



*A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware  
Civic Feedback Sessions, 8/1- 8/2  
Session #1: Cescaphe Ballroom, 8/1*

**Report: Small group discussion**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Ed Battle**

Participants were asked to recall the presentation, focus on the design guidelines and respond to the following questions:

What do you find most appealing?

- Fine street grid to the riverfront
- Cover or bury I-95
- Use of open space
- Public access to the river
- More foot traffic which will improve public safety
- Moving away from auto culture
- Mixed use of parcels

What opportunities do you see?

- Improved infrastructure, streets, electric, water, utilities
- Bring schools to the area
- Political, economic and public support of the vision plan
- Food stores and supermarkets
- An opportunity for Gov. Rendell and or candidate Nutter to take ownership and leadership of the vision plan

What roles can citizens play to make ideas a reality?

- Coordinate civic groups to pressure public officials to support the vision plan
- "Grass roots up", create a citizens groundswell of support that pushes the vision plan up to elected officials and their backing

Moderators' observations

The participants are knowledgeable about the planning process that led to the current vision plan. This may be the result of past civic engagement activities and a welcoming atmosphere. Finally, the positive phrasing of the questions stopped some participants from continued complaining or negativism in referring to the plan.

On the whole, participants are pleased with the vision plan, have some reservations because of past disappointments and are looking forward to the next steps in the process.

**Report: Small group discussion**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Corrine Thatcher**

### **Most Appealing**

1. Continuous waterfront trail
2. North and South Philly connections to waterfront (2)
3. Pocket parks, green spaces (2)
4. Re-introduction of grid system
5. Addressing I-95
6. Long-term vision
7. Comprehensive (2)
8. Accessibility via mass transit (3)

### **Opportunities**

1. More control of development in hands of citizens
2. Limited ability for casinos to impact neighborhoods' footprints
3. Increased revenue from developing land over I-95 and otherwise currently underutilized/undertaxed land
4. Mixed-income housing
5. New energy for the city, improved self image
6. Increased appeal to attract newcomers to the city and to keep graduates of our universities *here*
7. Glass-covered creeks!
8. Connections with Camden, water transit
9. Increased appeal to attract more businesses/companies = more jobs

### **Actions**

1. Pressure City Hall to make it happen
2. Continue citizen engagement process (forums, publiciaionts, etc.) to keep up pressure
3. Get others excited about the plan so that it becomes political suicide for politicians *not* to support it
4. Create a citizens' advisory committee to work directly with City Hall on implementing vision
5. Hit home economic benefits of new development

Report: Small group discussion  
SUBMITTED by moderator Ellen Peterson

### What do you find most appealing?

- There are new places to walk around
- I love the re-development, landscaping and casinos
- More connection to the water
- Pedestrian activity
- Accessibility and access
- Re-connection of city to the water's edge
- Use of development and green space
- Process of involving the public and community in the plans
- Waterfront as a whole
- Plan will create new neighborhoods
- Currently no economic benefit to the land; there will be great benefit
- Love the plan
- The waterfront will be the pride of Philadelphia
- The continuity of the plan for seven miles is great and should be extended
- Communities are interacting at the water

### What opportunities do you see?

- Strengthen the port
- Plan presented was land based-what's going on in the water?
- Shouldn't stop at Allegheny
- Need a great Pulaski Pier
- "Fix" public transportation as a prominent component of the plan. Also, consider making it free for access to the waterfront
- Water taxi on the river
- Monorail above ground
- Should have a landmark, symbol, showcasing the waterfront as a destination
- Have landmarks for the neighborhoods
- Seek points of interest in the neighborhoods-dig deep
- Find a modern way of marking landmarks, e.g. Independence Mall, President's slave quarters
- Ensure there is something distinctive in the waterfront that is *only* found in Philadelphia
- Watch the boulevard-proximity to water and the traffic
- Outdoor pier design like done in Chelsea
- Make the environment lush
- Clean up the river
- Communicate the short term wins to the public to keep the excitement going

- Harris Steinberg should revise his presentation to visually reflect the small scale of buildings and streets. Perhaps blow-up a popular street as an example (e.g. Columbus Blvd)
- Harris Steinberg should give an example of how Parking might be accomplished in one of the more challenging neighborhoods like Fishtown
- The interest in the Delaware should be used a springboard for the Schuylkill and N.J.
- Boulevard should follow a path parallel to 95 not through the green space

#### **What role can citizen's play in making these ideas a reality?**

- Groups should come together in community forums like tonight and vote as a bloc
- Neighborhood planning commissions and zoning board need to be assertive about ensuring the process is followed in their neighborhood. They should also be benchmarked for their progress.
- The neighborhoods, commissions and representatives should be accountable for the plan

Report: Small group discussion

SUBMITTED by moderators Louise Giugliano and Jean DiSabatino

**“What did you find most appealing from the presentation?” They said:**

- Bringing the city back to the river.
- Real estate and tax development opportunities.
- More green space and mixed use opportunities.
- That it is not anti-development.
- Access to the river for families.
- Opportunities for recreation.
- Bike paths connecting parks.
- Limit cars, no huge parking lots, having other transportation options.
- The street grid.
- Healing the wounds of I-95. Utilizing the space under it. Revitalizing and healing the neighborhoods.
- Importance of the zoning process.
- William Penn’s original plan coming back.
- Creating a walk-able waterfront by extending the street grid and breaking up the 30 acre parcels.
- The street level shops and interesting facades.
- Restoring the eco-system and the marshland.
- Adding architecture that is modern.

**“What opportunities do you see for the waterfront?” They said:**

- I like the amenities of shops, services and paying attention to the aesthetics.
- Growth that supports tourism, i.e. going beyond industrialization.
- Increased tax revenues as more people come into this part of the city.
- New residential neighborhoods along the river.
- The beauty of this plan.
- The opportunity to learn more about these neighborhoods.
- The long view of changes and growth over generations. This is very future oriented.
- Property values will increase.
- We may keep our graduates in the city once they start their careers.
- Open space for artistic performances.
- We will keep up with Camden. (Tongue in cheek)
- There is less violence in open space.
- Shipyards will remain vibrant.

**“What is the citizens’ role in making this happen?” They said:**

- “The devil is in the details.”
- Attend zoning meetings.



- Tell the powers that be what you want.
- Hold necessary referendums.
- Establish stakeholder groups, such as the Bicycle Coalition to leverage support. Connect groups up to broader issues.
- Use community newspapers, like the Fishtown Star, to get the word out through ads, publishing proceedings from Penn Praxis, use "citizen reporters".
- Use Media Guide. (?)
- These citizen meetings are evidence of civic engagement that has grown over the last five years!!
- Remember that "Change is a process not an event."
- Make sure elected folks are part of the process. Ask them to come to meetings. Have citizens call them about what we want.
- Bring in the Building Trades into the process.
- Remember that "Democracy requires constant vigilance." Jefferson.

**Report: Small group discussion**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Kiki Bolender**

**WHAT APPEALS TO YOU ABOUT THIS PLAN?**

- A lot of it could really happen
- It maintains the character of the city, and of William Penn's original plan
- Extension of the grid makes integration with the very vital neighborhoods west of I-95 possible
- The idea of continuous public access along the water; the piers could be public space
- Clean up and use the space under I-95
- The city would make use of its unused river
- Extending the grid
- Multiple green areas
- Greenway
- Green aspect, sustainability
- Housing brought to river; the city needs more affordable housing
- The plan can be a vehicle for bringing together neighborhood groups for action and collaboration – bottom up planning

**IMPLEMENTATION / OPPORTUNITIES**

- Use existing tools of city government, but "sweeten the pie" with inducements to individual developers, the state and federal governments, and investors, including foreign investors
- For whom is the waterfront being developed? The importance of the social question.
- Audience needs to be part of the vision
- Continue the unusual combination of Penn Praxis, Penn GSE and PCPC
- Neighborhoods thrive through diversity and commitment (The speaker clarified, when asked, that she did not mean that people had to live in the neighborhood for a long time, but rather that while they were there, they are involved with their neighbors.)
- Development incentives, like on the Brooklyn waterfront, where you can build higher if you include affordable housing
- Development zones
- High expectations, for a change
- A way to maintain public access and avoid gated communities
- Fear of urban living is an obstacle (following the gated community comments)
- Investment in your house is safe, as the surroundings are protected by zoning
- PCPC is too political, answering only to the mayor; it should answer to City Council.





**Report: Small group discussion**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Stacie Molnar Main**

### Appeals

- Public green spaces – beauty, environmental quality, bringing people together (social spaces)
- Addresses the problem of I-95
- Public access reinforces the fact the “The River belongs to us”
- Potential for fewer cars and more pedestrian traffic
- Reducing scale to make streets friendlier
- Grid extension is a good idea
- Planning and a “whole” is a great opportunity to impact the future of the entire city
- Ability it affords for people to relate to the waterfront
- Smaller parcels and 1<sup>st</sup> floor “active uses”

### Opportunities Associated with Plan:

- Potential to impact future development
- Obvious and inviting way to connect neighborhood and water
- Revisions to zoning code will foster river development
- Small groups/associations will have the opportunity to take ownership of planning
- Historical markers and pathways could support teaching/tourism
- Opportunity to build/highlight public transportation
- Recreation opportunities
- Use green space as an alternative infrastructure for ground water processing
- Waterfront could become an incubator for small businesses (due to scale)

of development)

- Green education, using the site to teach students about environmental issues
- Eminent domain lawyers may find work
- Increase in property values near development areas
- Opportunities for creative financing (such as leasing space above 1-95).
- Opportunities for private sector to promote public uses (example: Bryant Park, NYC)
- Also private-public partnerships

### **Citizen's Roles:**

- Elect officials that will support the plan
- Advocate/champion plan among neighbors, friends and others
- Stay interested and informed about development issues
- Use the press to express concerns and values
- Ensure that waterfront development is an ongoing agenda item during election time and afterward – lobby and attend meetings
- Citizens' groups can take the lead in promoting the plan through high profile events. This would provide early visible action
- Don't assume developers are "bad guys." We need to help them be accountable to this vision. Help developers connect their values to our values.
- Educate state and deferral officials about our vision. Seek support and funding.
- Use neighborhood associations to inform others.

### **Questions/Concerns:**

What would happen if current landowners do not buy-in or cooperate with the plan? Is there any leverage?

How would this project be phased? How could desirability and safety of bordering neighborhoods be maintained during phasing?



Why not address building usage through zoning?

Does the plan adequately address traffic and transportation issues?

We are concerned that this work to be "shelved." It should be acted upon.

**Report: Small group discussion**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Lisa Santer**

### **What people liked from the presentation**

- ❖ Moving from industrial wasteland to mixed use
- ❖ Showcasing potential of the water (& not being land-locked)
- ❖ Increasing green space
- ❖ More jobs
- ❖ Open spaces & increased use of area
- ❖ DOING something, with a plan & not piecemeal
- ❖ Integration of high-rise w/green space & esplanade that seems practical
- ❖ Public transportation up & down waterfront—want even more
- ❖ Vision great—doesn't see happening (NOTE: this man left after presentation, returned for a few intros, then left)
- ❖ "Possibility of the city owning itself"
- ❖ Having 95 underground
- ❖ Places for kids to play safely—not named explicitly in presentation, but seems implicit
- ❖ Mentioned Port Richmond, building light rail—want it continued
- ❖ Extending the grid, streets going to river

### **Opportunities**

- ❖ RETURN of affordable, linked public transportation—PATCO, el, busses, light rail, trolleys
- ❖ Unified community appearance unique to us & being us
- ❖ CITY project to correct parking problem; parking w/i all new buildings; affordable, hidden
- ❖ Sight lines—not high rises blocking view
- ❖ Mixed residential & commercial->economic viability; brings in residents, workers, people for recreation
- ❖ Plan/update infrastructure—sewer, police, fire, EMS, schools, hospitals
- ❖ Jobs expansion (port in particular), with living wage jobs, could keep people here. Permanent jobs, not just construction, needed
- ❖ Make the waterfront part of the city (not a new suburb, like best of Philly)
- ❖ Walk in own neighborhood, not drive to Schuylkill
- ❖ Not get delayed/sidetracked by big 95 project—perhaps have dig/no dig vision, or phased approach of what to do before 95 ready.
- ❖ Learn from mistakes, for example Please Touch Museum plan at Penn's Landing—piecemeal approach was problematic; Vine St expressway
- ❖ Prospective guidelines with teeth—zoning overlay; eliminate zoning variances
- ❖ Roof gardens are great, opportunity for bigger green projects & sustainable buildings. Put teeth into this kind of requirements for buildings: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™



- ❖ Improve first view of city from air—affects many more people than just those who live here now
- ❖ Work with NJ re development plan for Petty's Island
- ❖ Bury new wires & cables to eliminate telephone poles

#### **Possible roles for citizens**

- ❖ Vote
- ❖ Become (active) member of neighborhood group.
- ❖ Organize neighborhood tours to get politicians walking the areas
- ❖ Make city a "First Class City" to get control
- ❖ Hold our elected officials accountable
- ❖ Attend hearings
- ❖ Know what's going on—not just newspapers/tv. Email & neighborhood organizations can be very helpful here.
- ❖ Take plans from here to governor, mayor, . . .
- ❖ Public demonstrations

## Report: Concluding Plenary Discussion

Exciting ideas in small group work

- Sinking of I-95
  - Using creative financing and leased spaces may make that easier
  - Do it step-by-step in a way that creates value at each step, and that makes real and palpable the vision of the covered highway, with development on top of the covering.
    - This is a “phased plan” so that we can see the vision and build increasing support for it.
  - Also important to have a plan B for what to do in the meantime....
  
- Diversity is the key:
  - Not just mixed use, but mixed income, mixed ethnicities.
  - The possibilities to make the waterfront a diverse place -- social, ethnic, economic diversity – rather than a place for the richer....
  - This is critical to support – everyone should see how developing along these guidelines will benefit them and increase their access to the waterfront (to live, shop, visit, etc.)
  
- Connect this to a comprehensive regional plan.
  - It’s about more than the waterfront; it’s about people, all of us.
  - Who will “own” this? We all must.
  
- Connecting development values to community values
  - Zoning: building zoning regulations on these development guidelines would seem to protect neighborhoods, while also being of benefit or value to developers and investors
  - Address utilities and other infrastructure issues and stakeholders
  - This connection is essential to create a plan the public will rally behind – create civic political capital.
  - Convincing developers and politicians that our values are their values... get the utilities on board.
    - Grassroots involvement is the key.
    - Involve neighborhood publications in on the process – now and through implementation
  
- Use public transit (existing lines as well as new lines) to reinforce the connections the guidelines seek to build and strengthen.
  - Reopening old trolley lines to link the waterfront with the rest of the city -- not just the roadways as in the guild lines.