

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 8, 1998**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of August 11, 1998 were approved with the following changes: Don Nigro brought up two corrections to the RCC minutes of August 11, 1998; these corrections are under the heading "Appointment to NJ 295/76/42 Transportation Investment Study committee", and read as underlined below:

"Don Nigro in turn objected, noting that Brittin could not fairly represent the RCC's point of view due to his allegiance to a group known as Citizens for Alternative Rail (CFAR), which holds positions on Gloucester County transportation issues that are contrary to the position the RCC adopted in July concerning the TIS." In place of "Nigro offered to serve as the representative", the wording should be "Nigro suggested that a representative from New Jersey or Pennsylvania be appointed instead, or that he would be willing to serve." In addition, Linda Ingenthron noted that she was present at the last meeting, her name did not appear on the attendance list.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, RCC Chair, announced that Colin Hanna, DVRPC Board Chair for FY 1999, and John Coscia, DVRPC Executive Director, will be at the October 13, 1998 RCC meeting to discuss changes in procedures to avoid future problems with committee review of issues, and to outline Hanna's goals for the coming year. No Board meeting was held in August.

TIP AMENDMENT 9749:

In the absence of Sue McNamara, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, and Pat Horrocks, who had substituted for Ms. McNamara, DVRPC staff member Candace Snyder outlined TIP Amendment 9749, a request from Chester County to add the construction phase of a project to the TIP. Engineering and right-of-way for the US 202/Westtown Road intersection is complete and signalization and channelization are ready to begin. Total cost of the project is \$540,000. Fiscal constraint will be maintained by deferring the construction phase of TIP #8713 (PA 113: Ridge Pike to PA 20 Restoration). The Transportation Subcommittee recommended approval of TIP Amendment 9749.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Peggy Killmer, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9749.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 9750:

TIP Amendment 9750 is a request from PennDOT for Bucks County to include construction funds for signalization and channelization of PA 132, Street Road in Upper and Lower Southampton Twp. and Bensalem Twp. in FY 1999. The project was initially programmed for \$2.2 million in FY 2000, and now has been updated to \$5.2 million. This change in cost is due to utility costs and a major drainage issue, as well as an updated estimate. I-95, Phase I reconstruction will be deferred to maintain fiscal constraint. The Transportation Subcommittee recommended approval of TIP Amendment 9750.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Pat Horrocks, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9750.

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

I-295/NJ 42 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT STUDY:

Candace Snyder explained that DVRPC and NJDOT recently made a decision not to include any interest groups on the I-295/NJ 42 Transportation Improvement Study (TIS) steering committee, because of disagreement on which groups to include; staff members had been approached by several groups pertinent to the study area. At this time the steering committee will be made up of municipal and county elected officials, and representatives of regulatory agencies and the private sector. The only public seat will be that held by the RCC representative. At the Transportation Subcommittee meeting, Don Nigro stated that an alternate should be named in case Peggy Killmer was not able to attend; he stated that he would be willing to be the alternate. The subcommittee unanimously nominated Don Nigro as the RCC alternate to the I-295/76/42 TIS, with the understanding that the floor would be open for additional nominations at the RCC meeting.

Dennis Winters accepted this nomination, and then opened the floor for additional nominations. Ron Brittin was nominated; nominations were then closed. Nigro and Brittin each outlined the abilities they would bring to this role. ***Through a blind ballot, tabulated by Candace Snyder, the RCC elected Don Nigro as alternate to the I-295/NJ 42 TIS.***

RCC STATEMENT RE: US 202, SECTION 300:

In an additional report from the Transportation Subcommittee, Pat Horrocks stated that Jerry Coyne, DVRPC Manager of the Office of Transportation Studies, had outlined the details of US 202, Section 300, which was approved by the DVRPC Board in July.

The subcommittee felt that the RCC should make a statement regarding this highway in spite of the fact that the DVRPC Board had already acted. The RCC discussed a number of transit options, and debated the merits of making a stronger statement regarding high level platforms to provide access for the disabled.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Don Nigro, seconded by Jane Glenn) to adopt the following statement, which reflects a number of amendments by RCC members:

Section 300 of US Route 202 serves, not only as part of the Philadelphia beltway but also, as a major corridor for travel between east-central Chester County and Center City, Philadelphia. The SEPTA R5 Downingtown/Paoli Line also provides mobility between this segment of Chester County and Center City.

Therefore, the RCC recommends that the following congestion mitigation opportunities relating to the SEPTA R5 Downingtown/Paoli Line be included for study in the upcoming US 202, Section 300 efforts:

1. Upgrade signal, power and track at key locations to reduce travel time, improve reliability and lower operating costs. This should include the construction of Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) between Philadelphia and Thorndale;
2. Improve stations and station platforms to ease boarding and alighting;
3. Expand station parking ubiquitously to provide “just enough” to enable access for all who want to utilize the rail line. Presently, ridership growth on much of the line is parking constrained;
4. Provide 2+2 train seating with 22" wide seats to improve passenger comfort;
5. Exploit the full ability of the rolling stock to operate more briskly -- both in the peak and the off-peak periods -- to improve travel time;
6. Service the outer half of the line with more express trains; and
7. Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to rail stations and trains to encourage alternative modes of travel.

The RCC Transportation Subcommittee was informed that an increase in frequency of service on the SEPTA R5 Downingtown/Paoli Line will be studied as a congestion mitigation alternative. The line already has a higher frequency of service than any other SEPTA commuter rail line. Increasing frequency appears to be DVRPC’s and SEPTA’s reflexive response to the need for more attractive service where in fact there are four other parameters of service attractiveness: swiftness of trip, reliability, passenger comfort and station accessibility (parking). Regarding frequency, transit cannot compete with the automobile because the automobile’s potential departure times are unbounded.

Unwarranted higher transit frequency dramatically drives up operating costs through the use of many expensive short consists, whereas attracting more passengers to existing consists, extending them as necessary, is inexpensive. In short, it's cheaper to operate fewer, fast, attractive, long trains than to operate many, slow, unappealing, short trains.

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

PRIORITIES FOR DVRPC'S FY 2000 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM:

Ms. Horrocks reported that the Transportation Subcommittee reviewed the priorities already listed in the last set of RCC minutes, and asked that the Bicycle Facilities description in the RCC minutes be extended to include "for road user education." The subcommittee recommended that the Fare Free Zone, as described in Jane Glenn's memo, be added into the list of Work Program priorities. The list, once adopted by the RCC, will be forwarded to DVRPC staff and the Board. Bill Rafsky reported that DVRPC's Housing Committee was unable to draft a full list of priorities and will do so in October. The RCC will add a statement supporting housing studies in general to its list of priorities.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Jane Glenn, seconded by Bill Rafsky) that the RCC adopted the following projects as their recommendations for inclusion in the FY 2000 Planning Work Program:

- ▶ Bicycle Facilities on Existing Highways -- this project should be continued and funding should be increased to provide for road user education (see attached description);
- ▶ Suburban Bicycle Map (see attached description);
- ▶ Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Forecasting (see attached description);
- ▶ Bike Parking at Transit Station Inventory (see attached description);
- ▶ Center City Fare-Free Zone (see attached description);
- ▶ Landside Access - Tioga Complex -- the RCC questions whether railroad access to the site is adequate;
- ▶ White Paper on Stress and Commuting -- the RCC recommends that DVRPC look at LA Metro Link Commuter Rail, which just completed a study on this issue;
- ▶ Community Based Transit Service -- the RCC questions whether DVRPC is aware that the "Horsham Breeze" is not community based, but is run for reverse commuters. The wording in the "New Project Description" is misleading and inappropriate;
- ▶ The RCC feels that extra funding should be provided to the Public Affairs Office to provide for such public participation events as workshops, outreach, additional RCC activities, etc. The RCC also recommends that a full-time position for an assistant in Public Affairs be reinstated;

- ▶ Long-Term Economic and Social Efficiency of Locating Jobs in Center City (see attached description); and
- ▶ The RCC supports the inclusion of housing studies in general in the FY 2000 Planning Work Program.

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

BICYCLE FACILITIES FOR EXISTING ROADWAYS:

John Madera, DVRPC Transportation Planner, outlined recommendations for roadway improvements that are the result of a study of existing highways in three suburban counties. These recommendations include posting bike routes, creating bike lanes through widening or on existing shoulders, adding shoulder stripes, and constructing shoulders with drainage. Madera also reviewed ancillary improvements, design objectives, bicycle level of service (BLOS) improvement variables, and cost summaries. The next step is determining the availability of funding. The RCC then discussed the removal of parking lane for bicycle access, European trends, safety, and the inclusion of Bucks County in the next phase of the study.

MUNICIPAL GUIDES FOR RECREATION AND HIGHWAY/TRANSIT CORRIDOR PLANNING:

Mary Bell, DVRPC Senior Regional Planner, stated that the intermunicipal cooperation project is now entering its third year, and provides suggestions for elected and appointed officials on how to partner with adjoining municipalities to offer citizens improved services for the same or fewer local tax dollars. The first report in the series, published in August, 1997, is titled *Regional Recreation Commissions*, and describes how municipalities and school districts in southeastern Pennsylvania could benefit from expanding access to recreation facilities and coordinating program offerings. The second in the series, *Inter-Municipal Cooperation Alternatives for Highway and Transit Corridor Planning*, describes how municipalities can save money and increase efficiency through cooperative transportation planning. Ms. Bell explained that the greatest obstacles to intermunicipal cooperation are competition for tax rateables and the loss of independence. Future potential topics include regional police services, emergency services, regionalized school districts, joint planning and zoning, affordable housing opportunities, and tax-base sharing. The RCC noted that this constitutes some of the best work done by DVRPC staff.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Horrocks reported that the Transportation Subcommittee recommends retaining the original *Criteria for Highway and Transit Projects* rather than adopting Ajay Creshkoff's revised version, which merges the criteria with TIP-ranking questions. The standard criteria will be issued with a letter

to John Coscia stating that he should forward the listings to all DVRPC staff so that they will be prepared when addressing the RCC.

The criteria will be used as a basis for questions regarding DVRPC highway and transit projects and presentations. A draft of this letter will be provided to the Transportation Subcommittee for review before being sent to Coscia.

Ernest Cohen stated that he has made calls on behalf of the Year 2020 Task Force to try to increase attendance at the subcommittee meetings. He sees the purpose of the task force as envisioning the needs of the region in relation to sustainability. His vision is summarized in an article on "What would a Sustainable Future look like?" and he may wish to mail this to RCC members. Ajay Creshkoff pointed out that his memo, which was mailed to RCC members, addresses the future direction of the task force in a way that links land use and transportation and provides a more narrow focus. Dennis Winters emphasized the need to continue to assess DVRPC's progress toward the goals of the Year 2020 Plan. The task force can continue to be pro-active by bringing issues to the RCC that promote the Year 2020 goals.

Linda Ingenthron announced that the Rules Subcommittee will meet at 11 a.m. on October 13, 1998 prior to the next RCC meeting.

The Environmental Subcommittee has yet to meet because of a lack of available environmental impact statements.

Winters announced that Cathy Zukoski was ill, and therefore the Legislative Subcommittee meeting was canceled.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ernest Cohen reported that Illy Sobel was out of the hospital; he will try to get a phone number for him. The 21st Century Commission is releasing its study this month; if copies are available, they should be sent to the Environmental Subcommittee and the Year 2020 Task Force.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dennis Winters announced that Cathy Zukoski was concerned about the deer kill that has been proposed for the Fairmount park system. Now is the time to contact local elected officials to express opinions.

