Delaware River Waterfront Corporation: Washington Avenue Waterfront Piers & District
Philadelphia, PA

ULI VIRTUAL ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL
ULI RESILIENCE LAND USE COHORT
APRIL 19-22, 2021
A special thank you to all panel participants!
Thank you to our sponsors!

JPMorgan Chase & Co.  

Delaware River Waterfront Corporation
URBAN LAND INSTITUTE
MISSION STATEMENT
Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.
“I am very concerned about the impacts of climate change on our environment... It is a difficult issue for our society to address because the impacts are long term and need for action is short term or, frankly, immediate.”

- Owen Thomas

ULI Global Chairman

CEO, Boston Properties
ULI 2020: Time for Change

June 2, 2020

“ULI’s 45,000 members are at the forefront of shaping the built environment and have **an important role to play in designing and building places in ways that help tackle, rather than perpetuate, the inequalities in our society.**”

- Ed Walter

ULI Global CEO
Since 1947, ULI’s Advisory Services Program have helped more than 700 communities find independent, strategic, and practical solutions for the most challenging land use issues.
Urban Resilience at ULI

- The Urban Resilience program brings ULI’s expertise in land use, real estate, and climate resilience to communities nationwide.
- Resilience panels:
  - Provide land use and development strategies for vulnerable sites
  - Assess policy opportunities to enhance community resilience
  - Craft strategies for implementation and funding
ULI Resilient Land Use Cohort (RLUC)

Program Overview

- RLUC is a platform for technical assistance and knowledge sharing between 8 cities and their ULI District Councils.
- RLUC leverages ULI member expertise to identify strategies for cities to be more resilient in the face of climate change and other vulnerabilities, as well as the related social, environmental, and economic impacts.
- The project is generously supported by JPMorgan Chase through a grant to the ULI Foundation.
Emerging Themes from ULI’s Resilience Program

Building the Business Case for Resilience in Waterfront Communities

- Resilience can create value for assets and the community
  - Asset level adaptation can preserve and generate real estate value
  - Community level adaptation provides economic benefits
- Evaluating and assessing climate risks at a market scale is essential
- Racial, social, and health equity is key to resilience
- Living with Water: Green infrastructure and nature-based solutions
ULI Panelists and Staff

Selected for their subject matter expertise to provide objective, volunteer recommendations

**Uwe Brandes (Panel Chair)**
Georgetown University
Washington, DC

**Elinor Bacon**
E.R. Bacon Development, LLC
Washington, DC

**Dr. Lynette Cardoch**
Moffatt & Nichol
Miami, FL

**Raymond W. Gastil**
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA

**Tyrone Rachal**
Urban Key Capital Partners
Atlanta, GA

**Michael Rodriguez**
The MITRE Corporation
McLean, VA

**Michael Samuelian**
Cornell Tech
New York, NY

**Dawveed Sully**
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, LLP
Chicago, IL

**ULI Staff**

**Kelsey Steffen**
Director
Advisory Services

**Leah Sheppard**
Manager
Urban Resilience
What We Did This Week...

Monday, April 19
Full-day briefings with DRWC and ULI Philadelphia staff including a virtual site visit.

Tuesday, April 20
Confidential interviews with over 30 individual stakeholders.

Wednesday, April 21
Panel was sequestered in order to synthesize, analyze and deliberate.

Thursday, April 22
Present our preliminary findings.

To follow over the next month:
Prepare a written report.
The Site and the Challenge
The Urban Location

Credit: Google Earth
A Site of Rich History

1928 Waterfront
Urban Waterfront Location
Study Area
The Piers
### Matrix of Pier Conditions and Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pier Number/Name</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Upland</th>
<th>Proposed Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pier 53 (Washington Ave)</td>
<td>DRWC</td>
<td>Retrofitted in 2011</td>
<td>Publicly Accessible</td>
<td>Sheet Metal Workers Union</td>
<td>Riparian Habitat with Public Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 55</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>DRWC Trail, K4 Ownership beyond</td>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 56</td>
<td>DRWC</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Below-water</td>
<td>DRWC owned trail, K4 Ownership beyond</td>
<td>Riparian Habitat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 57</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>DRWC owned trail, K4 Ownership beyond</td>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 60</td>
<td>US Construction</td>
<td>Fenced-Off</td>
<td>Intact, Concrete</td>
<td>Vacant, in permitting</td>
<td>Residential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 62</td>
<td>US Construction</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>Vacant, in permitting</td>
<td>Private Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 63</td>
<td>US Construction</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>Vacant, in permitting</td>
<td>Private Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pier 64</td>
<td>DRWC</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>Big box stores, Tasker St</td>
<td>Riparian Habitat with Public Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pier 67</td>
<td>DRWC</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>Big box stores</td>
<td>Riparian Habitat with Public Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pier 68</td>
<td>DRWC</td>
<td>Retrofitted in 2015</td>
<td>Publicly Accessible</td>
<td>Big box stores</td>
<td>Riparian Habitat with Public Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pier 70</td>
<td>DRWC</td>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>Collapsed, Above-water</td>
<td>Big box stores</td>
<td>Riparian Habitat with Public Access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context: Site Ownership

Credit: DRWC

Resilient Land Use Cohort: Philadelphia, PA (April 2021)
500-Year Storm Today
Questions Posed to the Panel by DRWC

1. **What are the market realities of the piers and adjacent properties?**
   - How might the overall approach to development in the study area change depending on how the piers are used (green/public open space vs building development)?
   - How can the pier system and development along the Delaware River support each other financially and/or work together to reach resilience goals for DRWC and the City?

2. **How might the piers be used in the future?**
   - If the piers can be developed with a building program, how might we incentivize resilient development the responds to the goals of DRWC as outlined in the Master Plan?
   - If they should remain green/public, what incentives/regulations should be in place to ensure property owners participate?

3. **What are the best practices for implementing the advised use program?**
   - How can DRWC, the City of Philadelphia, as well as state and federal agencies update their planning and regulatory documents to ensure resilient development long term?
Advisory Panel: Key Considerations in Our Approach

1. How can we build on the very considerable achievements and momentum of the DRWC?
2. What is a world-class urban waterfront in the 21st century?
3. What is a resilient waterfront in the age of climate change?
4. How does this place become fully connected, truly inclusive and responsibly equitable?
5. How can DRWC leverage its own mission to attract private capital to the site?
6. How might the pandemic impact the future of land uses on this site?
7. How can we honor the globally significant history of the Philadelphia waterfront?
Ten Ideas Guiding Our Recommendations

1. **Keep Your Eyes on the Prize.** Fearlessly carry the torch of the comprehensive big-picture vision of a world-class Delaware River waterfront.

2. **The City of Brotherly Love.** Articulate a truly inclusive vision of what it means to “provide access to the waterfront”.

3. **Create People Places.** Put human experience at the center of the strategy.

4. **Call the Plays.** DRWC is a mission-driven economic development organization and the quarterback of one of the most complex urban development projects in the City of Philadelphia.

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6. **Always Stay a Step Ahead.** Planning never ends; planning anticipates new problems and finds new solutions across many phases, scales and issues of the project.

7. **Work Your Land.** This site has land! ...and land enables options, choices and flexible solutions.

8. **Be a Knowledge Broker.** Investments in this complex waterfront (public and private) requires new knowledge, coordination, collaboration and negotiation. This is DRWC’s call to action.

9. **Broadcast Your Priorities.** An expansive vacant waterfront requires a clearly articulated value creation strategy and a risk mitigation plan.

10. **Don’t Forget the Water!** The water is your gold and supports activities and uses that cannot be found anywhere else in the city.
We Are Bullish on the Philadelphia's Delaware Waterfront!

The world is recognizing how amazing Philadelphia is...and the Delaware Waterfront has arrived.
Implementation Theme 1:
Climate Change, Risk & Resilience
Interconnected Systems: Physical, Economic, Social

Hurricane Michael
Mexico Beach, FL
(October 2018)
Perspective: Not “If it floods”, but “When it floods”

- The site is vulnerable to flooding today and worse in recent years.
- Site and uplands were created in floodplain.
Issues and Observations

- A vulnerability assessment needs to be done to acknowledge the risks to the area in order to manage its resiliency.
- While the area seems isolated, the site is part of a larger interconnected urban system that includes critical lifelines; transportation, water, energy, social systems and more.
- The physical environmental exposures directly impacts the economic and social well-being of the site.
- Develop an understanding of the potential threats and vulnerabilities in order to quantify the risk profile, inform land uses, and develop mitigation strategies.
- Understand the vulnerabilities and opportunities that the piers provide, every pier is different and should have a tailored approach.
- Consider the entire site as a protective buffer for South Philadelphia.
Front Lines of Exposure: South Philadelphia

Cat 3 National Storm Surge Hazard Slosh Model
Consider Both Sides of the River

Economic strategies are dependent on a more regional approach
Work With Water; Acknowledge Rising Tides

Credit: Moffatt & Nichol, Swire Properties, edsa
Work With Water; Acknowledge Rising Tides

Credit: Moffatt & Nichol, Swire Properties, edsa
Precedent: Soften the Edge
Precedent: Bring Fun to the Water’s Edge
Precedent: Elevate the Design of Piers
Precedent: Embed Environmental Education

Credit: SCAPE Landscape Architects
Precedent: Expand Waterborne Transportation Network
Opportunities

- Think Bigger, create a vision for the waterfront that is active, authentic and sustainable
- Establish DRWC as an active convener of both the regulators and the private development community
- Every Pier is Special → Create a Pier Roadmap
  - Condition assessment on structural integrity and existing habitat to guide development actions
- Identify strategic upland areas for increment improvements to resiliency
- Bundle Projects → Larger project footprint
  - Enables mitigation strategies
  - Opens broader grant opportunities
- How you plan, use and develop the site and uplands that would enhance its protective capacity?
Resilient System Solutions That Build Upon Each Other
Recommendations

- Update 2011 masterplan to incorporate coastal resiliency and adaptation plan
  - Identify anticipated coastal hazards from future physical changes (E.g., coastal flooding (pluvial and riverine), storm surge, erosion, etc.)

- Develop design standards that reduce risks, such as “living with water”

- Promote mixed-use development with a lot of green space and space for the water to come in and out

- Expand water-borne transportation to activate the water’s edge with a ferry network to connect multiple current and future destinations along Delaware River

- Include Camden as a stakeholder in the environmental, social, and economic resiliency of the River

- Establish multiple lines of defense to mitigate the effects of climate change, sea level rise and storm surge

- DRWC should embrace their leadership in resiliency for the whole waterfront, including uplands
Implementation Theme 2: Site Strategies & Access
Conect the Riverfront, the Neighborhood, and the City

Strengthen Major Connectors

- **North-South – Along the River’s Edge**
  - Complete the Delaware River Trail (DRT) ASAP.
  - Expand the Easement area for the DRT to Allow for Additional Mobility:
    - On a site-by-site basis, consider limited/slow street access to riverside of new development for greater sense of public ownership of riverfront.

- **East-West - To the Neighborhoods and the City**
  - Implement and Expand River Access Streets Designation/Equivalent
    - Major Connection- Complete Washington Avenue Connector.
    - Establish Reed Street as “River Access Street” equivalent – near-term connection.
    - Plan for East-West Connector through U.S. Construction Site – Dickinson St, connects to neighborhood.
    - Major Connection - Establish near and longer-term strategy for Tasker St.
      - Easement to reach riverfront trail.
Connect the Riverfront, the Neighborhood, and the City

Identify and Build Key Transit/Multi-Modal Nodes

- Stations/sites for bus transit, walk, bike, micro-mobility and micro-transit at north and south:
  - Walk, Bike, and Roll.

- At the Washington Avenue Connector.

- At Pier 70: the big box retail parking lot with pedestrian/micro-mobility path (tactical & longer-term).

- At Pier 60 as potential stop for multistep Delaware River ferry/waterborne activity center.
Building Resilience and Restoring Ecology

- Build on Identity of the Study Area as a Model for Resilience and Restoration:
- Identify Pier/Wetlands Open Space as Part of Overall Site Strategy.
  - Pier 53 to Pier 57 at the northern end.
  - Pier 70 to Pier 63 at the southern end.
- Establish Matrix of Conditions, Uses, and Projects for Piers:
  - Expand on South Wetlands Park plan study of pier conditions to the full site.
  - Including Piers 53 and 68 – Completed, confirm condition and adaptability.
  - Establish priorities for South Wetlands Park re phasing, priorities for habitat, access, and investment.
  - Piers at north and south move towards concept of different levels of reconstruction and access but stay largely green/as is in response to Resilience and Restoration Model.
  - Pier 60 – confirm that in scale and condition it can serve as focal activity pier.
- Work to Widen the 50-foot Waterfront Easement for Environmental/Public Space Benefits:
  - “Front Yard” for Neighboring Communities.
  - Climate/Flood Mitigation.
Reimagine and Retrofit Development

- Infrastructure retrofits/development retrofit:
  - Washington Avenue Connector.
  - “Pier 70 Connector” through the big box retail site for interim and longer-term.
  - Potential Tasker connector/easement.
  - Reed Street through to Delaware River Trail.

- Big box retail parking lot and site retrofit:
  - Tactical, Short Term re Park/Lot interface and Transit.
  - Interim event use.
  - Portion of lot rededicated to permeable surface.
  - Longer Term, utilize opportunity for large open space (parking lot) while designing for denser development.
Summary: Guiding Future Growth

- Building Resilience/Restoration Identity for Entire Study Area, Beyond the South Wetlands Park.
- Balance and Phase Priorities for Piers/Related to Resilient Site Strategy.
- Plan for “Philadelphia Blocks” for Both Major Development Sites.
- Design for Wider River Trail/Front Yard For Pennsport and Neighboring Communities.
- East West Connectors at North, Middle and South of “Pennsport East.”
- Activities and Mobility Centers at Washington Ave, Pier 60, and Pier 68/70.
  - Master Plan vision for study area.
  - The River Access Streets Use Requirements.
  - Further demonstration/illustration of Height Bonus Structure for site strategy public benefits.
Summary Diagram

- Explore other opportunities for more community connections
- Improve pedestrian and bike safety on Columbus Ave
- Implement Washington Ave public realm improvements
- Collaborate to reimagine Pier 70 Blvd as a gateway to the waterfront
- Embrace the rewilding for resiliency and education
- Collaborate with US Construction to reimagine Pier 60
- Water taxi as part of the waterfront experience

Credit: ULI
Implementation Theme 3: Engagement, Inclusion & Equity
Access Through Engagement

- Continue on-going city-wide community engagement through the Central Delaware Advocacy Group (CDAG)

- Focused engagement with waterfront communities adjacent to study area, in partnership with CDAG, to address physical barriers to accessing waterfront (identify preferred connector street on South end of study area, crossing I 95 and Delaware Avenue, creating clear route to waterfront)
  - Pennsport
  - Whitman
  - Dickinson Square West
  - Queen Village
Access Through Inclusion

Targeted engagement with Philadelphia communities distant from the Waterfront to assure inclusion.

- Outreach to engage communities throughout city in their own neighborhoods
- Inclusive meetings bringing together adjacent and distant communities, providing transportation to the Waterfront
- Create a community-based heritage program to celebrate key events, places and people during history of the Waterfront
Access Through Programming

- Create Comprehensive Waterfront Activation Program
  - Different types of programming for different audiences and different locations
  - Small programs and big
  - Active and passive uses
  - Seasonal programs throughout year
  - Extend programming along the entire length of the DRWC Waterfront
  - Focus environmental/sustainability programs in Study Area
    - Bird watchers and nature interpretation
    - Programs for children
    - Exercise on accessible piers
    - Promote all feasible water activities – kayaks, canoes, paddle boats
    - Create multiple "get-downs" to the water
Access Through Equity

- Build on existing M/W/DBE program and consider expanding to include
  - 35% goods and services to Philadelphia firms
  - 15-20% MBE; 10-15% WBE
  - Best efforts DBE
  - Rigorous monitoring of progress, shared regularly with community stakeholders

- Establish objectives for Jobs and Apprenticeships for Philadelphia residents
  - Propose 51% of new jobs and apprenticeships to Philadelphia residents
    - 20% of that total to Philadelphia residents from disadvantaged neighborhoods
    - If not already in place, create agreement with Unions, to give preference to Philadelphia residents, particularly from zip codes identified as disadvantaged.
  - Rigorous monitoring of progress, shared regularly with community stakeholders

- Private Sites
  - Work with owners to find ways to achieve community economic development objectives, both in business participation and jobs, and jointly establish quantifiable goals.
  - Offer support to such owners in identifying qualified candidates, calling on well-established non-profit entities, experienced in such work.
Implementation Theme 4: Markets & Attracting Capital
Overview Considerations

- **DRWC is an economic development organization!** Get hungry. Get creative. Partner-up. Make it happen. Position yourself as a value-add intermediary and problem-solver on issues such as permitting, stormwater, remediation, etc. Work with developers to get the outcomes that you want. (Piers will require subsidy in any scenario).

- **Need to catalyze more private sector collaboration.** Explore different tools. Encourage new partnerships. Buy sites if you can afford to. Leverage infrastructure investments. Create a BID and/or TIF District.

- **Value creation and capture strategy.** Create land value where you want it. Accept the status quo where you need to and work to transform it where you can. Connect value creation to new finance mechanisms.
Implementation Capacity Considerations

- Organizational capacity to marshal the project forward.
- DRWC has provided dedicated staff to focus on project implementation.
- DRWC should continue to be staffed and supported to complete the public development process and the ongoing maintenance role.
- Unlocking private sector value will present additional complexities given land parcels that are not currently owned and controlled by DWRC and City.
- Increased reliance on public private partnership (P3) projects to generate additional resources to pay for the public portion of the project will need increased skills sets and resources at the staff level.
“The Public Sector Entrepreneur”

Public Private Partnership inherently focuses on the public sector as an investor that expects a return of its investment:

- Investment is not a “give-away”.
- This is about putting money where our mouths are (priorities).
- Return is measured in monetary ways (e.g., bringing non-productive assets back into service and on the tax rolls) but also in intangible ways (e.g., catalytic effect on the future private development along the waterfront).
- Smart partnership is required to unlock the potential to implement.
- Requires a different mindset (public sector as “quarterback”).
Maximization of P3 Opportunities to Generate Value

- Power to develop or redevelop an area or site, often blighted or underused.
- Proactively initiated by the public sector to achieve key public objectives:
  - Downtown revitalization
  - Housing
  - Commercial and retail development
  - Catalytic impact
  - Quality of life
- Maximization of P3 opportunities creates value that can be used to cover upfront park infrastructure costs (value capture).
- For DWRC, we must maintain an appropriate balance between public realm and P3 opportunities to unlock this value.
Financial Tools Already Available

- Monetized Fee Income
- Philanthropic Grants
- Other Grants (County, State, Federal)
- Revenue Bonds and/or Pay-as-You-Go
  - Business Improvement District (BID)
  - TIF (City and County)
- City General Obligation Bonds
- Property Tax Abatement Coordination to Maximize Value Creation
Financial Tools to be Considered

- Private Development Fee Impact Contribution
- Sales, Use and/or Hotel Occupancy Taxes
- Tax Credit Programs (not applicable for study area but available for northern segments)
- Corporate Sponsorship
- Program Related Investment
- Traditional Debt Instruments
- Additional Tax Levies
Spectrum of Financial Implementation Tools
An Abbreviated Toolkit

Most Tools that Communities Use

- City-wide tax increases
- Deficit finance
- Special-purpose revenue / fees
- Tax Increment Financing
- Special revenue districts
- Public Private Partnerships
- Business Improvement Districts
- Grants / philanthropy
- Tax incentives
- 100% laissez faire

Gov't-led development / eminent domain

Credit: ULI
Value Creation and Capture for Public Uses
A Layered BID/TIF

1. Identify and acknowledge the value created by public-realm amenities (trails, parks, environmental destinations)
2. Create additional value through branding, identity, and “destination” creation
3. Build developer / private sector buy-in towards the creation of a BID
4. Leverage a BID for high-visibility, community-utilized projects (mix of public spaces, private developments, destination retail/experience, and shared-use spaces).
5. Build upon “wins” from BID towards a vision of a larger TIF District that can be leveraged for larger infrastructure and project improvements (TIF District will require much more consideration and political will)
Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc / Monroe North TIF

- Grand Rapids Downtown, Inc. first formed to rebrand and re-inspire development in Downtown
- Monroe North TIF
  - Funds development along a specific waterfront area
  - Funds used to
    - support real property development
    - Streets
    - Public infrastructure
    - Parks and public amenities

Credit: Flickr, Paul Hart
Key Take-Aways and Recommended Next Steps
Ten Ideas Guiding Our Recommendations

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Go, DRWC Go! Keep Up the Momentum...

- Complete each segment of the continuous waterfront trail.
- Maintain focus on all underpass and street connector projects.
- Affirm the South Wetlands park vision as a conceptual direction for the future of the south piers.
- Continue to make grant-driven improvements to DRWC-owned piers.
Tomorrow Morning: DRWC's New To-Do List

- Commence negotiations with the Army Corps on a multi-pier permitting strategy with mitigation "banking."
- Prepare a scope of work for a area-wide integrated infrastructure plan (flooding, mobility, utilities, site elevations, stormwater, fire & life safety)
- Convene all land-owners to initiate the creation of a BID or CID (includes residential).
- Meet with City and State to position DRWC for federal resilient infrastructure funding.
- Create community steering committees to explore place-based waterfront programming.
Over the Next Year...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work with regulators on permitting protocols for new construction in the floodplain.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance civic engagement to make the waterfront for all of Philadelphia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buy as much water frontage as is feasible. Negotiate select setbacks beyond the 50’ requirement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft a 15-year capital improvement plan and make it public in order to build support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate with owners of Pier 60 and affirm DRWC's vision of pier as a central public amenity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate design, permitting and development activities with all land-owners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commence feasibility study for a potential TIF District.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commence urban design guidelines, including long-term phasing scenarios.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiate public right-of-ways for direct access to waterfront from Delaware Ave.</td>
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</table>
Thank you!

http://www.uli.org/advisoryservices