



*A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware
Civic Feedback Sessions, 8/1- 8/2
Session #2: Settlement Music School, 8/2*

Report: Small group Discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Ed Battle

Small Group Discussion

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

What do you find most appealing?

- Street grid to the river
- Connections to the river
- Bury I-95, but drainage problems may result and should be anticipated
- Nature parks for young people
- Recreational parks for children and the young
- River park, a sixth square", should be large, "a living room" to accommodate a variety of activities on the riverfront.
- Water drainage into the park system
- Parking

What opportunities do you see?

- Less development and more green spaces
- A street grid that does not continually extend to the river. There should be areas along the riverfront that doesn't have street grid.
- Water parks
- Boating along the riverfront
- Water taxis
- Light rail intergraded into the current street system
- Facilitate the use of all modes of public transit
- Remote parking areas to reduce the need for parking in riverfront areas
- Address density issues
- Preserve historic places, buildings, streets, industrial remnants, etc.

What roles can citizens play to make ideas a reality?

- Networking among citizen groups
- Work through your community groups
- Pressure political representatives
- Don't give up, be persistent with agencies
- Volunteer with groups, for example, Friends of the park

Moderators' observations:

Again, 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. 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 Erika Evans

Participant's response to the waterfront project:

- The concept
- Reconnecting with the waterfront
- The framework (collaboration with the citizens)
- That there are restrictions on what development would occur
- Eco-friendly (all the green space)
- Appears to be neighborhood friendly
- Does away with 95
- Likes that it honors water, city, history and people

Participant's Concerns/Comments about the program:

- Assuming casinos are a part of the plan it could undermine the honoring the people component as the citizens don't want the casinos.
- There is a lack of strong civic leadership, which is necessary.
- Where is the strong leadership coming from?
- Sinking 95 could be costly
- Has there been any research regarding how other cities accomplished creating their great waterfronts?
- Some of the greenspace could be replaced with schools or police stations to remain neighborhood friendly
- The transit plan has not been flushed out enough.
- The land on and around the waterfront is toxic. What is being done to investigate and appropriately resolve this?
- Possible corruption (small scale and large scale), which would undermine the grand plan.
- Where is the money coming from and who are the benefactors?
- It may not be truly friendly to pedestrians as the plan reflects it will.

Participant's response to opportunities the program creates:

- Improved Tax Base
- More people moving into the city
- Removing 95
- Recreation space in the city
- Redemption for Philadelphians to achieve and realize the dream of a great waterfront

Participant's opinions regarding the citizen actions that would support the development of the program:

- Vigilance in monitoring the plan
- More people will buy in will help the investment and the process of the plan
- Civic organizations like Greater Baltimore Committee



- Ensure minimal governmental changes to plan

Report: Small group discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Louise Giugliano

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

- That the plan is do-able, i.e. not outlandish.
- Public will have access to the water.
- That we are taking the long view and planning for this overtime.
- It allows for both extensions of neighborhoods as well as new one neighborhoods.
- The green areas and little parks along the water are appealing.
- Keeping the ecology in mind.
- Low-rises along with high-rises that allow for views.
- That the parking is hidden.
- It includes active play not only parks.
- That the process has involved citizens.
- Varied development including homes, shops.
- That access and movement will allow for water taxis, walking and especially fewer cars.
- That *all* neighborhoods will have access to the water.
- Like the dense small streets, i.e. not a suburb.

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

- The port area, Weccacoe St., for example, allows for an artisan area, even a chocolate factory.
- The historic nature of the area, i.e. PennsLanding where immigrants entered, can be developed more and in different ways. New streets and parks can be named for the ethnic groups that lived here. Places like Olde Swedes Church might have an event where we reach out to Sweden for something to honor the people that moved to this area.
- The plan allows for new social opportunities, i.e. eateries, bars, family activities. There are large areas for people to gather, including concert space.
- To have mixed types of housing including opportunities for children to be outside playing.
- Using the river for water sports, i.e. jet skiing, sailboats, etc.
- The opportunity to develop the wetlands and educate the public about the ecology of the area.
- Educational demonstrations such as turbine tidal power generation are possible.
- Cross-river development is possible and desirable.
- Rename Columbus Ave. back to Delaware Ave.
- Open space and an open land-use district are possible.
- Require things of the Developers: the “give-backs”
 - % of energy savings in new construction.



- Green development
- % of public art
- The upkeep of public space.

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

- Develop easements now.
- Make rules about foreclosures to ensure the land will be available.
- Create tax incentives so people will not be forced to move out through gentrification.
- Develop a funding source levy for open space.
- Join civics and get more active.
- Establish a land-use plan now.



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

Appeals

- Continuation of the city grid
- Minimizing impact of I-95
- Finally a plan to enhance the city!
- Green space and sight lines
- Appreciate the public process
- Use of piers for public recreation
- Community-driven solution
- Preserving history
- Maintaining multi-use of river
- Awareness of/respect for working port
- Reclaiming of city for people and visitors
- Potential to draw people to the city
- Connections to Penn's Landing (opportunity to enhance Penn's Landing)

Opportunities Associated with Plan:

- Potential for a mixture of uses on the river (commerce, recreation, education, etc.)
- Preservation of river
- Diverse development – recreation, residential, tourism
- Rediscover local treasures
- Attracting commerce to support development
- Tax generating
- Potential to bring new businesses downtown



- Opportunity to showcase environmental/sustainable design.
- Green spaces can enhance the city
- Opportunity to connect with region/city-wide sustainability plan.
- Opportunity to preserve existing piers that are unique. There is one in particular – it's an old bridge, north of Penn Treaty Park. It has lots of beautiful graffiti.
- Redevelopment of old Reading Railroad tracks – flowers, sculpture, etc.
- Establish continuous bike trails along water
- Creative transportation options – water taxi's along the water – like Bangkok.
- Ability to rethink transportation in the city, as it relates to this area
- Potential to involve box stores in creative transportation planning (shuttles, etc.)

Citizen's Roles:

- We need to educate ourselves about the trade-offs of different development options
- Insist that citizens have a role in land-use decisions
- Neighborhood groups should united in support of plan; networking of neighborhood groups could be helpful – attending each other's meetings
- Advocate for the use of referendums
- Communicate with others; improve existing networks of communication (within and across neighborhoods)
- Do more!!
- Write letters to elected officials

Questions/Concerns:

How much activity do we really want to see on the River? Do we want a reflecting pool or a working waterway?

Report: Small group discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Ellen Peterson

What do you find most appealing?

- Using the pier as a park
- Like the fact that there is a plan
- Concept of a living harbor
- Connecting the city to the river and open spots for green space
- Love the process
- Experienced in past plans-like the current professionalism, I am optimistic
- People on the waterfront

What opportunities do you see?

- Opportunities for a boating community for people living and visiting on the river
- Waterfront transport-taxis up and down the river
- Bike path for the full seven miles
- Tram, Trolley
- Creative transportation
- Connect Schuylkill bike trail on Washington Avenue to the waterfront trail
- Philadelphia is known for trolleys-showcase them; use them, as part of "Real Philadelphia"
- Opportunity as a ship destination and maritime attractions with our famous ships-Gazella, Moshulu
- Use creeks as water access to the river
- Outdoor music space facing the river
- Cordon off spots for swimming
- Have a beach effect
- Maintain scalability
- Ensure the development is in line with a plan not haphazardly built
- Support mixed use and lower income housing

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

- Reach out to black and other minority groups to include them- put more effort in vehicles to reach them
- Put together a Citizen's commission to see the plan through
- Write the mayor and other politicians
- Seek corporate sponsorship and grants



Report: Small group discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Corrine Thatcher

* indicates themes that were reiterated throughout Group 4's discussion.

Most Appealing

1. Natural features all along corridor
2. Human scale*
3. Careful planning of building size and type
4. Public access to waterfront: public as opposed to private streets and parks
5. Walkability

Opportunities

1. Strong zoning rules and guidelines*
2. Long-term vision = enables consideration of future water level due to global warming
3. Public art (such as along Schuylkill)
4. Hidden parking
5. Water transit connecting various points along waterfront
6. Reflection of organic form of river's edge
7. Connection of trolleys and other forms of waterfront mass transit to rest of city:
create a city-run model "to put SEPTA to shame"*
8. Mixed-use and mixed-income buildings and housing
9. Historical markers, signage, and park themes
10. Job stimulation by I-95 work and future development over it
11. Recycling/retention of old industrial buildings for cultural venues*
12. Recycling/retention of existing infrastructure (i.e. trolley lines)*
13. Bikeways (better bike lanes/distribution of street use)

Actions

1. Continue citizen engagement process
2. Empower citizen groups: give them real authority in the decision-making process*
3. Create an organized advocacy group to unite citizen groups concerned about waterfront
4. Get public and private interests working together*
5. Develop a phasing process before developers run off with waterfront*
6. Create a strong zoning overlay*
7. Build transparency into the process*
8. Bring this process to more people across city and region
9. Get citizens inside the planning room: we have knowledge and insights, too!*

Report: Small group discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Jean DiSabatino

APPEALING ASPECTS of the PLAN

1. City grid, idea of the long-view – integrates it to the river and vice versa
2. Good planning has continued
3. Use of space under I-95 - sculpture garden – illuminate at night
4. Respect for art, incorporating art and the arts into the design and recreation venues
5. Idea of continuous 9 miles of public land punctuated by parks – excellent for cyclists and walkers
6. Disappear parking lots – underground
7. Burying part of I-92 - imperative to heal the “the gash” created by I-95
8. Commitment to increase green space – designing with nature, not against it
9. Potential to increase mass transit
10. Balance of building heights, size – varying scale – incorporate living spaces
11. Refresh Wm. Penn vision of “mixed use city” – plan for mixed use waterfront
12. Building grating down to river – creates unique Philly feel
13. Constructing more single family houses – provide more jobs for building trades – potential to increase taxes

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Improved infrastructure – bridges, waste and water treatment, sewer, wiring
2. More opportunities for outside activities – more bike and watersports - lead to increased fitness of citizens
3. Potential for small businesses to flourish, Mom and Pop stores
4. New communities require new schools – revitalize school system – neighborhood schools
5. Increased winter activities – inside & outside recreational/cultural venues – extending museum venues from Ben Franklin parkway
6. Sustain and maintain park systems through entrepreneurial enterprises – park as self-sustaining, revenue producing
7. More affordable housing
8. Increased tourist revenue
9. Connect with Camden – other side of river has to be healthy too
10. Provide storm water management and eco-friendly water treatment
11. Add impervious land cover to more surfaces, including roofs, good for environment and aesthetics
12. Increased tax-base as relates to new construction – “family-sustaining” jobs
13. Improved mass transit



14. Revitalized port can serve as "anchor" – space and training for new jobs
15. Use waterfront for smaller, pleasure boats – "don't have to go to Margate" and "don't have to be wealthy to enjoy boating"
16. Creating larger communal centers, gathering places, larger group venues & plazas – entertainment venues to rival Tweeter Center & Wiggins Park (NJ)
17. Beautiful views of Philadelphia
18. More folks move from suburbs
19. Opportunity for city to be leader in urban design – others look to us for examples of excellence
20. Modernize the PECO property

Report: Concluding Plenary Discussion
SUBMITTED by moderator Stacie Molnar-Main

What excites us?

Green sustainable space

- Nature, the river.
- Thinking in terms of sustainable water, wind and solar energy
- Considering development in the context of long-term environmental issues – GLOBAL WARMING
- Green architecture
- Experimental turbine demonstration project, using energy from tides.

Opportunity to update City's infrastructure

- Storm water management, sewers, etc.
- Alternative transportation systems that interface with other transportation systems

Need to consider city services

- Where are the schools? Police departments, etc.
- Can we link these to resources of the area? Example: Old ship becoming a maritime technology school.

Opportunity for Housing

- Single-family homes
- Affordable housing
- Mixed income
- Diversity



- Tax-base
- Walkable lifestyle
- Families supporting businesses

Philadelphia's density could reach water through platting.

- Recreation, entertainment, tourism
- New mayor and elected officials could support this through zoning laws

What actions could citizens take?

- Create a "citizen's council" to promote citizen involvement in planning processes
- Build civic leaders (like Baltimore)
- Advocate for real transparency. Casinos are an example of how things should NOT be done
- Value citizen engagement

Concerns:

- Do we have the political and civic capacity to do this?
- Is there a need for a phasing process connected to the zoning plan?