



VISTA 2025 Goal 1:

Maintain and enhance “quality of place” as a key component of economic health

Goal 1 Team Meeting

December 15, 2017

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: W. Boulton Alexander, Lou Beccaria, Pat Bokovitz, Beth Harper-Briglia, Don Hannum, Michelle Kichline, Molly Morrison, Todd Pohlig

Also Attending: Marybeth DiVincenzo, James Logan, Brian O’Leary, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith

Michelle Kichline

Welcomed all team members and invited everyone to introduce themselves. Requested comments on meeting notes from previous meeting. None were received. Asked David Sciocchetti to review VISTA 2025 draft progress report.

David Sciocchetti

Noted that VISTA 2025 had been authorized by Chester County Commissioners in late 2014 and that implementation had been ongoing for close to three years since then. Indicated that the draft progress report was intended to provide an update on the implementation of VISTA 2025 strategies from all five goals.

Added that the progress report was intended for general public consumption and designed to be visually attractive and easy to read and understand. Commented that the draft progress report documents significant progress on the implementation of the VISTA 2025 strategies.

Reviewed the eleven (11) progress report slides in the Progress Report PowerPoint presentation related to Goal 1.

Lou Beccaria

Commented that one of the side effects of the great success that Chester County has had is the lack of affordable housing.

Brian O’Leary

Noted that affordable housing will be a prime issue for Landscapes 3. Added that the issues facing suburban centers including workforce housing would also be a focus of Landscapes 3.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Commented that the issue of workforce housing seems to keep coming up at all of the different goal team meetings.

Pat Bokovitz

Noted that affordable/workforce housing is a national issue and that Chester County is not unique.

Lou Beccaria

Indicated that Phoenixville had recently completed an analysis of this issue for the Phoenixville area.

Todd Pohlig

Stated that individual municipalities have the ability to influence this issue with their comprehensive plan and municipal ordinances, noting that these rules direct development.

Brian O’Leary

Commented that it might be possible to infuse some ideas on this issue into CCPC land development reviews.

Beth Harper-Briglia

Noted that decisions on land use are made at the local level. Asked how we can drive a process that addresses this issue.

Pat Bokovitz

Noted that urban centers have active revitalization plans that are updated annually. Added that this process provides an opportunity to advise and remind them on this topic.

Lou Beccaria

Noted that community safety is often a part of the dialogue around affordable housing.

Pat Bokovitz

Cautioned that local perspectives are a critical part of the location of affordable housing and need to be taken into account.

David Sciocchetti

Moved to a discussion of the Goal 1 draft strategy status report. Noted that the process to date included a review of each Goal 1 strategy with a focus on assessing the level of implementation. Indicated that five categories had been established and color coded in the PowerPoint presentation for easy recognition:

- Done/Ongoing (Green)

- Ongoing (Green)
- On Hold/Active (Yellow)
- On Hold (Yellow)
- Eliminate (Red)

Stated that the next step in the review process was feedback from the members of the Goal 1 team. Identified possible issues to consider, including:

- Accurate assessment of progress
- Strategies to be modified
- Strategies to be added
- Strategies to be eliminated
- Strategy responsibility
- Strategy resource source
- Suggest change in timeline
- Suggest change in goal location
- Suggest merger with other strategies

David Sciocchetti

Initiated review of individual strategies.

Strategy 1.1.1 Status - Ongoing

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.2.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.2.2 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.2.3 Status - Ongoing

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.3.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.3.2 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.3.3 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.3.4 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.3.5 Status - Ongoing

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.4.1 Status - Done

Strategy 1.4.2 Status - Done

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.5.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.5.2 Status - On Hold

Gary Smith

Noted that the Dish provides a calendar of events for the West Chester Area and that VISTA Today also has a section focused on events and activities.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Added that a small group that is focused on marketing Chester County might be able to take this project on.

James Logan

Commented that the Daily Local and the Inquirer also have some coverage of events and activities in Chester County.

Michelle Kichline

Noted that while there are numerous sources of this information the goal would be to re-direct the multiple sources to one spot.

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.6.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.6.2 Status - On Hold

Strategy 1.6.3 Status - On Hold/Active

Don Hannum

Commented that the proposed Chester County Agricultural Center could possibly be a venue for certain types of assemblies.

Todd Pohlig

Noted that the key is to identify the right location and get a collective buy-in.

Michelle Kichline

Suggested that there is always a wrinkle and many issues and challenges with bringing a major event venue to completion. Added, however that Chester County misses out on many events like the CCAP conference because we don't have a facility big enough to hold the event.

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.7.1 Status - Done

Strategy 1.7.2 Status - Done

Strategy 1.7.3 Status - On Hold

Brian O'Leary

Suggested that Strategy 1.7.3 should be re-categorized as On Hold/Active noting that brochures and e-mails are used to describe available grants and technical assistance services. Noted that there is an intention to develop a website approach to providing information.

Concurrence on status of other strategies

Strategy 1.8.1 Status - Done

Strategy 1.8.2 Status – On Hold

Strategy 1.8.3 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.8.4 Status – Ongoing

Pat Bokovitz

Noted that the reality of state and federal programs that provide assistance to urban centers in terms of declining funding availability.

Brian O’Leary

Indicated that Landscapes 3 may look at suburban centers as well as urban centers as they are a different form of economic center.

Michelle Kichline

Noted that there are missed opportunities when communities have not thought through what they want in the way of economic development. Described an example in Tredyffrin.

Todd Pohlig

Commented that millennials leaving the city still desire walkable communities. They like the urban feel of our urban centers with the smaller scale.

Michelle Kichline

Noted also the attraction of Chester County school districts for millennials moving into the child rearing stage.

Brian O’Leary

Suggested the use of Business Improvement Districts as a way to support desired activity in urban centers.

Bo Alexander

Commented on the importance of inter-municipal planning to avoid the need for every use in every community.

Gary Smith

Noted that Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) that has been an historic approach to modifying densities in desired areas.

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Strategy 1.9.1 Status - Ongoing

Strategy 1.9.2 Status - Done

Strategy 1.9.3 Status - On Hold

Strategy 1.9.4 Status – Ongoing

General concurrence on assigned strategy status

Molly Morrison

Stated that Landscapes 2, VISTA 2025 and Landscapes 3 have all recognized that Chester County has historic development corridors. The objective is to not lose the quality of place as development occurs. We need to direct development in a “Chester County style”.

Michelle Kichline

Closed the meeting by reporting that Don Hannum had indicated his intention to step down from his role on the VISTA 2025 Goal 3 Team. She thanked him for his years of service and wished him well.