

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
JUNE 19, 2001**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of May 16, 2001 were approved with the following correction: on page 2, under *Discussion* of the SVM Ridership Estimates, the first sentence should read: The RCC expressed support for “the revival of early Philadelphia to Reading passenger rail service.” The last sentence in that paragraph should substitute the word “service” for “project.”

CHAIR’S REPORT:

RCC Chair, Patrick Starr, informed the group that William Rafsky had passed away. He noted Mr. Rafsky’s many contributions to the City of Philadelphia and to the RCC. Mr. Starr then outlined the May Staff Summary of Board Response, noting that the Board had forwarded the Schuylkill Valley Metro resolution to SEPTA for a response. SEPTA is still working on this and will have a reply in July.

PENNVEST ACTION:

Patricia Elkins, DVRPC Manager of Environmental Planning, reported that Penn Township had submitted an application for a PENNVEST loan for a wastewater project. The township is requesting a loan for \$710,000 to increase the disposal capacity of its wastewater treatment from 93,690 gallons per day to 350,000 gallons per day by constructing a force main to the Conrad-Pyle Nurseries where a storage pond would be constructed and the effluent would be used for spray and drip irrigation purposes. Ms. Elkins explained that the Conrad-Pyle Company is one of the largest plant growers in the eastern US. The nursery owns approximately 400 acres and has been limited in its ability to grow plants by the groundwater yield from four existing wells.

Discussion: RCC members questioned the advisability of granting a loan that would benefit a private company. Ms. Elkins and Mr. Starr explained that this is a sound economic decision for the township and the county. Mr. Starr asked that future PENNVEST applications be forwarded to the Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee if time permits before coming to the RCC.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Ernest Cohen, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve Chester County's PENNVEST application with the proviso that this land will remain commercial/horticultural in use.

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

TIP ACTION PA0133 (PENNDOT):

Lorraine Brill, who had chaired the Transportation Subcommittee meeting in Dennis Winters' absence, reported that PennDOT has selected 11 agencies in the DVRPC region to receive a total of \$1.467 million for the purchase of vehicles under FTA's Section 5310 program (formerly Section 16) and has requested that these funds be added to the TIP. This program provides capital assistance to private nonprofit corporations that provide transportation services for senior citizens and people with disabilities. PennDOT approved 41 applications statewide for a total of \$5.4 million. These selections were made in Harrisburg. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Action PA0133, noting that the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles should be considered for these services in the future.

Discussion: The RCC noted that the Clean Air Council and the City Energy Department should approach PennDOT and other agencies to educate them to the benefits of alternative fuel vehicles. Judy Barnet, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner, explained that this program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) which does not require that the vehicles use alternative fuel.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA0133, PennDOT's request to add \$1.467 million to the TIP for the purchase of vehicles under FTA's Section 5310 program. The RCC, however, believes that alternative fuel vehicles should be purchased and noted that existing state and federal programs are available to cover the marginal costs of these vehicles.

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

TIP ACTION PA0134 (POTTSTOWN URBAN TRANSIT - PUT):

The Borough of Pottstown has requested that DVRPC amend the TIP by adding back the Transit Mall and Park project (old TIP #PT021). This project was originally included in the FY99 TIP but was not advanced in the anticipated time frame. It involves the creation of a transit-related park and pedestrian mall on about one acre of undeveloped land in Pottstown's business district.

Improvements include planting, landscaping and grading, a bus shelter, bike racks, benches, trash cans, lighting and public art. This area will serve as the focus and connection for public transportation in the borough. The parcel is adjacent to the hub of Pottstown Urban Transit where all five bus routes link. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Action PA0134 but hopes that this location will connect to any future rail service.

(NOTE: In speaking with the Borough of Pottstown, staff learned that the proposed Transit Center is adjacent to Borough Hall and in front of the rail station, about one-half block from the tracks. A future pedestrian walkway is also planned to connect Montgomery County Community College to the Transit Center.)

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA0134, the Borough of Pottstown's request to add the Transit Mall and Park project back to the TIP for a total of \$460,000 in FY 2001 and \$950,000 in FY 2002. The RCC hopes that this location will connect to any future rail service.

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

TIP ACTION PA0136 (SEPTA):

SEPTA will submit a grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the near future for the 30th Street Station Intermodal Facility project. Funds for the project were earmarked in TEA-21 under the Bus and Bus-Related Facilities Program in FY 1999 and 2000. The funds for FY99 are set to lapse on September 30, 2001. The project was included in the FY99 TIP as project S092. FHWA funds totaling \$7.5 million were also earmarked for this project and will be used for the construction of a parking garage north of the Amtrak station, as well as various roadway improvements. These funds are included in the FY01 TIP as project 9746. Amtrak will primarily sponsor this work.

To ensure that the FY99 FTA funds do not lapse, SEPTA has agreed to submit an application by June 30th for this project. At this time, the scope of work will include accessibility improvements to the SEPTA transit facilities at 30th Street; street level improvements to better serve the several bus routes in this area; and the feasibility/preliminary engineering of reopening the pedestrian tunnel between 30th Street Market-Frankford Station and the 30th Street Amtrak Station. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Action PA0136.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Miles Day) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA0136, SEPTA's request to add the 30th Street Station Intermodal Facility project back to the TIP at a total cost of \$3.124 million. The RCC recommends this action on the condition that the project include weather protection and security for bicycle facilities. The committee also urges the completion of the pedestrian tunnel as quickly as possible.

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

TIP ACTION PA0137 (PENNDOT ADJUSTMENT PACKAGE):

PennDOT has requested that DVRPC amend and/or modify the TIP to reflect adjustments in cost, schedule, and scope of existing or former TIP projects and to add one new project. The actions include:

1. PA 63, Woodhaven Road (TIP#9332), Philadelphia: Increase the cost of the preliminary engineering phase by \$1.430 million; defer the final design phase to later fiscal years.
2. US 202, Section 405 (TIP #8382C), Montgomery County: Increase the cost of the construction phase by \$8.615 million; costs have increased due to additional requirements by Norfolk Southern as well as anticipated sink hole repair.
3. US 202, Section 403 (TIP #8382B), Montgomery County: Add this project back to the TIP, increasing the cost of the construction phase by \$9 million for current sink hole repair.
4. Bridgeton Hill Road Bridge Replacement (TIP #5727), Bucks County: Add the final design phase back to the TIP at a total cost of \$350,000.
5. Lehnberg Road Bridge Replacement (TIP #5718), Bucks County: Add the preliminary design phase back to the TIP at a total cost of \$100,000 to resolve environmental and permitting issues.
6. Germantown Avenue Bridge Replacement (TIP #9308), Philadelphia: Add the final design and right-of-way phases back to the TIP at a total cost of \$300,000 and \$100,000 respectively.
7. Retrofit for Bike Lanes and Shoulders (New TIP #0596), Regionwide: Add this new project to the TIP at a total cost of \$300,000 for preliminary engineering; the project will place an engineering consultant on retainer to undertake the necessary design work to retrofit bike lanes and shoulders, where appropriate, coincident with resurfacing projects. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Action PA0137.

Discussion: Lorraine Brill provided a new TIP description for the Germantown Avenue Bridge project and asked Ms. Barnet to correct this wording. The RCC also discussed the issues raised at the subcommittee level. Tom Cooper questioned the breakdown of cost between the Norfolk Southern issue and the sink hole issue in project #2 above.

(NOTE: Ms. Barnet learned that about \$3 million of the \$8.615 million cost increase will

go toward sink hole repair. The additional Norfolk Southern requirements involve changes to the design of the trusses of the railroad bridge over Gulph Road.)

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA0137, PennDOT's request to amend and/or modify the TIP to reflect adjustments in cost, schedule, and scope of six existing or former TIP projects and to add one new project.

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

TIP ACTION NJ0112 (DELAWARE RIVER PORT AUTHORITY - DRPA):

DRPA has requested that DVRPC amend the TIP to add a project, Ferry Dock Expansion/Repairs at a cost of \$300,000. The agency has recently purchased a second ferry boat with funding from the TEA-21 Section 1207 Program; the boat will be converted and ready for use in the RiverLink System in 2002. Recognizing the need for additional ferry infrastructure in Camden to adequately serve the growing numbers of tourists and local passengers, as well as to provide docking facilities for two boats, DRPA will build two new terminals in Camden: a south terminal to serve the Battleship New Jersey, and a north terminal to serve the Campbell's Field baseball park and expansion of the aquarium. Funds will be used to undertake preliminary planning, including permitting for the north terminal. DRPA will also retain an experienced marine engineering firm to investigate the feasibility of the project from both operational and environmental perspectives. The current terminal in Camden is not large enough to accommodate two boats. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Action NJ0112 and hopes that the service will accommodate local travelers and commuters as well as visitors. (NOTE: Linda Hayes of DRPA pointed out in a telephone conversation that the ferry is not intended as a commuter option; it is intended to serve tourists. Its schedule is set up to reflect that purpose. She supplied the RCC with ferry schedules.) The RCC noted that better linkage is needed to transit.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Dennis Winters) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action NJ0112, DRPA's request to add the Ferry Dock Expansion and Repairs project to the TIP at a total cost of \$300,000 for preliminary engineering. The committee hopes that the ferry service will accommodate local travelers and commuters as well as visitors.

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

TIP ACTION NJ0114 (LOCAL FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM):

The four New Jersey counties in the region have requested that DVRPC amend the TIP to include four projects:

Burlington: Traffic Signal LED Bulb Replacement and Power Backups - \$626,000

Camden: Mill and Resurface County Routes 612, 616 and 615 - \$604,000

Gloucester: Upgrading Traffic Signals with LED Lenses - \$442,000

Mercer: Traffic Signal LED Bulb Replacement and Power Backups - \$344,000

The New Jersey Commissioner of Transportation had sent a letter to each of the counties informing them that specified amounts of money had been made available from a new \$10 million Local Federal Surface Transportation Program. These federal funds must be authorized for use by September 30th. Each county was advised to select a project for these funds that would not require acquisition of right-of-way nor necessitate environmental permits, and should be ready to go to construction quickly. The funds have been set up by NJDOT upon the recommendation of a special task force charged with finding a way to assist the counties in drawing down excessive unobligated balances in STU funding. DVRPC staff helped to initiate this effort and participated on the task force. Lorraine Brill mentioned damage that had been incurred when a contractor had not milled correctly in her neighborhood. The subcommittee recommends that the RCC approve TIP Action NJ0114 and suggest that Camden County take care not to damage existing sidewalks and curbs.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action NJ0114, a request by the four New Jersey counties to add four projects to the TIP. The committee suggests that Camden County take care not to damage existing sidewalks and curbs.

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

MEASURING TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TMA) PERFORMANCE:

Dr. Don Shanis, DVRPC Deputy Director of Transportation Planning, outlined the characteristics of TMA's in the region, noting that they are membership organizations and public/private partnerships that cover specific service areas. TMA's in the Delaware Valley include Bucks County, Partnership TMA, TMA of Chester County, Central Philadelphia, Delaware County, Cross County Connection, Greater Valley Forge and Greater Mercer. Dr. Shanis outlined the TMAs' clients, funding sources, staffing and work programs.

He also discussed performance measures that include monthly progress reports, quarterly performance reports and level of effort. Mobility alternatives program measurements

include the number of companies contacted, the number of companies with new programs, new participants, persons matched for ridesharing and new transit riders. Dr. Shanis also reviewed an action plan that promotes more interaction between the counties and TMA's.

Discussion: RCC members voiced concern that TMA's are too dependent on public funds. The committee also expressed the belief that TMA's should not support programs that increase single occupancy vehicles (SOV's). Dr. Alan Miller, who sits on the Board of the Bucks County TMA, stated that this TMA and the county have good interaction. Ajay Creshkoff suggested adding broader discussion into Sarah Oaks' schedule to disperse the findings on TMA performance. Ms. Oaks stated that a revised schedule has been drafted.

DVRPC DRAFT FY 2002 - 2004 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY:

Judy Barnet explained that the TIP is the near-term expression of the Regional Transportation Plan that lists all regionally significant projects and all other projects seeking federal funds. The TIP is required by federal law and is the best estimate of project schedule and costs. In Pennsylvania, the TIP is a four-year program that is updated every other year; in New Jersey, the TIP is a three-year program and updated every year. The New Jersey program is a coordinated effort between DVRPC, the counties, NJDOT, NJTransit, DRPA/PATCO. Ms. Barnet reviewed the development of the TIP as well as new project selection and funding sources. This year's TIP includes 180 projects, totaling \$909 million over three years. \$486 million are set aside for the highway program, and \$423 million for transit. Public outreach for this year's TIP included GIS mapping of low income and minority populations, mailings to 1500 individuals and groups, contacts with community organizations, legal notices, media releases, posters in libraries and throughout communities, a PATCO seat drop, public meetings and a 30-day public comment period and use of DVRPC's website. The TIP adoption schedule was also reviewed.

Discussion: The RCC discussed the need for input from its New Jersey members. Copies of the Draft TIP will be mailed to these individuals and their input sought for the next Transportation Subcommittee meeting so that recommendations can be drafted by this task force and forwarded to the RCC for action in July.

SEPTA FARE HIKE ISSUE:

In lieu of a presentation on the SEPTA Fare Hike, Peter Javsicas drafted a resolution that urges the DVRPC Board to lobby for a state subsidy and against a fare increase.

Lorraine Brill urged members to attend the 10 a.m. meeting at SEPTA headquarters on

June 21, 2001 at which time the SEPTA Board will vote on the fare hike. The DVRPC Board will not meet until June 28, 2001. Cathy Zukoski stated that the Environmental/Legislative Subcommittee had reviewed the resolution and supports it. The RCC discussed the issue of capital versus operating costs.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE;

MOTION (by Cathy Zukoski, seconded by Peter Javscas) to recommend the following background and resolution to the DVRPC Board:

As of today, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is moving toward approval of the proposed annual budget for fiscal year 2001-2002. However, final approval may not come until next week.

The Regional Citizen's Committee understands that the proposed state budget includes no significant increase in funding to offset SEPTA's increased operating costs, especially in light of increasing fuel costs during the past year.

A 3% funding increase would be in line with increases in recent years, and according to SEPTA would amount to about \$7 million. These funds would be a significant aid in helping to offset SEPTA's increased operating costs.

In addition to its operating budget shortfall, SEPTA has lost substantial capital funding due to state utility deregulation - about \$24 million, according to SEPTA. Inevitably, this substantial shortfall in capital funding reduces opportunities for creating operating efficiencies through capital improvements.

The SEPTA Board points to these funding shortfalls as part of the justification for its proposed fare increase package. Enactment of a substantial funding increase can mitigate these revenue losses and provide the opportunity for SEPTA to roll back at least some portion of the proposed fare increases.

The DVRPC has championed support for transit as a good investment; it helps contain the high cost and negative impacts of increased highway use. The fare hike package, if approved, will hurt everyone in the Delaware Valley region. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission has stated that access to public transportation is a crucial factor in fulfilling many of its stated objectives; access to jobs and other activities, overcoming the problems of sprawl, air pollution, traffic congestion, traffic deaths and injuries, and mobility for those who do not drive automobiles.

At a time of rising gasoline prices and a deepening energy crisis, public transit ridership has been going up. This trend should be encouraged through incentives, not hampered by fare increases.

The proposed fare hike package will discourage transit use, undermining the transportation and land use plans endorsed by the counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania and set forth by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. In order to help offset the need to increase fares, the RCC requests that members

of the DVRPC Board express their support for an increase in state funding for SEPTA.

Immediate action by DVRPC Board members can help to promote more livable communities for all the citizens of Pennsylvania.

The RCC therefore offers the following resolution:

Whereas the proposed Pennsylvania annual state budget for fiscal year 2002 does not include an increase in funding for SEPTA, and

Whereas SEPTA's operating costs have risen substantially, and

Whereas no reason was given for the omission of an operating revenue increase, and

Whereas consideration of the budget is now before the legislature, and

Whereas the proposed SEPTA fare hikes are a detriment to the stated objectives of the DVRPC,

The RCC asks DVRPC Board members to immediately contact the region's state senators and representatives to advocate for a SEPTA operating and capital fund increase in the state budget.

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

Discussion: The RCC also asked Ms. Snyder to urge John Coscia to fax this resolution to DVRPC Board members, state legislators and SEPTA representatives immediately so that this message will go out prior to the June 21st SEPTA Board meeting and prior to the state's vote on the budget. (NOTE: John Coscia felt this was not advisable and did not forward this resolution the day following the RCC meeting.)

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental Legislative: Cathy Zukoski stated that her group had reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the PA Turnpike/I-95. She stated that her subcommittee does not see how the alternative chosen versus "do nothing" would impact congestion on local streets, and at this point, cannot support this alternative. Lorraine Brill stated that she had attended the public meeting to discuss this issue.

Transportation: Ms. Brill reported that SEPTA will hold public hearings in September on the FY02 Annual Service Plan which recommends changes for Delaware County. She is concerned that the City's recommendations include taking away the "76" bus and adding a "shoppers' special" to loop around Chestnut and Walnut Streets. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the service plan should contact Lorraine Sherer at 215-580-7965.

She also noted that Ernest Cohen had mentioned his concerns with the Roosevelt

Boulevard Corridor Study's alternative F which he feels is a default alternative. He distributed a newsletter with more information on the project; the newsletter will be copied for the full RCC. The subcommittee recommends the following action item:

The RCC should ask the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to review alternative F of the Roosevelt Boulevard Corridor Study as a commuter rail operation on the New York Short Line. The vote on this motion was split with two ayes, one nay and one abstention at the subcommittee level.

Dennis Winters stated that he had served on the advisory committee for this project and this group had met for two years. He advised against taking action without a City Planning Commission representative at the meeting to correct any mis-information. He suggested holding a special meeting in August with this subject as the focus. This subject will be added to the Transportation Subcommittee's July agenda and they will decide how to proceed for August.

2025 Task Force: Ernest Cohen stated that he will re-issue the Year 2025 paper that was distributed today because it is missing the footnotes.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Cathy Zukoski suggested contacting Lower Moreland Township to come and discuss their decision to vote against the Neo-Village concept proposed by developer Joe Duckworth. Larry Shaeffer suggested a representative from Clean Cities for a future meeting. The ecommute and Transitchek presentations were deferred until the July meeting.

Lorraine Brill discussed the PA statewide meetings and told members that she will have Ms. Snyder copy pertinent materials and mail to members.

Elaine Cohen reported that Illy Sobel is still in the hospital and is slightly better than last month.