

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
APRIL 18, 2000**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of March 14, 2000 were approved as mailed.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Sue McNamara, RCC Chair, announced that a Pro Bike/Pro Walk Conference will be held September 5 - 8 at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel. Bike-to-Work Day will be June 2 and will leave from City Hall at 8 a.m. Earth Day will be celebrated April 22. Ms. McNamara also summarized her work on one of the transition teams for Mayor Street. The papers issued by the various transition teams can be viewed on the web at phila.gov . She stated that she and three other RCC members were on the CMAQ Committee and were evaluating proposals at this time.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) MODIFICATION 9938:

Dennis Winters, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, explained that the subcommittee did not meet this month but he would summarize the transportation action items for the RCC. TIP Modification 9938 is an adjustment package from SEPTA for a number of projects that are already on the TIP. These projects include the City Hall Station Rehabilitation; Broad Street Station Improvements; and the Norristown Parking Garage. Each represents a change in funding allocation.

John Pawson introduced a resolution (see attached) on the Norristown Parking Garage that listed various factors leading to his conclusion that this was a wasteful addition which should not be built. Peggy Killmer stated that a comment should be note that these transitional projects should be deferred until critical future transit decisions are made. The committee questioned how it can comment on these issues without knowing future needs. Illy Sobel noted that SEPTA allows for comment on major projects but there is little opportunity to comment on smaller projects such as these. The RCC also discussed the use of the Norristown Parking Garage for TOD projects and the Congressional earmark that was pinpointed for this

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Modification 9938, SEPTA's request to change the funding source for the City Hall Station Rehabilitation and the Broad Street Subway Station.

AMENDMENT (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to exclude the Norristown Parking Garage project from the above modification and to forward John Pawson's resolution on this issue to the Board.

AMENDMENT (by Peggy Killmer, seconded by Kevin Smith) to also note that the Norristown Parking Garage project should be set aside until future transit improvements are determined conclusively. The RCC asks that the sponsor of this earmark reconsider this project and mark these funds for another use on this site.

MOTION CARRIED, AS AMENDED. (See Item A on voting record.)

TIP MODIFICATION 9939:

Winters summarized TIP Modification 9939, which is a request to include the FY 2000 Job Access and Reverse Commute earmark in the TIP. In March, 2000 the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the process for accepting grant applications for this fiscal year's Job Access and Reverse Commute Program. In FY 2000, Congress earmarked \$49.6 million of available funds for this program. Of these funds, \$1 million was earmarked for southeastern Pennsylvania. In addition, \$15.8 million is available for larger metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia as part of a competitive grant program.

The RTC reviewed the proposals and letters of intent submitted for this year's program and recommended approval of the earmark. A list of the projects was included for the RCC. The proposals will go to the Board's Policy Committee for prioritization.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Modification 9939, SEPTA's request to include the FY 2000 earmark for the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program in the TIP.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 9940:

Winters explained that TIP Amendment 9940 is a recommendation from Chester County to include engineering and right-of-way for the French Creek Parkway in Phoenixville. The project has been included in the draft 2001 TIP but a 2000 TIP amendment is needed to fast track the environmental review, preliminary engineering and final design. The French Creek Parkway will provide improved accessibility in the area of routes 23, 29 and 113, and will provide significant opportunities for brownfield redevelopment and transit-oriented development.

The parkway is an integral part of the access plan for the Phoenixville station on the proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro. The project has significant support from the Borough Council, county Commissioners and legislative delegation. A complete project description was included but the map distributed to the RTC was not.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Amendment 9940, Chester County's request to add the engineering and right-of-way phases of the French Creek Parkway project to the TIP.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 0004:

Winters next explained TIP Amendment 0004, a submission from NJDOT to modify the TIP by adjusting the schedule of the Route 31/CR 518 Intersection Improvement project and to amend the TIP by adding the Route 130 Corridor Improvement project, which is currently in the Study and Development Program. TIP print-outs were included to show the projects as programmed along with fiscal constraint.

Peggy Killmer objected to NJDOT's placing more than one project into an amendment and noted that this is a bad practice, giving no thought to public comment. She stated that NJDOT should provide more information such as public comments, a map, environmental constraints, etc. In addition, she questioned the validity of this project. Winters noted that Chick Dougherty has forwarded a request to all agencies asking for additional information and maps to be included with TIP amendments and modifications. The RCC voted to handle the projects in this TIP amendment separately.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board add the project development/preliminary engineering phase of the Route 130 Corridor Improvement project contained in TIP Amendment 0004.

AMENDMENT (by Peggy Killmer, seconded by Kevin Smith) to recommend that the Board not approve NJDOT's request to adjust the schedule of the Route 31/CR 518 Intersection Improvement project listed in TIP Amendment 0004 due to a lack of information such as environmental constraints, public comment and citizen involvement.

MOTION CARRIED, AS AMENDED. (See Item D on voting record.)

FY 2001 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT FOR PA TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TMA) SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

Sarah Oaks, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner, stated that the RTC had approved a total of \$74,000 in Supplemental TMA Assistance Grants which consists of the Delaware County TMA for Year 3 of the Quicksilver Shuttle (\$28,000); the Partnership TMA for Year 2 of the Subscription Bus Service (\$36,000); and the Chester County TMA for their Local Government Assistance Program (\$10,000), the last of which is conditional upon approval of the work program by the Chester County Planning Commission. Ms. Oaks reviewed the categories of proposals, noting that they include telecommuting outreach, operational assistance for commuter shuttles, educational programs in schools, and ancillary projects for municipalities to coordinate programs. It was noted that the telecommuting and educational programs should be funded from the MAP program. PennDOT funds are supplied only for the first three years to get the projects off the ground. \$26,000 is left in the available pot of funds for FY 2001.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board amend the FY 2001 Planning Work Program to include \$74,000 in Supplemental TMA Assistance Grants for the Delaware County TMA for Year 3 of the Quicksilver Shuttle (\$28,000); the Partnership TMA for Year 2 of the Subscription Bus Service (\$36,000); and the Chester County TMA for their Local Government Assistance Program (\$10,000).

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

FY 2000 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT FOR US 322 CORRIDOR PLANNING STUDY:

Dennis Winters outlined the US 322 Corridor Planning Study which has been a joint effort by DVRPC, Gloucester County and NJDOT. Several planning studies and public outreach efforts have recently been completed in this corridor. As a result, funding has been programmed on the region's TIP to conduct preliminary engineering for improvements along the section of US 322 between the Commodore Barry Bridge and NJ55. Using funding from that TIP project, NJDOT has hired a consultant to conduct a detailed corridor analysis including a geometric evaluation, an environmental screening, a current/future traffic analysis, a conceptual solutions screening and a public involvement process. DVRPC will serve as a resource for much of the data already collected. The Commission will also conduct a traffic counting program for the corridor.

Jeff Taylor noted that there is a great deal of building taking place in Mullica Hill. This project is important to South Jersey since this is a major route to the shore and Atlantic City. Peggy Killmer stated that this road's importance as a scenic byway should be remembered, as well as its role in the state plan. In addition, she noted that widening roads induces sprawl. Rikki Saunders reminded committee members about the effects of induced traffic, particularly on agricultural lands. Ken Edmonds mentioned that it is important to provide bicycle access on road shoulders.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Warren Strumpfer) to recommend that the Board approve the US 322 Corridor Planning Study and amend the FY 2000 Planning Work Program to include it.

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

FY 2000 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT FOR US 130 CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLAN:

Dennis Winters reviewed the Context-Sensitive Concept Plan for a section of US Route 130 from the Pennsauken Creek to Wood Street in Burlington City. The goal of the plan is to revitalize a 10.2-mile segment of US 130 by making it more attractive from both an aesthetic and functional standpoint in coordination with the economic development and redevelopment of the corridor. The project will prepare a plan that is a concept-development study producing all documentation required to advance the plan as projects in Feasibility Assessment at NJDOT. Public involvement will play an important role in the project.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Peggy Killmer) to recommend that the Board approve the Context-Sensitive Concept Plan for a section of US Route 130 and amend the FY 2000 and 2001 Planning Work Programs to include it.

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

FY 2001 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT FOR NEW JERSEY WATERSHED PLANNING:

Michael Ontko, DVRPC Deputy Director for Regional Planning, stated that two years ago DVRPC was asked to submit a proposal for watershed planning in New Jersey.

Over a period of time, the scope and content of the proposal changed at the request of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). This new proposal has resulted in a \$600,000 study to take place over four years; \$200,000 to be spent in each of the first two years and \$100,000 in each of the last two years.

New Jersey has divided the state into 20 watershed areas. DVRPC is responsible for the study in watershed area #18, which stretches from Burlington County through Gloucester county and into Camden and Salem counties. This process will be more public-oriented than in the past and will be built around work done in other areas. Ontko stated that he hopes this proposal will remove the planning process from the judicial process and resolve institutional differences. Ontko pointed out that DVRPC is also pursuing watershed opportunities in Pennsylvania. The RCC discussed the effect of highway building on watersheds, concurrence with the state plan to balance requirements for growth and retaining environmental features. Darlene asked that the RCC be kept informed throughout this study, with reports going to the committee's Environmental Subcommittee. She volunteered to keep tabs on this study.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Kevin Smith) to recommend that the Board approve the New Jersey Watershed Planning Study and amend the FY 2001 Planning Work Program to include it. The RCC also appoints a representative to monitor the study.

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

REGIONAL JOB ACCESS AND REVERSE COMMUTE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM - APPLICANT SELECTION, PLAN CONSISTENCY, PROJECT NEED AND PRIORITIES AND TIP COMMITMENT:

Jeff Butler, DVRPC Regional Planner, announced that March 31 was the deadline for the receipt of letters of intent for the Regional Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grant Program. DVRPC received five letters from SEPTA, the Bucks County TMA, the Partnership TMA, the Greater Valley Forge TMA and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition. Butler reviewed each of the projects. He stated that Darlene Messina is the RCC representative sitting on the committee assigned to rank the projects, which total \$3.9 million. The earmark is for \$1 million. Applications will be submitted to FTA by the end of April.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Miles Day, seconded by John Pawson) to support the appointment of Darlene Messina as the RCC representative to the Job Access and Reverse Commute Grant Program; to endorse the projects proposed for the FY 2000 Job Access and Reverse Commute Program as consistent with the Regional Job Access and Reverse Commute Transportation Plan; to assert that the applicants are qualified to undertake the projects and that there is a need for the projects proposed.

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

AUTHORIZATION TO OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT DVRPC FY 2001 - 2003 TIP FOR NEW JERSEY AND FY 2001 - 2004 TIP FOR PENNSYLVANIA:

Candace Snyder, DVRPC's Director of Public Affairs, reported that the DVRPC Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FY 2001 - 2003 in New Jersey and for FY 2001 - 2004 in Pennsylvania should be ready for public release in mid-May. DVRPC staff will go to the Board this month asking for approval to release the TIP's and to set up a public comment period for approximately 30 days. Public outreach for this TIP will be far more extensive than for those in the past since it will encompass efforts to reach minority and low income populations in accordance with newer regulations addressing Title VI and environmental justice statutes. In the past, DVRPC used its website, issued legal notices, utilized regional libraries and the media for outreach. This new effort will also include working with the NAACP, Urban League, Spanish and Vietnamese communities; getting word out to the public through transit agency electronic bulletin boards and publications; translating TIP notices into Spanish; holding seven meetings in those areas with larger minority and low income populations.

Peggy Killmer questioned issuing media releases and why the papers didn't print more notices of meetings. Ms. Snyder stated that media releases are sent to the more than 250 electronic and print media in the region but there is no assurance that each will use the information. She will fax a copy of Mercer County's media release for Ms. Killmer's follow-up. Suzanne Axworthy asked that public meeting notices indicate the nearby transit route and whether they are handicap-accessible.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the Board authorize staff to release the DVRPC Draft FY 2001 - 2003 TIP for New Jersey and the DVRPC Draft FY 2001 - 2004 TIP for Pennsylvania in May, 2000 for at least a 30-day comment period.

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

GREENWAY CASE STUDIES:

Patty Elkis, DVRPC Senior Regional Planner, explained that a greenway is a corridor of open space linking natural, historic and/or recreational resources. She noted that Fairmount Park dates back more than 100 years and is a good example of a greenway. Ms. Elkis stated that the benefits of greenways are environmental, educational, scenic, recreational, economic and quality of life. She also outlined the Year 2020 Plan which calls for the protection of greenways and has translated these goals into realistic objectives. DVRPC is working in those areas in New Jersey suggested by the counties, as well as partnering with local land trust/watershed associations and municipalities. The Commission has also set up a steering committee represented by state, county and municipal representatives, non-profit agencies and residents. The planning process include creating maps, soliciting input, conducting research and producing a greenway plan as a "how-to" guide for stakeholders. Three such greenway plans have been prepared; namely, for Rancocas Creek, Upper Mantua Creek and Assunpink Creek. Ms. Elkis reviewed the goals of each greenway plan and answered questions regarding buffers for streams, building in floodplains, updating of the Year 2020 Plan to 2025 and next steps.

CITIZEN REQUEST RE - NEW JERSEY HIGHWAY ISSUES:

Jeff Taylor, RCC member, stated that he travels many roads in New Jersey and is concerned about a number of issues, particularly in light of the upcoming Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. He presented a paper (see attached) that outlined issues regarding ramp confusion and misleading or fading signage, the "Jersey Left", useless construction signs on I-295, DRPA signage and EZ Pass implementation. He stated that all of the recommendations are low cost and could be easily implemented. Sue McNamara pointed out that she sits on the MUTCD which standardizes signage and highway striping that pointed out that standardization is important. Taylor pointed out that he has mentioned many of these issues to NJDOT, many times with no response.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by Warren Strumpfer) to forward Jeff Taylor's recommendations to the Board and ask that NJDOT address these issues on a point-by-point basis.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee: Dennis Winters reported that the subcommittee had met and comments were available on the counter for anyone who wanted to pick them up.

Rules: No report.

Year 2025 Task Force: Ernest Cohen stated that he believes that information that is presented for various projects is “massaged” before being issued to the public. He does not trust the numbers issued for the US 202 traffic counts, for ridership on the DRPA tram and for the Schuylkill Valley Metro. He asked for an explanation of DVRPC’s involvement in the 202 issue as reported in local media. Dennis Winters questioned whether modeling affects air quality conformity and asked if this manipulation of numbers happens often. He reiterated that an accounting of this issue is due the RCC. Ms. Snyder explained that she was told that the modeling numbers were simply adjusted to match the traffic counts that had been done in the area, and that this is common practice. DVRPC has been dismissed from the lawsuit.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION: (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Rikki Saunders) to ask that the DVRPC Executive Director come the next RCC meeting to explain what appeared in regional newspapers regarding the US 202 issue, as well as the effects on other corridor studies, air quality conformity and the regional land use plan. The RCC would like to see the input and output data for conformity.

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

Ernest Cohen also asked that DRPA be invited in June to justify its numbers on the tram.

Transportation Subcommittee: No report.

Central Jersey Transportation Forum: Peggy Killmer reported that the Forum met on April 7 to discuss municipal plans and modeling. She stated that she had questioned NJDOT’s placing funds in the state capital budget for the Millstone Bypass. Bill Beetle of NJDOT had responded that the project is moving through the environmental process.

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY METRO RESOLUTION:

John Pawson introduced a resolution (see attached) on the Schuylkill Valley Metro that

reaffirms the “Attractive Public Transportation for the Schuylkill Valley “ proposal and lists twelve concerns. The RCC discussed SEPTA’s doing a pilot project that would use diesel trains and existing rail from Reading to 30th Street Station to ascertain ridership. Some members questioned whether this would determine accurate demand since marketing and timing would be crucial to promoting this line. The committee agreed, however, that even minimal service is needed as soon as possible, and edited the resolution to include this statement.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by John Pawson, seconded by Harry Hyde) to transmit the Schuylkill Valley Metro resolution to the DVRPC Board for consideration.

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

OTHER BUSINESS:

Rikki Saunders introduced a discussion about the need for new population forecasts for the area along PA Route 41, noting that the adopted forecasts do not address 20,000 acres of eased land or protected open space. She cited the “Landscapes” Plan, noting that millions have been spent to ensure quality of life and agricultural needs. Pat Horrocks stated that some townships are questioning the direction of the county. Information presented to Chester County is not the information used to determine the population projections. She also emphasized that the use of route 41 is also a factor in determining future land use.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Rikki Saunders, seconded by Dennis Winters) to inform the DVRPC Board that the RCC questions the population forecasts for nine townships along the PA Route 41 corridor; namely, West Marlborough, London Grove, Londonderry, Penn, Highland, West Fallowfield, Upper Oxford, Sadsbury, West Sadsbury; and the boroughs of Atglen and New Garden.

The RCC asks that DVRPC work with Chester County and the Brandywine Conservancy to re-examine the projected population numbers along this corridor, considering the agricultural preservation program, open space acreage and easements, and report back to the RCC on this matter.

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

Ms. Saunders stated that she will attend the DVRPC Board meeting to add her comments to this motion.

NEXT RCC MEETING:

The RCC will meet on Tuesday, May 16, 2000.