

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
JUNE 13, 2000**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of May 16, 2000 were approved as mailed.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Sue McNamara, RCC Chair, gave her time to Jane Glenn, who reported that a final zoning hearing had been held on Venice Island, at which time many voiced their opposition to building more than 500 residential units in the floodplain. Ms. Glenn distributed a letter from James Witt, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), stating that he is concerned about the applications for variances from Philadelphia's floodplain ordinance. The letter also points out that Philadelphia's continued eligibility for the National Flood Insurance Program could be jeopardized by approving these projects if the technical basis on which they are deemed to meet federal standards is unsound. This could mean that the City would not be eligible for disaster relief.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Jane Glenn, seconded by John Pawson) to provide a project update to the DVRPC Board on Venice Island through these minutes and the Federal Emergency Management Agency letter and point out how this issue relates to the Schuylkill Watershed.

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

PENNVEST FUNDING REQUESTS:

Barry Seymour, DVRPC Assistant Executive Director for Regional Planning, explained that the first of three applications for PennVest funding is from Philadelphia Suburban Water Company which is a request for a \$1,174,916 loan to replace the deteriorated North Wayne Water Tank No 2 with a new tank of the same size. The other two requests are from the Borough of Lansdowne asking for separate loans of \$2,434,500 and \$1,497,500 to replace damaged and failing sanitary sewer lines at various locations. No additional capacity will be created from these projects.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Jane Glenn) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve the requests for PennVest loans for Philadelphia Suburban Water Company and the Borough of Lansdowne.

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

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT 9945:

Dennis Winters, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, explained that TIP Amendment 9945 is a request from the City of Philadelphia to set aside funds for an open-end contract for miscellaneous city-wide engineering design work to erect traffic signals and controls. In order to fund this project, dollars will be taken from the School House Lane project which will not be available for construction until FY 2001. Winters stated that Bill Rafsky had expressed concern about the School House Lane project, which he opposes. Funding will be restored to the School House Lane project in the FY 2001 TIP which is currently under review. DVRPC staff told Rafsky that his concerns should be addressed during this public comment period on the draft TIP. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Amendment 9945.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9945, the City of Philadelphia's request to add \$250,000 for Traffic Control - Miscellaneous Design.

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

DVRPC DRAFT FY 2001 TIP FOR NEW JERSEY AND PENNSYLVANIA:

Winters introduced the recommendations of the Transportation Subcommittee regarding the Draft DVRPC FY 2001 TIP and the RCC reviewed them and made minor changes. Candace Snyder will mail copies of RCC members' testimony regarding the Delaware River Tram and the committee will decide in July whether to add this correspondence to their comments below. The RCC discussed the need for the Missing Moves portion of the I-295/I-76/NJ42 project. The committee was split on whether transit could sufficiently solve the problems along this highway.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Peggy Killmer, seconded by Kevin Smith) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve the DVRPC Draft FY 2001 TIP for New Jersey. The RCC also submits the following comments on the New Jersey TIP:

1. TIP#2374 (Delaware River Tram): The RCC continues to oppose the Delaware River Tram for the following reasons:
 - a) There is no justification for the project;
 - b) This project is tantamount to an amusement park ride;
 - c) There is much concern about the operation of the tram in different weather extremes;
 - d) DRPA should focus on its core mission which is to expand PATCO operations;
 - e) The agency should be addressing other, more timely transportation issues.

2. TIP#4321 (Scotch Road/I-95 Interchange): The RCC continues to oppose this project.

3. TIP#2340A & B (I-295/76/NJ42 - Missing Moves and Direct Connection): On the basis of safety concerns, the RCC supports the missing Moves and Direct Connection. However, the committee feels these projects should not move forward until transit is more thoroughly examined. As the RCC recommended in 1998, transit alternatives can significantly address the mobility pressures of the area: data in the Burlington-Gloucester MIS needs to be considered. Specifically, the alternatives to be studied should include:
 1. Light rail and modified light rail (modified PATCO) alternatives to Mantua where the Camden-Glassboro freight line intersects Route 55.
 2. Furthermore, Atlantic City Rail Line Improvements should include--
 - a. The addition of one peak direction round-trip;
 - b. Lessen travel time of each run by 20-35 minutes to what it was 50 years ago;
 - c. Directly extend service to Suburban Station.In addition, the RCC encourages vigorous consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, with particular emphasis on the transportation improvements listed above.

4. TIP#4313 (Route 29): The RCC continues its opposition to the Route 29 project and contends that the environmental review was inadequate.

5. TIP#4311 (Millstone Bypass): The RCC believes that action by the DVRPC

Board on the Millstone Bypass is premature prior to completion of the Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

6. TIPDB#T300 (Transit Rail Initiatives): The extension of the Trenton to Camden line and extension of the PATCO Systems should be studied.

7. The RCC also questions why project costs for North Jersey are in the DVRPC TIP for this region.

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

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded Kevin Smith) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve the DVRPC Draft FY 2001 TIP for Pennsylvania. The RCC also submits the following comments on the Pennsylvania TIP:

1. In general, arrangement of the TIP should be improved as follows:
 - a. There is no index other than on maps;
 - b. Maps give project numbers but not page numbers;
 - c. Individual projects are not listed according to TIP number sequence;
 - d. Related projects are scattered without cross-reference. One instance is the various Route 23 projects)TIP#8743, 8776 and M 06.
2. Opposition is highly likely on TIP#8743 (PA 23). This project would convert what is now a local residential street (Chelsea Drive) into a four-lane segment of Route 23. The area was assured years ago that the Route 23 project was permanently halted a mile west of Bridgeport. The RCC questions whether there has been community involvement in this project.
3. TIP#7879 (Chester Creek Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail): Trails should be in vicinity of rail - not on the rail grade. Experience has shown that rail restoration is likely to be politically impractical if the trail is located on the rail grade.
4. TIP#D26 (McDade Blvd.): Traffic signals are to be pre-empted by buses at Darby Bus Terminal. The RCC supports this all too rare "Transit First" Initiative.
5. TIP#8475 (Church Road): Are sidewalks included in this bridge replacement?
6. TIP#8436 (Greenwood Ave.): Will sidewalks on the bridge replacement meet ADA standards?
7. TIP#8798 (Pennypack Connector Trail): The RCC again questions whether

rail restoration would be politically impractical if the trail is located on the rail grade.

8. TIP#9746 (30th Street Station Intermodal Gateway): What direct, secure alternatives are proposed for the Market Street Subway to Surface Line connection to the Regional Rail at 30th Street?

9. TIP#0537 (Alternative fuel Project): The RCC supports and urges quick acquisition of hybrid buses.

10. TIP#PA01 (Amtrak Harrisburg Line): Does this include centralized traffic control, especially where SEPTA operates?

11. TIP#SO14 (Station Accessibility): The RCC supports accessibility but questions whether SEPTA has explored the interim strategy of making cars, rather than stations, serve as the critical element in ADA compliance (i.e., wheelchair lifts on each train instead of ramps on every platform).

12. TIP#SO30 (North Philadelphia Transportation Center): With the proposed discontinuance of the R-8 train at this station, how has this project been rescoped in terms of capital dollars?

13. TIP#SO60 (Rail Stations and Parking Program): See Attachment #1. The RCC believes that "market driven" pricing should be used; i.e., pricing for parking at different rail stations should be considered.

14. TIP#SO71 (Eastwick Transportation Center): The RCC reaffirms its position that ridership is not large enough to justify this expansion. The projected cost does not match the description of the project issued at the public hearing. Where are these additional dollars programmed?

The RCC urges the City of Philadelphia and SEPTA to refrain from spending any additional money in the next few years. The station lies in an isolated area. A park-and-ride lot at Eastwick would only duplicate parking spaces which exist in ample amount a few miles away at more visible and more secure locations on the Wilmington-Newark R-2 line. Some of these locations generate higher fares than Eastwick would; so any diversion would be economically unwise for SEPTA.

An elaborate Eastwick Station costing several millions of dollars would only deflect scarce capital money from more productive uses. In addition to the capital cost, the added lighting, elevators, platforms, stairs, etc., would only add to the already high annual fixed-plant maintenance and operating costs of SEPTA's rail systems.

15. TIP#SO74 (Schuylkill Valley Metro): See Attachments #2. In addition, the

RCC understands that there are two potential ultimate routes between Perkiomen Junction and Cromby (south of Royersford) for the Schuylkill Valley Metro project.

In order to determine which route would be best for the region and its transportation system, the RCC recommends that an impartial study be done, identifying alternate construction costs, operating costs, travel time, passenger level, passenger revenue, cost recovery and other important factors. Such a study should not preclude the immediate start-up of service with currently available equipment.

16. TIP#SEP01 (Elwyn-Wawa Rail Improvements): The cost listed in the TIP (\$15 million) conflicts with the cost given at a recent SEPTA public hearing (\$41 million). Why?

17. TIP#SO80 (Paoli Transportation Center): See Attachment #3.

18. TIP#SEP03 (Regional Rail Car Acquisition): Customers' views should be sought openly through a public hearing before the design stage.

19. TIP#SO31 (Cross County Metro): The project description cites a Major Investment Study and Draft Environmental Impact Study -- neither of these have been released to the public and no locally preferred alternative has been issued. The RCC feels it is premature to program design dollars in FY 2001 and questions why the public has not been involved in the process on the same level as for the Schuylkill Valley Metro.

20. TIP#8601A (Betzwood Bridge): See Attachment #4. The RCC is seeking reassurance that this bridge replacement will be done correctly.

21. TIP#9555 (School House Lane): The RCC opposes the widening of School House Lane. If the project does move forward, the committee asks that "No Trucks" signs be posted.

22. TIP#9345 (Krewstown Road Bridge): The RCC opposes the construction of a new bridge at this location.

23. TI P#6719 (PA 41): The RCC asks why the funding levels in the later years of the TIP were changed for this project and who changed them. The committee also asks for a copy of comments made to the State Transportation Commission by the Chester County Commissioners relative to this project at the meeting of November 15, 1999.

24. TIP CSP (US 1 Expressway): The RCC notes that the quality of

workmanship on this roadway is deplorable.

25. Bicycle Network Program (formerly TIP#9703): The RCC is disappointed that this project was removed from the TIP and questions the status of the project and the CMAQ funds that were allotted for the Plan.

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

UPDATE ON REVERSE COMMUTE PROJECT:

Darlene Messina reviewed the survey that she had drafted and that was enclosed with the May RCC minutes. She asked for two volunteers to finalize the questions with her before submitting them to the DVRPC Board. Sue McNamara and Peter Javsicas offered to help with this project.

PROPOSED FEDERAL RULES ON THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

Dan Johnson, Environmental Program Manager with the Harrisburg Office of FHWA, reviewed the major provisions encompassing NEPA and Environmental Justice/Title VI. He outlined the current regulations, proposed regulations and intended outcomes. Additional provisions cover the areas of Intelligent Transportation Systems and the linkage with the planning process. Johnson reminded the RCC that the deadline for public comments on the provisions is August 23, 2000. The Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee will review and supply proposed comments to the RCC in July.

YEAR 2025 BUSINESS SURVEY:

Steve Luxenberg, DVRPC Transportation Planner, reviewed the results of the Year 2025 Business Survey that reviewed commuting behavior and goods movement. The surveys were sent to 1858 employers; approximately 350 were returned. Of those returned, 25% of employers were in Philadelphia; 46% in the Pennsylvania suburbs; and 26% in the New Jersey suburbs. The major concerns voiced by most employers related to commuting behavior, goods movement and air quality. Luxenberg outlined the variances between the results of the business survey and those of the 2025 charrettes. He stated that he will supply the results of the survey and his slides for the July RCC meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee: Cathy Zukoski reported that the Millstone Environmental Assessment should be out later in June.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Cathy Zukoski, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to respectfully request that the DVRPC Board require each transportation agency and/or service agency making infrastructure changes to provide a minimum of two copies of all environmental reviews performed to DVRPC with sufficient time for review and comments by the RCC.

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

Rules: No report.

Transportation: Dennis Winters reviewed the letter from John Leary of SEPTA in response to the RCC last resolution. John Pawson supplied his reply to the RCC for review but committee members could not agree on the wording. The issue will be referred back to the Transportation Subcommittee for review.

Year 2025 Task Force: Ernest Cohen stated that committee members should read Suburban Nation, a book about sprawl.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Jeff Taylor stated that he has not yet received a response to his written comments from NJDOT. He will report back if he receives one in the next month,

NEXT RCC MEETING:

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