

I. Public Participation

Riverfront Plan Steering Committee Questionnaire

Summary

The Steering Committee for the Riverfront Plan should consider the enclosed questions in their initial gathering and thereafter for their ultimate contribution to the success of the document.

Questions for the Steering Committee Guided by the RFP:

1. What is the working 'Mission' of the Steering Committee?
2. What is your vision of a vibrant riverfront?
3. What are the simple expectations of each member?
4. What Information Would You Like to Present or Us to Present?
5. Existing Studies and Background
 - a. Are we missing anything
 - b. What are the missing elements of the Riverfront Open Space Plan?
 - c. What are the challenges of the Riverfront Overlay Development District?
6. In-fill and Redevelopment Opportunities
 - a. What are the missing land uses?
 - b. What are the challenging/uncreative land uses?
 - c. What kind of transit-oriented land development components are positive and which are not so positive?
7. Trails
 - a. What are the best components of the existing trail system?
 - b. What are the missing elements of the trail system?
 - c. What are creative pieces to add?

Questions to consider when thinking about the Schuylkill River and reviewing *The Riverfront Plan*

- Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?
- Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls? Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
- Can people easily walk to the place? For example, do they have to dart between moving cars to get to the place?
- Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
- Does the space function for people with special needs?
- Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?
- Can people use a variety of transportation options – bus train, car, bicycle, etc. – to reach the place?
- Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations such as libraries, post offices, park entrances, etc.?
- Does the place make a good first impression?
- Are there more women than men?
- Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have is a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
- Are spaces are clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance? What do they do? When?

- Does the area feel safe? Is there a security presence? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
- Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?
- Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?
- Are people using the space or is it empty?
- Is it used by people of different ages?
- Are people in groups?
- How many different types of activities are occurring – people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
- Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
- Are there choices of things to do?
- Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone is in charge of the space?
- Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here or running into them?
- Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another?
- Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
- Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place or do they point to one of its features with pride?
- Are people smiling? Do people make eye contact with each other?
- Do people use the place regularly and by choice?
- Does a mix of ages and ethnic groups that generally reflect the community at large?
- Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

Meeting: **The Riverfront Plan, Steering Committee Meeting #1**

When: **Tuesday, July 7, 2015 (10:30 AM)**

Where: Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Attendees: Kent Baird, Paul Vernon, Amy Mayer, Charlie Guttenplan, Scott France, Andrew Van Leuven, Tom Blomstrom, Rick Mellor, David Bertram, Robert Thomas, Doug Maisey

Next Meeting: **Tuesday, August 11, 2015 (10:30 AM)**

Minutes of this Meeting

I. Introduction

- a. Sign-In and Introductions—attendees signed in and introduced themselves and the organizations they represent. For the purpose of ensuring efficient communication Charlie Guttenplan will act as the Client representative and Kent Baird will act as the Consultant representative.
- b. The Riverfront Plan—for the benefit of the Steering Committee, Mr. Baird presented attendees with a Power Point presentation depicting the brief over view of the project with expansion on the Consultant Scope of Work, Draft Study Area Boundaries, and tasks achieved to date. Later portions of the presentation included Questionnaire style slides and Best Examples slides gleaned from existing national riverfront and waterfront redevelopment efforts; including steps to take and photos of improved riverfronts
 - i. Paul Vernon-recommended the Study Boundary Area be amended to include parcels found in Conshohocken and specifically north of Elm Street, West of Fayette Street and bound at north by a line including First Street running westerly to lands adjacent Colwell Lane. The Committee accepted the amendment and the Consultant agreed next steps mapping would include the amendment.

II. Steering Committee

- a. The Committee confirmed the need for, requirement of and sequence of meetings with one amendment thus far: the next meeting will not be held here again in July but rather Tuesday, August, 11, 2015, at 10:30AM, with invitations.
- b. During the presentation, Committee members were invited to review a Questionnaire handout and participate in a round table discussion:
 - i. Bob Thomas promoted the plan should ultimately offer “continuously interesting” activity and fill in gaps of activity along the riverfront and while some floodplain areas have raised habitable/used space in residential and office buildings we should think creatively how to create interactions;
 - ii. Paul Vernon raised an excellent point that the Best Examples presented celebrate the successes of other riverfronts and we are in the initial stages of ‘repair’ and offered, “How to Repair the Riverfront” as a unifying thought. The group agreed;

- iii. Scott France asked that the plan acknowledge the contribution business has made to the [stabilization and current functionality] riverfront. Others remarked that the business community had really pioneered the cleanup of struggling properties;
- iv. David Bertram asked that the plan seek ways to encourage positive interactions between businesses along the riverfront and existing neighborhoods and longtime residents who might not have felt included or informed of the change.
- v. Tom Blomstrom asked that the plan highlight the successes of past planning documents, what's been done to date as means of showcasing the collaboration of past project; he further hoped for photographs from other riverfront projects which have successfully brought visitors down to the water; the group immediately saw the parallels and past challenges of installing pedestrian trails: before and after photos work extremely well. Charlie Guttenplan suggested infill development scenarios and options fit that desire well. David Bertram quickly recognized the Spring Mill Bike Shop, the Brewery and the Farmer's Market as possible success stories integrating business, parking, people and activity. Bob Thomas remembered the owner of a local Betzwood development hailing the installation of a trail behind the community to be a success because it encouraged new tenants.
- vi. Paul Vernon reminded attendees of previous plan recommendations included signage to draw trail users from the riverfront back into the Borough main street shopping and cultural districts. Bob Thomas and Paul felt naming trails would help encourage exploration and adventure; ie. "The Business Loop."

III. Action Items

- 1. Study Area Boundary—amend the boundary to include the area described by Paul Vernon
- 2. Steering Committee to offer list of Stakeholders with Charlie Guttenplan taking the lead compiling the list.
- 3. Consultant and Steering Committee to finalize the goals of the plan, thus far discussed roughly as
 - i. Improve Access to the Riverfront
 - ii. Connect Our Trails
 - iii. "Bridge Our Riverfront Business Success to Our Riverfront Community"

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

Meeting: **The Riverfront Plan, Steering Committee Meeting #2**

When: **Tuesday, September 29, 2015 (10:30 AM-12:00 Noon)**

Where: Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Attendees: Suzanne Ryan, Carter van Dyke, Scott France, Charlie Guttenplan, Terry Ferris, Tom Blomstrom, David Bertram, Robert (Bob) Thomas, Harry Murray, Doug Maisey, Kent Baird, Fran Hanney

Next Meeting: TBD

Minutes of this Meeting

I. Introduction

- a. Sign-In and Introductions—attendees signed in and (re) introduced themselves and the organizations they represent. New attendees included Suzanne Ryan, from PECO and Fran Hanney, from PennDOT. Again, for the purpose of ensuring efficient communication Charlie Guttenplan will act as the Client representative and Kent Baird will act as the Consultant representative.
- b. The Riverfront Plan & Initial Assessment—for the benefit of the Steering Committee, Mr. Baird presented attendees with a Power Point presentation depicting the brief over-view of the project with expanded information for the initial assessment of the riverfront conditions and relevant information previously recorded for the community and that of recent contributing stakeholders. Information from previous plans and studies included:
 - i. Conshohocken and Whitemarsh both would like a passive recreation trail, for leisurely use and with trail signage suggesting as much, along the actual river
 - ii. A civic gathering space, artwork, and new concessions along the waterfront are desired;
 - iii. New signage for visiting back and forth to the river, including the Borough’s historic and cultural resources, are greatly desired;
 - iv. Improvements to existing parking and clarification of shared parking is much needed;
 - v. Installation and improvement of safety and emergency response elements are critically important.
 - vi. Improvements to Spring Mill County Park are desired;
 - vii. Boat launches staged at various locations, including revised usage of the Borough’s Riverwalk at Millennium ramp, are hoped for;
 - viii. Potential license agreements and trail improvements in the PECO utility easement could present Township residents with non-road access to the trail system.

II. Steering Committee

- a. During the presentation, Committee members were asked to contribute their input for the current goals of the riverfront plan as well as to create objectives for the goals. Members were offered first

the chance to write down their objectives and thoughts on paper; then share either verbally or in writing those objectives and thoughts. The following is a representation of what was shared:

- i. Terry Ferris felt the riverfront is seriously lacking in events, activities and venues for young families, amongst others. A few ideas she felt worked in communities she's visited and that she and her family and friends have discussed included: a music band shell (such as in Norristown), an ice cream parlor and picnic area, a play area for kids and parents (possibly at Spring Mill), a bed & breakfast option in the vicinity of the river, a museum (with or without a café, but preferably with a café), a playhouse or [performing arts] theater, and a quiet area with artwork (possibly reminiscent of Lee Tire and other historic sites) and for peaceful reflection. Bob Thomas and Terry shared compassionate thoughts for the history being lost as new development chooses not to include artistic or land planning features or elements from the past.
- ii. David Bertram echoed the thoughts of Ferris and Thomas and offered a hope for a large space, flexible in its usage, for events such as weddings, beer and food fests, and possibly picnicking after work hours and weekends.
- iii. Charlie Guttenplan presented his concerns from a "planner's perspective" and included concerns and hopes for improved rail road crossings for vehicles and pedestrians; the creation of an identity for the riverfront, similar to Riverwalk in San Antonio; reevaluation of the street pattern/flow of traffic; repurposing of the trail system to provide relief and/or separation of bicyclists and pedestrians (possibly with signage or trail markings or other); and especially establishment of a trailhead, including Spring Mill Park as a possible destination for one; and finally the need to hold onto/incorporate the cultural and historical materials and artefacts of area.
- iv. Douglas Maisey offered objectives for creating safer crossings at railroad tracks, including visual cues to get across tracks safely such as light, texture, layering of street and trail hard-scaping, and consistent types of paving. He noted the plan should highlight nodes and gateways to act as directional guides and that a loop could be created for the trail system. Baird was pleased to hear the comment and offered the loop could include extension of 1st Avenue toward the Cross County Trail, thus creating a loop from that juncture, down to and across the SRT, up Lee Street and back across Spring Mill Avenue to 1st Avenue with minimal grade stress to the pedestrian. Maisey additionally offered that food trucks, programmed events and even an ice skating rink help to keep Philadelphia not only a 24 hour destination but a seasonal destination.
- v. Tom Blomstrom looked for the plan to include what the public space/experience connectors might be and suggested a unified system of kiosks might be a simple approach. He also felt landmarks, both physical and visual, would help to ground residents and visitors to the riverfront as a place with an identity. He shared his enjoyment as a visitor to Baltimore with its staging areas educating and orienting visitors. He especially noted that Whitemarsh Township's park system is known for its usage by a regional population and not just local residents and remarked that any opportunity to locate parks and recreation facilities along the river would be welcome. He and Bob Thomas noted that inclusion of

regional users of parks helps to provide better, longer lasting parks and to recruit different and larger grants.

- vi. Harry Murray offered objectives which would preserve natural areas within the riverfront study area and that with the disappearance of some of the industrial uses, nature has returned and flourished. These areas could meet the desire of creating a peaceful place to rest, relax or enjoy wildlife viewing. In his experience with the area, parking seemed a dominate issue. It was his assessment that parking lots, parking garages and shared parking each had happened in a reactionary way, leaving some areas strained and others without adequate parking. A discussion including Suzanne Ryan, Fran Hanney, Harry and Bob correctly identified the need for parking but further need to identify the different design solutions nationally. Hanney felt an objective ought to include designing parking to meet the needs of visitors and residents differently from business.
- vii. Fran Hanney shared his hopes for objectives which would highlight the need to educate the public and landowners on the importance of an integrated riverfront; a connected street and trail system; a clarified parking system. He also asked for objectives which would foster small business such as ice cream parlors, canoe and bike rentals. Objectives for funding improvements to the riverfront should identify the public-private partnerships but also engage citizen participation and volunteer groups such as “Friends of..” Finally the Plan should recommend ways of maintaining momentum for the improvements to the sense of community and interaction with the riverfront; starting with small projects and celebrating milestones. Bob Thomas supported Hanney’s thoughts and offered management of the improved space or activities could be years of involvement such as that of the Philadelphia parks system and partnerships.
- viii. Scott France felt a sound plan should include objectives for creating a gathering place. The idea or reason for being and the feasibility should include opportunities for multi-level activities. He recalled Pittston has a big picnic on the bridge of their town each year. He especially identified Conshohocken as a destination for the long stretches of the Schuylkill River Trail and sincerely hoped for rest stops, trailheads or other rest areas.
- ix. Suzanne Ryan offered her thoughts for making Spring Mill County Park an actual destination in and of itself inclusive of play areas for families with children. She also felt the Fayette Street Bridge area would make for a good destination spot and felt the community already identified with the area below the bridge. She felt it important to include objectives for partnering with the riverfront businesses and one or more of the boathouses for offering expanded activities such as pop-up-beer gardens, outdoor patio-style eating, or even a large outdoor Yoga event such as she has witnessed nearby in King of Prussia. She urged the plan to help make the riverfront more family friendly.
- x. Carter van Dyke offered the suggestion that the plan include another or substitute goal of “Make the Riverfront a Destination.” He additionally hoped the community would accept objectives to complete street and trail gaps including Washington Street; places that currently prevent the creation of a loop or alternative path for trails. He further remarked that the achievement of the riverfront’s goals will need commitment to creative and innovative thinking such as happened elsewhere in the world and could include objectives

for multiple levels of activity, elevated walking paths, pedestrian extensions to the Fayette Street Bridge and unique branding of the riverfront's destination elements. When complete, the walking path along the river will truly be a linear park and interactive space for families and visitors tying them to the river for generations.

- xi. Bob Thomas felt it important to establish objectives which would ensure the experience through the riverfront area, and the community, will be continuously interesting. Whether these objectives include focal points with seating, food venues and activities or links to the cultural and historic offerings of the borough and township, any visitor to the riverfront or its trails should experience something interesting all the way through (sometimes even creating double entrances to buildings along riverfronts creates visual links to the community). He additionally felt it important to consider both train stations as the destinations they once were, either by their architecture or their offerings.

III. Action Items

- a. Objectives—a written compilation of the goals and objectives will be shared with the Steering Committee for further discussion.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

MEETING: The Riverfront Plan, Steering Committee Meeting #3

WHEN: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 (10:00 AM-12:00 Noon)

WHERE: Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

ATTENDEES: Suzanne Ryan, Fran Hanney, Carter van Dyke, Scott France, Charlie Guttenplan, Terry Ferris, Tom Blomstrom, Rick Mellor, Robert (Bob) Thomas, Paul Vernon, Doug Maisey, Kent Baird, and guest Steve Nelson (P.E.C)

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Minutes of this Meeting

I. Introduction

- a. Sign-In and Agenda—attendees signed in, were shared an amended agenda and again, for the purpose of ensuring efficient communication Charlie Guttenplan will act as the Client representative and Kent Baird will act as the Consultant representative.
- b. The Riverfront Plan & Recommendations—for the benefit of the Steering Committee, each committee member received a memorandum of project status including a summary of recommendations of the draft plan. Mr. Baird presented attendees with a Power Point presentation revisiting the project as well as expanded information for the summary recommendations as well as discussion points to introduce the following additional goals to the plan:
 - a. Goal 4—Meet Recreation & Open Space Needs
 - b. Goal 5—Provide for Economic Development
 - c. Goal 6—Incorporate Sustainable Design

II. Steering Committee

- a. During the presentation, Committee members were asked to contribute their input for the draft recommendations, presented graphics and additional discussion points. The following is a representation of what was shared:
 - i. Access to the river was presented in various ways with the most talked about recommendations including two pedestrian bridges: the first to connect pedestrians between West Conshohocken and Conshohocken boroughs via a pedestrian bridge suspended beneath Fayette Street Bridge and the second to connect Schuylkill River Trail users with West Bank Schuylkill River Trail users via a full river span pedestrian bridge designed with cyclonic wind turbines to generate energy from the river valley winds. Comments were favorable for the introduction of each bridge with requests for more design information to address safety, lighting and obstructed or unobstructed views.
 - ii. Plaza spaces to be introduced along the river’s edge were additionally well talked about with requests for additional design connectivity between Harry Street and land uses to be introduced behind the existing parking garage and Marriott hotel as well as pedestrian connectivity from Ash, Poplar and Cherry streets. Emergency vehicle access, introduced

in pending plans, were talked about and were talked about for greater attention in future designs and recommendations; ie. 401 Washington Street.

- iii. Recreation areas recommended were well received by the Committee with members hoping for revision of designs to account for more multi-use open space. Additional requests included introducing recommendations for recreation needs and analyses.
- iv. SEPTA train stations were discussed as topics in need of further detail regarding future plans for improvements. Each station has received a great deal of concept planning by SEPTA but the Committee felt their goals and ultimate changes to their stations would play a critical role in the layout of improvements along the river.
- v. Trails were discussed throughout the presentation and the Committee was grateful their concerns for safety, aesthetics, connection and convenience were being addressed.
- vi. The additional Goals were presented for the Plan and Committee members felt strongly they would be of benefit to the overall strength of the recommendations and the Plan's longevity.

III. Action Items

- a. Review and address comments from Steering Committee members

IV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

MEETING: The Riverfront Plan, Steering Committee Meeting #4
WHEN: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 (10:00 AM-12:00 Noon)
WHERE: Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
ATTENDEES: Fran Hanney, Charlie Guttenplan, Terry Ferris, Tom Blomstrom, Rick Mellor, Robert (Bob) Thomas, Kent Baird, Byron Comati, Todd Poole, Holly Mager (for Scott France) and Dave Bertram
NEXT MEETING: Joint Planning Mtg TBD

Minutes of this Meeting

I. Introduction

- a. Sign-In—attendees signed in, and again, for the purpose of ensuring efficient communication Charlie Guttenplan will act as the Client representative and Kent Baird will act as the Consultant representative.
- b. The Riverfront Plan & Feedback—for the benefit of the Steering Committee, a brief revisit of the presentation made to Conshohocken Borough Council was shared. Feedback for the strategic planning of the Conshohocken Borough Train Station was received, especially relative Oak Street and adjacent lands. A possible emergency boat ramp under the Bridge was also discussed.

II. Presentation of Next Steps Possibilities

- a. Consultant team member, Todd Poole, of 4Ward Planning, Inc., shared a Power Point presentation of possible next steps for The Riverfront Plan; including a recommendation to study the possible maintenance, expense and revenue resulting from the Plan’s implementation. Similar studies were presented as example suggesting this kind of urbanized/ex-urban park system would generate substantial revenue and small business growth. In concert with the Committee’s recommendations, Poole suggested a joint municipal approach to the management of the park system developed. Beyond maintenance of the various elements of the Plan, such coordination would streamline promotion of events, rentals and vendors.

III. Next Steps

- a. A joint meeting of both municipalities’ planning commissions is hoped for.

Adjourn—The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

Riverfront Plan Stakeholder Letter & Questionnaire

[Address]

Re: Your Much Needed Input for The Riverfront Plan

[Dear Mr. B.:’

On behalf of Conshohocken Borough and Whitemarsh Township, we invite you to participate in the next phase of Schuylkill Riverfront improvements. As a business owner, resident or local official you have had or continue to play an important role in the revitalization of a once industrialized then neglected river’s edge. Your efforts and commitment are greatly appreciated. To continue the trend of revitalization, Conshohocken and Whitemarsh have teamed with Carter van Dyke Associates and Campbell Thomas & Company to illustrate improvements which when implemented will enhance the riverfront experience for all. Together we’d like your input for the preparation of a report titled: *The Riverfront Plan*.

The Riverfront Plan seeks to consolidate the goals and objectives, recommendations and action steps, and especially the aspirations of dozens of reports and public surveys regarding life along the river in Conshohocken and Whitemarsh. Thus far, these reports and surveys, and recent Riverfront Plan Steering Committee members, agree the following goals will guide the next phase of improvements:

1. Improve Access to the Riverfront
2. Connect the Trails
3. Bridge Our Riverfront Business Success to Our Riverfront Community

With the above in mind, we invite you to attend a meeting to help us understand the land use issues, design challenges, or next steps needed to achieve the next phase of improvements. Please RSVP by: August 28, 2015.

Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 2015 @ 10:30 AM

Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Additionally, we’ve included a questionnaire to capture some of your personal or organizational history. Feel free to bring the answers along with you or contact me directly by phone (215) 345-5053 or by email kent@cvda.com.

Sincerely,
Kent A. Baird
Community & Conservation Planner

The Riverfront Plan

Introductory Questions for Stakeholders

1. What history do you, or your organization or group, have with the redevelopment of the previously industrialized areas of the riverfront?
2. What history do you, or your organization or group, have with development of the Schuylkill Riverfront Trail or Cross County Trail?
3. What benefit do you feel public transportation brings to your business or organization; ie. do you or your employees take advantage of the existing train or bus stations?
4. What plans, reports or studies have you contributed to in the past for the analysis of the riverfront's revitalization opportunities?
5. What are your primary concerns for shared use of the riverfront, by way of a riverwalk, boating access, etc.?
6. What land uses or amenities, if any, would you introduce to make the interaction between the public and the business space more interesting:
 - a. Land use—active recreation areas, sports arena, retail, commercial entertainment, museum/art gallery or other (s)?
 - b. Amenities—outdoor cafe-like seating and lunch areas, food festival/event/small concert venues or other (s)?
7. If it could be demonstrated that improvements to the riverfront will enhance the value of your property would you support municipal or joint financing of these improvements; for example would you support a government issued bond, the use of government awarded grants, or possibly recruitment of private foundation monies?

Meeting: **The Riverfront Plan, Stakeholder Meeting #1**

When: **Wednesday, September 16, 2015 (10:30AM-12:00PM)**

Where: Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Attendees: Rick Mellor, Charlie Guttenplan, Christopher Lane, Terry Ferris, Tim Fenchel, Peter Cornog, Deb Shreero, Brian Rosenthal, Scott Miller, Carter van Dyke, Kent Baird

Minutes of this Meeting

- I. Sign-In and Introductions—attendees signed in and introduced themselves and the relationship they or their organizations have with the riverfront. Similar to the Steering Committee and the Plan at large, further communication should be sent to Charlie Guttenplan, at Whitemarsh Township, or the consultant team representative, Kent Baird.
- II. The Riverfront Plan—for the benefit of attending Stakeholders, Mr. Baird presented attendees with a Power Point presentation depicting the overview of the project Scope of Work, Study Area and expanded Early Assessment, Best Examples and Stakeholder Questionnaire information.
- III. Stakeholder Questionnaire—invited and attending Stakeholders were asked to consider the following seven (7) questions:
 1. *What history do you, or your organization or group, have with the redevelopment of the previously industrialized areas of the riverfront?*
 2. *What history do you, or your organization or group, have with development of the Schuylkill Riverfront Trail or Cross County Trail?*
 3. *What benefit do you feel public transportation brings to your business or organization; ie. do you or your employees take advantage of the existing train or bus stations?*
 4. *What plans, reports or studies have you contributed to in the past for the analysis of the riverfront's revitalization opportunities?*
 5. *What are your primary concerns for shared use of the riverfront, by way of a riverwalk, boating access, etc.?*
 6. *What land uses or amenities, if any, would you introduce to make the interaction between the public and the business space more interesting:*
 - a. *Land use—active recreation areas, sports arena, retail, commercial entertainment, museum/art gallery or other (s)?*
 - b. *Amenities—outdoor cafe-like seating and lunch areas, food festival/event/small concert venues or other (s)?*
 7. *If it could be demonstrated that improvements to the riverfront will enhance the value of your property would you support municipal or joint financing of these improvements; for example would you support a government issued bond, the use of government awarded grants, or possibly recruitment of private foundation monies?*

- IV. Using the seven questions of the Stakeholder Questionnaire as a backdrop, attendees presented their thoughts, concerns and recommendations for the Riverfront Plan and the future of its potential Action Plan items:
- i. Brian Rosenthal, Chairman of Whitemarsh Township’s Parks and Recreation Board, and former commissioner of Lower Merion Township, presented his Board’s responses: Question #5 – safety, inclusion, community harmony, maintenance, parking, traffic Question #6 – a. Public areas for concerts, movies, celebrations; walking paths; arts and culture; historical monument; retail; restaurants – outdoor dining, b. Festivals; outside public areas close to water; boardwalks; raised “overlook” areas; vendors; and Question #7 – yes.....community asset enhancing economic value and quality of life, and requested the Plan [when implemented] not “ increase the tax burden to Whitemarsh & Conshohocken. He further remarked that the Township’s parks are very well maintained, well funded and a real attraction-draw for visitors and residents and parks along the river would be key. He and Carter van Dyke conceded to the notion any new parks along the river would take real passion and commitment on the part of business and municipal officials to create a sustainable riverfront park management plan.
 - ii. Peter Cornog, former Whitemarsh Township Supervisor and Chairman of Whitemarsh Township’s Planning Commission shared his long involvement with the township’s riverfront aspirations, his love for cycling and previous participation in the public-private partnership for the Hills at Whitemarsh, an active adult community. He also shared concerns for the business community’s willingness or unwillingness to participate in public access initiatives along the riverfront. For the Riverfront Plan he hoped for recommendations which lead to increased collaboration with Conshohocken, new parks to make up for Whitemarsh’s park deficit, a band stand, artwork (with images shared of historically and culturally significant steel structures in Pittsburgh) and sculptures and more areas to enjoy views of the river, including more park benches. He additionally shared newspaper clippings reminding attendees and the consultant team of the dramatic flooding experienced by businesses and residents over the years.
 - iii. Tim Fenchel, of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, shared both his organization’s support and his personal observations for the Plan and the area of the Schuylkill being studied. First, it is the collected fact that the improvements to the trails and parks along the Schuylkill result in economic improvement for the towns and communities that receive them. Secondly, and with shared sentiment by Mr. Baird, the Schuylkill River Trail is seriously lacking in access, destinations and bathrooms [within the Study Area]. He has received phone calls from frustrated visitors to the Conshohocken/Whitemarsh portion of the trail looking for bathrooms and parking. Both Fenchel and Baird discussed openly the importance, and past support for, a new trailhead parking and bathroom facility at Spring Mill Park-outparcel currently owned by a private materials recycler. Tim additionally thought the Spring Mill area would make for an excellent public boat launch.
 - iv. Terry Ferris, a life-long resident of the area, and a member of the Parks and Recreation Board for Whitemarsh Township, was deeply concerned for the potential to improve safety and emergency facilities along the riverfront. She, and with other attendees’ support, called for additional lighting along the Schuylkill River Trail. Additionally, she shared with the group

her pleasant experiences with communities that infused their trail/greenways and waterfronts with museums and bed & breakfasts. In all, she hoped for a positive end result to the Riverfront Plan and that's its recommendations lead to increased enjoyment of the river.

- v. Rick Mellor, Whitemarsh Township Manager, reminded attendees the riverfront once was not a draw for much more than industry and business and today it is much more. The train stations are an exceptional resource for residents and visitors and so too is the actual river. While change may have brought frustration and issues of adjustment it also opened the door for the opportunity to discuss new activities. As an important component of the Riverfront Plan and going forward with any implementation projects, educating the public is important: establishing a base of understanding for the needs of emergency personnel and safety and creating the proper message for putting together new blends of mixed-land-uses. He and Terry Ferris discussed the current status, and some of the challenges, the emergency personnel has with using the Hines Rowing Center Boat Ramp.
- vi. Deb Shreero, attending member of the Whitemarsh Township Environmental Advisory Board, thanked the Township, the Borough and the consultant team, for offering the attendees a chance to contribute to the Plan. She also thanked Peter Cornog for the creation of the EAB while he served as Township Supervisor. It has had a lasting impact on the township's development and resident participation. First and foremost, Deb presented to the attendees her board's concerns for flooding along the riverfront. She has access to both historical flooding and stormwater management information and first anecdotal information. For many years the township has had concerns for the stormwater travelling toward the riverfront. She additionally noted that it takes quite a long time for flood waters from the river to recede. As an active member of the rowing center she could speak directly to the boats at the center being flooded and completely covered in mud, on occasion more than once per year. She offered two hopes that the plan or the municipalities would be careful to address a new Stormwater Management Plan as well as help create signage or rules for the increase in litter associated with increase in use of the riverfront. She celebrated Lois Trench-Hines rowing center rules of not using plastic water bottles which can easily pollute the river and additionally ruin the aesthetic of the natural resource.
- vii. Christopher Lane, attending on behalf of the Whitemarsh Township Open Space Committee, presented both his committee and personal thoughts for the riverfront. The open space committee makes recommendations to and communicates with the township supervisors and other boards on matters of purchasing, preserving and stewarding open space within the township. At different times funding has been available from the township for the acquisition of land or conservation easements from private landowners. As a local resident Chris was especially thankful of the plan's inclusion of Spring Mill Station. As a rider of the train from that station he can remember several times it being closed due to flooding. He also presented real world experience of the parking struggles at the Station. He noted by 8AM, the SEPTA parking was full, which forced riders to park their cars at the local fire department, commercial parking lots and then near private homes.
- viii. Scott Miller, a principal of Miller-Purdy Architects, presented his firm's input for the Riverfront Plan. First, his firm chose specifically to locate their offices near the Conshohocken-Whitemarsh riverfront and its two train stations because it spoke to their corporate mission of promoting new urbanism, sound land use development, smart growth strategies and transit oriented development. His firm especially loved how many modes of

transportation were just outside their door and how close the actual river was to their office. As a contributing architect to such projects as Riverwalk he spoke directly to the challenges of parking and the early decisions of developers to remediate industrial sites and to coordinate shared parking. He suggested parking permits for tenants had been a partial but meaningful relief for his firm and other tenants in his office building. Brian Rosenthal and Charlie Guttenplan offered to Scott and the attendees the benefit of ordinance language that required developers to 'set aside' parking in portions of proposed development projects.

- V. Adjourn-a Round-table discussion included concerns for the impact of future development and hopes the Plan would address next steps and implementation of good ideas.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30PM.

Meeting: **The Riverfront Plan, Stakeholder Meeting #2**

When: **Thursday, September 17, 2015 (10:30AM-12:00PM)**

Where: Conshohocken Borough Hall, 400 Fayette Street, Suite 200, Conshohocken, PA 19428

Attendees: Lois Trench-Hines, Mike English, Donna Heller, Kevin Tierney, Richard Manfredi, Amy Mayer, Charlie Guttenplan, Carter van Dyke, Kent Baird, Robert Thomas

Minutes of this Meeting

- I. Sign-In and Introductions—attendees signed in and introduced themselves and the relationship they or their organizations have with the riverfront. Similar to the Steering Committee and the Plan at large, further communication should be sent to Charlie Guttenplan, at Whitemarsh Township, or the consultant team representative, Kent Baird.
- II. The Riverfront Plan—for the benefit of attending Stakeholders, Mr. Baird presented attendees with a Power Point presentation depicting the overview of the project Scope of Work, Study Area and expanded Early Assessment, Best Examples and Stakeholder Questionnaire information.
- III. Stakeholder Questionnaire—invited and attending Stakeholders were asked to consider the following seven (7) questions:
 1. *What history do you, or your organization or group, have with the redevelopment of the previously industrialized areas of the riverfront?*
 2. *What history do you, or your organization or group, have with development of the Schuylkill Riverfront Trail or Cross County Trail?*
 3. *What benefit do you feel public transportation brings to your business or organization; ie. do you or your employees take advantage of the existing train or bus stations?*
 4. *What plans, reports or studies have you contributed to in the past for the analysis of the riverfront's revitalization opportunities?*
 5. *What are your primary concerns for shared use of the riverfront, by way of a riverwalk, boating access, etc.?*
 6. *What land uses or amenities, if any, would you introduce to make the interaction between the public and the business space more interesting:*
 - a. *Land use—active recreation areas, sports arena, retail, commercial entertainment, museum/art gallery or other (s)?*
 - b. *Amenities—outdoor cafe-like seating and lunch areas, food festival/event/small concert venues or other (s)?*
 7. *If it could be demonstrated that improvements to the riverfront will enhance the value of your property would you support municipal or joint financing of these improvements; for example would you support a government issued bond, the use of government awarded grants, or possibly recruitment of private foundation monies?*

- IV. Using the seven questions of the Stakeholder Questionnaire as a backdrop, attendees presented their thoughts, concerns and recommendations for the Riverfront Plan and the future of its potential Action Plan items:
- a. Lois Trench-Hines, a long time resident of the Conshohocken community, and representative of the Hines Rowing Center, presented her organization's input and her personal thoughts for achieving the goals of the Riverfront Plan. First, she believes the Conshohocken community is an excellent one to raise a family and for others to visit. Relative to the rowing center and its connection to the Riverfront Plan, Lois noted that at any given time the center had three (3) universities, five (5) high schools and one (1) non-profit organization using the rowing center for rowing education and training. For that reason she hoped the recommendations and implementation of the Riverfront Plan would be mindful of both the users of the rowing center as well as the equipment and boats. She was not opposed to public engagement of the riverfront, after all the public is an excellent source of support for rowing in general, but rather wanted to ensure protection and safety of the individuals and expensive equipment. She noted the general public will be invited to use a yet to be built gazebo, on the rowing center property, for enjoying views of the river. The center also allows Whitemarsh Township emergency personnel to use the boat launch for accessing the river. She reminds everyone the center took special care to direct, by way of restrictions with the township, any future trail along the riverfront away from the area in-between the center and the launch. Her long term boat launch goals are to introduce a new ramp at the Hines Center for wake-less boats; which are expensive and require her center to plan carefully. Lois went on to note that parking for the community has always been a challenge. She felt new or infill development should consider the parking an important issue and supported opportunities to include Spring Mill Park as a possible future trailhead parking area to ease the stress caused by overburdened parking. Consultant Bob Thomas, of Campbell Thomas offered continued support for creative solutions for the Hines Center riverfront trail compatibility. He personally had experience visiting the riverfront upstream and downstream of each boat launch along the riverfront and remarked they had their own unique set of challenges and safety concerns to be carefully planned.
 - b. Kevin Tierney, local resident and owner of the Spring Mill Farmers Market, spoke on behalf of himself and Ben Bergman, co-owner of the Market. Kevin has not only initiated community events but posts to a blog, "More than the Curve" which routinely promotes local businesses and community activities. Kevin was especially aware of the community's parking problems and the loss of potential business due to poor signage and incentives for visitors and commuters to stay. The Farmers Market, at Lee and Hector street, picked its location because of the opportunity to provide restrooms to its vendors. Otherwise he and Ben found it challenging to utilize space along the river. He personally has coordinated food events and discussions for hosting "Pop-Up Beer Gardens," noting that food events, such as beer gardens, have proven not to detract from local business but actually encourage participants to frequent local restaurants and shops as a result of attending the Garden (he cited the Philadelphia South Street event which bolstered business significantly). He envisions using the tops of parking garages, especially Tower 3, with spectacular views and ample under-utilized after hours parking, for food events and pop beer gardens. The "Sky Garden" as he called it, will be the first test of elevating activities above the empty parking lots of the riverfront. On the subject of parking he further hoped better signage would coordinate where public areas are, such as the dog-park, or where the rowing center in Conshohocken is accessible to the public or not accessible.
 - c. Mike English, West Conshohocken Borough Manager, presented his municipality's excitement for possible destination-design and events that might be introduced to the riverfront of Conshohocken and Whitemarsh. He discussed some of the development plans in discussion for buildings and land along West Conshohocken's riverfront. Mike reminded the attendees West Conshohocken's local fire department maintains river flood rise levels by simply marking the pillars of the bridge. Both

the painted markers and the staining of the muddy flood water help to remind residents how high the river actually floods. Mike initiated a discussion for the safety and design of the Fayette Street Bridge, which his community's residents would like use for attending or visiting the riverfront. On one level, West Conshohocken routinely updates Pa Dept. of Transportation the snowplowing failures which create blocked or iced-over pedestrian routes across the bridge. He hoped for design changes to the bridge which would make it more pedestrian friendly and engaging. Carter van Dyke, Baird, Guttenplan, and others had previously discussed modifying the pedestrian bridge or creating a new design and were pleased to hear support from the community regarding safety especially. Other bridges were noted such as Philadelphia, and New Hope and Lambertville boroughs which improved their bridges and subsequently improved their economic outlook.

- d. Donna Heller, Director of Parks and Recreation for Lower Merion Township, presented some of her community's support for the Riverfront Plan. She felt the presentation was especially positive and did not position just the bad or challenging aspects of the shared riverfront of Conshohocken and Whitemarsh. She felt the graphics and depiction of contrasts between success and opportunities yet to be realized were right in line with the message the Plan should send to readers and future participants. Lower Merion Township has had experience with one or two of the developers who made changes to the riverfront and spoke of good communication leading to better outcomes. She recalled various meetings which lead to public-private partnerships with positive public press. Her experience was that clear expectations and collaboration was important for the future of the riverfront.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Steering Committee Questionnaire



Carter van Dyke Associates

40 Garden Alley
Doylestown, Pennsylvania
18901-4325

Voice: 215 345 5053
Fax: 215 345 4324
Web: www.CVDA.com

Riverfront Plan-Steering Committee Questionnaire

Summary

The Steering Committee for the Riverfront Plan should consider the enclosed questions in their initial gathering and thereafter for their ultimate contribution to the success of the document.

Questions for the Steering Committee Guided by the RFP:

1. What is the working 'Mission' of the Steering Committee?
2. What is your vision of a vibrant riverfront?
3. What are the simple expectations of each member?
4. What Information Would You Like to Present or Us to Present?
5. Existing Studies and Background
 - a. Are we missing anything
 - b. What are the missing elements of the Riverfront Open Space Plan?
 - c. What are the challenges of the Riverfront Overlay Development District?
6. In-fill and Redevelopment Opportunities
 - a. What are the missing land uses?
 - b. What are the challenging/uncreative land uses?
 - c. What kind of transit-oriented land development components are positive and which are not so positive?
7. Trails
 - a. What are the best components of the existing trail system?
 - b. What are the missing elements of the trail system?
 - c. What are creative pieces to add?

Questions to consider when thinking about the Schuylkill River and reviewing *The Riverfront Plan*

- Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?
- Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls? Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
- Can people easily walk to the place? For example, do they have to dart between moving cars to get to the place?
- Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
- Does the space function for people with special needs?
- Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?

- Can people use a variety of transportation options – bus train, car, bicycle, etc. – to reach the place?
- Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations such as libraries, post offices, park entrances, etc.?
- Does the place make a good first impression?
- Are there more women than men?
- Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
- Are spaces clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance? What do they do? When?
- Does the area feel safe? Is there a security presence? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
- Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?
- Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?
- Are people using the space or is it empty?
- Is it used by people of different ages?
- Are people in groups?
- How many different types of activities are occurring people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?
- Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
- Are there choices of things to do?
- Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?
- Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here or running into them?
- Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another?
- Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
- Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place or do they point to one of its features with pride?
- Are people smiling? Do people make eye contact with each other?
- Do people use the place regularly and by choice?
- Does a mix of ages and ethnic groups that generally reflect the community at large?
- Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?

Stakeholder Questionnaire



Carter van Dyke Associates

40 Garden Alley
Doylestown, Pennsylvania
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Re: Your Much Needed Input for The Riverfront Plan

Dear Mr. [Redacted]

On behalf of Conshohocken Borough and Whitemarsh Township, we invite you to participate in the next phase of Schuylkill Riverfront improvements. As a business owner, resident or local official you have had or continue to play an important role in the revitalization of a once industrialized then neglected river’s edge. Your efforts and commitment are greatly appreciated. To continue the trend of revitalization, Conshohocken and Whitemarsh have teamed with Carter van Dyke Associates and Campbell Thomas & Company to illustrate improvements which when implemented will enhance the riverfront experience for all. Together we’d like your input for the preparation of a report titled: *The Riverfront Plan*.

The Riverfront Plan seeks to consolidate the goals and objectives, recommendations and action steps, and especially the aspirations of dozens of reports and public surveys regarding life along the river in Conshohocken and Whitemarsh. Thus far, these reports and surveys, and recent Riverfront Plan Steering Committee members, agree the following goals will guide the next phase of improvements:

1. Improve Access to the Riverfront
2. Connect the Trails
3. Bridge Our Riverfront Business Success to Our Riverfront Community

With the above in mind, we invite you to attend a meeting to help us understand the land use issues, design challenges, or next steps needed to achieve the next phase of improvements. Please RSVP by: August 28, 2015.

Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 2015 @ 10:30 AM

Whitemarsh Township Building, 616 Germantown Pike, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444

Additionally, we’ve included a questionnaire to capture some of your personal or organizational history. Feel free to bring the answers along with you or contact me directly by phone (215) 345-5053 or by email kent@cvda.com.

Sincerely,

Kent A. Baird
Community & Conservation Planner

The Riverfront Plan

Introductory Questions for Stakeholders

1. What history do you, or your organization or group, have with the redevelopment of the previously industrialized areas of the riverfront?
2. What history do you, or your organization or group, have with development of the Schuylkill Riverfront Trail or Cross County Trail?
3. What benefit do you feel public transportation brings to your business or organization; ie. do you or your employees take advantage of the existing train or bus stations?
4. What plans, reports or studies have you contributed to in the past for the analysis of the riverfront's revitalization opportunities?
5. What are your primary concerns for shared use of the riverfront, by way of a riverwalk, boating access, etc.?
6. What land uses or amenities, if any, would you introduce to make the interaction between the public and the business space more interesting:
 - a. Land use—active recreation areas, sports arena, retail, commercial entertainment, museum/art gallery or other (s)?
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