

GSSC IAC Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2023

AGENDA:

7:00 P.M.	Welcome, Announcements, and Recap of June 6 Meeting	Phillip Usatine (GSSC IAC Co-Chair)
7:15 P.M.	Great Seneca Plan: Transportation Background and Big Ideas	Montgomery Planning Staff
8:00 P.M.	Great Seneca Plan: Economy Background and Big Ideas	Montgomery Planning Staff
8:25 P.M.	Great Seneca Plan: Plan Implementation Big Ideas	Montgomery Planning Staff
8:45 P.M.	Great Seneca Plan: Next Steps	Montgomery Planning Staff
9:00 P.M.	Adjourn	All

Agenda Review, Announcements, & Recap of June 06 Meeting:

Brief discussion on whether we would take a summer break from committee meetings.

During quick recap, development availability pipeline concerns were again raised as an issue to the implementation of the Plan.

Transportation:

Scribe's Note: There were a large number of very detailed slides that set background, showed current state, highlighted problems, etc. It would be interesting (though perhaps not possible) to craft a higher-level slide that reflects multiple key elements on one map, maybe as a before (current state) and after.

Key Background/Current State Takeaways:

- Limited local “street grids” force all traffic onto major roadways.

- Proposed interchanges from 2010 Master Plan all abandoned except one.
- Question: Asked presenter to define “undesirable” and “uncomfortable” sidewalks and crossings.
- Question: How relevant are the equity-focused breakdowns for the LSC? Generally, less relevant for our specific area.
- Great Seneca Transit Network (GSTN) provides new bus routes, including some dedicated bus lanes, in GSSC area.
- Question: How does GSTN impact existing bus routes? Presenter did not know.
- Corridor Forward: Re-imagination of CCT; confirms that CCT as proposed in 2010 Master Plan is dead. Aligns with GSTN and dedicated bus lanes.

Big Ideas:

- Introduce a Street Grid, which should take traffic off of major roadways. This allows for . . .
- Right-sizing of travel lanes on major roadways. This should lead to more desirable sidewalks and crossings.
- Question: Does right-sizing of lanes consider the traffic that is *passing through* the GSSC area on the way to 270 from points west (and north/south west)? Simple answer was “no.”
- LSC Loop and additional bikeways (perhaps sharing with dedicated bus lanes).
Mark Prator Comment: I didn't think of this at the time, but these proposed bikeways will be on the major roadways which will have “right-sized” (i.e., will now have less) traffic lanes for cars, but will still be carrying through traffic from the west and northwest. This seems like a recipe for serious accidents (and fatalities) involving bikes.
- Linear Park presented
Mark Prator Comment: This doesn't seem like a “Big Idea” for the transportation section. Parks benefits from a right-sizing of lanes, but I wouldn't' but this here as a “Big Idea.”
- Question: There was no discussion of micro-transit (e-bikes, scooters, etc.); have these alternative forms of transit been considered in the plan? Simple answer is “no” (or maybe “not yet”).

Interlude:

Discussion that since we are running short of time this evening, how do we want to proceed. Decision was to go through Real Estate et al. quickly tonight (shorter subjects), then have the committee reconvene in the near-term to discuss and put together a recommendation prior to the presentation to the Planning Board at the end of July.

Real Estate, Economy, and Employment:

Key Background/Current State Takeaways:

- GSSC/LSC area has significant growth opportunity, especially, but not exclusively, in Life Sciences.

- Life Sciences presence drives higher than average \$ (higher rent, lower vacancy, etc.).
- There has been VERY little new real estate delivery in LSC area since 2012; indicative of pipeline issue discussed multiple times previously.
- Our area is lagging vs. other life sciences hubs.

Mark Prator comment: DEFINITELY not an apples-to-apples comparison; comparing a small part of one suburban county to large metropolitan areas).

Big Ideas:

It was pointed out that most of this area's big ideas are standard good economic development practices, plus

- 1) Focus on development of small and medium-size lab space (incubator),
- 2) Consider public and other creative investment into early-stage companies, and
- 3) Consider developing an economic development organization responsible for the overall growth of the LSC area (discussed more in the implementation section).

Conclusion:

Very briefly spoke to barriers and implementation, as they had already been discussed at least in part earlier. Reiterated that the intent is to provide a more detailed version of the "Big Ideas" to the County Planning Board at the end of July. The committee will have to determine how to reconvene, discuss, and make specific recommendations before then.