



*A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware*

*Value Sessions, 12/11-12/14*

*Session #2: George Washington Elementary School, 12/13*

**Report: Pennsport discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Jesse Hunting**

*A. What energized the group -- ideas, concerns, solutions, values...*

Quality of life issues related to:

1) Jobs

- Industrial job retention was a major concern among all of the group members
- Members were concerned that planned development (casinos, big box development, condos, and highways) along the waterfront would replace "family sustaining jobs" with low paying jobs - forcing longtime area residents to relocate.
- There was also a concern that Mom and Pop stores would be run out of business

2) Safety

- There was a fear that potential casinos would bring prostitution, drugs, and an increase of crime to the Pennsport Neighborhood.

3) Politics and Investment

- There was an overwhelming consensus that any planned development along the waterfront should have the blessing of the local residents. (When I-95 was built, large sections of the Pennsport neighborhood were demolished to make way for it – residents are still very bitter about this)
- Monies (State, Federal, and City) should be invested into the industry along the waterfront. For example, upgrading cranes, increasing harbor capacity – for larger ships....

4) Access to Green

- Residents wanted to see more green – However – they did not want this green to come at the expense of family sustaining jobs

*B. interesting things people said -- exact quotes if possible, paraphrasing is okay too.*

"Industry along the waterfront supports family sustaining jobs and the proposed casinos and big box retailers will jeopardize these jobs, potentially replacing them with jobs that only pay \$7 to \$8 an hour – How can you raise a family on \$7 to \$8 an hour?"

"We fear that all of the planned waterfront development is going to price us out of our own homes and community."

"We have access to the waterfront. We can walk 100 yds down the street and see the water."

**Report: Pennsport discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Beth Perry**

The Pennsport small groups that I helped facilitate had energy, intelligence, and a real desire to get their well-thought-out points out onto paper and into a city-wide discussion.

Specifically, the port and its capability for providing "family-sustaining" jobs led the list. Philadelphia's port has significant strengths, such as railroad connections all the way to Chicago and Montreal with all-weather double-stack capacity throughout. With the new national plan to inspect container traffic coming into the country, Philadelphia's port will be creating more work, more jobs, and potentially more physical space requirements along the waterfront. This method of freight distribution will be even more important in the future because of its energy-saving, pollution-decreasing characteristics.

These "family-sustaining" jobs provide the backbone of neighborhood life in Pennsport that is multi-generational, safe, walkable, with locally owned businesses serving the community.

Threats to this way of life come from plans for the waterfront imposed from without that take no care of what is valuable in the area and already in place. Penn's Landing's many failed plans came in for special scorn, as an example of what they fear from powers outside the neighborhood.

Historically, I-95 is an example of eminent domain that truncated the local community and destroyed part of the historical character of the area.

Eminent domain comes up again in the plan for casinos along the waterfront -- a fear that a proposed bill will allow any waterfront casino to be assured that it will become immune to eminent domain in the future -- even if that land could be needed in the future for expansion of the Philadelphia port.

The box stores and the movie theater along the waterfront were another sore point, both as generators of litter, graffiti, muggings, and traffic jams -- and as harbingers of a service job economy that would not have the "family-sustaining" wage capability provided now by the port.

The casinos were seen as threats to their neighborhood way of life -- "Trash, traffic, and tramps" was one phrase used. The recent murders in Atlantic City were cited as predictions of what was to come here if casinos are established. The policy of free drinks threatens neighborhood taverns, as well. One participant pointed out that at least with their neighborhood bars, inebriated patrons could just walk home -- unlike the expected clientele of the new casinos.

Green space also got strong support. Pittsburgh was cited specifically as a city that had declared public access from the water line back 150 feet, allowing miles of walk/bikeway along their rivers. Our own Schuylkill development was highlighted --

"people were jogging and biking along that trail even before the new extensions were formally opened". Participants spoke of taking their children along that waterfront, wanting safe and family-friendly conditions (up-river from the port facilities).

**Report: Pennsport discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by Alan Sharavsky**

**What excites them about this process**

- That this may shine a light on the value of the Philly ports, and spur more growth. It will make people appreciate them and realize that they may be worth more than the casinos.
- That they are meeting others who share their frustration about lack of access to the waterfront
- That they are participating in process that may actually get their views heard

**What they value about their South Philly Neighborhoods**

- "Great Food!!! Lots of it everywhere I turn."
- "No need for a car. This is a bike-able neighborhood. And if I can't bike there, I take public transit. A very easy lifestyle."
- Affordable, for now
- Holidays in South Philly are special. Decorations, activities
- Parks, recreation centers and play group. It's great for families
- Diversity of ethnicity, generations and even architecture
- "I love the density. I came here from Texas, and it's great to have so many people around you."
- Proximity to everything.

**How does the Waterfront affect them**

- Same as Port Richmond I wish I could get at it." So close, yet so far away, separated by industrial parks, fences and barriers
- We're not so close that the casinos will be a problem for us. It will be a disaster for the others
- It would be great if we could make the waterfront a "working" attraction. Give people access to see the port in operation.
- We need it to be "mixed use", so that everyone can find something the like, not just Baltimore's sterile, phony mall-droid.
- What about a green lane of environmentally inviting plazas that run from Center City to the airport?

**Fears, Laments and Cherished Beliefs**

- Housing prices are already too high for this neighborhood. It will just get worse
- Parking is always a problem
- What developer is going to let someone else tell them how to use their property?  
That's a joke.
- They can do so much more, as they did in Battery Park, New York.
- Other than Penn's Landing, there is nothing here. It's not a real destination. It's more emotional than physical.
- Ports create sustainable jobs, that feed the economy. Casinos drain the economy

**Report: Queen Village discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Joan Davis**

The following values appeared during their small group discussion and for the most part map to their comments in large group.

I value:

- \* Sharing space for recreation & industry
- \* Family orientation
- \* Mom & Pop stores
- \* the architectural characteristics of the neighborhood
- \* what my family taught me / how they made a living on the river before me for generations
- \* recreational places
- \* accessibility to the waterfront for families / sharing the awe of the big ships
- \* proper management of all types of traffic - commuting, visitors, and industrial
- \* industry [casinos] giving back to their community in support of schools

**Report: Dickinson Narrows discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by Steve Pyser**

Attached are the Dickinson Narrows Community Values developed and synthesized in my group at the forum tonight, Wednesday, December 13, 2006.

1. Diversity of people, cultures and architecture
2. Sense of community
3. Safety (can vary block-by-block, some areas need improvement)
4. Accessibility/walkability/convenience within the community and ability to leave neighborhood to connect to other neighborhoods and the rest of the City
5. Environment stability (current levels of traffic, green space, pollution/trash)
6. Affordability (reasonable purchase prices and property taxes)
7. Intelligent development (protecting existing community, local/small businesses)



**Report: Queen Village discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Ellen Peterson**

This was an energized group, diverse in their backgrounds and interests, but they were commonly united and bonded with one another around the following:

- They valued the ability to walk, bike, and conveniently access their neighborhood and have the ability to easily interact with one another
- The "scale" of the neighborhood buildings was appealing and made the neighborhood welcoming
- Open space, beautiful, accessible, and of recreational use was important.
- They were committed to the economic viability of their neighborhood which heavily relies on the ports and other waterfront businesses. It supports current generations as well as many retired people in the area who depend on the ports for their pensions
- They wanted a design geared to Philadelphia neighbors and citizens, not casino day trippers
- There was an interest in maintaining and showcasing not only the history of Philadelphia but the historic connections the people in the area had to their neighbors. They talked about underground tunnels from certain houses to the waterfront and they were all well versed about the history and the many families that are rooted in the neighborhood.
- They wanted a sustainable plan with little ad hoc development, like the big box approach that has been used
- They valued a diverse and balanced community of people and interests (commercial, residential, recreational)

Some great quotes in our group:

- "The new waterfront plan should enhance our history, instead of destroying it"
- "We need space geared for the people in Philadelphia, not the casino day trippers"
- "It's not just the history but the historic connections to the people in the neighborhood that are important"

**Report: Whitman discussion group**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Marita Roos**

Our group - consisting of 2 women and about 18 men, including many longshoremen - was a fully engaged, energized bunch of folks with strong opinions about the future of the waterfront. It was a memorable experience.

What energized them is a very strong sense of who they are and how proximity to the waterfront - specifically the port area - has contributed to their way of life.

Their chief values:

- A way of life and community, where lives, livelihoods, family and community are inseparable from the industrial port.
- Work that pays well, is satisfying and is authentically connected to the waterfront.
- A tradition of multi-generations of families inhabiting the same neighborhoods, shopping at local family owned stores.
- A sense of community celebrated by the string band clubs and Mummers parade.

Some memorable quotes:

- "You can build a Walmart anywhere. You can't dock a ship at Broad and Snyder"
- "We don't want to be the DMZ between the casino and the high income townhomes"

**Report: Whitman discussion group**  
**Submitted by moderator Bob Walker**

- When the port does well, we all do well
- Economic diversity—retain the mix
- Don't want to like Atlantic City
- Businesses that return value to the neighborhood
- Port competitive with other cities
- Affordability (houses for seniors, young families)
- Wal-Mart job for young people will not allow them to buy a home here
- Clean air—chronic diseases from air pollution
- Close-knit, caring neighborhood—living close together for a long time
- Traditions, sense of belonging
- Housing affordable—you can live well for less
- Easy access to many different activities and types of transportation
- Don't want to take police attention away from the neighborhood for casinos, condos, etc.
- MUMMERS  
Domino effect: Lose jobs → Lose church → Lose tradition →
- Don't want to be "DMZ" between casinos and nice homes
- These Close-knit communities benefit the whole city—do not get infrastructure or jobs in return
- Environmental quality—Fear that there will be an increase in flooding
- New commercial development has made flooding worse
- Commercial vs. industrial development
- "Ikea built dams and they don't know it"
  
- Our lives, livelihoods, and families are inextricably tied to waterfront
- We give, give, give
- Quality of jobs vs. job erosion—industrial vs. Wal-Mart
- Economic diversity=both blue and white collar
- Worry casinos will bring traffic, drugs, crime
- We all know each other—families, business reinvests in community
  
- Natural beauty
  - Connection to nature
  - Care of environment
  - Green space
    - Biodiversity
    - Wetlands as an industrial filter for industrial toxins
    - Greenway-Bike-Walk paths
    - Underdeveloped places for education
  
- Neighborliness—sense of community
  - Safety
  - Accessibility
  - Path North and South—through neighborhoods
  - River to river

- Diversity
  - Welcoming to ethnic groups who live there and visit
  - Economic
  - Age—families, elderly
  - Businesses/Housing/Entertainment
- Working Port
  - Historical/Educational/Cultural
  - Economic
- Sense of beauty
  - Public art
- Scale—human scale

#### SUMMARY OF VALUES

- Our lives, livelihood, families, and community are inextricably tied to the industrial port
- Economic diversity—both blue and white collar jobs
- Housing affordability so that generations can stay in the neighborhood
  - Row houses keep cost of living well lower
- "Someone's got your back"—Deep tradition and neighbors
- Casinos will bring traffic, pollution, drugs, and crime We don't want to be another Atlantic City"
- Improve accessibility to and along the waterfront
- MUMMERS-The clubs

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside South Philadelphia) discussion group  
SUBMITTED by Phoebe Sheftel**

Group consisted of six participants, only one of whom lived in the waterfront area. Members were there because they had interest in the welfare of the city or environmental concerns, or out of a general interest in the public involvement process.

**Values Defined**

- Sense of community
- Good neighbors
- People care about the future of the neighborhood and have pride in its appearance.
- Sense of shared values.
- Active civic organizations
- Cultural diversity
- Accessibility of the location to the waterfront, Center City and sports facilities.
- Recreational spaces contribute to activity within the community
- Good housing with interesting architecture, although sometimes located next to less desirable areas (trash-filled empty lot.)

**Aspects of the Waterfront that Both Do (now) and Could (in the future) Affect the Neighborhood**

- Waterfront could act as a unifying force for people from all neighborhoods.
- Waterfront affects the whole city, making it important to get everyone's input, not just the immediate neighbors.
- Offers the most expansive views of the area and the greatest sense of open space.
- Offers nature-oriented activities: running, biking, etc.
- Important to preserve mixed uses: employment opportunities, recreation, entertainment and enjoyment of nature.
- Need to have a continuous path of accessibility along the entire waterfront – a greenway, bike path, shops, restaurants, etc.
- Acts as a safe place for local people and people from other parts of the city.
- I-95 is a major obstacle that needs to be dealt with.
- Use the waterfront development to enhance environmental quality. Many areas experience flooding in basements. Any development needs to avoid worsening the situation, and even provide better drainage.

**Report: "Other" (residents from outside South Philadelphia) discussion group  
SUBMITTED by moderator Sally McAfee**

Values:

1. Community/neighborhood - including walkability, convenience, small town/ village feeling, family values, historical tradition and architecture
2. Safety
3. Diversity - economical, ethnic and cultural

The waterfront is currently not an attraction to the neighborhood due to inaccessibility and safety.

Waterfront Desires:

- bike path
- greenery
- no casinos - safety, exploitation of workers due to poor wages, traffic congestion, attracting wrong kind of people
- economic diversity - some cafes, restaurants, small shops
- have something for everyone
- poor planning can ruin it for all
- good planning can make it great for the people and the city and the region
- safety

Comments from large group - "what inspired you tonight?"

- City returning to idea of planning and possibility of growing industry here, rather than having a dying city
- Bring the river back into the public sector, rather than private ownership and interests
- Make the river accessible to all people
- Want space for PEOPLE
- We are interconnected
- Center recreation safely around river, like the river drives along the Schuylkill
- Don't ignore Phila as a port city - other cities are pouring millions into building their ports, why aren't we?
- We are not ready for growth of port and the business that is possible via the port
- The river IS a highway that we could make much more use of
- Does the city have any ability to stop casino development?
- When the port thrived, the infrastructure of the city also thrived
- Casinos - low paying jobs, no benefits, can't sustain family life

**Report: General plenary discussion**  
**SUBMITTED by moderator Louise Giugliano**

Consolidated Values Found Across Neighborhoods

SIMILAR VALUES

**Green Space**

- Natural beauty, trees, gardens, pathways, parks
- Escape city life, exercise
- Increases property values

**Safety**

- Good relations, sense of community, children can play
- Accessible, walkable, traffic reasonable
- Low crime

**History/Tradition**

- Mummers: identity, history, camaraderie, friendly competition, pride

**Jobs**

- Ports
- Economic sustainability
- Quality of life
- Economic improvement that ports bring
- Quality jobs with benefits to sustain families

**Community**

- People watch out for each other
- Human scale, lack of concrete
- Walkable, accessible
- People are connected
- Not a lot of traffic

ANY SURPRISES?

**Little Mention of the *Industrial* Port**

**Schools Missing**

- Don't associate schools with waterfront
- Fits in with community values

**Churches Missing**

**Diversity and places for diversity to come together and share**

- Age, cultural, economic, natural

WHAT IS MISSING?

### **Long Term thinking and planning for development**

#### **“Pay to Play” culture**

- The dominant deal-making, old style politics over-rides
- Want an open, transparent process
- Want creative visioning
- Want the positive, hopeful energy found in these conversations to counter politics as usual