The Master Plan for the Central Delaware, adopted by the City of Philadelphia in 2012, proposed a new vision for Penn’s Landing: reconnecting the city to the river through a spacious green park, sloping gently towards the river, connecting Chestnut and Walnut Streets from Front Street, over I-95, and across Columbus Blvd. Recognizing that Penn’s Landing was a signature opportunity for implementing the Master Plan and better connecting the city to its waterfront, DRWC hired a team led by Hargreaves Associates to test the economic and engineering feasibility of the original plan. This study was a necessary next step in advancing the Master Plan, offering not a brand new proposal for the space, but a better informed and refined version of the Master Plan’s concept. Over the next few weeks, DRWC will be sharing this study with the public.

The Penn’s Landing concept is first and foremost a connectivity project. The project aims to successfully reconnect the waterfront to Center City to allow waterfront access by all modes of travel. By creating a new and expanded bridge over I-95, we are able to create the space for a spectacular 12 acre civic space, framed by development that provides the necessary density and activity to support the associated public space. The plan uses strategic investment in key pieces of infrastructure like the cap over the highway and Columbus Boulevard, a park between Chestnut and Walnut, and an extension of the South Street pedestrian bridge to not only create better public spaces and access but also create opportunities for private investments that will be well integrated with the public realm.

This framework for Penn’s Landing builds upon the years of work and outreach, from the Civic Vision to the Master Plan for the Central Delaware that involved thousands of Philadelphians. During the past nine months, DRWC and Hargreaves have sought input from a wide range of stakeholders, including PennDOT, SEPTA, the Philadelphia Water Department, the Central Delaware Advocacy Group and others. The result is a conceptual framework for development that has been thoroughly vetted by both the public and the relevant government agencies.

After several decades of false starts and failed proposals for Penn’s Landing, Philadelphians have an understandable skepticism for new plans for the site. We believe that the concept we introduce today is fundamentally different than those of the past and therefore much more likely to succeed. Rather than a private interest proposing an isolated attraction, this plan is publicly led and focuses on connecting back to the city. It is also a relatively cost effective approach that relies on simple infrastructural improvements to address the separation issues that have made the waterfront and Penn’s Landing so challenging to redevelop. Our plan does not preclude additional caps over the highway or expanding the vision in the future but what we are proposing is a “big move.” It is an ambitious move but, most importantly, it is realistic and achievable in the near future.

And now we’d like to extend the planning process even further. Over the next few weeks, we’re going to share plans with you about the engineering analysis, transportation and connectivity, types of open
space, the economic and social impact to the neighborhood, the types of development we’re planning, and how we hope to get you there. To make this project happen, we have to start now. We want Philadelphians to know about the plan and let us know what you think. The public will have the ability to leave their thoughts, comments, and questions and we hope that you will. We also hope you’ll be as get excited about it as we are, and let decision-makers and elected officials know that you support it.

Now that we now the cost of the investment, DRWC will now be working hard over the coming months to secure the necessary financing for this project by seeking commitments from the relevant local, state, and federal resources. Check back to this website frequently for news. While there is still a lot of work to be done before we can break ground on this project, DRWC hopes you’ll support this exciting opportunity for Penn’s Landing, the Delaware River and the City of Philadelphia.