

## Comments and Requests Submitted at Public Workshop - May 1, 2008

Meeting held at Lower Merion Township building

Notes issued for review May 5, 2008 by Campbell Thomas & Co. to Lower Merion Township

*(It is the consulting team's understanding that a tape was made of the workshop. While we have made every effort to accurately summarize our understanding of the workshop, we would be pleased to compare any such tape with our hand-written notes. CTC replies are given here to answer the questions raised by the public, and were not necessary given at the meeting.)*

### Introductory Activities:

- Scott Zelov welcomed those in attendance. With one exception, all in attendance indicated they live in Lower Merion Township.
- Lindsay Taylor and Chris Leswing gave background on the Schuylkill River West Project.
- Bob Thomas presented a slide show showing the proposed trail corridor from Valley Forge National Historical Park to the Falls Bridge, and related the consulting team's work including field views, interviews, field trips, mapping and historical and cultural resource inventory.

### Comments received at the public meeting were generally as follows, shown in chronological order:

- One citizen noted that trails don't need to be continuous to be successful. See the Radnor Trail as an example.
- One citizen noted a trail between the expressway and the railroad doesn't appear to be safe.
- One citizen noted Bridlewild must not be made public
- Concern was expressed about traffic West Conshohocken. *CTC clarified the trail, if constructed and where it would follow streets, would utilize side streets with low traffic volumes if permission can be obtained*
- Concern was expressed that not all conditions were shown by the photographs in the slide show, and that the slide look in different directions. *CTC has taken several hundred photographs, and selected a limited number in the interest of time.*
- One citizen noted that walking along the possible alignment of the Waverly Road to West Conshohocken segment of the SRT West is beautiful, and traffic noise seems to disappear.

- One user, a bicyclist, expressed concern that it appears that the SRT West would be constructed only as a footpath. *CTC will review several alternative trail types; no conclusions have yet been reached.*
- Concern was expressed about the trail on the slope of the Schuylkill Expressway contributing to stormwater problems, and removing tree roots. *CTC will comment on stormwater management in the draft feasibility study. CTC will investigate construction techniques, such as building a shelf on top of the slope, rather than cutting into it, thereby preserving tree roots.*
- One potential user like the idea of a river trail, but is concerned about users being “dumped” onto River Road.
- One citizen confirmed that the consulting team is only partially through the study process, and has not made any pre-judgments prior to gathering all the information needed.
- One resident expressed the following concerns
  - that it would be difficult to police a footpath
  - that the “Harry Olson Trail” is too close to the Expressway in some places
  - that an alternative alignment be investigated using two new bridges across the Schuylkill River, placing the trail on the existing Schuylkill River Trail, thereby avoiding River Road. *CTC will comment on such an alternative in the draft feasibility study*
  - that if runoff from the Expressway contains toxins that the trail should not be placed in such locations.
- One citizen noted that the trail cross section could be different in different area to suit different conditions.
- Another resident noted that they are pleased with the location of the Harry Olson Trail.
- One resident expressed concern with the railroad being an “attractive nuisance” for children.
- One resident reported there has been a resolution opposing the trail made by the Gladwyne Civic Association.
- One bicyclist, who indicated he had been seriously injured last year, expressed hope that a multi-use, off-road trail would be recommended and constructed. Another bicyclists indicated his hope that the Township would “stick with this project”
- One Scout leader noted the work done by Scouts on the Cynwyd Trail, and hoped that the Schuylkill River Trail would be constructed by current and future generations. Another Scout leader expressed concern about the safety of Scouts working on the hillside sections of a possible trail.

- A citizen noted the trail should avoid emptying people out onto River Road. CTC noted that it is investigating off road alignments to keep people from having to walk in the cartway of River Road
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Questions received from the public, shown in chronological order

- Lower Merion Township took a pledge not to use eminent domain. Will the County of State use it? *CTC reply: We are not aware of any plans to use eminent domain.*
- Are there any plans to remove the VFW Post? *CTC reply: No, not to our knowledge.*
- What did the consulting team learn regarding railroad safety issues? *CTC reply: When passing underneath the railroad, such as at Mill Creek, adequate protection must be provided. The railroad prefers a parallel trail generally to be well above their tracks, not below, to avoid hazards from derailments. Fencing will be desirable in several situations, even where the trail is separated from the rail line. In general, trails will not be permitted adjacent to the tracks and at the same elevation.*
- Should the trail between the railroad and River Road in Gladwyne be shown in the study maps as “not feasible.” *CTC reply: Since such an off-road trail is on the railbed where tracks are likely to be reinstalled in the future, and because of inadequate clearance, this is likely not feasible. This will be discussed in the draft feasibility study.*
- Will trees be cut down on the slope between the railroad and the expressway? *CTC reply: Trail construction alternatives (e.g. footpath versus multi-use path) will examine the impact on vegetation and soil conservation, as well new plantings to replace those removed. These alternatives will be discussed in the draft feasibility study.*
- Will the feasibility study address potential use of the proposed trail, costs of construction including costs of alternative designs, and cost of ongoing maintenance. *CTC reply: Yes.*
- Who determines the feasibility of the proposed trail, the consultants or the Commissioners. *CTC reply: The consultants will make specific draft recommendations, and will modify them after a review period, then making the final recommendations.*
- Who will maintain the proposed trail? Reply from C. Leswing: *Volunteers will maintain the Cynwyd Trail. CTC reply: The consulting team has yet to determine who will be recommended for maintaining the different segments of the SRT West, but expect to do so in the draft feasibility study.*
- What has the Norfolk Southern RR approved? *CTC reply: Nothing has been approved. This would require the preparation of detailed drawings beyond the scope of the feasibility study, and a detailed engineering review. NS RR has helped with their initial reaction to the consulting team’s work based upon their previous experience.*

- Is a trail feasible between West Conshohocken and the compost facility on the slope between I-76 and the NS RR? *CTC reply: Such a trail is physically possible. Determining the feasibility will depend on cost, property ownership, and other factors.*
- Can roads be widened, or sidewalks be constructed where a trail is desired? *CTC reply: This depends upon topography, ownership, and cost.*
- Will the trail conform to 100 year flood plain standards? *CTC reply: trails are normally located within flood plains. The consultants will make general comments in the draft feasibility study. Detailed stormwater management design would not occur until preliminary design, a step after the current feasibility study.*