

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
JULY 15, 2003**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of June 17, 2003 were approved as mailed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, Chair, reported that the RCC will hold a special meeting on August 12 featuring Bus Rapid Transit and Michael Baltes of the National Bus Rapid Transit Institute in Florida. The DVRPC Regional Transportation Committee, the Board, staff and members of the Camden County Citizens' Advisory Board will be invited as well so it is important that RCC members make a reservation early. Notices for the meeting will be mailed in late July.

PENNSYLVANIA RAIL STUDY:

Joe Daversa, Director of PennDOT's Bureau of Public Transportation and Acting Deputy Director, presented the Statewide Intercity Passenger Rail Study which released a final report in December of 2001, as the request of the State Transportation Commission. The objectives of the study were to identify and prioritize rail passenger corridors, develop a baseline comparison, and identify needs and policy considerations. The study served as a macro-level evaluation of the corridors based on existing data, and was not intended to be a local commuter rail evaluation. The scope of the study kept the cost to approximately \$200,000.

Mr. Daversa reviewed corridor identification factors as well as a map of the various corridors which included the Keystone Service (Harrisburg to Philadelphia); the Northeast Corridor (Washington to Boston); the Capitol Limited (Washington to Cleveland); the PA/Three Rivers (Pittsburgh to Washington); and the Lake Shore Limited (serving Erie). He also outlined the policy/funding input received which encompassed such issues as: preserving right-of-way and rail lines, dedicated state funding for rail development, crossmodal impacts, public awareness, an aging population, supportive land use, and shared use of rail with freight. Ms. Daversa explained the evaluation criteria used in the study, the high priority corridors identified, and the various issues mentioned in the seven public meetings held. He noted the need for a passenger rail vision and for intergovernmental roles. Study conclusions pointed to the need for a long-term initiative for passenger rail; corridor preservation; a balanced approach to new technology; and the incentive of building on progress achieved to date.

Discussion: RCC members brought up the issues of the long-term vision/ mag-lev technology and its use in Germany and Japan; the need for goods to travel by rail versus trucks; inter-state travel; the need for a dedicated funding source; and the Schuylkill Valley Metro.

NOISE WALLS:

Marc Radell, Environmental Manager, URS Corporation, brought the committee up to date on noise walls, explaining that URS is a global design and environmental firm that has done extensive work with PennDOT on Sections 400 and 600 of US 202 where noise walls are planned. He outlined the measure of noise in decibels, noting that a weighted scale designated by dBA is used with +5 dBA being a readily perceptible level of noise and +10 dBA being twice as loud. As per federal standards, noise walls are not considered unless a +5 dBA is the result of a transportation project. Most noise walls are able to lower noise levels by 10 dBA.

Mr. Radell outlined the concepts of measuring current noise levels, future noise levels (using DVRPC's Regional Traffic Data as a base for models), sensitive receptors (such as hospitals, libraries, etc.), insertion loss (how many decibels noise will decrease with noise walls), and the impact and benefit of constructing walls. He explained the noise study procedure used by URS when contracted by PennDOT and the criteria that warrant construction. Walls must be feasible, reasonable and accepted by the community. He also described the various types of noise walls available.

Discussion: Mr. Radell explained, when asked, that a supporting study must precede the construction of all noise walls; why road surface is not currently a factor in the decision to build walls; and the bounce effect of opposing walls. Larry Shaeffer and Warren Strumpfer promised to forward Mr. Radell materials on the impact of road surfaces on noise. Dr. Shirley Loveless pointed out an FHWA pilot study in Arizona that utilizes rubberized asphalt in order to study the impact of different highway surfaces.

TIP ACTION PA03-30a: I-76 Westbound Noisewalls:

Warren Strumpfer, Transportation Subcommittee Chair, explained that PENNDOT has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2003-2006 TIP for Pennsylvania by adding a new project to the TIP, I-76 Westbound Noisewalls. This project, funded by specially earmarked state DEMO funds would program a FY03 final design phase of \$600,000, and a FY03 right-of-way phase of \$150,000. The project location is on westbound I-76 in Upper Merion between Henderson Rd. and Weadley Rd. With an estimated construction cost of \$3 million, it is expected that the project will move to construction in conjunction with the I-76 Henderson Road Interchange improvement project (MPMS #16211.) This amendment will program a \$600,000 final design phase in FY03, and a \$150,000 right-of-way phase in FY04, using specially earmarked state demonstration funds.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA03-30a, PENNDOT's request to amend the FY 2003 TIP for Pennsylvania (FY2003-2006) by adding a new project into the TIP, I-76 Westbound Noisewalls. In addition, the RCC asks that an evaluation be done to determine the necessity for noise walls in this location.

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

TIP ACTION PA03-30b: I-95 Pre-Cast Bridge Parapets (New Proposed Project) Philadelphia and TIP Action PA03-30c: I-76 Pre-Cast Bridge Parapets (New Proposed Project) Philadelphia and Montgomery County:

PENNDOT has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2003-2006 TIP for Pennsylvania by adding two new safety projects to the TIP, the I-95 Pre-Cast Bridge Parapets in Philadelphia and the I-76 Pre-Cast Bridge Parapets in Philadelphia and Montgomery County. These projects, funded by federal highway funds, would program a FY03 final design phase of \$750,000 for 19 structures on I-95, and a FY03 final design phase of \$750,000 for 27 structures on I-76 in Philadelphia and Montgomery County. The purpose of these projects is to redesign a particular type of concrete bridge parapet (side wall) which was identified as a safety hazard, in order to improve the structural integrity of the bridge. This will eventually lead to replacement or retrofit of bridges throughout the state.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA03-30b, PENNDOT's request to amend the FY 2003 TIP for Pennsylvania (FY2003-2006) by adding a new safety project to the TIP, I-95 Pre-Cast Bridge Parapets in Philadelphia, as well as TIP Action PA03-30c, PENNDOT's request to amend the FY 2003 TIP for Pennsylvania (FY2003-2006) by adding a new safety project to the TIP, I-76 Pre-Cast Bridge Parapets in Philadelphia and Montgomery County.

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

TIP ACTION PA03-31: Section 5311 Capital Assistance, Capitol Trailways Intercity Bus Terminal, (New Proposed Project) Montgomery County:

Montgomery County has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2003-2006 TIP for Pennsylvania by adding a new project to the TIP, a Section 5311 Capital Assistance project for the Capitol Trailways Intercity Bus Terminal in Willow Grove, PA.

Funding would be programmed for an FY03 construction phase (\$26,500 Section 5311 funds/\$21,200 State Act 10 funds/\$5,300 local match funds.) The property owner will pay for and construct a 25' x 23' intercity bus terminal on the piece of property currently used by Capitol Trailways. Jointly sponsored by Capitol Trailways and Montgomery County, this portion of the project would be funded by the Non-Urbanized Area Program (formerly Section 18) and would provide for certain elements of the construction fit of the terminal on Fitzwatertown Road. Specifically, an office/ticket booth area, small waiting room, and a unisex ADA compliant restroom would be constructed using the Section 5311 funds.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA03-31, Montgomery County's request to amend the FY2003-2006 TIP for Pennsylvania by adding a new project to the TIP, a Section 5311 Capital Assistance project for the Capitol Trailways Intercity Bus Terminal in Willow Grove.

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

TIP ACTION NJ03-13: Gloucester County Restriping Program (New Proposed Project):

Gloucester County has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2003-2005 TIP for New Jersey by adding a new project to the TIP, the Gloucester County Restriping Program and at the same time deleting an existing project, the Gloucester County Sign Management Program (DB #01301) which has been deemed ineligible for federal funding. Funding for the Restriping Program would be programmed for an FY03 construction phase (\$850,000 STP-STU funds) and would use the \$850,000 that was originally programmed for the Sign Management Program, thus maintaining fiscal constraint and putting funds to use before the close of the fiscal year. The Restriping Program will be implemented on county roads that are part of the Federal Aid System in order to improve the safety of those roadways by installing long-life, highly reflective traffic stripes.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action NJ03-13, Gloucester County's request to amend the FY 2003 TIP for New Jersey (FY2003-2005) by adding a new project to the TIP, the Gloucester County Restriping Program programmed for a FY03 construction phase (\$850,000 STP-STU funds).

At the same time, an existing project, the Gloucester County Sign Management Program (DB #01301), currently funded at the same level, would be deleted.

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

DVRPC FY 2004 WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT: Burlington County Shuttle

Mr. Strumpfer reported that NJ DOT has requested that the DVRPC FY 2004 Planning Work Program be amended to carry over the BurLink Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System (SNJLRTS) Connection promotion program (project #3-03-025) to FY 2004. Although the work was expected to be completed during FY 2003, the delayed opening of the SNJLRTS postponed the need for the work. Since the line is expected to open this fall, it is now time to begin this project.

The project is to create an advertising campaign to inform the residents of Burlington County that the BurLink Shuttle System will connect with the SNJLRTS and to educate them about how this linkage will increase their transportation options, thereby reducing dependence on single occupancy vehicles. The campaign will be tightly targeted to Burlington County residents. Work will be carried out on behalf of Burlington County by the Cross County Connection TMA, which serves Burlington and Camden Counties in New Jersey. The project was originally funded as part of the FY 2003 DVRPC Transit Support Program in New Jersey.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by Elaine Cohen) that the DVRPC Board approve the amendment to the DVRPC FY 2004 Work Program to add the Targeted Advertising for the BurLink - Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transportation System Connection project.

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

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY METRORAIL CORRIDOR STATION AREA PLANNING:

Richard Bickel, DVRPC Deputy Director, Regional Planning, reported on a recently published brochure entitled *Schuylkill Valley MetroRail (SVM) Corridor Station Area Planning and Implementation Study*. The study was funded by a FY 1999 Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot Program (TCSP) grant through FHWA, and examined five proposed stations areas, including 52nd Street in Philadelphia, Valley Forge, Pottstown, Phoenixville and Douglassville. Guided by a project management team, the project included community task forces in each of the study areas and comprised a number of public meetings over a 1-1/2 year period.

The purpose was to explore the advantages of transit-oriented development; to work with local representatives to identify and capture the best potential transit service; and to support continued federal funding for implementation of the SVM. The brochure presented conclusions and a plan for each station area.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS:

Proposals for DVRPC FY 2005 Work Program:

The Transportation Subcommittee reviewed past proposed Work Program projects that had not been funded. After much discussion, the RCC decided to submit a list of projects for DVRPC staff and Work Program Committee discussion but not to rank the projects until an overall picture of all proposed projects could be examined.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by Elaine Cohen) to recommend that the RCC submit the following proposed projects as a preliminary list for the consideration of DVRPC staff and the Work Program Committee:

- Bicycle/Pedestrian Facility Utilization Projections
- Bicycle Survey
- Rail Restoration Study
- Implementation Performance Indicators Study
- East Coast Greenway Administration
- Bus Rapid Transit on Route 55 Corridor, Gloucester County
- Bus Service Improvement and Marketing Program
- Study on New Jersey's Yield on Entry Rules and Roundabouts
- Study of Non-Traditional Funding Alternatives for Public Transportation Projects

MOTION CARRIED (See Item F on voting record.)

Proposed Resolution Re: SEPTA:

Warren Strumpfer reported that the Transportation Subcommittee was forwarding a resolution crafted by John Pawson for the RCC's consideration. The RCC noted that PennDOT should be scrutinizing SEPTA more closely in order to ensure that funding is not wasted.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Warren Strumpfer, seconded by Ernest Cohen) to recommend that the DVRPC Board forward the following resolution to SEPTA, PennDOT and Governor Rendell's office for a response:

The RCC wants to see as much of SEPTA's operating funding restored as possible under the constraint of the state's revenue shortfall. However, we believe that numerous inefficiencies exist. When corrected, these matters could significantly lower SEPTA's operating cost with little impact on its passengers and the region. Specific problem areas should be identified as soon as possible by SEPTA and by outside experts. Among them are:

1. We believe that about 264 cars can operate SEPTA Regional Rail in place of the reported 291, without causing any passengers to stand and without any reduction in service.
2. Now during peak hours, long terminal turnarounds of 20 to 50 minutes (both trains and crews) are the case. They can be reduced to 5 to 20 minutes by scheduling trains to turn promptly and to return to center city and out the other side without regard to the current, conventional route cross-pairing (first in, first out).
3. Likewise, off peak turnarounds can be reduced from a 35-minute average to about 16 by judiciously cross-pairing the lines and by eliminating duplicate services. This will allow more resources to be concentrated at peak hours, resulting in a reduction in the number of operating personnel needed.
4. "Deadhead" bus mileage (running from garage to route and return) can be reduced by reassignment of some routes to nearer garages of the same or another SEPTA operating district.

MOTION CARRIED (See Item G on voting record.)