page with an intention to update the information twice a year. Noted that the response from the municipalities and property owners has been positive.

Michelle Kichline

Introduced Brian O'Leary to provide an update on how infrastructure is being handled in Landscapes 3 .

Brian O’Leary

Provided an overview of the Landscapes 3 process and schedule. Noted the role of the steering committee and the emphasis on public input. Explained that Landscapes 3 is intended to be a long range guide to the built environment in Chester County.

Reported that Chester County is expected to grow substantially in the coming years. Noted several themes of landscapes 3 including reconfirming the commitment to open space and supporting urban and suburban centers as the areas where growth should occur.

Indicated that the issue of infrastructure is covered under the How We Connect section of Landscapes 3. Explained the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process and how Chester County priority projects are incorporated into that regional planning process. Noted the difficulty of adding projects to the TIP given the significant regional demand for available funds. Commented that the next two major highway projects in Chester County will be the Route 30 bypass and Route 1. Noted that two current county priorities are 113 between Route 30 and Route 100 and Route 202 south of West Chester. Recognized that interim solutions may be necessary for these two areas due to limitations of funds for widening.

On a smaller scale, noted that there is a focus on connections between existing infrastructure including roads, transit, etc. Added that there is an emphasis on getting municipalities to look carefully at their codes regarding things like sidewalks.

Mary Frances McGarrity

Mentioned the issue of sidewalks to nowhere that developers are often required to build.

Brian O’Leary

Responded that there are a whole variety of issues like this to address. Mentioned that buses are often dropping off people onto grass areas or sidewalks that go nowhere.

Greg Newell

Mentioned that there may be a way to limit the width of streets to force people to drive slower. Also mentioned the issue of impervious cover.

Brian O’Leary

Noted the focus in Landscapes 3 on continued development of the countywide trail network that is part of and connected to the Circuit Trail System, Greater Philadelphia’s regional multiuse trail network. Added that there are trails throughout our growth areas, except for southern Chester County.

Noted the importance of the expansion of local regional rail service to our urban and suburban centers and the need for adequate parking at all regional rail stations. Indicated that the highest priority is extension of SEPTA service west to Coatesville. Described SEPTA challenges related to improving the existing infrastructure and building new stations, while having problems finding adequate numbers of

engineers. Added that the role of Amtrak on the Keystone Corridor further complicates the process of making improvements along the line.

Further noted the increasing importance of smart travel demand management strategies and new technologies to enhance roadway safety and reduce congestion.

Mentioned that freight is another focus area adding that there is interest in conducting a study of freight service areas of concern to improve service while minimizing impacts.

Greg Newell

Noted that the growth of same day delivery will be adding new challenges. Added that people are looking at new sites for regional warehouses.

Brian O'Leary

Noted the need to focus on truck traffic and direct it away from roads where it should not be.

Tim Phelps

Mentioned that a lot of the truck drivers are using Waze (and not their company's GPS) to figure out how to deliver packages. Added that this is how they end up in neighborhoods where they don't fit (and end up hitting covered bridges).

Brian O'Leary

Noted the importance of enhancing pipeline safety through the provision of information, facilitation of communication, and encouragement of partnerships to reduce impact on neighborhoods and our community. Recognized that there is limited local control over pipeline locations.

Noted the focus on the availability of water and sewer in designated growth areas.

James Logan

Asked about the information on growth used for planning infrastructure.

Brian O'Leary

Responded that major transportation projects are based off of DVRPC's models.

Tim Phelps

Raised the issue of the growth of school districts and possible competition with open space growth. Noted that in Lower Merion, there was an influx of people moving in that were choosing public schools, which led to a whole host of problems.

Brian O'Leary

Responded that predicted school-age populations will remain relatively flat, with a small potential bump.

David Sciocchetti

Asked about the Keystone Corridor data on intra-county transportation patterns. Advised that SEPTA may have some data.

Tim Phelps

Noted that that out of the 1 million people who ride through Paoli, 2/3 go inbound into Philadelphia whereas the other 1/3 go outbound to Harrisburg and Lancaster.

Meeting adjourned.