

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 9, 1999**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of December 8, 1998 were approved as mailed. The minutes of the RCC meeting of January 12, 1999 were approved with the following changes: Wayne DiFrancesco clarified that he is not a developer as stated at the January meeting. The attached Transportation Subcommittee highlights outlines his background. Lorraine Brill and Roberta Ehrenberg corrected typographical errors.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, RCC Chair, stated that he did not want to hear of any further confrontations taking place in or out of the RCC meetings. He stated that he had received a complaint following the January meeting regarding a member who had been confronted about an issue that had arisen at the meeting. Winters stressed the need for keeping these issues nonpersonal. He urged members to address comments to the chair, not to each other.

Winters also reported that DVRPC Board discussion had touched upon sprawl and the need for public meetings that will address innovative planning in land use and transportation. He also outlined action taken at the January 21, 1999 Board meeting, noting that the Board accepted the RCC's three representatives, but did not approve a fourth for bicycle advocacy. The Board felt that bicycle interests were well represented otherwise.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Peggy Killmer) to inform the Board that the RCC believes that the process used for the selection of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects under ISTEA was an excellent example of citizen and governmental cooperation. It included citizen representatives from diverse interests and was reflective of the community at large. DVRPC's process was used by the Bikes Belong Coalition, the Surface Transportation Policy Project, the Bicycle Coalition of the Delaware Valley and others as an example of how MPO's should conduct the CMAQ process. The RCC is disheartened that the DVRPC Board would select a new CMAQ process under TEA-21 that is less inclusive and does not reflect the diverse interests of citizens and taxpayers in the region. The RCC believes that the democratic process thrives through the inclusion of many voices.

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

TIP MODIFICATION 9821:

Sue McNamara, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, explained TIP Amendment 9821. NJ Transit has requested that DVRPC approve a series of modifications to the continuing FY 1998-2002 TIP for projects in FY99. These changes are necessary in order to make the TIP consistent with the actual FTA appointments, which are higher than what was originally anticipated when the TIP was developed. The total increase to the FY99 programmed amount will be \$7.687 million. This correction is generally to project costs and was provided as a courtesy. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Amendment 9821. The committee discussed the need for additional information. Suzanne Axworthy questioned why project N058 (accessibility for people with disabilities and vans for paratransit service) would be delayed or dropped at the peak of the Welfare to Work issue, and what the impact of this might be. No answers were readily available to this question or to others regarding the addition or deletion of funds to specific projects.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Ajay Creshkoff, seconded by Sue McNamara) to recommend to the DVRPC Board that, in the future, any presentation of changes in the capital programs of transit or transportation agencies be accompanied by a conceptual framework that reveals the impacts on the long-term regional plan, consistent with the long-term agency plan. The RCC declines to take action on TIP Modification 9821 because of a lack of definition in the accompanying document.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 9822:

Ms. McNamara reported that TIP Amendment 9822 will relocate the existing helipad at Cooper Hospital. This relocation will move the helipad 150 feet from the parking garage to the hospital in order to eliminate the time emergency patients currently spend traveling down the garage roof, across to the hospital, and up to the trauma center. The hospital intends to construct the project this summer when one of the elevators can be closed down without impeding medical services. The federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) provided funding for this project under Section 601, High Priority Projects Program. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Amendment 9822.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Pat Horrocks) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Amendment 9822, NJDOT's request to amend the FY 1998 - 2002 TIP to include the Cooper Hospital Helipad Relocation project, using \$1.5 million in TEA-21 demo funds and \$800,000 of private funds, and to seek advance construct authority in order to initiate

the project in FY 1999.

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

THE FUTURE OF FIRST GENERATIONS SUBURBS IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY:

Barry Seymour, DVRPC's Assistant Executive Director for Regional Planning, stated that work had begun approximately one year ago on this project as a means of examining many of the region's first generation suburbs, which are currently experiencing fiscal and socioeconomic challenges that until recently were perceived to be exclusively urban problems. In recent years, the region's continuing cycle of growth and decline has bypassed these "early suburbs". Consequently, first generation suburbs have lost middle class households, jobs and tax base, local demand for social services increases, and local ability to finance municipal services and schools comes under stress. In the report, *The Future of First Generation Suburbs in the Delaware Valley Region*, explores policy and planning strategies to address the challenges that they face.

In a region with as much history as the Delaware Valley, the phrase "first generation suburbs", generally refers to two groups of municipalities: (1) Older industrial boroughs or cities such as Pottstown, Pennsylvania and Bordentown, New Jersey, and (2) townships and boroughs that developed rapidly in the years immediately following World War II, such as Cherry Hill, New Jersey and Bensalem, Pennsylvania. This latter group is largely clustered around Philadelphia and Camden, extending along the region's major roads and highways and along the banks of the Delaware River. *The Future of First Generation Suburbs in the Delaware Valley Region* reviews the history of suburban development and regional decentralization; measures fiscal and socioeconomic conditions and differences among municipalities and school districts using various demographic and fiscal factors; and develops recommendations to overcome identified problems through tax reform, regional planning and case studies of successful local revitalization initiatives. Seymour pointed out that many of the remedies complement each other and could be advanced concurrently to address regional fiscal disparities and decentralized land use patterns. The RCC discussed the limitations of Myron Orfield's work and the importance of implementation.

STUDY DESIGN FOR RAIL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS:

Ron Roggenburk, DVRPC Manager of the Office of Air Quality Planning, outlined the Study Design for Rail Service Improvements, which was in DVRPC's FY 1998 Planning Work Program. The study responded to a request from the RCC to write a scope of services for a review of all regional rail services, including SEPTA, NJ Transit, PATCO and Amtrak to a limited degree. The study would encompass not only the review of existing rail systems in the region, but also an analysis of the region's rail market, research into other metropolitan area rail systems, and development of recommendations. Roggenburk explained regional rail characteristics and the scale of the study. The projected cost of such a review is between \$300,000 and \$500,000. At the present time, there is no sponsor or funding identified for the project.

Roggenburk stated that he presented this study to the RTC with mixed response. The cooperation and participation of all transit agencies is essential. Don Nigro noted that this is truly an RCC initiative that should be promoted. The committee discussed public participation as part of this project and noted that future scope of DVRPC projects should include working with the organizations represented on the RCC as a requirement to enhance outreach.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Don Nigro, seconded by Peggy Killmer) that the RCC fully endorses the Rail Service Improvements Study Design and encourages the region to move the study forward as outlined. The DVRPC Board should pursue sponsorship and funding immediately.

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

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT SELECTION:

John Madera, DVRPC Transportation Planner, reviewed the funding available for non-traditional projects that will enhance the transportation process. These Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects have more than \$120 million set aside from 1998 through 2002. This round of funding will program two years' worth of projects, at approximately \$40 million. Madera stated that 106 applications have been received from the Delaware Valley, totaling \$70 million. He explained the programming schedule the staff's evaluation of the applications, and the criteria used for this evaluation. He also noted that TE eligible activities include, among others: the provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles; the provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; acquisition of scenic easements and historic sites; landscaping; historic preservation; and the preservation of abandoned railway corridors. Madera also distributed the list of high priority nominations supported by the RTC.

Ajay Creshkoff questioned why the RCC was not involved earlier in the process and was not told that this would be an action item. Sue McNamara stated that she is concerned that the process will not be more inclusive in the future. She feels that the RTC blatantly approves all lists and motions. The RCC questioned #119 (Main Street Gateway), a City Streets Department project that would include street lighting, signage, towpath access, etc. Several RCC members stated that this is a duplication of facilities.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Ajay Creshkoff) that the RCC convey to the DVRPC Board its belief that it should be involved earlier in the Transportation Enhancement (TE) decision-making process, specifically during the formulation of criteria and project selection. The RCC's role in the process at this time is unclear.

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

ADDITIONAL MOTION (by Kevin Smith, seconded by Miles Day) that the RCC endorses the list of High Priority Transportation Enhancements projects with the exclusion of #119, Main Street Gateway, due to the vagueness of the project description and the fact that it proposes duplicating facilities that are already available.

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

REDEVELOPMENT OF VENICE ISLAND:

Wendy Lathrop, representing the Friends of the Manayunk Canal, described an issue that has many residents in Manayunk opposed to a City Planning Commission project to redevelop Venice Island, located in the Schuylkill River, parallel to Main Street and separated from the mainland by a canal. The island is zoned for industrial use and has in fact been used industrially for nearly 200 years. Access to the island is by way of four small streets with narrow bridges. Nearly all of Venice Island lies in a 100-year floodplain and is designated as the floodway for the Schuylkill River. The City Planning Commission enlisted three groups of designers to draft a plan to capitalize on Manayunk's popularity as a dining, shopping and residential district. The designers were told to ignore any zoning or environmental restrictions. All three plans included up to 1000 residential units and two hotels, with a variety of retail and restaurant facilities and open space. Ms. Lathrop quoted city Planning Commission representatives as stating that as long as new construction is within the footprint of buildings existing at the time that Philadelphia was mapped for flood hazards by FEMA, there is not a problem. Ms. Lathrop quoted city Planning Commission representatives as stating that as long as new construction is within the footprint of buildings existing at the time that Philadelphia was mapped for flood hazards by FEMA, there is not a problem. The City of Philadelphia is pushing the project, according to Ms. Lathrop, as a means of expanding the City's tax base. Area residents are opposed to the project based upon the environmental, congestion and zoning issues.

The RCC questioned the position and intent of the Manayunk Development Corporation; this organization claims to be a community group but tends to promote redevelopment, according to Jane Glenn. Bill Rafsky pointed out that it is only fair to hear the City Planning Commission's comments regarding this project, as well as the Manayunk Development Corporation. Representatives from these two groups will be invited to the March 9th RCC meeting, at which time this discussion will continue.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Sue McNamara stated that the Transportation Subcommittee had an ongoing discussion about PA Route 41; this discussion will continue next month, hopefully with the PennDOT project manager in attendance.

Cathy Zukoski reported that the Legislative Subcommittee had met; they discussed asking DVRPC to

notify PennDOT and NJDOT about the citizens' concern that heavier and larger trucks may be allowed on the region's highways. This discussion will also continue next month. Ms. Zukoski also questioned the outcome of earlier land use planning legislation that had been forwarded to the DVRPC Board for resolution. In addition, she reported on an economic development funding bill that was adopted by Congress.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Peggy Killmer stated that the first meeting of the Central Jersey Transportation Forum had been held in January in Plainsboro, NJ and that citizens had been left out of the process. Candy Snyder pointed out that this was a joint project between DVRPC and the North Jersey MPO and that there had been doubt going into this meeting as to whether this project would work constructively toward solutions for transportation issues in the middle portion of the state. Since the first meeting went well, citizens will be involved in future meetings.

Members announced that the Delaware Valley Transit Users' Group will host a forum at 9 a.m. on June 5, 1999 at the Free Library.