

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
APRIL 14, 1998**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the March 10, 1998 RCC meeting were approved as mailed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, Chair, updated the committee on DVRPC Board action relative to the Millstone Bypass, stating that the Commissioners did not approve the TIP modification to add right-of-way and construction funds for the project due to a lack of meaningful public participation because the environmental assessment had not been completed.

Winters proposed the formation of an Environmental Subcommittee as an additional opportunity to review highway and transit projects and their ultimate impact. This subject had generated considerable debate at the last RCC meeting. Linda Ingenthron stated that she believed a project to be almost complete before the environmental assessment is finished and available for review. Winters announced that legally the environmental impact statement (EIS) is one step along a project's course; it is to take place early in the project and be available for public review. Shirley Loveless quoted the NEPA Handbook which calls for each individual to accept responsibility for awareness of public issues. Lorraine Brill felt that DVRPC staff could provide some expertise in this area. Ajay Creshkoff felt this subcommittee provided the RCC with an opportunity to be pro-active. Winters stated that the mission of this subcommittee would be to review environmental statements while there is still time to have an impact on a project; the subcommittee would then make recommendations to the RCC which would forward strengths and weaknesses of the EA or EIS to the DVRPC Board. Those willing to serve on this subcommittee included Ernest Cohen, John Pawson, Jane Glenn, Ed Russell and Shirley Loveless.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Shirley Loveless, seconded by John Pawson) for the RCC to create an Environmental Subcommittee.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item A on voting record.)

The RCC also discussed holding an evening meeting. Because Candace Snyder may have jury duty on May 12 (the date of the next RCC meeting), she asked that an evening meeting be postponed until June 9th when she is sure she will be present to handle arrangements.

The RCC felt that a Haddonfield, NJ location would be good and asked Ms. Snyder to contact Andy Johnson at PEC for possible locations there.

TIP MODIFICATION 9740:

Sue McNamara, Chair of the Transportation Subcommittee, reported that TIP Modification 9740 is a request from SEPTA to modify the TIP by increasing the amounts programmed in FY 1998 for three existing TIP projects. SEPTA begins the year with its best estimate of the cost of various projects. Now the agency is aware of its exact funding allocation and is adjusting the projects accordingly. The projects include a bus purchase program, the Frankford Transportation Center Construction, and the Regional Rail and Suburban Transit System-wide Repair Bridges and Structures. This modification will not impact financial constraint. SEPTA clarified, however, that the Suburban Station to 30th Street Station Catenary and Bridges and Wayne Junction to Glenside Track and Signal projects have been combined for programming purposes in FY 1998. The FY 1998 programming of \$8 million represents a portion of the total project cost for both projects. The Suburban Station to 30th Street Station project is estimated to cost \$54,800,000; the Wayne junction project is estimated at \$56,600,000. John Pawson had compiled a number of questions regarding the Bridge and Structure Repair project; the responses from SEPTA are attached to these minutes.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Modification 9740.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item B on voting record.)

TIP AMENDMENT 9741:

This amendment is a SEPTA request for the engineering phase of the Paoli Transportation Center, which would be an addition to the TIP of \$2 million. The Paoli Transportation Center is included in DVRPC's Year 2020 Long-Range Plan. The DVRPC Board passed a resolution encouraging the continuation of intergovernmental cooperation efforts to secure funding to fully realize the completion of this project. The project provides for the development of a new multi-modal transportation center on SEPTA's R-5 line at Paoli, which is the most heavily patronized train stop outside of Center City Philadelphia. A conceptual study of the Transportation Center was funded out of DVRPC's FY 1997 Planning Work Program. The subcommittee recommended that the RCC approve TIP Amendment 9741 with the understanding that the committee had submitted concerns in 1997 regarding this project and should resubmit those same concerns to the DVRPC Board

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9741. However the RCC had submitted a list of concerns in 1997 regarding this project and wishes to resubmit these again

:

- ◆ The RCC endorsed the Paoli Transportation Center with the understanding that this project is in the concept stage and that it can be substantially revised to reflect the paramount needs of the entire region.
- ◆ Because of the large cost estimate for this station (\$34 million), in comparison to other large public transportation needs, the RCC urges that the cost of the public transportation segment of this project, including CMAQ funds, not exceed a small fraction of the total figure.
- ◆ Any other funding for this project should come from highway or private sources.
- ◆ The present station site is suitable, and existing facilities should be used as much as possible for the sake of economy.
If desirable, the present station platforms should be extended a short distance westward. Parking and other improvements should be made in a cost-effective manner.
- ◆ Replacement of the present Valley Road overpass with a wider bridge or underpass, including sidewalks on both sides which are accessible to station platforms, is an essential part of the plan, and should be added to the project.
- ◆ Nearby stations from Devon to Whitford urgently require station-building, platform, lighting, and pedestrian safety capital improvements.
- ◆ The RCC further recommends that a project for installing centralized traffic control and revising the track arrangement on Amtrak's Harrisburg Line between the Overbrook and Thorndale areas be added to the TIP. This would be a highly productive improvement. It should be actively pursued by SEPTA and Amtrak, which should share in its capital cost and in its resulting operating cost savings.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item C on voting record.)

TIP AMENDMENT 9742:

TIP Amendment 9742 is a request from the City of Philadelphia for Kelly Drive Light Modernization. The existing lighting system on Kelly Drive has become undependable. A second smaller part of this effort would include the realignment and signalization of the Kelly/Sedgley/Aquarium Drives intersection, the current circle at the end of Boat House Row. There is a significant safety concern with the pedestrian crossing at this location. This would require the relocation of the Lincoln statue, now within the traffic circle, to the east of the intersection. This TIP Amendment is for the engineering phase only. The subcommittee debated the merits of the project and voiced concern about the location of the

statue. They requested that staff contact the Streets Department for conceptual plans. Staff spoke with Bob Wright of the Philadelphia Streets Department and obtained clarification on the following points:

- ▶ The Lincoln statue will be moved 20 feet to the east of its current location. Historically this places the statue in its original position. It was erected following Lincoln's assassination on the right side of the pathway. Subsequently Kelly Drive grew up around the statue. This move will again place the statue on the right side of the road where it will be lit and much more approachable. The historical and art communities agree with this proposal. See attached conceptual drawing.
- ▶ A large number of people park at Lemon Hill and cross Kelly Drive to Boat House Row, particularly at peak rush hour. There has been a significant safety issue that cannot be addressed any other way, particularly since a pedestrian bridge was proposed several years ago; it drew significant opposition because it marred the landscape.
- ▶ This project will provide a safe crossing; remove the jog in the road for north-bound traffic; and provide bike lanes to connect with those in the City.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Rosie McVay) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9742.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item D on voting record.)

TIP MODIFICATION 9810:

Ms. McNamara explained that TIP Modification 9810 is a request from NJDOT to advance a number of projects including Hartford Road (Burlington County); CR 563 Greenbank Road Bridge (Burlington County); CR 542 Wading River Bridge (Burlington County); Rts. 41, 42F Sections 1A, 2A, 14M (Camden and Gloucester Counties); CR 653 Paulsboro Road Bridge (Gloucester County). These projects are the only ones on the listing that will require action. The remaining projects have been handled administratively. These include: Bridge Deck Paving (various counties); Rt. 29 Parkside Ave. (Mercer County); Rt. 33, 33 Fwy. Road Rehabilitation (Mercer County); and Rts. 95/31 Interchange (Mercer County). Four of the first five projects are already on the TIP and are listed as transition projects (signifying that they are expected to be obligated during the final quarter of the year but may not move because funds may have been committed otherwise or they are not ready to move.) The projects are now ready to move, with funding coming from the Paulsboro Bridge project which has been delayed.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the

DVRPC Board approve TIP Modification 9810.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item E on voting record.)

The subcommittee had debated the merits of administrative approval and questioned the advisability of approving the Rt. 29 Parkside Ave. project. However, Gerry Mooney of NJDOT had informed staff that this project was not part of the Rt. 29 project that is currently being contested in court.

Dennis Winters questioned whether “significant controversy” constituted one criteria for dis-allowing administrative approval of a project. He stated that if this is not a disqualifier, it should be. (The TIP document states that Pennsylvania allows administrative approval when a “project sponsor wants to advance a project phase listed in the second or third year on the approved TIP/STIP, unless there is a formal record of opposition to the project by a public interest group.” New Jersey does not have this stipulation in its resolution with DVRPC.)

TIP AMENDMENT 9811:

TIP Amendment 9811 is a submission from Gloucester County for guiderail improvements at various locations throughout the county. This project is ready to move but is not on the TIP. Financial constraint will be maintained by taking funds from “DVRPC Future Projects.”

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, Rosie McVay) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9811.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item F on voting record.)

OTHER TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION:

The subcommittee had discussed SEPTA’s answers to its questions regarding the Cross County Corridor MIS. John Pawson had written up some concerns, the chief one being that which addresses reports that the PA Turnpike Commission is moving to begin construction to expand the turnpike to six lanes between Plymouth Meeting and Valley Forge. Pawson suggested that the DVRPC Board should censure the Commission for this action. The subcommittee recommended that the RCC investigate whether news reports are true regarding the imminent widening of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Candace Snyder stated that she had spoken with Walt Green in the King of Prussia Office of the PA Turnpike Commission. He made the following comments:

- ▶ Construction on the area of the turnpike between Plymouth Meeting and King of Prussia is not occurring at this time; the news report simply stated that a feasibility study

is beginning on this project.

- ▶ The widening of the turnpike at this point is in the DVRPC Year 2020 Plan under “Studies” and the Commission is aware of the regional planning process and is participating in it by informing DVRPC of its 12-year plan. The Commission has also met with SEPTA and is looking at transit alternatives such as the Cross County Corridor, which includes an alternative running along the south boundary of the turnpike. Construction to widen would not eliminate this alternative. The Turnpike Commission has asked SEPTA to commit to an alternative by 2003, which is when construction would begin.
- ▶ One feasibility study has already been done on this portion of the turnpike and indicates that the roadway is badly under capacity, citing bumper to bumper conditions at peak rush hour.
- ▶ Even though this project would not include federal funds, the widening of the turnpike will eventually be submitted for TIP action since it will help to achieve the region’s air quality goals by eliminating gridlock.
- ▶ The only portion of the seven mile project that is currently under construction is the 1.3 mile section that comprises the Schuylkill River Bridge segment. This has also been presented to DVRPC and is in the Year 2020 Plan.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by John Pawson, seconded by Ed Russell) to recommend the following resolution to the DVRPC Board:

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is currently widening a 1.3 mile section of the 7 mile portion of the turnpike between the Plymouth Meeting and Valley Forge interchanges. This project was only one alternative to be considered in the Cross County Corridor Study. Such partial SOV capacity improvements tend to prejudice the possibility of studying all possible alternatives in the Cross County MIS. The DVRPC Board should consider encouraging the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to more closely participate in the regional planning effort.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item G in voting record.)

PA 100 CORRIDOR STUDY:

Gerald Coyne, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner, introduced the PA 100 project by stating that the Year 2020 Plan calls for refined analyses of high priority corridors within the region. Route 100 is the first project of this type to be completed in Pennsylvania. The corridor, as defined in this study, is a 13-mile roadway traveling north to south through a number of municipalities. The study was performed with particular attention to land use and development centers. Coyne reviewed current traffic volumes,

existing public transportation services, journey-to-work statistics, highway deficiencies, Year 2020 full-build conditions, and study recommendations. The RCC discussed the controversy surrounding the proposed widening of Route 100. Members also raised questions regarding the study boundaries and limitations; future development and its impact; interaction with the Chester County Planning Department; and park and ride options.

Bill Rafsky raised the issue of traditional planning versus a new philosophy and whether the RCC should meet with John Coscia and Ridgeley Ware to promote innovative thinking and presentations by staff. Dennis Winters stated that he would follow up on this.

YEAR 2000 CENSUS PREPARATION:

Michael Ontko, DVRPC's Deputy Director of Regional Planning, reported that statistical sampling is one of the controversies facing the Census Bureau as it contemplates the Year 2000 update. Because returns historically decrease with each census, the Census Bureau is looking at ways to identify those who don't respond. Instead of the standard follow-up, the Bureau is considering determining the 90% threshold in each census tract, and then doing statistical addition from already-existing responses. Congress is discussing whether this is a legitimate way to count people. Undercounting is always a major issue, especially in older cities.

For example, it is estimated that Philadelphia lost @ \$70 million due to undercounting in the last census. New Jersey, on the other hand, lost a congressional district because of undercounting. Without statistical sampling, there will probably continue to be severe undercounts.

Ontko went on to report that the SIC code system for occupations is being changed. He also discussed the confidentiality of census information, as well as the status of the TIGER file, which allows the Census Bureau to put information into the proper geography. Finally, he explained the LUCA Program, which is the local update of census addresses by municipalities.

LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT:

Cathy Zukoski, Legislative Subcommittee Chairman, introduced Patrick Starr who made a brief presentation on principles, as outlined in a resolution that the subcommittee was forwarding to the RCC. (See attached resolution and supporting materials.) Starr pointed out that these concepts draw a connection between proposed land use legislation and Board policy as cited in the Year 2020 Plan. Bill Rafsky commented that the PA Planning Association endorses the concepts but has reservations about HB 1615; the major issue is the transfer of development rights. He suggested that Barry Seymour be consulted for his opinion. Starr pointed out that the attached resolution avoids the particulars of any one bill and establishes support for rural resources. He also stated that the DVRPC Board should participate in the stakeholders' group.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Cathy Zukoski, seconded by Patrick Starr) to adopt the attached resolution and forward it to the DVRPC Board.

MOTION CARRIED. (See Item H on voting record.)

ADDITIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bill Rafsky reported that the DVRPC Housing Committee will meet on April 20, 1998; he will have a report for the RCC in May.

OTHER BUSINESS:

John Pawson reported that members of the Transportation Subcommittee had received copies of SEPTA's Task 10 Report on the Cross County Corridor. He stated that he had reviewed the report and then presented the RCC with a list of issues regarding the corridor. (See attached comments.) Pawson commented that the RCC should set goals in this corridor; he questioned whether development of this rail corridor would help or hurt Center City's future growth.

Because they believe this issue to be time-sensitive, the RCC discussed holding a special Transportation Subcommittee meeting on April 24, 1998; the meeting would depend upon Richard Bickel's availability. If this meeting can be arranged, the RCC authorized the subcommittee to proceed in voicing its concerns regarding the Task 10 Report.