

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
MARCH 14, 2000**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of February 15, 2000 were approved with the following corrections: page 3 under TIP Amendment 9933, "the R2 - West Trenton" should be "the R3 - West Trenton"; and page 6, a typographical error was corrected in paragraph five to "now."

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Sue McNamara, RCC Chair, announced that Suzanne Axworthy is in Graduate Hospital and Bill Rafsky is in Lankenau Hospital. Committee members wished them both well. Ms. McNamara also announced that Warren Strumpfer had attended the New Jersey Subcommittee of the RTC representing the RCC and will continue to do so; she thanked him for this commitment. Ajay Creshkoff distributed an article he had drafted on the need for a proactive mayor for public transit.

THEY CALL IT PROGRESS:

Dan Rooney, Upper Merion Township Supervisor, opened the meeting by singing his song about suburban sprawl. He related his experience growing up in Upper Merion at a time before the King of Prussia Mall was built and when US 202 was one lane in each direction.

SEPTA HYBRID BUS PROGRAM:

John Nielson, SEPTA's Senior Project Manager for New Vehicle Programs, reviewed the history of gas/electric technology, noting that this type of vehicle dates to 1926 when SEPTA had 200 of these buses. Changes in technology dictated a different type of vehicle for many years, but the new hybrid buses are once again in the forefront. Benefits of the bus include reduced exhaust, improved brake life, and quieter operation; they are highly competitive with the CNG bus and far better than diesel. Nielson pointed out that there are currently three suppliers: Orion, Nova and New Flyer. He outlined the orders placed for vehicles by various cities around the country.

The current proposal calls for buses to operate on routes with high ridership and visibility; for the purchase of 12 buses initially; for operating performance and cost standards to be developed; and for the determination of community acceptance.

Because SEPTA's buses must go to Altoona for testing to meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, progress in procuring the buses has been slow. The first bus should be here by December of 2000. The RCC discussed vehicle cost; the use of Lookheed as a consultant in this field; the ratio of diesel to hybrid buses; and ADA and bicycle accommodations on vehicles.

NJDOT PROGRESS REPORT RE: ROUTE 42:

Debbie Kingsland, NJDOT Project Engineer for Planning, presented background information, noting that Senator John Matheussen and officials from Gloucester Township and Camden County had proposed an interchange on Route 42 at College Drive. The proposed interchange would provide better access to Camden County College, the Camden County Health Services Center and Gloucester Township Recreational Facility. NJDOT Commissioner James Weinstein had directed staff to conduct a 90-day sketch planning assessment of the merits of this proposal, looking at network conditions and existing traffic data. The assessment must be done by mid-April. Project scope development has completed an environmental and engineering screening with a finding of no fatal flaws. The project has been added to the FY00 - 01 Study and Development Program of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as concept development.

Doug Freudenrich of Michael Baker, Jr. Consultants explained that the Scope of Services includes an examination of traffic volumes (both old and new) and accident summary data; a review of origins and destinations; and a meeting with stakeholders. Input from the stakeholders included identification of key traffic problem locations. The facilities examination work is approximately 75% complete, and encompasses roadway capacity assessment, truck maneuvers, travel time, traffic signal timing and vehicle queuing. The consultant's work will be completed and submitted to NJDOT by April 15, 2000.

The RCC reiterated its concern about early public involvement and questioned why NJDOT had not yet met with local citizens, rather than municipal officials and politicians. Ms. Kingsland answered that a public meeting will be held following the 90-day sketch planning assessment. The RCC requested that the results of the completed assessment be presented to the committee.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Peggy Killmer, seconded by Ajay Creshkoff) to thank NJDOT for their presentation. However, the report did not allay the RCC's concern that the public was not involved early enough in the planning process. The social and economic knowledge of local individuals could have lent additional expertise to the 90-day sketch planning assessment.

MOTION CARRIED.

CITIZEN CONCERN OF JEFF TAYLOR RE: ROUTE 42:

RCC member Jeff Taylor has forwarded concerns regarding two variable message signs that were installed on NJ Route 42 in June, 1999. He questions the lack of use of these signs during normal congestion and even at times when accidents occur but are moved to the side of the road. He stated in his letter that there is a signed alternate route that would help traffic flow at times of congestion and this should be prominently posted. Taylor has asked the RCC to persuade NJDOT to use the variable message signs on a daily basis. The RCC asked Debbie Kingsland from NJDOT to respond but she said that she was not the correct person to deal with this matter. She suggested that Jeff Taylor contact Bill Kingsland at 856-866-4932. Taylor will be informed of this suggestion, and if there is no adequate answer, the RCC will take up this matter next month.

TIP MODIFICATION 9936:

Dennis Winters, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, outlined TIP Modification 9936 which has been forwarded by PennDOT. It is a proposal to change the TIP to reflect an update in the costs and scope of the Harrisburg Rail Line Improvements project. This project is programmed with \$12.5 million in FY99 and \$14.471 million in FY00. These amounts reflected the best estimates of available resources at the time the TIP was developed. Now that the actual funding allocations are known, PennDOT wants to change the TIP amounts to \$30 million, combining the FY99 and FY00 allocations. In addition, the scope will be revised to include the rebuilding and rehabilitation of electric locomotives and coaches instead of the purchase of multiple diesel units (DMU's). Dennis Winters stated that he is pleased that the decision has been made to proceed with electric locomotives that will use the current catenary. DMU's will be used in other locations in Pennsylvania. The subcommittee recommends approval of TIP Modification 9936.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Miles Day) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Modification 9936, PennDOT's request to program \$30 million in FY00 for the Harrisburg Rail Line Improvements to reflect the actual funding allocations and to revise the scope to include the rebuilding and rehabilitation of electric locomotives and coaches instead of the purchase of diesel multiple units.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 0002:

Winters next explained TIP Amendment 0002, a request from DRPA to add four new projects to the TIP, including an upgrade of Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition equipment; Modernization of the Center Tower; Upgrade of the Philadelphia Transformer Room; and Bridges Rehabilitation. These projects will add \$4.7 million to the TIP. Other action proposed by DRPA includes reprogramming a project from a previous TIP, and combining FY99 funding with FY00 funding for one other project. Dennis Winters pointed out that PATCO's Linda Hayes was willing to attend today to outline these projects, but that he and Sue McNamara felt that the projects were innocuous enough that this was not necessary. He also noted that PATCO is thinking of alternative transportation modes because they are placing bicycle racks and lockers in various stations. The RCC discussed the Bridges Rehab, noting concern about the Ben Franklin Bridge's loss of walkways during renovation. The package listed above, however, does not include the Ban Franklin Bridge. Ajay Creshkoff questioned whether the Transportation Subcommittee has a copy of the PATCO master plan which would provide a background for how these projects fit. Candace Snyder will contact PATCO and request this. The subcommittee recommends approval of TIP Amendment 0002.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Amendment 0002, DRPA's request to add four new projects, reprogram a project from a previous TIP, and combine FY99 funding with FY00 funding for one project.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 0003:

Winters noted that TIP Amendment 0003 is a NJDOT package of adjustments to the FY00 - 02 TIP that includes: Route 41,42 Freeway (Gloucester County) - an increase in the amount programmed for right-of-way; Route 206 (Burlington County) - advance in construction funds; Route 73 (Burlington County) - program \$1.1 million in preliminary design funds; and CR 551 (Gloucester City and Camden County) - add the construction phase to FY00. A number of adjustments in other projects maintain financial constraint. The only new project is the latter one shown above; it is new only in the sense that it was left off the current TIP. The subcommittee discussed the Route 41,42 project, noting that it is different from the 42/295/76 interchange project, and that the increase in funds it to accommodate land acquisition. The subcommittee recommends approval but asks again that any agency submitting TIP modifications/amendments include maps along with project descriptions. This could easily be accommodated on the back of the TIP project form.

Peggy Killmer questioned how DVRPC's Board could have voted on the TIP last year

when a federal freeze was in place. Chick Dougherty, DVRPC's Associate Director for Transportation Planning, explained that the TIP doesn't become effective until the federal government's final approval. Even though projects could not move while the freeze was in place, DVRPC had to take action to adopt a TIP. The TIP serves as the endowment for budgeting funds. The RCC then discussed whether the increase in the cost of land for right-of-way for TIP Amendment 0003 was justifiable. Dougherty noted that a project may be in the preliminary engineering phase when it is first developed and placed on the TIP. At that time, only an estimate of right-of-way costs can be made. At the proper time, NJDOT must update this estimate and make a better guess after looking at all of the land needed for a project. It is in the design phase that the agency negotiates for land.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Amendment 0003; however, the RCC asks again that any agency submitting TIP modifications/amendments include maps along with project descriptions that provide sufficient details for decision-making. These additional items could easily be accommodated on the back of the TIP project form.

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

**PENNDOT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TMA)
ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM:**

Dennis Winters outlined the TMA program, stating that these organizations are a creation of ISTEA and were designed to work with the private sector on transportation issues involving the movement of people and goods. PennDOT has annually funded TMA activities since 1992. The program was developed to provide operating assistance to these public-private partnerships to support their travel demand management promotional work as a means of mitigating traffic congestion and improving air quality. Although the TMA's are membership organizations, and a percentage of their operating budgets must come from dues and other fees, the PennDOT grant allows TMA's to serve their constituencies in a limited way without regard to membership. This is an ongoing program, renewable annually. Each TMA must submit an application for the program every year, and any PennDOT award must be matched at 20%. The subcommittee discussed PennDOT's decision that these funds should come from the CMAQ pot.

The material distributed has been corrected to show total funds of \$500,000 -- to be split at \$80,000 per TMA with the additional \$100,000 being used for special projects. There are five TMA's in the Pennsylvania portion of the region: namely, Greater Valley Forge TMA, The Partnership TMA; the Delaware County TMA; the TMA of Chester County; and the Bucks County TMA. There are also the West Philadelphia TMA and the Bucks County

HUB, which call themselves TMA's but do not receive PennDOT funding. Each TMA submits its Work Program to DVRPC for approval. Quantifiable measures are provided for single occupant vehicle (SOV) reduction and air quality impact.

Pat Horrocks made the point that grant funds for TMA's are not provided in a timely manner, often causing the association to scramble for dollars. She questioned why the TMA's are not allowed to advocate but yet can advertise programs.

Winters stated that the only controversy was a letter received from David Levy of the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation, asking that his organization be considered a TMA and receive funding. Winters pointed out that there are many development corporations and this could mark the beginning of a number of additional applications. Levy has asked DVRPC for a letter of support; Winters noted that he has a history of not being transit friendly. Ajay Creshkoff noted that Levy should be given the opportunity to show how his group would use the funds. The RTC motion does not address this request. Winters will report back on this issue.

The subcommittee recommends amending the DVRPC FY01 Work Program to include the \$500,000 PennDOT TMA Assistance Grant Program, allocating \$400,000 to the five TMA's currently under contract, and reserving \$100,000 for special studies to be determined.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Claudia Crane) to recommend that the Board amend the DVRPC FY01 Work Program to include the \$500,000 PennDOT TMA Assistance Grant Program, allocating \$400,000 to the five TMA's currently under contract, and reserving \$100,000 for special studies to be determined. The RCC urges PennDOT to forward these funds in a timely and expeditious manner.

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

MILLSTONE BYPASS RESOLUTION:

Peggy Killmer stated that NJDOT has programmed \$11 million in the state's FY00 budget and in the DVRPC FY01 and 02 TIP for land acquisition for the Millstone Bypass. She noted that there are still many environmental hurdles before re-alignment can begin, even though no particular alignment has been specified.

Ms. Killmer reviewed a letter sent from the New Jersey Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer to NJDOT stating that he disagrees with the assessment that the proposed Millstone Bypass project will have no adverse effect on the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District. He contends that "the proposed roadway would substantially change the

character of physical features within a portion of the Canal's setting and would introduce visual, atmospheric and audible elements that diminish the integrity of significant historic features in this portion of the Canal.”

Ms. Killmer emphasized her belief that programming funds for right-of-way at this time is premature and will obstruct a mitigating solution. Right-of-way acquisition prejudices the process. An Environmental Assessment (EA) might call for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which in turn might come out with a no build scenario. No EA has been released at this time. Ms. Killmer noted that this is in violation of Section 106 compliance with federal laws, which states that the assessment of the effects on historic sites must be complete before the expenditure of federal funds. According to Ms. Killmer, NJDOT must still comply with federal law because federal funds were used for the Millstone CMS. She believes this to be the case in spite of the commitment of state funds for this project. The subcommittee recommended a resolution as outlined in its highlights.

Chick Dougherty explained that NJDOT cannot touch federal funds until an EA has been completed. The right-of-way allocation in the TIP was allowed after much debate, and states that the inclusion of funding for right-of-way does not endorse any particular alignment. The right-of-way cannot proceed until FHWA approves all environmental documents. He also pointed out that this year's New Jersey state budget shows right-of-way funds as federal dollars.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Peggy Killmer, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend the following resolution to the Board:

- ▶ Having reviewed the letter from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Historic Preservation Office to the New Jersey Department of Transportation regarding the Millstone Bypass, the RCC would like to see NJDOT's written response to this correspondence.
- ▶ The RCC again asks that all copies of Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements, including the Millstone Bypass EA, be sent to DVRPC, including in CD-ROM format which is inexpensive to produce and can make studies available to larger numbers of people.

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

UPDATE ON YEAR 2025 REPORT #2:

Richard Bickel, DVRPC Associate Director for Regional Planning, stated that the RCC had received the summary of survey results from Year 2025 Report Survey #1. A survey was mailed with Report #2 and everyone is encouraged to return this form. Bickel then

reviewed the four charrettes that were held last fall, and stated that the Land Use and Transportation Plans are yet to come, followed by a report on implementation issues. Results of a business survey conducted by the Transportation Division are being tallied and will be released shortly.

The Year 2025 Report #2, entitled *Issues and Choices*, focuses on global and regional issues and presents two scenarios as the logical follow-up to the consequences of current trends. Global issues include technology and decentralization, e-commerce, world markets and information technology. Regional issues are those that planners can deal with such as an aging population, a skilled work force, maintaining infrastructure and race and poverty. The two scenarios included in this report provide “what if’s” and alternatives for readers.

Sue McNamara suggested that a letter and Citizens’ Guide be sent to those on the Year 2025 mailing list as a means of interesting them in the RCC. The committee discussed whether more scenarios were needed, and the need to influence land use as a means of implementing the plan.

THE 2000 CENSUS:

Michael Ontko, DVRPC Deputy Director for Regional Planning, announced that the 2000 census is struggling against the fact that the 1990 census was not particularly accurate and against falling returns. Most people will be receiving their census forms this week; the census goes to more than 119 million housing units in the U.S. Approximately 520 offices are expected to open to deal with census returns, with temporary staffing totaling 1.35 million. Ontko pointed out that about 46 million households will not send back their forms, forcing census workers to visit the household in person.

He stated that some of the information gleaned from this effort will be released as early as 2001; this information is the segment that will influence reapportionment. A new core-based process is being used, designating statistical areas as mega (over 1 million), macro (50,000 - 999,000) and Micro (10,000 - 49,999). Information will be available by census tract, as well as by county and municipality. Part of this new census effort will redefine census tracts. DVRPC is involved in transportation analysis zones, census tract revisions and match rates for the locations of employers for journey to work trends. Ontko stated that some information can be downloaded from the census website (www.census.gov) and some will come to us on CD-ROM.

The cost of the census has doubled since 1990 because of increasing households, inflation and the declining probability of return leading to costly follow-up.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee: Cathy Zukoski, subcommittee chair,

announced that the Environmental Assessment for the DRPA Tram is in the DVRPC Library. Comments are due by March 16, 2000 to the agency. Lorraine Brill provided hand-outs from the Tram public meeting. Kevin Smith gave an update on the Venice Island hearings.

Year 2025 Task Force: Ernest Cohen stated that the task force is finishing up its work on pedestrian access to transit stations, following a presentation by DVRPC's John Madera.

Transportation Subcommittee: Dennis Winters mentioned John Pawson's letter to Jack Leary on the Schuylkill Valley Metro.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Sue McNamara announced that she had met with PATCO officials to discuss construction on the Ben Franklin Bridge walkway; this work will continue until June, 2000. Officials stated that pedestrian access is via PATCO and NJ Transit, and bicyclists can use NJ Transit buses. Ms. McNamara had submitted an estimate for installing bike racks at all PATCO stations; the agency has accepted this estimate and will move forward with this project.

NEXT RCC MEETING:

The RCC will meet on Tuesday, April 18, 2000.