

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
JULY 15, 1997**

(Revised ... August 18, 1997)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of June 17, 1997 were approved with one clarification: Lorraine Brill reported that the Woodhaven Road project Environmental Impact Study (EIS) has not been completed; it is due at the end of 1997.

COCHAIR'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters announced that in order to facilitate future meetings, he will hear comments from opposing views on an issue until these comments become redundant. He also clarified the resignation of James Dixon, due to job responsibilities. The RCC, by consensus, expressed their thanks to Dixon for the time and effort he has contributed to this committee.

Winters mentioned the PENNVEST applications for funding assistance which were submitted to DVRPC for review for consistency with the regional plan, and outlined by Barry Seymour at the June DVRPC Board meeting. They generally included requests for upgrades to sewerage and storm water collection systems. Winters pointed out that these are infrastructure decisions that can effect regional issues, such as land use and growth. He stated that he felt the RCC should receive a list of these requests and subsequent Board action (in the same way that TIP modifications that are handled administratively are forwarded to the RCC for its information). The committee concurred.

The chairman also announced that he had reported the RCC recommendation to the Board last month regarding support for the dedication of ½ cent of the 4.3 cent federal gasoline tax for Amtrak's capital expenditures. The Senate Appropriations Committee is now considering action; Senator Arlen Specter is sponsoring a bill to this effect. He urged each citizen to contact Senator Specter's office in support of this concept. Winters also distributed a brochure/mailer supporting the standards of the Clean Air Act.

The committee discussed the scheduling of the August and September RCC meetings. They agreed that they will meet on August 19 at 1 p.m. to discuss the Year 2020 Task Force findings (a 6-page paper will be mailed to RCC members in early August); to hear a representative from the PA Utilities Commission outline taxi-related issues in the region; and to summarize comments on the proposed CSX-Norfolk Southern merger). The Transportation Subcommittee will not meet in August.

The committee then questioned the merits of meeting at either 4:30 or 6 p.m. on September 9th (the

RCC's new meeting date which conflicts that month with the RTC meeting).

After much discussion and in an effort to accommodate the schedule of potential new members who might be employed, the RCC agreed to hold its September meeting from 6 - 9 p.m. The DVRPC Board had requested that the RCC hold several evening meetings in an attempt to attract new members. A number of RCC members, however, expressed their dissatisfaction with this arrangement, citing few transit connections and long drives at night. The RCC discussed the need for day care for those who might bring their children, and refreshments since this is at the dinner hour. It will be necessary for DVRPC staff to be here to orient new members and to make presentations. Candace Snyder will make the appropriate arrangements after speaking with John Coscia. The Transportation Subcommittee will meet at 12 Noon on September 4th. A flyer will be sent out to approximately 450 groups and individuals with the help of the Clean Air Council.

PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE/I-95 INTERCHANGE MIS:

George Hannon of the PA Turnpike Commission stated that the proposed PA Turnpike/I-95 Interchange is one of 12 remaining PA Interstate projects. The Major Investment Study (MIS) was done to determine the appropriate scope and design for the project, as well as to consider the cost and impact of various alternatives. Greg Lebo of KCI Technologies provided a history of the project. He also outlined a summary of needs, which included making I-95 a continuous highway; reducing the amount of traffic using local roads; and increasing the capacity on the turnpike to handle this traffic. Various Congestion Management Study (CMS) strategies were eliminated before proceeding to the MIS phase. Lebo stated that the selected alternative is to build with widening; this alternative will move forward through the MIS process. The project is in the DVRPC Year 2020 Plan but not on the TIP at this time.

The environmental phase of the project has been funded and will be completed in late 1998. The design to build phase will begin in 1999; it is this phase that will advance to the TIP. Construction will be phased through 2010. Construction of a six-lane bridge across the Delaware River is scheduled in the latter years. Federal aid earmark funds are being used for the project, with the turnpike providing the 10% match, as well as an overmatch to finish construction. The federal share is \$344 million. In Phase 3, PennDOT will provide \$18 million for the widening of I-95 at the interchange. New Jersey will provide \$69 million. The total cost of the project, beyond the EIS, is estimated at \$564 million.

RCC members expressed their concern over the concept of a proposed new bridge. Hannon explained that the Turnpike Commission and KCI have used DVRPC traffic projections which suggest that a six-lane bridge will be needed by the year 2016. The bridge will end in Burlington County, which has taken part in the discussions to date. He also stated that the project has been divided into buildable pieces that can stand alone, should funding be jeopardized in the future.

Hannon explained that interstate funding cannot be flexed to transit. Discussion continued, however, regarding the need to involve SEPTA and NJ Transit in a cooperative effort to provide thru service in areas where traffic is dense, and where transit could ease congestion. The Transportation

Subcommittee will continue this discussion at a future meeting.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by June Morton) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve the draft MIS for the Pennsylvania Turnpike/I-95 Interchange project, with a note to re-evaluate the need for an additional bridge as the project progresses.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

REGIONAL INDICATORS AS MEASURES OF THE YEAR 2020 PLAN:

Ben Ginsberg, DVRPC Regional Planner, outlined the 29 indicators that have been selected to measure the region's progress toward achieving the goals outlined in the DVRPC Year 2020 Long-Range Plan. The plan sets forth a vision for the Delaware Valley that couples a strong economy and seamless transportation system with a healthy environment and vibrant communities. A more efficient and sustainable region is envisioned through new development in and around existing communities, while traffic congestion and enhanced mobility are achieved through alternative travel modes and less reliance on the single occupant vehicle.

The indicators include such factors as population growth patterns, farmland preservation, auto and transit usage, recycling, water quality, energy consumption, ozone pollution, employment and income growth, freight movement by mode, housing affordability, etc. The RCC discussed why other indicators were not used, such as education, health and social issues. Barry Seymour explained that these were not areas that DVRPC traditionally included in its sphere of interest. He did indicate, however, that the indicators will be reviewed and revised in two years. Dennis Winters pointed out that pedestrian and bicycle safety are not reflected here either. The committee felt that expanded explanations should be provided in a number of areas, and that regional indicators should be used in addition to federal.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Bill Rafsky, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board adopt the Regional Indicators as measures of progress toward the goals outlined in the Year 2020 Long-Range Plan.

AMENDMENT (by Illy Sobel, seconded by Bob Machler) to also indicate to the Board that additional funding should be provided to allow staff to enhance and expand future indicators.

MOTION, AS AMENDED, CARRIED. (See voting record.)

TIP AMENDMENT 9727 (BUCKINGHAM PEDESTRIAN/BIKE PATH):

Pat Horrocks, Chair of the Transportation Subcommittee, reviewed this amendment which would defer construction on the Buckingham Pedestrian/Bike Path (Amendment 9727).

The amendment was submitted by PennDOT. Buckingham Township has expressed no interest in moving the project. In its place would be the Knight Road Trail which is available for let in December, 1997.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Don Nigro) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9727.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

DRAFT FY 1998 AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE DELAWARE VALLEY:

Ms. Horrocks outlined the Draft FY 1998 Airport Improvement Program, which was mailed to the RCC and is required by the FAA. This capital program identifies current aviation system needs, and assists the FAA district and regional offices in the distribution of grant funds. Projects recommended in the report are listed in order of regional priority and importance in coordination with DVRPC's Long-Range 2020 Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP), which was adopted in 1995. FY 1998 AIP funding will total approximately \$1.35 billion nationally, a reduction of about 30% from peak levels in the early 1990's. The Pennsylvania grant program continues at a level of \$6 - 7 million statewide, while New Jersey now provides about \$10 million annually to state airports. New Jersey also distributes approximately \$4.5 million per year in Federal block grant allocations. Pennsylvania was assigned block grant status in 1997, and will distribute an additional \$8 million in apportionment funds annually. Although support for the region's three commercial airports continues from Washington and the states, federal funds and block grants to the region's 22 general aviation and reliever airports continues to be below historical levels.

Ms. Horrocks stated that the critical issues for the region include: runway expansion at Philadelphia International Airport; preservation of critical suburban airports, such as Wings, New Garden, and Brandywine; and an increase in and improvement of capacity at suburban airports. Wings Air Field in Montgomery County is currently owned by a corporation that is asking \$10 million for the property.

The county has formed an airport authority with the intent to run the airport, but there is a great deal of local opposition to this. New Garden Airport is being subdivided and will be sold to New Garden township for approximately \$5.2 million. Brandywine Airport is being taken over by private investors.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Elaine Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board adopt the FY 1998 Airport Improvement Program for the Delaware Valley.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

DVRPC SELF-CERTIFICATION:

The RCC reviewed the Resolution for Self-Certification of the Transportation Planning process that indicates DVRPC's compliance with the mandates of ISTEA, the Clean Air Act Amendments and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by June Morton) to recommend that the DVRPC Board adopt the Resolution for Self-Certification of the Transportation Planning process.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

INTENT TO FILE COMMENTS ON NORFOLK SOUTHERN-CSX-CONRAIL MERGER:

The RCC discussed their interest in commenting on the proposed Norfolk Southern-CSX takeover of Conrail.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by June Morton) to inform staff and the Board that they will submit comments regarding the proposed CSX-Norfolk Southern merger in a timely fashion for consideration in final remarks that will be forwarded from DVRPC to the Surface Transportation Board.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

YEAR 2020 LONG-RANGE PLAN AMENDMENTS:

US 1/MILLSTONE BYPASS: Pat Horrocks stated that the Transportation Subcommittee reviewed the many comments that were recorded about this project in the staff summary. A group from Princeton appeared at the Trenton public meeting to oppose the project; another large group appeared at the meeting in Philadelphia to support it. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC acknowledge that improvements are needed in this area, but the Millstone Bypass may not necessarily be the appropriate answer to the problem. A Congestion Management Study (CMS) should be completed before progressing.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Don Nigro) to adopt the subcommittee resolution as outlined above.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

NJ 42/I-295 INTERCHANGE: Ms. Horrocks stated that the Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) approved this project. NJDOT maintains that there is a safety issue here, but Don Nigro contends that heavy traffic volume and bad design have created the safety issue. An effective rail line would solve this problem. Lorraine Brill pointed out that the interchange is so bad that a new interchange is needed. June Morton stated that this is a missing link project that should be completed. There is no off-ramp to Atlantic City when driving northbound on I-295. Most of the congestion is caused by buses and trucks that would not be removed from the highway if transit was accessible. Cost of the project at this time is \$130 million. The RCC Transportation Subcommittee recommends that the RCC not approve the NJ 42/I-295 Interchange project because transit could be considered as an alternative in solving the volume safety issues.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Don Nigro) to adopt the subcommittee recommendation as stated above.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT: Don Nigro stated that his major concern with this project is NJ Transit's proposal to move out the Mt. Holly - Camden Rail Line and substitute the Trenton - Camden Rail Line. A Major Investment Study (MIS) has not been completed for this new segment. A feasibility study is currently being done, according to the transit agency. The Transportation Subcommittee, according to Ms. Horrocks, felt that the line has merit and should be studied, but the project should not be moved forward until that study is complete. The subcommittee

recommends that the RCC approve the following motion: The RCC states its support for the Mt. Holly - Moorestown Rail Line as a priority in the Year 2020 Long-Range Plan. The RCC has serious concerns about the proposed Camden - Trenton Rail Line because the project lacks details about project and capital costs and recovery ratio; no credible patronage figures are available from detailed computer modeling; NJ Transit has not demonstrated that their selected mode is the preferred mode; and this is such a major investment that an MIS should be completed before any money is committed for engineering and construction.

Ernest Cohen stated that the following should be added to any action: “maintenance of freight service on this route has not been clearly defined.”

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Don Nigro) to adopt the subcommittee recommendation as stated above.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE WIDENING: This project is proposed for inclusion on the Plan, and not on the TIP. Sources of funding for the project have not been clarified. Most public comments reflected opposition to the project because of noise and safety issues. The Transportation Subcommittee recommends that the RCC not endorse the New Jersey Turnpike Widening because of the need for an alternatives analysis; because congestion pricing could be used to reduce traffic; and because there needs to be an overall view of movement along this corridor.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to adopt the subcommittee recommendation as stated above.

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

DRAFT FY 1998 DVRPC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR NEW JERSEY:

The RCC received a packet of information, complete with the draft TIP in late May. The subcommittee and the full committee reviewed the new public comment summary. After discussion at its meeting, the subcommittee recommends that the RCC endorse the FY 1998 TIP for New Jersey, with the following comments:

** Approve engineering for the Millstone Bypass, but delete the right-of-way, with final approval subject to the RTC’s New Jersey Caucus/Subcommittee recommendations and any legislative changes.

** Not approve the NJ 42/I-295 Interchange because transit could be considered as an alternative in solving the volume safety issues.

** State support for the Mt. Holly - Moorestown Rail Line as a priority in the Year 2020 Long-Range Plan. The RCC has serious concerns about the proposed Camden - Trenton Rail Line because the project lacks details about project and capital costs and recovery ratio; no credible patronage figures are available from detailed computer modeling; NJ Transit has not demonstrated that their selected mode is the preferred mode;

and this is such a major investment that an MIS should be completed before any money is committed for engineering and construction.

** In response to #3 on the *Determination of Conformity between Amended Plan and TIP and State Air Quality Implementation Plans*:

Both MIS alternatives for Camden to Glassboro are a form of light rail.

This is an attempt to dismiss the thru-service modified-PATCO alternative without having a hearing on the MIS.

** The RCC praises DVRPC staff for the format of this year's TIP document.

** Attention should be paid to the difference in the state funding allotted for the northern and southern parts of the state and for the way in which each part of the state allots funds for the modal splits of transit and highway.

(Northern New Jersey splits funding at a level of 50% for highway and 50% for transit; southern New Jersey's split is 72% for highway and 28% for transit.)

Discussion ensued on the NJ 42/I-295 interchange issue. The RCC also discussed the viability of one rail line over another. Members questioned whether the committee had endorsed the proposed Mt. Holly - Moorestown Rail Line in the past. Don Nigro numbers and issues from studies that had been completed for each line, while June Morton questioned the subjectivity of his comments. June Morton also stated for the record that she objects to voting on a report from the subcommittee when she doesn't always agree with their version of the facts. She felt that many RCC members had left the meeting at this point and would have a better or different understanding of the issue than those who are still present. The TIP this year is a New Jersey issue and only two New Jersey members are still present. Bill Rafsky stated that if the RCC begins to question the ability and concerns of each of its members and their state of residence for a vote, then the committee will not continue to be viable. Members must trust that each individual is concerned about the region as a whole.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to adopt the resolution as outlined above with the following change: delete the sentence reading "State support for the Mt. Holly - Moorestown Rail Line as a priority in the Year 2020 Long-Range Plan."

MOTION CARRIED. (See voting record.)

IN OTHER BUSINESS:

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Don Nigro, seconded by Bob Machler) to state support for the Mt. Holly - Moorestown Rail Line as a priority in the Year 2020 Long-Range Plan.

MOTION CARRIED. (with 10 “aye” votes and 6 “nay” votes)

Bill Rafsky submitted a written Housing Committee report. Lorraine Brill mentioned the Germantown Ave. issue involving the repaving of four blocks that had been proposed for the FY 1997 PA TIP. No action has been taken on this project. She asked that a representative of the Philadelphia Streets Dept. be invited to the September 4th meeting of the subcommittee for an update.