

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of June 13, 2000 were approved as mailed.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Cathy Zukoski, Vice Chair, who ran this month's meeting announced that Suzanne Axworthy is in Graduate Hospital -Room 626B, 600 S. 24th Street, Philadelphia.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) MODIFICATIONS 0005:

Dennis Winters, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, reviewed TIP Modification 0005, a series of adjustments to NJDOT projects. In most cases, the action adds a phase or reinstates funding for delayed projects to later years. Paperwork includes the original mailed description as well as an addendum. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Modification 0005.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Modification 0005, NJDOT's request to adjust the schedule of projects as listed.

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

TIP MODIFICATION 9946:

Winters explained that TIP Modification 9946 is a request from the Philadelphia Streets Department to add funds to Phase II of the Bicycle Mobility Project to do a more complete assessment. DVRPC staff has suggested that \$200,000 is available in FY00 and \$200,000 in FY02. These funds would be moved forward to complete this effort. The letter that was distributed from the Streets Department is now invalid, although the scope of the project remains the same. This project does not appear in the Draft FY01 TIP because it was obligated in FY00. Sue McNamara felt that the \$400,000 could be put to better use, although she doesn't oppose the project. She reiterated the need for a full-time bicycle coordinator. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Modification 9946.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Modification 9946, the City of Philadelphia's request to expand the scope of the Bicycle Network Phase II project to include an assessment phase and to move \$200,000 from FY02 to FY00. The RCC also asks the Board to urge the City of Philadelphia to hire a full-time bicycle coordinator.

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

TIP AMENDMENT 9947:

Winters stated that TIP Amendment 9947 is an addition for the Towamencin Township project that will utilize ITS funding through TEA-21. The township applied for these funds and was awarded \$471,000. (The reference in the paperwork to \$417,000 was an error.) Total project costs are \$900,000. The funding requires a 20% local match and the remaining 30% will be federal funding. The project encompasses a number of townships surrounding Towamencin and will coordinate an ITS program throughout the various municipalities. The subcommittee took action to recommend that the RCC approve TIP Amendment 9947 but the vote split with one "aye" vote, one "nay" vote and five abstentions. Charles Dougherty, DVRPC Associate Director of Transportation Planning, explained that this was a Congressional demonstration project to study the interconnection of signals throughout a number of townships.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Amendment 9947, PennDOT's request to add the Towamencin ITS Initiative to the TIP, using \$471,853 in ITS Deployment funds, \$283,112 in CMAQ funds from the Towamencin Signal System Interconnection Project and \$188,741 in local funds.

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

TIP MODIFICATION 9948:

Winters explained that TIP Modification 9948 involves PA 23 and the relocation of the US 422 and US 202 connection. He noted that there are a number of projects going on in this area at the same time and PennDOT has proposed a study to examine how these projects will interact and the impact of each. Financial constraint will be maintained by moving funds from the Pottstown Expressway project.

The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Modification 9948 with the following caveats: PennDOT should evaluate the increase in traffic that will occur once the connection between US 422 and US 202 is improved; the RCC questions the impact of this improvement on the projected ridership of the Schuylkill Valley Metro; and in the future PennDOT should include a map showing the present configuration with any TIP amendment or modification.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Finley Shapiro) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Modification 9948, PennDOT's request to program an additional \$500,000 to the preliminary engineering phase of the PA 23 Relocation project. In addition, the RCC believes that PennDOT should evaluate the increase in traffic that will occur once the connection between US 422 and US 202 is improved; the RCC questions the impact of this improvement on the projected ridership of the Schuylkill Valley Metro; and in the future PennDOT should include a map showing the present configuration with any TIP amendment or modification.

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

**YEAR 2020 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN
AMENDMENT - SCHUYLKILL VALLEY METRO:**

DVRPC has received notification from SEPTA that its Board of Directors voted on June 22, 2000 to adopt MetroRail (Alternative 6) as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Schuylkill Valley Metro (SVM) Major Investment Study/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (MIS/DEIS). SEPTA is requesting that DVRPC amend the Year 2020 Land Use and Transportation Plan to include this project. To amend the long-range plan, DVRPC must open a 30-day comment period and hold a public meeting in the SVM corridor. SEPTA will hold additional public hearings once the MIS/DEIS is completed later this summer.

Dr. Donald Shanis, DVRPC Deputy Director for Transportation Planning, explained that the Schuylkill Valley Metro is in the Year 2020 Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan as a study. The plan therefore needs to be amended to reflect the Schuylkill Valley Metro as a project with a preferred alternative. The RCC informed Dr. Shanis that there has been a lack of information and inconsistent ridership numbers from SEPTA. Committee members questioned the purpose of DVRPC's public meeting and whether SEPTA and Urban Engineers would be present to answer questions. Dr. Shanis stated that the point of DVRPC's meeting is to review such major factors as how the project serves the region, air quality impact, etc.

The Commission's staff will analyze the appropriateness of the preferred alternative in the plan but will not conduct an in-depth review of the proposed MetroRail system. The RCC stated that DVRPC's public comment period would be more timely if it followed the release of the DEIS. When asked for suggestions for gathering public input, the RCC responded that newspapers and libraries should be used and that a SEPTA train running from Philadelphia to Reading picking up riders would be unique.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by John Pawson, seconded by Finley Shapiro) to recommend that the DVRPC Board authorize staff to open a 30-day public comment period and hold a public meeting for the Schuylkill Valley Metro. The RCC asks the Board to urge SEPTA to release information to the public before the start of the DVRPC public comment period.

AMENDMENT (by John Pawson, seconded by Finley Shapiro) to make opening the DVRPC public comment period contingent upon SEPTA's making information on the SVM available to the public.

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

DVRPC SELF-CERTIFICATION:

Dr. Shanis reported that metropolitan planning organizations (MPO's) are required to self-certify that the transportation planning process is in conformance with TEA-21 and Clean Air Act mandates. He outlined the components that are included in the resolution for self-certification.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Bob Machler) to recommend that the DVRPC Board adopt Resolution No. B-FY01-001 certifying that the DVRPC transportation planning process is in conformance with federal regulations implementing TEA-21, the Clean Air Act Amendments and other federal legislation.

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

FY 2001 WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENTS:

Dr. Shanis stated that the first of several Work Program Amendments is **Philadelphia Regional Integrated Multi-modal Information Sharing (PRIMIS)** which provides a framework for institutional coordination of ITS in the Delaware Valley.

This framework gives the region's ITS stakeholders opportunities to share and disseminate information on travel conditions and coordinate the regional deployment of ITS systems. The first phase of PRIMIS will last two years.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Finley Shapiro, seconded by Warren Strumpfer) to recommend that the DVRPC Board amend the FY 2001 Planning Work Program to include the Philadelphia Regional Integrated Multi-modal Information Sharing (PRIMIS).

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

The **Relocation of PA 23 in Upper Merion and the Lafayette Avenue Extension in Norristown** are the second and third proposed Work Program Amendments. These projects would improve the efficiency of the region's transportation system by analyzing traffic impacts of relocating PA 23 from just south of Dannehower Bridge to the current interchange with 422, and of extending Lafayette Avenue from a proposed interchange with US 202 to a proposed PA Turnpike slip ramp interchange at Conshohocken Road. Under DVRPC's leadership, a consultant will be retained to perform travel forecasts for these projects. The RCC discussed the effects of the PA 23 project on Valley Forge National Park.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Finley Shapiro, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board amend the FY 2001 Planning Work Program to include the PA 23 Relocation Project in Upper Merion and the Lafayette Avenue Extension Project in Norristown. However, the RCC urges the Board to expand the project scope to examine the impact of these projects on Valley Forge National Park and on local roads in this area. The resulting ease of access on PA 23 and Lafayette Avenue will increase the use of these roads as secondary throughways. In addition, the RCC is concerned that one major project is being broken into smaller pieces, minimizing or possibly masking its regional effect.

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

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 306:

Peter Darcy, Field Organizer for the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT), attended the Transportation Subcommittee meeting and explained that his organization is a national non-profit group that focuses on highway and truck safety. There has been a recent push by federal legislators representing the western states to increase truck weight limits from 80,000 lbs. to 97,000 lbs.

This would take the weight limit to that of Canada and Mexico, and would affect all federally funded roads. If passed, the most heavily impacted in Pennsylvania would be I-81. Because TEA-21 will be up for a mid-course review next year, many feel that this is the time to adjust truck limits. However, the impact would be significant on highway infrastructure and safety, as well as on fuel consumption.

House Concurrent Resolution 306, currently in Congress, would hold the status quo on current truck weight limits. CABT supports this resolution and is asking the RCC and DVRPC to add their support as well. This would keep weight limits at 80,000 lbs in Pennsylvania and would continue to ban triple trailers. Darcy pointed out that the teamsters support this resolution as well. A vote on the bill is expected before August 1, when Congress recesses for the summer. Darcy will supply folders with pertinent materials for the DVRPC Board meeting. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC endorse House Concurrent Resolution 306 and urge the DVRPC Board to support it as well.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board pass a resolution limiting truck weights in Pennsylvania to 80,000 lbs. and banning the use of triple trailers.

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

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY METRO RESOLUTION:

Dennis Winters reviewed the Transportation Subcommittee minutes noting that John Pawson had prepared a four-page answer to SEPTA's response to the RCC's request for an analysis of the route of the SVM between Perkiomen Junction and Cromby. In this document Pawson questioned why SEPTA believes that the PA alignment is better. Sue McNamara had stated that she would have trouble supporting this resolution because of its caustic tone and noted that the DVRPC Board would probably only deal with a more succinct statement. Pawson had shortened his statement as follows: The RCC has reviewed John Leary's letters of June 5 and July 7, 2000 in response to the RCC's resolutions and the committee still endorses the statements espoused in "Attractive Public Transportation for the Schuylkill Valley", adopted February 15, 2000. The subcommittee forwards this recommendation to the RCC for action.

Patrick Starr stated that Phoenixville is developing its new SVM station on a brownfield site and views this as a major economic development and infill project. He urged the RCC to give the community a chance to respond to the RCC's belief that this route will make the SVM more costly and less timely. Starr volunteered to contact the Borough of Phoenixville to invite officials to an August RCC meeting.

The RCC questioned the disparity between Phoenixville's resolve to move quickly on this project and the proposed SVM schedule which shows completion of MetroRail in 2006.

The RCC voted to table the subcommittee's resolution until September.

PROPOSED AUGUST RCC MEETING:

The RCC will hold an August meeting (date to be determined) to focus on the Schuylkill Valley Metro issue. SEPTA's General Manager, Jack Leary, will be invited as will the SVM project manager and consultant to answer questions regarding the SVM project. In addition, the meeting will include representatives of the Borough of Phoenixville who will discuss the route of MetroRail through their community.

REGIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN (RASP) UPDATE TO 2025:

Roger Moog, DVRPC Manager of the Office of Aviation Planning, outlined the Year 2020 RASP which was adopted in 1995. Moog stated that he and his staff are collecting the latest demographic data, as well as analyzing operations, based aircraft counts, airport closures, neighborhood bias and air space congestion in order to revise the plan to the year 2025. Moog explained that commercial and business traffic are expected to grow at a much faster rate than general aviation traffic. The tremendously fast growing regional jet fleet and their operations will sharply influence the shape of the region's airport system in the future. To maintain a functioning and prosperous region, an adequate aviation infrastructure that will meet future demand is necessary.

Moog focused on the trend toward weakening suburban airports that will negatively impact Philadelphia International Airport, compromising both safety and service. He also addressed attempts by a number of neighborhood groups to block expansion of suburban airports. An additional issue is the federal decision to change the criteria for funding airports. Moog will return with the RASP as an action item in the fall.

NEW JERSEY STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:

Charles Dougherty explained that the New Jersey Study and Development Program is a pre-TIP action to select transportation problem areas, study them and recommend resolutions through possible projects. The three phases of the program include concept development, feasibility assessment and final scope development. Dougherty noted that NJDOT submitted a proposed list of projects this year that did not reflect some of the problem areas that DVRPC felt should be addressed. DVRPC communicated this to NJDOT in June and again in July but received no response. As of this date, NJDOT has stated that they will forward a written response within the next few days and has indicated they may be able to examine some of DVRPC's concerns.

At the time that the RTC met, the Commission had not received a response; the RTC

voted to refer the matter to its New Jersey Subcommittee which will meet prior to the July 27th Board meeting. The subcommittee will decide whether NJDOT's response is sufficient.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Warren Strumpfer) to recommend that the New Jersey Study and Development Program be forwarded to the Board for action if the RTC's New Jersey Subcommittee deems NJDOT's response to DVRPC's correspondence to be sufficient.

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

ROUTE 41:

Marcia Ryan had raised two issues at the Transportation Subcommittee meeting regarding Route 41. She questioned the project cost and the issue of air quality exemption. She received an answer in a letter from Chester County regarding the first issue. She then questioned whether comparative conformity analysis is done for each alignment before an alternative is chosen. Chick Dougherty clarified that air quality conformity analysis is not done on individual projects. When a project is added to the TIP, a region-wide conformity analysis is done to determine whether the addition of this project will affect overall conformity. Dougherty also clarified that Route 41 currently has an exemption because there is no project in terms of construction.

Dennis Winters questioned why various alternatives cannot be tested for emissions assessment as part of the air quality analysis, thus providing more of a comparison for project selection. He stated that he would like to understand the air quality conformity issue better. The RCC requested that Ron Roggenburk attend the September committee meeting to answer questions about conformity analysis.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee: Cathy Zukoski reported that the subcommittee met to review the proposed NEPA changes.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Cathy Zukoski, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend that the DVRPC Board consider incorporating the following statement into the Commission's comments regarding proposed NEPA changes:

Part 1420 - NEPA and Related Procedures for Transportation Decision-Making;

Subpart C - Process and Documentation Requirements;
Section 1420.311 - Categorical Exclusions.

Require that the applicant agency requesting a "Categorical Exclusion" notify all interested parties (including opponents of the project) of the "Categorical Exclusion" request at the time of application. The public should then be given opportunity to respond to the "Categorical Exclusion" request.

MOTION CARRIED.

Peggy Killmer reported that the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Millstone Bypass should be completed shortly with a public comment period that could close before Labor Day. She requested that the Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee review this document, if available, at its August meeting.

Rules: No report.

Year 2025 Task Force: No report.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ajay Creshkoff distributed his paper entitled *Wanted: A Long-Term Plan for Transit Access* and asked members to review it.

Candy Snyder pointed out a letter addressed to Norman Vutz which was distributed to the RCC and which addresses issues raised by Schuylkill Township about DVRPC's modeling process. She stated that even though the Commission is not yet free to comment on the US 202, Section 700 issue, this letter addresses many of the same concerns.