

**MEETING MINUTES  
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE  
MAY 16, 2001**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes of the RCC meeting of April 17, 2001 were approved as mailed.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

RCC Chair, Patrick Starr, informed the group that Suzanne Axworthy, a former RCC member, had passed away recently. He also announced that Bill Rafsky and Illy Sobel are in the hospital. He told the group that they could give cards to Candy Snyder for forwarding.

Mr. Starr updated the group on the April 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. He informed the RCC that a misunderstanding with FHWA regarding deadlines pushed Board approval of the Year 2025 Plan to the April 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Although the Plan was adopted, the Board and staff have noted that they will continue to address comments and suggestions on the Plan. Mr. Starr mentioned that DVRPC Executive Director John Coscia stated that he would like to see a change in the TIP that would allow money to be devoted to municipalities as a means of assisting with community planning. He noted that there are other MPOs using transportation dollars for this kind of work and that he supports the concept. Mr. Starr informed the group that he accidentally neglected to cover the RCC's request for the timely forwarding of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) to the committee. He promised that he would relay the request at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Starr reported that he and Dennis Winters, as well as DVRPC staff and transportation agency staff met with traffic calming expert David Engwicht to discuss the possibility of sponsoring a workshop. The group discussed various goals: promoting awareness of traffic calming issues; promoting community participation in calming efforts; and serving as a recruitment tool for the RCC.

**FY 2002 DVRPC WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT: INTELLIGENT  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (ITS) PUBLIC EDUCATION VIDEO:**

In the Greater Philadelphia area, many public agencies have begun implementing Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). A ten minute ITS Public Education Video is proposed to build support by informing the public, elected officials, and government policy makers about ITS, the projects already implemented, and the benefits of a fully implemented ITS program in the Greater Philadelphia area. In FY 2001, the Delaware Valley area was allocated \$40,000 for the ITS Service Plan; \$15,000 of that amount is reserved for the development of an ITS Public Education Video.

The video will be produced in conjunction with the ITS Technical Task Force and will

describe the various elements of ITS.

*Discussion: Don Shanis, DVRPC Deputy Director of Transportation Planning, asked for a representative from the RCC to sit on the ITS committee. Finley Shapiro volunteered to take on this responsibility.*

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION** (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve amending the FY 2002 DVRPC Work Program to include the ITS Public Education Video project funded by \$15,000 from a FHWA-FTA Service Plan grant.

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

**SCHUYLKILL VALLEY METRO (SVM) RIDERSHIP ESTIMATES:**

Don Nigro of DVARP made a presentation regarding his organization's analysis of the SEPTA consultant's modeling of SVM ridership estimates. Mr. Nigro explained that DVARP set out to learn why the ridership estimates seemed so atypically high. He gave an overview of the variables in DVRPC's model, which served as basis for the model for SEPTA's consultants. Based on the nature of the project, Mr. Nigro holds that the Subway Elevated model used by SEPTA's consultants was an inappropriate choice for calculating estimates. Citing the support of various experts such as former DVRPC employee, John Dawson, he explained that the Commuter Rail model would have been a better choice for this project. Mr. Nigro asked that his hand-out, "Commuter Rail Extensions - Cost Per Extended Mile", be attached to the minutes.

*Discussion: The RCC expressed support for the SVM project's concept. As a predominantly pro-transit group, the committee expressed concern that Greater Philadelphia could not afford a failure of this magnitude and worried that the FTA would question these ridership numbers. The group would like to see this project succeed, but wants to make sure that it happens with solid forecasting and planning.*

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**MOTION** (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Harry Hyde) that the RCC adopt the following resolution:

- ▶ The modeling of the preferred alternative or any alternative for the Schuylkill Valley Metro on the DVRPC Subway Elevated model is an inappropriate selection for the Schuylkill Valley Metro MIS/Draft EIS;
- ▶ All rail alternatives for the Schuylkill Valley Metro are more appropriately

- modeled on DVRPC's commuter rail model;
- ▶ The RCC requests that the DVRPC Board urge SEPTA to re-run the estimations based on DVRPC's commuter rail model; and
- ▶ The RCC requests that the DVRPC Board urge SEPTA to devise other rail alternatives for the Schuylkill Valley Metro (research shows that projects like this should cost between \$ 5 million and \$11 million per extended mile). The subcommittee requests that the cost be appropriate for expected ridership.
- ▶ This recommendation is based on the following differences between the Subway Elevated and Commuter Rail modes:

Subway Elevated	Commuter Rail
▶ High Urban densities	▶ Mixed densities
▶ 6-7 minute peak headways	▶ 15-30 minute peak headways
▶ 6-10 minute off-peak headways	▶ 30-60 minute off-peak headways
▶ Flat fare structure	▶ Zoned fare structure
▶ Serves mostly transit dependent communities	▶ Serves mostly non-transit dependent communities

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

**TIP ACTION PA0127 (PENNDOT ADJUSTMENT PACKAGE):**

PennDOT has requested that DVRPC amend and/or modify the TIP to reflect adjustments in cost, schedule, and scope of four existing TIP projects. These actions are summarized below.

1. Aston Bike Loop (TIP #7903) - Delaware County  
Delete this project from the TIP. The Aston Township Board of Commissioners approved a motion to suspend work on this project due to concerns about the "on-road" nature of the project. Construction funding will be returned to the "On-Road Bicycle Facilities Line Item (TIP #0565.)
2. US 202, Section 701 (TIP #8729) - Montgomery County  
Increase the cost of the final design phase by \$1.8 million. This revised cost estimate is based on recent field views with the consultant.
3. Glenwood Ave. Bridge (TIP #9742) - Philadelphia  
Defer the construction phase from FY01 to "Later Fiscal Years." This project will not be ready to advance in this fiscal year. Although no funding will remain programmed for this project in the current TIP period, it remains a priority for the City and its schedule will be addressed during the next TIP update cycle.
4. "Share the Road" Campaign (TIP #0582) - Regionwide  
Change the funding source from Transportation Enhancements (TE) with a local match

to CMAQ with a toll credit match.

***ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:***

***MOTION*** (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Action PA0127. The RCC restates its continuing opposition to US 202, Section 700. The RCC asks that DVRPC staff write a letter to Aston Township informing them of the existing “Share the Road” Program and offering to present an overview of the Program to the Township.

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

**TIP ACTION PA0129 (SEPTA CARRYOVER FUNDS):**

SEPTA has requested that DVRPC add available funds remaining from the FY1999 TIP into the current TIP. Carryover funds in the amounts of \$11 million and \$17.5 million will be added to the Broad Street Subway Station Improvements Project (TIP #S070) and the 30<sup>th</sup> Street to Suburban Station Catenary and Bridge Repair Project (TIP # S054,) respectively. Financial constraint will not be affected since these funds will be carried over from the FY1999 TIP.

***ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:***

***MOTION*** (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Action PA0129.

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

**TIP ACTION PA0132: CITY OF PHILADELPHIA BICYCLE MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS:**

The TIP includes a Bicycle Mobility Improvements line item (TIP #0565), currently programmed with \$3.183 million (\$2.546 million CMAQ). Its purpose is to fund on-road bicycle projects in the four suburban counties and in the City of Philadelphia.

The City of Philadelphia has submitted a proposal to add the study phase of two projects to the TIP under this line item, totaling \$110,000. The projects are described below:

1. Chestnut Street/Walnut Street Evaluation (\$55,000)

Explore the feasibility of establishing bicycle lanes on each of these streets from 38<sup>th</sup> Street to the Cobbs Creek Parkway.

The study will include a capacity analysis to determine whether traffic lane reduction can be effected through this corridor.

2. 25<sup>th</sup> Street Evaluation (\$55,000)

This roadway is beneath a railroad viaduct, the columns of which create an unusual inner/outer lane configuration.

The study will concentrate on possible closure of the inner lanes, if capacity permits, and the creation of a bikeway in the area now occupied by the inner lanes.

*Discussion: John Boyle expressed his concern about using bicycle mobility funds for this project, thus taking dollars away from true bicycle projects. He questioned whether this is highway money that has been designated for this use. Dennis Winters spoke to the Streets Department and indicated that there is a problem with buses not moving out of the way. A lane is needed for bicycles and there should be consideration of one on the left side of the street. The RCC also discussed the need for better enforcement.*

***ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:***

***MOTION*** (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Bob Machler) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Action PA0132, but asks that the City complete its work in consultation with the Bicycle Coalition and the community. The committee also expresses concern that bicycle mobility funds are being used for the Chestnut/Walnut Street extensions. Finally, the RCC asks that consideration be given to adding a bicycle lane on the left side of the street.

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

**TIP ACTION NJ0111(GLOUCESTER COUNTY TRAILS PROJECT):**

Gloucester County has requested that DVRPC add the design phase of the Gloucester County Trails Project at a total cost of \$141,000. This project is a multi-purpose trail along the abandoned Williamstown Branch of the Pennsylvania - Reading Seashore Line, which is located in Monroe Township and Glassboro. The trail will provide linkages with the Glassboro Wildlife Management Area, Scotland Run Park, the Monroe Township Bike Path, and the Clayton Trails Bike Path. The \$500,000 construction phase will be funded through the State's Local Aid Bikeway Program.

***ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:***

***MOTION*** (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Warren Strumpfer) to recommend that the Board approve TIP Action NJ0111.

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

**PROPOSED ADDITION TO THE PENNSYLVANIA HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM:**

The Chester County Planning Commission is requesting the addition of a new roadway to the Regional Functional Classification System. The new roadway, the French Creek Parkway, is a two-way facility that will connect PA 23 (Nutt Road) to PA 29 (Starr Street) in the Borough of Phoenixville, Chester County.

The new road, one lane by direction, with left turn lanes where needed, will provide access to a new railroad station of the Schuylkill Valley Metro line. The purpose of the French Creek Parkway will also be to provide service to a 120 acre parcel of land scheduled for redevelopment consisting of office, retail and residential uses. The land is an old brownfield that was the former site of a large steel plant that had little road access. This new land use is estimated to create 5,000 new jobs. Two new bridges over French Creek are also planned along the new road.

***ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:***

***MOTION*** (by Dennis Winters, seconded by Warren Strumpfer) to recommend that the Board approve the proposed addition to the Pennsylvania Highway Functional Classification System.

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

**HORIZONS - THE YEAR 2025 LONG-RANGE LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION AND REGIONAL AIRPORT SYSTEM PLANS:**

Roger Moog, DVRPC Manager, Office of Aviation Planning, gave an overview of the Regional Airport System Plan (RASP), noting that RASP activities include identifying trends in demand and capacity; projection of future traffic and capital needs; and policy and program modifications. Mr. Moog summarized the region's capacity by stating that there are three commercial airports, 22 general aviation and reliever airports, five heliports and two major military bases. The RASP is now being amended to reflect events that have occurred since 1995, such as the drastic increase in commercial traffic; the flat rate of non-commercial traffic; increased suburbanization of the region; major construction at Philadelphia International; and the closures of two airports. Mr. Moog reviewed deficiencies, facilities and funding. Public feedback received at a series of meetings indicated the following: there is a need for more competing commercial service; bordering airports might provide capacity; military capacity might be used for civilian use; more ground access via rail is needed to commercial airports; and airspace needs to be redesigned to limit noise.

*Discussion: Citizens made a number of comments including: using military and abandoned air stations for airport facilities, and creating an aviation bank that works like a rail bank to preserve land for aviation use.*

*Mr. Moog stated that DVRPC has made the suggestion regarding civilian use of military air stations in the past, but faced opposition from the Navy . He did recognize that the military may change its position.*

Richard Bickel, DVRPC Associate Director, Regional Planning, reviewed comments and changes that have been made to the Year 2025 Plan since the printing of *Horizons* Report #3, the Preliminary Land Use Plan. He highlighted a number of refinements including:

- ▶ Princeton and Mercer County expressed concern that their designation as a center on the map appears larger than it is in reality;
- ▶ A growth center was added for Great Valley;
- ▶ The City of Philadelphia's representation of open space was decreased; and
- ▶ Delaware County requested that Chester be added as a core city.

*Discussion: Citizens suggested that an intergovernmental review process be used to coordinate documents for consistency. Mr. Bickel noted that this is happening through DVRPC's committee structure. One citizen asked what happens when a municipality's plan conflicts with a county's plan. Mr. Bickel noted that it is really up to the counties and municipalities to work out a solution for those kinds of problems and that DVRPC cannot dictate the resolution of such matters. The organization can only serve as an informed advisor in those cases.*

Ron Roggenburk, DVRPC Manager, Office of Air Quality Planning, reviewed comments received regarding *Horizons*, the Preliminary Transportation Plan. Mr. Roggenburk noted that some comments were so technical in nature that they will have to be carefully weighed with the appropriate parties before they can be given a response. Some projects and studies were added to the Plan, following public comments. They include:

- ▶ Added capacity improvements to PA 309 from Stump Road to the Fort Washington Expressway;
- ▶ Changed facility name under C017 to *State and Local Streets*;
- ▶ Added a study of relocating PA 23 out of Valley Forge National Park;
- ▶ Added Agile Port to the list of studies;
- ▶ Added track restoration of Southern Secondary from Woodmansie to Winslow Junction; and
- ▶ Added an analysis of capacity for the study of Delair Bridge.

*Discussion: The RCC discussed the Statewide Passenger Rail Study and questioned whether DVRPC is involved in this.*

***ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:***

***MOTION*** (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by Elaine Cohen) to appoint Lorraine Brill as the RCC delegate to the Statewide Passenger Rail Study.

***MOTION CARRIED.***

## **UPDATE - WORKFORCE 21 JOB ACCESS PROJECT:**

Rich Bickel informed the RCC that the Board had approved the Job Access applicants all of whom are government-based, at its March Board meeting. However, Workforce 21, a faith-based applicant, and SEPTA have since met with DVRPC to refine a proposal that now is estimated to cost @ \$90,000. These two agencies will probably come back to the DVRPC Board with another Job Access proposal.

Delaware County will have to agree to move a project out of the way for this proposal if it is to move forward.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Environmental Legislative: Cathy Zukoski stated that her subcommittee would like to discuss the appropriate uses for CMAQ funding at its next meeting. She believes that the region should be more particular about how these dollars are spent. She also mentioned an Inquirer article on sprawl. The Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee will meet at 11 a.m. on June 19, preceding the next RCC meeting.

2025 Task Force: Ernest Cohen noted that he is still wordsmithing the task force's comments on the Year 2025 Plan. He wants to focus more succinctly on lower energy use, less sprawl and better rails. Dennis Winters stated that Darlene Messina had voiced a request that watershed-based comments be included in the Year 2025 Task Force's remarks. She suggests that Kyle Zieba be considered as a future speaker. The 2025 Task Force will meet from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Friday, May 25 in the Philadelphia Room.

## **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Lorraine Brill noted that the PA Turnpike Commission has released the Draft EIS for the I-95 interchange. A public meeting will be held from 1 - 9 p.m. on June 12 in Bristol, PA. She questioned whether the RCC could get a copy of the EIS.

Peter Javscas questioned whether the RCC could hold a special session on the proposed SEPTA fare hike. He stated that DVARP has done quite a bit of research on this issue. Lorraine Brill pointed out that members should write to their state legislators telling them to increase the subsidy for SEPTA so that a fare hike might not be needed.

Patrick Starr announced that Doug Tomlinson of PennDOT will be part of a two-person team presenting an update on the PennDOT Traffic Calming Handbook at the July RCC meeting.