

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
MAY 12, 1998**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the April 14, 1998 RCC meeting were approved as mailed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, RCC Chair, provided news clippings that updated the ISTEA legislative issue and economic renewal through pedestrian-friendly development. He also reviewed DVRPC Board response to the RCC's April resolutions; the legislative resolution has been referred to the Board Policy Committee for review and action, and the Turnpike resolution rests with John Coscia.

NJ 41/42 CMS:

Don Shanis, DVRPC's Associate Director of Transportation Planning, reviewed the updated procedures that require all projects that add highway capacity to be examined through a Congestion Management System (CMS) study. Shanis pointed out that NJ 41 Section 1A, 2A/NJ 42 Freeway Section 14M is a small project that encompasses intersection improvements. He reviewed the various elements of the project, pointing out that DVRPC had recommended pedestrian sidewalks, additional bus stops and the widening of shoulders for bicycle use, all of which have been added. DVRPC's RTC and the CMS Committee have recommended that the project move forward.

The RCC discussed the parameters of the sidewalks and various means of traffic calming; Paul Truban of NJDOT was present to answer questions. The committee felt that this project should have been brought before the RCC Transportation Subcommittee for review.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Marcile Woodworth, seconded by Rosie McVay) to recommend that the Board approve the Congestion Management System (CMS) Report for NJ 41/42 with the following caveats:

- Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks should be an integral part of the project;
- Safe pedestrian crossings should be provided with reasonable access to and from transit stops;
- Appropriate signage for bicyclists should be included.

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

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY METRO FEASIBILITY STUDY:

James Fritz, SEPTA Project Manager, and Tom Halterman, Urban Engineers Project Engineer, updated the RCC on the Schuylkill Valley Metro Feasibility Study, which encompasses a 62-mile corridor between Philadelphia and Reading. The corridor contains two major highways -- I-76 and US 422, as well as Conrail's primary freight route between Philadelphia and the west. Because of rapid growth in the area, there is severe congestion, a rapid loss of farmland and limited rail passenger service.

Undertaking a study of the corridor were SEPTA, BARTA, Urban Engineers, STV, Inc., KPMG Peat Marwick, Simone Jaffe Collins, Inc., and Jeffrey Zupan. The study examined the possibility of adding either light rail or commuter rail along existing railroad rights-of-way. Commuter rail would entail higher operating costs and less optimum service; light rail would mean more initial expense but better service. The trains would provide service between Center City and Wyomissing, with light rail trains operating into King of Prussia. Light rail trains would operate every 15 minutes or less during peak hours and every 30 minutes at other times. Commuter rail trains would operate every 30 minutes during peak hours and every 60 minutes at other times. New and improved bus service would provide access to trains at many stations. Both commuter and light rail would cost about \$28.5 million per year to operate. In 1998, a light rail system would cost \$720 million and a commuter rail system would be \$402 million. The lower costs of the commuter rail system assumes that tracks could be shared with freight trains. Annual estimated ridership is 20,800 for commuter rail, and 30,500 for light rail. (Light rail attracts more riders because of more frequent service and the connection to King of Prussia.) The current projected time schedule is completion of the MIS, 1999 - 2000; design, 2001 - 2003; and construction, 2002 - 2006.

The RCC discussed the complications of changing locomotives; why only two alternatives were examined; the possibility of dual-powered light rail; accommodations for bicycles and the disabled; and travel times.

BICYCLE FACILITIES ON EXISTING HIGHWAYS:

John Madera, DVRPC Transportation Planner, outlined a bicycle mobility plan for the suburban counties. Approximately 70 miles of roadway were selected for the study; these represented highways that were not slated for any other type of improvement and could potentially be made more bicycle-friendly. Corridor selection entailed asking bicyclists to set priorities, selecting roadways with important destinations, and those that connected with existing or proposed bicycle facilities. Scoping included field views of bicycles and by van, data collection, evaluation of existing conditions, and draft design alternatives. A bicycle level of service (BLOS) model was used to estimate bicyclists' perceptions of quality of service in on-road cycling. In addition, DVRPC examined the number of traffic lanes, shoulder width, pavement condition, and bike lane designation. Community participation on the project was ensured through coordination with the Clean Air Council and the Bicycle Coalition, as well

as through counties and municipalities.

Madera then outlined the findings and implementation of the study, and answered questions related to gradients, and the use of bicycles for commuting versus recreation.

ACCESS-TO-JOBS UPDATE:

ML Wernecke, DVRPC's Manager of Comprehensive Planning, explained that DVRPC is approaching the access-to-jobs issue from the need for transportation improvements to help people move from welfare to employment. DVRPC has received a bi-state FTA grant to identify viable bi-state commutes, pinpoint barriers and strategies to overcome them, and improve communications and coordination between the states and transit agencies. The framework of the project is as follows: providing transit training for job trainers; working with a broad constituency; targeting specific centers and corridors; and summarizing regional access to jobs.

Ms. Wernecke pointed out that the vast majority of welfare households live in Philadelphia, but available jobs are generally located in the suburbs. There is currently a five-year limit to collect welfare benefits, and then individuals must enter the workforce or be without a source of income. The purpose of the FTA grant is to examine whether these individuals should also look for employment in other states. To meet the goals of the study, DVRPC staff looked at travel times, identified transit routes, and specified various employment centers. To maximize placement of individuals, it is necessary to think of the labor market regionally and to use the regional transit network. The report that results from the study focuses on the mobility strategy, but housing and enterprise strategies are also viable factors in this issue.

Wernecke went on to explain that an additional study through Greater Philadelphia Works looked at improving access from empowerment zones to the airport and King of Prussia. Finally, Ms. Wernecke distributed the new Regional Indicators booklet that is the result of several years' work on reaching the goals of the Year 2020 Plan.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Sue McNamara reported that the Transportation Subcommittee heard comments from Richard Bickel, SEPTA's Director of Long-Range Planning, who answered RCC discussion points on the Cross County Corridor. John Pawson reviewed his notes about the discussion. The Transportation Subcommittee will examine the issues to be brought to the entire RCC at its June meeting on this subject. Illy Sobel reviewed a resolution that strengthens the previous PA Turnpike statement sent to the DVRPC Board for action; the Year 2020 Task Force will return with action on this resolution in June. Sobel will convene this Task Force since Drayton Bryant has been out of commission.

Linda Ingenthron stated that the Rules Subcommittee did not have a report at this time. Cathy Zukoski,

chair of the Legislative Subcommittee, announced that the group is discussing a training workshop on how to get a bill passed. The group also discussed an update on the CMAQ process, and the need for more volunteers, particularly from New Jersey.

Bill Rafsky distributed a report on DVRPC's Housing Committee. Dennis Winters announced that the Environmental Subcommittee has yet to meet. The Work Program Subcommittee needs to meet beginning in June; John Pawson will convene the meeting, with volunteers including Jane Glenn, Regina Botkin and Dennis Winters.

The next RCC meeting will be held from 6 - 9 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 1998, with a location to be announced.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The RCC briefly reviewed a list of items drafted by Bill Rafsky for discussion with DVRPC senior staff. This issue will be deferred until June. In the meantime, Candace Snyder will distribute copies of the Highway and Transit Criteria adopted by the RCC in the past and forwarded to DVRPC staff.