

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
MAY 11, 1999**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of April 13, 1999 were approved with the following change in the first paragraph: "The minutes of the RCC meeting of March 9, 1999 were approved as submitted."

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, RCC Chair, reviewed the Staff Summary of Board action, noting that he is pleased with the Board's response to the RCC's input. He explained that the Board needs as much explanation as possible for the motions made by the committee.

VENICE ISLAND DISCUSSION:

Darlene Messina asked the RCC to review the letter she had sent in response to Barbara Kaplan's correspondence with Candy Snyder regarding the Venice Island issue. (Ms. Kaplan is the Executive Director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.) Ms. Messina felt very strongly that, contrary to Ms. Kaplan's opinion, it is within the RCC's mission to review issues of regional significance, such as flood control regulations and floodplain impacts. And, it is certainly within DVRPC's purview to have input to such as issue as regional flooding.

Ms. Messina stated that the City has a vision for Venice Island, and therefore hosted three charrettes that resulted in three large concepts, all involving large residential and commercial building. She cited the City's flood control regulations which "finds that development along existing rivers and creeks within the City of Philadelphia has led to increased flooding, thereby endangering the loss of property and life, creating health and safety hazards, and causing the expenditure of public funds for protection and relief. To prevent such adverse conditions, it is necessary to impose restrictions and regulations on development along rivers and creeks that are subject to flooding." Ms. Messina requested that the RCC examine regional flooding as an issue, and pointed out that this can be prevented through good land use planning.

The RCC voted to send a letter to Barbara Kaplan stating that it is within the mission statement of the RCC to examine issues of regional impact and that the City Planning Commission has in the past examined the effect of floodplain issues on proposed development, and needs to do so in the case of Venice Island.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Darlene Messina, seconded by Harry Hyde) to request that DVRPC urge local and county planning commissions to present long-term cost/benefit and environmental analyses to the Board for any proposed development of regional significance, such as Venice Island in Manayunk which raises floodplain issues. The RCC also urges that floodplain issues be incorporated into land use studies for future long-range regional plans, such as the Year 2025 Plan.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 9903:

Sue McNamara, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, reported that TIP Amendment 9903 includes eight TIP action items from PennDOT and one from Chester County. These projects are Vine Street Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), US 202 (Section 700) ITS, PA 309 (Section 100) ITS, PA 100/724 Ramp, PA 291/Industrial Highway, Chestnut Street Intermodal Improvements, Christopher Columbus Blvd., Girard Ave. over Schuylkill Expressway, and Pickering Road Bridge design and right-of-way.

She explained that the Vine Street ITS project was on last year's TIP; the project ran out of funding and now needs to roll over into this year's TIP. The 202 and 309 projects are existing projects that now have added ITS elements, such as advanced signage. PA 100 and PA 291 have now had funds added back into the TIP. Chestnut Street and Christopher Columbus Blvd. are already on the TIP; construction is being advanced so that they can be completed in 1999 prior to the onset of the Republican Convention. Girard Ave. was obligated in 1994; because of a master agreement issue with SEPTA, the project was delayed until now and must be added back into the TIP. The Chester County project, Pickering Road Bridge, is a different project than the one already listed on the TIP; Pickering Creek is crossed in two places in two different townships.

The RCC discussed the issue that CMAQ dollars should not be spent on ITS projects. Dennis Winters stated that he finds it very disturbing that ITS projects simply accommodate more SOV capacity, and the RCC has consistently opposed SOV capacity increases. The RCC also discussed the unproven effectiveness of these concepts. Some ITS projects that promote the "transit first" philosophy are worthy, but generally ITS is a band-aid, not a solution.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Claudia Crane) that the RCC recommend that the Board approve TIP Amendment 9903 minus the Vine Street ITS project, the US

202 ITS project, the PA 309 ITS project and the Chestnut Street Intermodal Improvement project. The RCC believes that ITS projects, even if effective, only increase SOV capacity, and at best, may extend the life of a highway project in the short term;

ITS increases only mitigate congestion temporarily and have yet to be proven cost effective for the benefits received.

The RCC again opposes Chestnut Street improvements; the committee has long been on record in opposition to this project.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 9904:

Ms. McNamara reported on TIP Amendment 9904, which is the Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grant Program. This amendment has been withdrawn pending a decision by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Formally these dollars must be listed in the TIP; however, there is no conformity issue involved. The RTC voted to approve the amendment conditionally upon the FTA announcing a decision on the projects. Once the decision is announced, this amendment will go directly to the Board.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Lorraine Brill) that the RCC recommends that the Board amend the FY 2000 DVRPC Planning Work Program, the FY 1999 - 2002 PA TIP and the FY 1998 - 2002 NJ TIP to include the Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grant Program dependent upon the Federal Transit Administration announcing a final decision.

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

US 202 (SECTION 300) CONGESTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS):

Michael Boyer, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner, reminded the RCC that he had presented the findings of the Congestion Management System (CMS) analysis for US 202 (Section 300) last month. This month he is coming to the RCC to review the CMS commitments. He stated that this project lies within the growth boundaries established by *Landscapes*, the Chester County Land Use Plan. The highway is proposed to be widened from four to six lanes, and the CMS found that SOV widening is the practical strategy to resolve a number of problems in the area, particularly the bottleneck that currently exists. The Needs Analysis found that TCM and TDM strategies only reduce daily traffic by 5 - 15%.

Boyer explained that CMS commitments are a federal requirement and enhance the proposed

widening. The commitments already in place include park and ride lots; new transit service; renovation of the Paoli Train Station and some other stations; bicycle facilities; and the Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) are reaching out to their members through a cooperative effort with PennDOT. Additional commitments will include new and enhanced transit service; expanded parking and bicycle facilities; a pedestrian overpass at Exton over Route 100; an ITS component (to be decided in final design); traffic operations improvements; extension of the Chester Valley Trail from Exton to Downingtown; and the TMA's will continue in their efforts to work with employers. Boyer concluded by pointing out that the SOV widening will fulfill the needs of the corridor, while the CMS commitments will enhance mobility to the year 2025.

The RCC stated that only 7% additional transit use can greatly effect mobility. John Pawson questioned whether an express bus had been considered. Boyer stated that it had been considered but that the bus would be sitting in congested traffic if the widening did not take place. Suzanne Axworthy voiced her concern that individual transit alternatives could be lost in the overall picture. The committee believes that there is a need to change attitudes about transit use and that an educational campaign is needed.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by John Pawson, seconded by Francene Brown) that the RCC supports most of the US 202 (Section 300) CMS strategies but opposes any new SOV widening.

The RCC is distressed that the US Route 202 (Section 300) CMS excludes explicit consideration of high quality express buses operating through at least Section 300. Such a program should include provision of one or more park-and-ride lots at the southwest residential end and direct service to significant employment locations at the northeast end. This service should be promoted aggressively in the media and through employers for an extended period with sufficient resources. It would serve as a modal alternative for other SOV-increasing proposals, in addition to the Route 202 (Section 300) corridor.

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

PA ROUTE 41 MAJOR INVESTMENT STUDY (MIS):

Dr. Don Shanis, DVRPC Deputy Director for Transportation Planning, outlined the PA Route 41 corridor, noting that PennDOT is conducting a study from PA 926 to the Delaware State Line in southern Chester County. A determination is required as to whether an MIS needs to be conducted. An MIS is a collaborative effort which links the transportation planning and environmental analysis processes leading to a more informed decision about the scope of transportation investment best suited for a study area. DVRPC, as the MPO, is responsible for making this determination. To better make this decision, DVRPC established an MIS committee that met twice. The attendees at these meetings identified the need for land use planning and growth management; and requested that supplemental

technical analyses be done, including a truck survey of the corridor. Dr. Shanis pointed that PennDOT has provided a ten-step process that includes public participation, environmental assessment and alternative review as a means of further studying the issue.

Stanley Platt, DVRPC Manager of the Office of Congestion Management, outlined the results of the truck survey. He stated that the study had examined types of trucks using the road, alternative routes and supplemental restrictions. His hand-out reviewed origin and destination, goods carried, and trip frequency. Platt explained that trucks are used for goods movement of 400 miles or less and that the average rail shipment is 800 miles. The types of products shipped from the Port of Wilmington tend to be petroleum and coal, food and farm products, and crude materials. The key findings included: 77% of northbound trucks have destinations within PA; 23% have at least one stop in the Avondale area; about half of all PA 41 trucks are tractor trailers; and less than 10% of the trips are longer than 400 miles. Platt also discussed the fact that a number of trucks make return trips empty.

Dr. Shanis stated that the study concluded that development pressures will impact highway capacity and safety; municipal land use controls should advance consistent with *Landscapes*; and strategies should be developed with the input of the communities along Route 41. Other issues identified include safety, the improvement of nine intersections and lower speed limits. An enhanced “no build” is currently being studied by PennDOT. DVRPC staff has concluded that no MIS is needed because the process has been collaborative; there are no other major modal alternatives; and all outstanding issues will be addressed by the existing planning process.

The RCC questioned some assumptions, noting contested population and employment growth. The committee discussed subsidizing rail to handle some of the freight; cost and environmental impact of alternatives; and safety issues. Michael Girman of PennDOT stated that speed limits on PA 41 will be reduced to 45 mph from 926 South and to 35 mph in Avondale. Linda Ingenthron’s rationale concerning the need for a bypass of Avondale and Chatham was distributed.

Wayne DiFrancesco pointed out that there has been no discussion of a bus line, or rail issues and their effect on the highway. He feels that there is an opportunity through an MIS to review and effect the design of the road. Staff and Girman pointed out that his is not the purpose of an MIS.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Wayne DiFrancesco, seconded by Suzanne Axworthy) to defer the vote on endorsement of or opposition to the PA Route 41 MIS until a counterpoint presentation can be made next month.

MOTION FAILED.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Susan McCue) that the RCC recommend that the Board confirm that the PennDOT ten-step process, enhanced with a land use initiative, is an adequate mechanism to address PA Route 41 corridor issues. A separate MIS is not required.

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

PA ROUTE 41 LAND USE STUDY:

Rikki Saunders submitted a resolution requesting a Land Use Study for the Route 41 Corridor. The Transportation Subcommittee reviewed the resolution and approved forwarding it to the RCC.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue McNamara, seconded by Rikki Saunders) to approve the following resolution and forward it to the DVRPC Board:

Motion before the DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee to request that the Land Use Study for the PA Route 41 Corridor be conducted by the Chester County Planning Commission:

Whereas Chester County Planning Commission has the award-winning Comprehensive Plan, Landscapes, with much of the work for the Land Use Study in place;

Whereas Chester County Planning Commission has a close working relationship with the Agricultural Preservation Program;

Whereas Chester County administers the Agricultural Security districts in the county;

Whereas Chester County Planning Commission has good working relations with the Brandywine Conservancy, which holds most of the private conservation easements in the area;

Whereas the population projections relied on by PennDOT are outdated and Chester County Planning Commission is currently revising such projections;

Whereas PennDOT will greatly benefit from the information, insight and perspective of the Chester County Planning Commission;

Whereas two of the Chester County Commissioners have requested that the Land Use Study be done by the Chester County Planning Commission;

Therefore, the DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee respectfully suggests that the DVRPC Board recommend to the Chester County Commissioners that the Chester County Planning Commission conduct the Land Use Study for the PA Route 41 Corridor.

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

PA ROUTE 41 NEEDS ANALYSIS :

Rikki Saunders distributed a new version of the PA Route 41 Needs Analysis resolution that had been deferred at the last meeting. Pat Horrocks questioned who would benefit from yet another study and pointed out that the communities along Route 41 have been trying to promote improvements here for years. Bob Machler proposed working within a two-lane alignment as a means of facilitating an answer. Michael Girman stated that PennDOT's ten-step process included a needs study whose purpose was to examine deficiencies and address issues. This was done and findings were presented at a public meeting. The earlier need study identified the following issues: safety concerns, congestion, a deficient infrastructure and a lack of intermodal connections. Ms. Saunders countered that there were issues that were not addressed. Girman pointed out that these are better handled through an EIS.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Rikki Saunders, seconded by Wayne DiFrancesco) to forward the attached Needs Analysis Resolution to the DVRPC Board for action.

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

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNITY AND SYSTEM PRESERVATION PILOT PROGRAM (TCSP) FUNDS:

Barry Seymour, DVRPC Assistant Executive Director for Regional Planning, stated that Gordon Linton, FTA Administrator, announced that DVRPC has received a \$665,600 grant to promote transit-oriented development (TOD), particularly along the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro. DVRPC, in partnership with the City of Philadelphia, the counties of Berks, Chester and Montgomery, the Berks Area Reading Transportation Authority (BARTA), the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, will coordinate the three primary elements of the project, which include:

- Developing a Location Efficient Mortgage Program, whereby a prospective homeowner, in areas well-served by public transit and services, could own fewer

cars and utilize those funds toward a better home and a higher monthly mortgage payment;

- Expanding ongoing education and information campaigns targeted to local officials, the development community and the general public, documenting the benefits of transit-oriented communities; and
- Proactively planning for transit-oriented development at station areas along the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro rail line, in conjunction with local plans and objectives.

The grant, one of 35 made nationwide out of 524 applicants for a total of \$13.1 million in fiscal 1999, is designated under an innovative program created by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) to help protect the environment and improve access to jobs, services and the marketplace.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Harry Hyde) to recommend that the RCC recommend that the Board amend the FY 2000 DVRPC Work Program and the FY 1999 - 2002 Pennsylvania TIP to include the Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program grant of \$665,600.

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

GRANT TO INCREASE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) CAPACITY FOR NATURAL RESOURCE PLANNING:

Barry Seymour announced that DVRPC has received a \$242,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation for work over two years to expand the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as a means of assisting area conservation organizations in accomplishing their goals. GIS is a data management system that links computers, people and data in order to display graphically what used to be seen in table form. With GIS, geography can be analyzed individually or in relationship to other data sources. By using GIS, conservation organizations will be better equipped to identify those areas in need of protection or remedial action and prioritize their efforts.

The project will be targeted to the non-profit conservation organizations supported by the William Penn Foundation. A significant number of the Foundation's grants to these organizations involve planning, technical assistance, feasibility studies, impact analyses, watershed management, or citizen environmental education which could be facilitated or improved through GIS.

Under this project, DVRPC will utilize its expertise to compile available GIS data layers within the William Penn Foundation's Expanded Grantmaking Region; combine those common layers in a regional GIS

database that would be replicated and distributed to users on CD-ROM; assess those data layers that are currently incompatible due to differences in scale, projection or coverage and conduct a pilot project to reconcile these layers with the regional base; provide training to GIS users through hand's-on-training courses organized at DVRPC; assist users on-site via a GIS expert "circuit rider" that would work with area organizations; and, expand the existing DVRPC on-line

GIS application, which allows users without on-site GIS to access and use the DVRPC GIS database with a standard computer and Internet browser.

UPDATE OF JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE TRANSPORTATION PLAN:

Richard Bickel, DVRPC Associate Director of Regional Planning, stated that a public meeting had been held on May 10th regarding the Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plan, which has been submitted to the federal government. The proposed plan contains current regional initiatives, as well as analysis of transit dependent populations, transportation needs and service gaps. It includes a regional strategy for access to jobs and reverse commuting, and provides a recommended regional strategy to overcome barriers to job access. In addition, the plan outlines a list of recommended, prioritized projects for Fiscal Year 1999 funding through the new Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grant Program. A list of those projects approved for funding in FY 1999 is also identified within the plan. Bickel will make copies available if the RCC requests them. This issue will be an action item in June.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Transportation: No additional report.

Legislative: The Subcommittee did not meet this month and will announce new meeting dates in the future.

Rules: No report.

Year 2025: Illy Sobel announced that the task force is working with DVRPC staff on the Year 2025 Plan.

Housing: Bill Rafsky stated that the DVRPC Housing Committee met in April and reviewed the First Generation Suburbs report and Location Efficient Mortgages and was enthusiastic about both concepts.

Environmental: Dennis Winters asked the RCC if the subcommittee should consider water issues. The committee endorsed this idea. The subcommittee will meet in June.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Gordon Linton, FTA Administrator, will be guest speaker at a meeting of the Delaware Valley Transit Users Group on June 12. Copies of the announcement were distributed.

Dennis Winters announced that he has copies of *Once There Were Green Fields* available if anyone wants to purchase them.