



A Civic Vision for the Central Delaware

Value Sessions, 12/11-12/14

Session #3: Independence Seaport Museum, 12/14

Report: Society Hill Towers discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Carol Lydon

While many of the people in our group expressed excitement at the prospect of having a voice in the waterfront development, many more were not excited or enthused because they said they had been through this before and were not expecting anything more to come of this project than the last one. They love their neighborhood and want the waterfront development to enhance it, not deter from it.

Many people agreed that their neighborhood provided easy accessibility to the amenities of the surrounding area, but that the waterfront itself is not easily accessible.

There was a spirited discussion regarding the fact that they feel that their voices are not being heard by the politicians.

Two quotes that came up were by a gentleman who wanted the waterfront to be a "common place that is not common" and for "a place for pedestrians that isn't pedestrian."

There was a lot of difficult discussion and it was interesting to watch how Steve guided that. We discussed afterwards the pros and cons of steering the conversation away from a person with much to say versus letting the conversation flow to its outcome in the hopes of generating or producing broader ideas. It was a very interesting process and I'm looking forward to learning more about it.

Report: Society Hill discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Carol Lydon

The Society Hill's small group felt strongly that their neighborhood had great amenities (culture, entertainment, etc.), accessibility, and walkability for all their "life's needs". They also highly valued their historic aesthetic character, and the real history behind it.

Protecting just those qualities generated a lot of energy in this group.

Safety figured prominently, for both people in the community and their property. Waterfront development posed real threats to their way of life - traffic, parking demands, drunk driving, predators attracted to visiting casino patrons.

Development process also was a big concern. The big box store development along Delaware Avenue (Columbus Boulevard) was a mess and a prime example of unplanned development. These people wanted a clear voice in what happened in their neighborhood. "Integration" was a key word for what they wanted in future development. "Scale" was another -- not overwhelming the human-scale character of what they now have.

Accessibility for all ages to waterfront walking and recreation was important. Covering the scar of Interstate 95 was important for access, and for the aesthetic and environmental amelioration it would provide. Crossing Columbus Boulevard (Delaware Avenue) was seen as a real hurdle.

Quote from a late-arriving member joining the group from West Philadelphia: "There's the value of broad vistas and light. I really feel it coming in from West Philadelphia, needing the relief of seeing that broad vista after the congestion of the city." The Society Hill residents supported that sense of valuing the view. They wanted public access to the waterfront, with no restriction on public access for the first half mile back from the water. They wanted continuous walking/bike paths all along the waterfront, integrated into a city-wide system of bike paths/lanes.

They wanted mixed use, European style, waterfront development that extended the human scale that described their own neighborhood, and they wanted to have a very clear say in what that development would look like.

It was a great group of people who were happy to be there, but a little wary that once again their opinion was solicited, but would be forgotten in the end.

A consolidated version of the small groups' answers to the "Friend's Dilemma" for Society Hill on 12/14/06:

- Proximity to entertainment, restaurants, and culture
- Proximity to amenities and "life's needs" (medical, etc.)
- Maintain /complement historical integrity
- Safety Personal and property
- Note: Casinos threaten the above
- Waterfront casinos bring traffic, drunk driving, distressed patrons, parking, and predators attracted
- Casino design threatens current/historical aesthetic
- Walkability Parks, recreation, bike paths for all ages
- Being able to cross Columbus Boulevard
- Adequate parking desired
- But garages blight Center City
- Need easy and accessible public transportation
- Value of view, light, broad vistas
- Continuous path from Allegheny to Oregon
- Uninterrupted waterfront walk/bike
- Protecting port industry important for the city
- Bridge/cover over I-95 and /Delaware Avenue
- Plan before development
- Note: Plan before development Box store development unplanned
- Abbott's Square example of mixed use and scale
- Preserve public entrance and access to water's edge
- No building up to edge excluding public
- Cafes along water
- Seasonal markets, rotating with seasons (Head House Square market)

"Values" for Society Hill for the evening of December 14, 2006:

- Focus on citizen voice
- Full accessibility to waterfront
- Safety for the nightlife crowd
- Process leads to good product
- Community needs
- Wants to contribute to community
- Reflect neighborhood wishes
- Increase pedestrian access to waterfront Walkability
- Prevent commercialism
- Maintain residential real estate value
- European model/mixed use
- Maintain good traffic control
- Recreation Bike paths connected across city

Report: Society Hill discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Steve Newman

The prioritized Individual Reflections were:

1. Open Space
2. Preserve History, & Scale
3. Safety, Security
4. Walk ability
5. Accessibility (ease of)
6. Sense of Community
7. Good Schools
8. Variety of Places of Worship.

I judged the age range of my little sub-group to be in their upper 40's to upper 70's, with over half 55+. I mention this because in their dialogue they were adamant about NOT having "gated communities" or "adult communities". They want the vibrancy, sights and sounds of an active, healthy (and happy) community which includes adults and children of all ages. They also brought up rather early in their dialogue the importance of excellent grade-school education as a requirement for sustaining a growing vibrant neighborhood. However, Good Schools ended up #7 on the final list of 8.

Open Space in #1 refers to beyond the usual dedicated parks. They don't want any major line of sight views changed.

Scale in #2 refers to primarily a "balance" in the make up of commercial services/businesses and overall community amenities. It also definitely refers to no "out of place" architectural style or size of buildings. Very anti-casino minded. New construction must conform as much as possible to the period and character of historic Society Hill.

Safety & Security in #3 includes a greater efficiency of police, fire and rescue operations along with a greater presence.

Walkability #4, and Accessibility #5 lead into #3 above; the group wants greater and safer pedestrian access/routes to area points of services/interests, and removal of "overwhelming barricades".

Sense of Community #6 refers to a continuing/growing pride of the neighborhood, an excellent place to live and to move into.

Places of Worship #8 is an emphatic statement that all expressions of religion are welcome.

There were a few shared negative feelings about the evenings efforts: that this whole Penn's Landing forum is 20 years too late; we (Philadelphia) can't seem to do it here (ref/ Baltimore, Boston, NYC); the politicians don't listen; and, the politicians are corrupt.

Report: Queen Village discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Phoebe Sheftel

Energizing Aspects

- Opportunity for citizen input
- Small group format that gives each person more voice
- Importance of the waterfront to the city and its citizens
- Feeling that things are about to change in the city
- Opportunity to take a specific action to effect change
- Hope that their voices will influence the future
- Belief they will have a positive impact on the project
- Desire to capitalize on the waterfront potential
- Feeling that the waterfront needs a bold new plan
- Concern about the river – both the water resource and the shore resources
- Excited to be building a family in the area
- Seeing positive growth in the area and hopes for this to continue.

Values Defined

- Neighborhood feeling
 - Pedestrian friendly
 - Sense of belonging
 - Diversity of the people
- Access to the waterfront is key
- Walk-ability and easy access to variety of services
- Mix of residential and commercial
- Conflicting values
 - Do we want to cater to tourists?
 - Do we want to enhance the livability of the area?
- Historical values and the need to enhance the visibility and appreciation of the historical treasures in the area
- Nature
 - Open sky feeling
 - Community gardens
- Safety fostered by the dense quality of design in the buildings
- Clean and well-kept areas – both around the water and in the neighborhoods
- Environmentally friendly aspects
- Diversity of recreation opportunities on the river – both those directly associated with water (boating), as well as other non-water dependent activities (golf)
- Good transit with rail linkages to maximize accessibility

Report: Queen Village discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator José Morales

Personal Stake Data Sub Group 1 (José Morales):

- Increased business
- Increased recreation
- Increased open spaces and landscaping
- Increased accessibility via public transit
- Increased property values
- Improved aesthetics

Personal Stake Data Sub Group 2 (Fatima Hafiz):

1. Walkability
2. Village community
 - "Urban Village"
 - Safety
 - Sense of community
 - I know my neighbors
 - They know me by name
 - Mix of uses (business, drug store, markets,)
 - More Activity
3. Green spaces and trees
4. Variety
5. Community Based Activities
 - Gardens
 - Neighborhood sponsored parks

Waterfront Cons:

- No access / public transportation
- No green spaces
- Traffic
- Lack of recreation

Report: Old City discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Jesse Hunting

The small group (~30ppl) was comprised mainly of seasoned professionals in the fields, of planning, architecture, landscape architecture, real estate investment, and development.

The values that were discussed seemed to focus on access, historic preservation, and public space improvements – although it took a long time for these values to surface because of the questions that arose over the Friends Dilemma and the definition of a value.

The group expressed a variety of values that dealt primarily with:

1) Access

- Everyone in the group agreed that there needed to be better access to the waterfront. Suggestions varied from bridges to sinking the highway underground.

2) Recreation

-everyone agreed that there needed to be more recreational opportunities along the river and in their neighborhoods.

3) Open space

-Separate from recreation, there seemed to be an interest in creating public gathering spaces. (I had the impression that these open spaces might be similar to Roman piazzas – an area where various activities could take place)

4) Preserving and enhancing the historic feel of the neighborhood -everyone valued the historical character of their neighborhood and wanted any future development to tie into the area's character.

5) Maintaining the human scale of the neighborhood -everyone strongly appreciated the human scale their community.

Concerns

- 1) Concern about Casino Plans
- 2) To learn about development plans
- 3) Be apart of changes
- 4) To help uncover unrealized potential
- 5) Interest in recreational access to the waterfront
- 6) A desire to be a part of the process to control high-rise development
- 7) A desire to preserve the distinctive quality of river
- 8) To insure pedestrian access to the waterfront
- 9) Listen to other people's concerns
- 10) To listen to the community
- 11) To preserve historic integrity and to improve pedestrian access to the river
- 12) To preserve the ethnic diversity
- 13) A stake in the business environment along the river

- 14) Maintain a pedestrian scale of Philadelphia
- 15) To reintegrate the water front to the City
- 16) To preserve the ecology and health of the river
- 17) Concerns over casinos
- 18) To persevere Pier 5
- 19) Opportunity to share vision of area
- 20) Concern over casinos and Cover over I-95
- 21) Desire to participate in Development
- 22) Desire be involved in the planning process
- 23) Have encourage access to between old City and the River
- 24) To increase shopping amenities in and around Penn's Landing
- 25) Interested in what type of development neighbors would like to see
- 26) Congestion, traffic and parking

Consolidated Values

- 1) Pedestrian Accessibility and Connection to the Waterfront
 - The waterfront and neighborhoods are separated by I-95 and Columbus Blvd
 - Excessive traffic throughout the community
- 2) Open Space
 - Balanced with human scale density
 - Appreciation of natural resources (light, air, water)
- 3) Outdoor Recreation
 - Parks and green space
 - Public gathering space for commerce and public events
- 4) Maintain Historic Elements of Community
 - Scale of historic buildings and streets
- 5) Human Scale
 - No high-rises South of the Ben Franklin Bridge
 - Neighborhood Sense of Community
- 6) Diversity of:
 - Culture
 - Businesses
 - Activity
- 7) Services that support:
 - Businesses, Families, and Homes

Report: Northern Liberties discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator José Morales

1. Accessibility
 - a. River as a magnet for recreation, sociability, contemplation, inspiration
 - b. Public art
 - c. Public engagement / civic engagement
 - d. Diversity of economics

2. Vistas / Views / Big Sky
 - a. Good dynamic quality of different views
 - b. Psychological effect
 - c. Opens us up to the "bigger world"
 - d. Open expanse of the river

3. Human Scale
 - a. Shared caretaking
 - b. Friendliness
 - c. Diverse, engaged citizenry

4. Historic / Mixed use Neighborhood
 - a. Towns, Planned – Character preserved
 - b. Green space
 - c. "Place to make a living"
 - d. Historically key elements preserved

Report: Old City/Penn's Landing discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator José Morales

Consolidated Values

1. Pedestrian, biking accessibility- link city to H₂O
 - o I95 really big problem, want to bury
2. Open space = green space
 - o Natural elements: Air, light, H₂O
3. Historic retention and preservation
4. Social, cultural and economic diversity
5. Relevant zoning process / enforcement and accountability
6. Sense of community and neighborhood on a "human scale" .

Report: Society Hill discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator José Morales

Consolidated Values

1. Accessibility
 - o Entertainment, culture, medical, commercial services, religious, schools.
 - o Problem: Waterfront inaccessible and has limited amenities
2. Safety
 - o Preserve and enhance waterfront. Currently feels "unsafe" and lacks activity and people.
3. Open space / Vistas
 - o Preserve views, trees and parks
4. Sense of community
 - o Currently does not exist in the waterfront
5. Public access
6. Therefore planning all 7 miles waterfront up to ½ mile in public plan.
7. Integrate waterfront into community.

Report: Northern Liberties discussion group
Submitted by moderator Jean DiSabatino

What energized the group?

Unlike my experience Monday with the 'Other' group for the Northern Waterfront neighborhoods, the peak energy from the Northern Liberties group came when the entire group was together, both before the work (during the Personal Stake explanations) and after the small group breakouts. I think the reason for this was that most group members were very intelligent and seemed to have a lot of information regarding the waterfront, the potential plan, the political process leading to the forums themselves, and examples from other cities' waterfronts. There was also a nice cross-section of interests within the group (total of 11 people), which allowed for a dynamic common-ground process.

Interesting things people said:

I was able to grab a couple direct quotes from people, but was unable to get their last names. Here they are:

- Ray, an artist and older gentleman, said this in the context of talking about Chicago's waterfront and other city examples: "Just seeing an administration that says 'we want to do this with our waterfront'" as being inspirational and provocative.

- Ed, a longshoreman (I believe), said this in the context of hashing out certain values about the waterfront: "I value a lot of things about my neighborhood, but I've never been given the chance to value the River."

Some other interesting aspects of the conversation in this group stemmed from the diverse nature of the 11 citizens. Several of the people were essentially 'pro-development,' that is, they either worked as developers for specific waterfront projects, or liked the idea of dense living (condos) mixed with open space right near the water. Several other individuals were opposed to intense development, condos, casinos, etc., and spoke of preserving unique neighborhood characteristics and social/demographic patterns. Even though there were two, diametrically opposed factions in the group, the engagement process really allowed the citizens to find common ground in their values and views of the waterfront. It was quite pleasing to see, and the process itself was very civil – more so than I expected.

FINAL COMMON VALUES FOR THE ENTIRE GROUP

I also took quick notes when the final, full group wide consolidation was being done. Here they are.

COMMON VALUES: (** values had applause/emphasis)

1. Walkability

- barrier of Delaware Ave.
- human scale
- greenspace
- walk without interruption

- activities of engagement
- not walking to a casino
- bike-ability
- safety
- restricting cars
- traffic
- public transit
- limited parking lots, or satellite lots

2. Safety

- people on the street / other people that care
- lighting
- openness
- police presence
- activities on the street
- no windowless buildings
- no casinos

3. Environmental Protection / Restoration

- clean water
- sewage
- human scale development
- drinking water
- environmentally friendly building (LEED system)
- views to the river

* Public Access to the River (was shouted out here, but not taken as a value itself, and mentioned that it fit under the previous 3 values)

4. Big Sky

- low buildings

5. Diversity

- cultural
- economic
- generational
- ethnic
- professional
- ecological

6. Historic Preservation

no examples

7. Value the River Itself

- recreation
- industry → (this issue was highlighted as being at odds with other issues; a Tension that might be addressed by the Plan)
- open space
- drinking water source
- touchable
- inspiration

8. Integration of the River and City

- waterfront like our neighborhoods
- 9. Civic Engagement
 - citizen involvement in all steps of planning

Report: Society Hill discussion group
SUBMITTED by moderator Bob Walker

Personal Stakes

- Protect open space
- Access to recreation
- Accessibility to riverfront
- Interconnection between people and natural environment
- Save first ½ mile for community access
- Walking access
- Marina potential
- Diversity of retail and commerce business
- Access to sky—no tall buildings
- I like the input effort and open process
- Protect Jersey shore access without adding extra time

Values Group

- Improved accessibility
 - Bike, Walk, Trolley/Light rail
 - I-95 barrier overcome
- Recreation
 - Indigenous
- Diversity of Commercial
 - Cinema, Restaurants, Gondola
- Environment
 - Park space
 - Open area—from city and along waterfront
- Residential
 - No one owns waterfront (Jersey City example)
- Casino
 - We have a say in how placed in total use of waterfront
 - Casino is not consistent with the values and the larger access issue

Summary

- Being part of the decision making
- Opportunity to enhance waterfront and fulfill its potential
- Skeptical about our work this evening being used justly—tired of seeing projects come/fail and evaporate

- "Urban village"
 - Know each other, small and accessible to all big city offers
 - Architectural scale and design heritage retained
- Accessibility
 - Waterfront now inaccessible—nothing there to attract except ice rink and concerts, some fireworks
 - Comfortable to be there
- Waterfront not (DE or Col's) Ave. barrier and architecture different and not inviting much of the time, walking area gated and unpredictable

- There are not enough people there to feel safe—coffee places and more amenities
- Open space, beauty, and clean
- Waterfront healthy
 - Established civic, cultural, religious institutions
 - Diversity of age, religion, background, economic
 - Tied with the Museum better
- Recreation opportunity
- Overpasses not human scaled—hostile and forbidding, don't connect to destination—benches, lights, bike racks, dog park
 - Sink I-95 and cover with real estate or park