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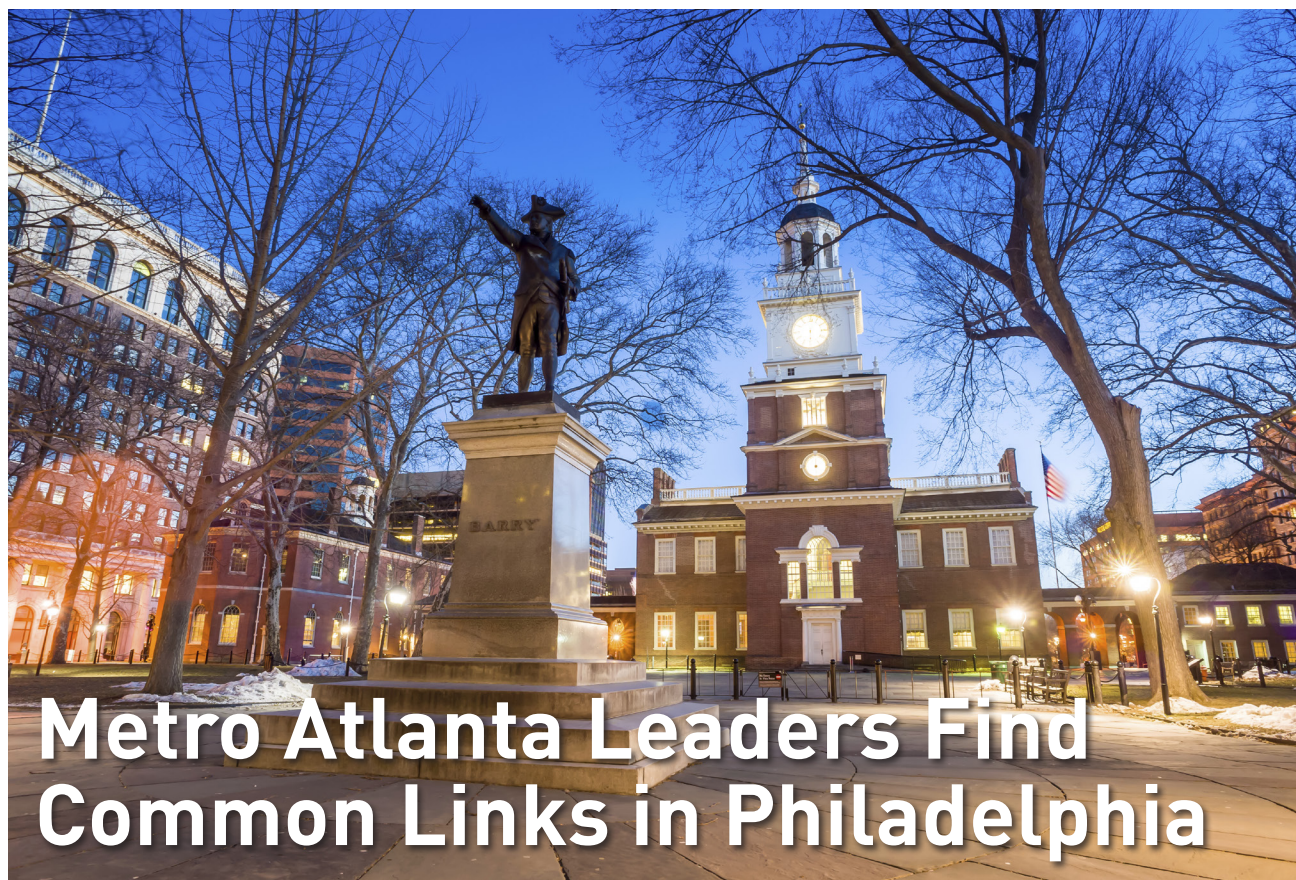


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Metro Atlanta Leaders Find Common Links in Philadelphia

The Philadelphia region is the sixth most populous in the U.S. with just over six million residents, making it a good comparison to the Atlanta region with 5.4 million. The two have other similarities, as well, such as a large university presence, growing economies and closed military bases being repurposed for economic development.

However, unlike metro Atlanta, more than 25 percent (1.5 million) of the Philadelphia region's population lives within the City of Philadelphia. Philly's economy rests on the back of its "biopharma" cluster and it has a mural arts program responsible for more than 3,800 murals covering city walls.

With these similarities and differences in mind, more than 100 LINK participants traveled to Greater Philadelphia in May to gain new insights into metro Atlanta's successes and struggles. Over the course of three days, the group met at the National Constitution Center, the University City Science Center and The Navy Yard. They heard from former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, current Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter, Drexel University president John Fry, Philadelphia schools superintendent Richard Hite, two deputy mayors and the Chief Development Officer of Urban Outfitters, to name a few.

While many innovative ideas were shared, LINK participants were particularly interested in following up in four key areas upon their return:

- » State transportation funding
- » Working together as a region
- » Making education part of every discussion
- » Taking a collaborative approach to economic development

State Transportation Funding

Even though this 18th group of LINK participants had discussions on new topics and heard ideas from different speakers, their top priority – by way of secret ballot – is a familiar one to the Atlanta region: Transportation Funding.

Because Georgia spends less per capita on transportation than any state besides Alaska, it is more reliant on the federal government for transportation funding than are most states. That federal funding is now in jeopardy as the Federal Highway Trust Fund is reaching insolvency and Congress has not agreed on even a temporary solution. At a LINK recap meeting on June 5, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) board member and LINK participant Dana Lemon explained that more than half of the state's annual transportation budget comes from the federal government. Lemon said that this federal dependency not only puts Georgia in fiscal jeopardy at times like this, it also makes our projects take longer due to the exhaustive regulations and red tape involved in building a project through the federal process.



The Philadelphia metro area receives transportation funding and guidance from both Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It also borders Maryland and Delaware. While this can make things a little complicated, Barry Seymour of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission said that they are seeing more cooperation amongst the states and he proudly touted the state's new transportation funding law that provides an additional \$2.3 billion annually for roads, bridges and public transportation.

Seymour said that the people behind the bill, which increased the state's gas tax and some driver fees, discussed the issues that are most important to residents of cities and of rural areas, and to those who support roads and those who support public transportation. The legislation spends 70 percent of the revenue on roads and bridges all over the state, with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) receiving the other 30 percent. This doubled the annual operating budget of SEPTA, while also providing more aggressive maintenance for the state's roads and bridges.

While it didn't hurt that the bill had a champion in each house of the legislature and that Pennsylvania's Republican governor was behind the bill, Seymour and other panelists agreed that the key to developing winning legislation was to listen to everyone so that state legislators could feel comfortable voting for it. The measure failed twice in the 2013 session before finally passing the House by a 106-95 vote.

Work Together as a Region

The second priority for LINK participants is increasing the amount of collaboration within the Atlanta region. This theme was constant throughout the trip, beginning with a video shown on the buses as participants left the Philadelphia airport. While new efforts like the Atlanta Aerotropolis Alliance and the Atlanta Regional Economic Competitiveness Strategy were praised by LINK participants, many said that better communication and a more united front are required if metro Atlanta is going to be all that it can be.

Members of Thursday's panel on "Philadelphia's Future Economy" agreed, saying that good things happen when there is a broad alignment of will and resources. They also said that this combined energy must be leveraged and taken advantage of when it happens.

Seymour illustrated this by telling the group that the Greater Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission governments had come together with bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups to be awarded a \$25 million TIGER grant from the federal government. Several panels also mentioned the importance of nonprofits and of the universities in the Philadelphia region. Both of these groups play large roles in building and sustaining Philadelphia's economic success.

Several panelists also mentioned how critical it is to have a champion for the region and for collaboration. These champions might be individuals or they might be organizations. In the Philadelphia region, the universities have championed the idea of collaborative efforts that benefit their students and the community at large. The University of Pennsylvania, Temple University and Drexel University have all undertaken programs to help revitalize neighborhoods around their campuses. According to Drexel University President Jim Frey, the universities do this to increase property values on and around campus, but the end result is more commercial investment in the community, which is a plus for the entire Philadelphia region.

During Thursday's "Investing in Communities" panel, Della Clark, president of the Enterprise Center, told the group that the local universities are encouraged to keep more of their revenue in the Philly area by purchasing local food and using local furniture installation vendors. She also mentioned that when a local business contributes to a community services organization, that business gets a break on city business taxes. On the other hand, the region has invested heavily in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to make it safer for students to move about the region and take advantage of classes and programs at all the universities.

This conversation led to LINK participants discussing how Georgia State, Georgia Tech and the Atlanta University Center might better connect both physically and through joint programs. There were also discussions about how the Atlanta region's hospitals, local governments and major employers might provide better connections to learning/career programs and could work more closely with college and high school students to create more opportunities for internships.



Education Must Be Part of Every Discussion

Greater Philadelphia is home to more than 100 institutions of higher learning and almost 380,000 college students. But more important than numbers to the LINK participants was how intentional the leaders of the Philly region were about including students and educational institutions in discussions of the area's future.

In fact, the speakers on the “Metropolitan Schools Challenges and Opportunities” panel all said that education, from Kindergarten through post high school, is the key to any metro region's future and must be part of any serious conversation. However, they said that unlike members of most other advocacy groups, the kids don't have voices in policy discussions. It's up to the adults to make sure education is at the top of everyone's mind.

The panelists also agreed that standardized tests and other typical tools used today are not the best ways to gauge educational progress. They discussed

surveying students, parents and colleagues to get feedback on teachers and administrators. That input could be combined with trends in test scores and other parameters in an attempt to get a clearer picture of an educator's performance.

“Standards and achievement are not the same,” said Philadelphia School District Superintendent Dr. William Hite. Hite, who was formerly with the Cobb County School District in metro Atlanta, said that high standards are required for students and educators, as are multiple avenues of evaluation.

Lisa Nutter of Philadelphia Academies, Inc, said that the development of curriculum and evaluation should start with the question, “What does the world require of this student?” She said we need to consider a student's goals and likely career path and help them be prepared when they reach the next step. For example, if a student wants to go to college or technical school, we should be teaching them what to expect when he/she gets there. If not, we need to prepare them for the workforce.

Nutter said that school doesn't teach students about collaboration and leadership. They learn those skills through life events and experiences that help them decide their futures. She believes that schools need to be structured to allow the community more participation to teach real-world skills and lessons.

No matter how we get there, all four panelists agreed that better, more consistent educational experiences are critical to the Philadelphia region's future. LINK participants agreed that this conversation is a key to metro Atlanta's future, as well.



Collaborative Approach to Economic Development

The theme of collaboration ran throughout the 2014 LINK trip. Nowhere was it felt more strongly than during discussions about innovation and economic development. Friday's panel titled “From Idea to Business Success,” was all about collaboration amongst startups and entrepreneurs.

Dr. Stephen Tang, President and CEO of the University City Science Center, explained that center's reason for being is to encourage this collaboration and give entrepreneurs a place to gather, learn, work and bounce ideas off of each other. Michelle Lee of Textizen explained that, "When you're running a start-up, you have no idea what you're doing." She said that it's important to put rookie entrepreneurs together with experienced entrepreneurs to help them get on their feet and get their business running. She said that investments in entrepreneurs and innovation matter. "You must have anchor institutions. The place has to matter. Otherwise, ideas would be bought and moved all the time."

And this line of thinking is not lost on the policy makers of greater Philadelphia. When Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter addressed the LINK participants, he mentioned that the City of Philadelphia put \$3 million in a fund for startups and venture capital, called Startup PHL. They then issued an RFP for a financial management company willing to run the fund and match the city's \$3 million. They found that partner in First Round Capital, which now manages the \$6 million fund.

But, as Dr. Tang pointed out, money isn't all you need to have innovation. Tang said that entrepreneurs need the money, but that the good ideas must come first. He used the example of electricity, "Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity, but the guy who invented the meter made all the money." He said that while the money in Startup PHL is important, the message of support it sends to entrepreneurs is even more important.

Many LINK participants were interested in helping entrepreneurs of all ages in metro Atlanta. Katie Kirkpatrick of the Metro Atlanta Chamber said that one way to ensure we are helping them in the future is to encourage their participation in LINK. She said that the trip should be led by these innovative thinkers. ARC Chairman Kerry Armstrong echoed that sentiment when he said that we all impact this in our jobs every day and we need to think about how we can either help or get out of the way.



Positive Energy

Aside from lessons learned with these specific subject areas, the overall theme of the trip seemed to be the positive energy and outlook of the Philadelphia leaders. No matter the challenge, they seemed to face it with a can-do attitude if not a smile.



Other Lessons Learned

Overview of the Greater Philadelphia Region

Ira Goldstein, President, Policy Solutions, The Reinvestment Fund

19 percent of Greater Philadelphia's population is over 60, compared to 14 percent of metro Atlanta's

- » 25 percent of the region's population lives in the City of Philadelphia
- » 8 Fortune 500 companies call Greater Philadelphia home, compared to 13 in metro Atlanta

Goldstein compared the Philadelphia region to an investment bond with slow, steady growth. He said that Atlanta and Philly are very comparable by the numbers, but they are very different regions based on their relative ages and growth patterns. However, he said that the people of both regions seem to believe in the adage, "If you do not see a way, make one."

How Things Get Done in Greater Philadelphia

Barry Seymour, Executive Director, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Louis Cappelli, Jr., Freeholder Director, Camden County, NJ

Shawn McCaney, Commissioner, School Reform Commission

David Thornburgh, Executive Director, Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania

- » Philadelphia was the world's workshop 100 years ago
- » Like Georgia, Pennsylvania is primarily a rural state, with similar politics
- » Another struggle is the region's location on the borders of three states

David Thornburgh said that the 200+ local governments in the Philadelphia region acted like 1,000 separate rooms with no connecting doors until a LINK-like trip to Chicago that prompted the region's economic development professionals to

begin working together. That spirit of collaboration has spread to governments, foundations and others over time. The panel said that the decline in manufacturing and the number of college graduates and startup companies has forced the region to reinvent itself, which has led to many recent successes.

Downtown Philadelphia Renaissance

Paul Levy, President & CEO, Center City District

- » For 300 years, the City of Philadelphia sat still in regards to urban form
- » 2.1 million was the central city's peak population in 1950
- » 327 outdoor cafes and 60 years of historic preservation work have helped revitalize the central city

Levy said that decentralization in the 60s, 70s and 80s threatened to ruin the central city. By making the city cleaner, cutting serious crime in half, providing transit to roughly 305,000 riders per day and a marketing campaign that convinced people that "Philadelphia isn't as bad as Philadelphia says it is," the central city population has begun to increase again. Levy said that an intentional emphasis on arts and the city's history was also important to its growth, as was a tax abatement program for people who purchased abandoned properties.

The West Philadelphia Transformation

John Fry, President, Drexel University

- » Drexel is located in a federal Promise Zone
- » The university purchases abandoned properties and fixes them up
- » The public school on Drexel's property is university subsidized by \$1,000 per student up to \$800,000

With Drexel University acting as a catalyst to revitalize west Philadelphia, the area has become a cleaner, safer place to live and work. Fry said that collaboration with the city, state and local neighborhoods has been key to their work. He said that the governments reduce red tape and make it easier for the university to accomplish its goals. He emphasized the importance of anchor institutions being good neighbors and leading community investment, revitalization, and overall wellbeing.

Investing in Communities

Della Clark, President, Enterprise Center

Rick Sauer, Executive Director, Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations

Cynthia Figueroa, President & CEO, Congreso de Latinos Unidos

Sharmain Matlock-Turner, President, Urban Affairs Coalition

- » \$30,000 is the homestead exemption for all homeowners in Philadelphia regardless of the value of their home
- » Partnerships with universities have been instrumental in driving minority business

This panel covered a wide range of topics, but focused most of its attention on the tax exemptions for people who purchase abandoned properties and another for low-income property owners that delays their tax payment until they sale the property. The panelists also discussed the importance of education, especially for minority populations and praised the region's partnerships with universities.

Philadelphia Mural Arts Program – Beyond the Paint

Jane Golden, Executive Director, Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

- » At least 100 communities are engaged in program each year
- » More than 3,800 murals painted so far
- » Almost 2,000 youth getting free art education

The Philadelphia Mural Arts Program began as an anti-graffiti campaign in a central city that struggled to attract new residents. Today, it employs 200 artists each year, including several of the most talent and prolific graffiti artists in the region. Since 2007, the program has partnered with the City's Department of Behavioral Health on 18 projects that focus



on mental health, substance abuse, faith, homelessness, trauma and other issues. Going beyond the paint, this program not only beautifies an area, it engages residents in community transformation. Golden brought such passion and energy, that on the final day of the LINK trip, participants raised more than \$70,000 to start a regional arts program in metro Atlanta.



Welcome from Mayor of Philadelphia

Michael A. Nutter, Mayor, City of Philadelphia

- » 26 percent of Greenworks Philadelphia projects are underway
- » 69 percent are currently in progress
- » The percentage of renewable energy being used in Philly has risen from 2.5 percent to 14 percent

Mayor Nutter addressed the LINK group over lunch on Thursday, tackling the difficult job of following his employee, Jane Golden. Nutter discussed several topics but was most proud of his city's comprehensive plan for sustainability called "Greenworks Philadelphia." Since its inception in 2009, this program has led the city toward more renewable energy, more locally-grown food, less waste and fewer vehicle miles traveled.

Philadelphia's Future Economy

Thomas Morr, President & CEO, Select Greater Philadelphia

Nick Frontino, Managing Director for Strategy & Operations, Economy League of Greater Philadelphia

John Grady, President, Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation

Alan Greenberger, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, City of Philadelphia

Craig Lesser, Chairman, Atlanta Regional Economic Competitiveness Committee



Political Celebrity Addresses LINK 2014

Over dinner on the opening night of the 2014 LINK trip, former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell told the participants that they must come together and “act as a region.” Rendell, who served as mayor of Philadelphia before running for governor, noted that both metro Atlanta and metro Philadelphia struggle to speak with one voice at the state capitol. Rendell said the best way to get the suburbs and the cities to speak with one voice is for everyone to vote for candidates at the local and state levels who have the region’s best interests at heart.

On Wednesday, David Thornburgh had described the Philadelphia region’s approach to economic development “a thousand rooms with no connecting doors.” Thanks to an inspiring LINK-like trip to Chicago and to the organizations represented on this panel, that is no longer the case all the time. The panel felt that the region’s close proximity to other major markets, like Washington DC, New York and Boston, makes collaboration throughout the region that much more critical.

From Idea to Business Success

Bob Moul, CEO, Artisan

Christopher Wink, Co-Founder & Editor, Technical.ly

Michelle Lee, Co-Founder & CEO, Textizen

Dr. Robert McGrath, Executive Director, Drexel Technology Commercialization

Dr. Stephen Tang, President & CEO, University City Science Center

- » In 1980, 52 percent of Philadelphia’s workforce was in manufacturing
- » 300,000 manufacturing jobs were lost over the next 30 years
- » 101 colleges and universities are preparing entrepreneurs and young professionals to drive the region forward

The panelists began by reminding everyone in the room that a startup is not a miniature version of a large company, and that every startup is different. They emphasized the importance of entrepreneurial infrastructure, not just venture capital and discounted space, but also a network of mentors and professionals ready to help entrepreneurs of all ages found, grow and develop their startup from idea to successful business. It was suggested that LINK participants read the book, “The Rainforest: The Secret to Building the Next Silicon Valley.”



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