

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 17, 2004**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the RCC meeting of January 13, 2004 were approved as mailed.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Dennis Winters, RCC Chair, reported that the RCC's response to SEPTA's request for the analyses used to determine time-saving measures was forwarded to the agency. He also reported that Candace Snyder, DVRPC Public Affairs Director, had contacted Bob Wright of the City Streets Department regarding level of service improvements as a result of the signalization program. Mr. Wright explained that a measurable study of level of improvement has not been done, although an unscientific view showed some increase in mobility. SEPTA has seen better operation on a number of bus routes. The purpose of the signalization project was not to increase capacity but to better coordinate signals optimizing green lights, as well as to implement pedestrian signals and crosswalks.

Mr. Winters also noted that most of the Transportation Enhancements (TE) projects recommended by the RCC had been listed as recommendations from the TE Subcommittee. He also pointed out that the East Coast Greenway project received a significant portion of the available funding. Finally, Mr. Winters reported that he is now employed by the Energy Coordinating Agency and will be able to continue as RCC Chair.

COMMENTS BY DVRPC BOARD CHAIR:

John Coscia, DVRPC Executive Director, introduced Thomas Gurick, Camden County Freeholder, radio personality and Board Chair. Mr. Gurick outlined his duties as Freeholder, pointing out that he oversees policy and pointed out that New Jersey is the only state to name its county commissioners "freeholders."

Mr. Gurick then outlined his background, noting that he first got into radio when he was sixteen. He stated that he traveled to this first job by bus and urged citizens to think "back to the future." It is possible to live without an automobile. He noted that DVRPC has visionaries who look at where we should be as a means of planning for our childrens' future. He stated that his favorite part of each Board meeting is the RCC report. He counts on the RCC to provide the input of real people.

Mr. Gurick stated his belief in smart growth and transit villages. His goals include learning from the past, fostering communication, and relying the RCC and its opinions. He pointed

out that Camden County had taken the lead among New Jersey counties in forming a Citizen Advisory Board.

Discussion: Tom Ferguson stated that DVRPC needs more public relations so that the average citizen knows what the agency does. Tom Cooper pointed out that the Schuylkill Valley Metro is dormant and needs to be brought back to life. He believes that DVRPC should not serve as a rubber stamp for SEPTA. John Coscia explained that he sits on a committee that is asking a consultant to devise a response to the FTA letter asking SEPTA to examine viable financing for the Metro project, a scope, and short-range answers. He noted that a refined proposal that is implementable is the goal. Mr. Coscia also stated that Faye Moore is in a difficult position; she does not have enough funding to run the current transit system, let alone to fund new projects.

Mr. Coscia asked Mr. Gurick what he thinks will happen in the State of New Jersey regarding future funding. Mr. Gurick stated that a \$900 million bond issue has been let to finance state projects for the next two years. He noted that he wouldn't mind paying a few cents more for gasoline as a user fee. New Jersey has one of the lowest gas taxes in the country.

TIP ACTION PA03-44: I-95/PA TURNPIKE INTERCHANGE, BUCKS COUNTY (MPMS #13347):

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission has requested that DVRPC modify the FY2003-2006 TIP for Pennsylvania. The I-95/Pennsylvania Turnpike Interchange project (MPMS #13347) is programmed with \$146.2 million in the current TIP period for final design, right-of-way, and utility phases; partial funding for construction; and \$389.9 million in Later Fiscal Years for remaining work. Currently, all phases are programmed with both Federal Aid Interstate (FAI) funding and a 10% match provided by the Turnpike Commission. A Record of Decision was issued for the project on December 31, 2003, by FHWA, and the Turnpike Commission is ready to proceed with the authorization of the final design phase including utility relocation and right of way activities. While only \$131.580 million FAI funds are programmed in the current TIP, approximately \$222 million of FAI funds have been made available to the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission for this project.

This request is to increase the final design phase of the project from approximately \$40 million to \$60 million, with \$10 million FAI programmed in FY04, \$25 million programmed in both FY05 and FY06, and to utilize the Advance Construction procedure to minimize obligation authority required. Further, the request is to remove Turnpike match from the final design phase and use 100% federal funds by means of a 10% "Toll Credit match" for the \$60 million final design phase only.

This action does not increase the amount of funds programmed in the current TIP period. The impact on the region is the utilization of an additional \$6 million of FAI federal funds for

phases programmed in the current TIP. Turnpike match will be provided for the remaining utility, right of way, and construction phases in the current TIP period, which will all be pushed back a year. The project description will also be corrected. The Turnpike Commission hopes to secure specially earmarked DEMO funding for some portion of the estimated remaining cost required to complete the interchange, and is committed to completing the project.

Discussion: Karen Friedman pointed out that this project may increase the number of quarry trucks traveling in the Bucks County area. She stated that a number of residents had testified that the Turnpike Commission had not adequately addressed citizens' concerns about safety.

Elizabeth Schoonmaker, DVRPC TIP Manager, and John Coscia explained that "toll match credits" are allotted to dollars that have been spent to build a highway, such as the Turnpike, before the federal program was in place. These were dollars spent in the 1940s and 1950s.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by John Nawn) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA03-44, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's request to modify the FY 2003 TIP for Pennsylvania (FY2003-2006) for the I-95/PA Turnpike Interchange Project (MPMS #13347) by increasing the final design phase of the project to \$60 million, with \$10 million FAI programmed in FY04, \$25 million programmed in both FY05 and FY06, and utilizing advance construct procedures for that funding. In addition, this action removes Turnpike funding as the match and allows the use of 100% federal funds by means of "Toll Credit match" for the \$60 million final design phase only. The remaining right of way, utility and construction phases will be shifted back one year.

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

TIP ACTION NJ04-03: TRANSIT CAR UPGRADE/OVERHAUL, DRPA/PATCO (DB #DR046):

The Delaware River Port Authority/Port Authority Transit Corporation has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2004-2006 TIP for New Jersey by changing the scope and title of an existing TIP project, Transit Car Upgrade/Overhaul Vickers Cars (DB #DR046). The project has been included in the TIP with the intent to amass funds in order to undertake a mid-life upgrade/overhaul of the PATCO Vickers-made cars.

However, as the PATCO fleet continues to age, it has become more and more apparent

that current technology does not support the systems in either PATCO's Budd or Vickers-made cars, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the fleet as many components must be manufactured in-house.

DRPA/PATCO has determined that it makes more sense to rebuild or replace the entire fleet to modern standards, and dispense with the idea of performing the mid-life overhaul of the Vickers made cars. The cost of replacing/rebuilding the entire fleet is estimated to be in the \$150 to \$300 million range. PATCO currently has a fleet that consists of 75 Budd Cars and 46 Vickers cars (total of 121 cars), and has a consultant on board to perform a study to evaluate the cars and recommend the proper approach and scheduling plan.

This is not a request to add additional funds to the TIP. Currently \$8.5 million is programmed over the three year course of the FY2004-2006 TIP for New Jersey. DRPA/PATCO does not expect to be able to pay the entire fleet upgrade cost at one time, but does hope to get a contract that establishes a set price for the full program. PATCO requests to change the title of the project to "Purchase/Rebuild PATCO Cars" and to replace the description with the following: "This project will provide for the replacement of PATCO's existing car fleet, either through new car purchase or complete rebuilding of existing cars."

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Lorraine Brill, seconded by John Pawson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action NJ04-03, DRPA/PATCO's request to amend the FY 2004 TIP for New Jersey (FY2004-2006) for the Transit Car Upgrade/Overhaul project (DB #DR046) by acknowledging a change in scope for the project and revising the project description accordingly.

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

PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS (TE) SELECTION PROCESS FOR 2003 - 2004:

Jacob Mallikal, DVRPC Project Implementation Coordinator, explained that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) allocates statewide Transportation Enhancements (TE) funding to be awarded to applicants chosen by the metropolitan planning organization, subject to PennDOT approval. A reserve of approximately \$9 million is set aside for the Secretary of Transportation to award to projects of statewide significance.

In the Philadelphia region, \$2,000,000 of FTA funds are available for the TE Program for transit-related projects, and \$8,926,000 of FHWA funds are available for any eligible transportation enhancement projects.

Last fall, DVRPC solicited proposals from the region and received 71 eligible submissions. Each was reviewed and scored by District 6-0 of PennDOT, by the county in which it was located, and the RCC. The scores were normalized and the ranked list was considered by the Pennsylvania Subcommittee of the Regional Transportation Committee (RTC). Multi-county projects were also evaluated and scored. The attachment that was circulated to the RCC lists the eighteen projects selected for FHWA funding and four for FTA funding. In addition, two previous recipients of TE funds were recommended to be granted supplemental funding. Five projects of regional significance were selected for submission to the state for the Secretary's discretionary fund.

Discussion: Tom Ferguson pointed out that he disagrees with the selection of the Historic Station Renovation in Merion. He felt that there was a better use for this money.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Creighton Rabs, seconded by John Boyle) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve the recommended list of Pennsylvania TE projects and forward the list to the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation for his approval and consideration of those designated for the Secretary's discretionary funding; and, that the Board approve such amendments to the FY 2003-2006 TIP for Pennsylvania as required by adding the approved TE projects, at the appropriate time.

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

FY 2005 TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (TMA) ASSISTANCE GRANT DRAFT WORK PROGRAMS:

Sarah Oaks, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner, explained that PennDOT has annually funded Transportation Management Association(TMA) activities for selected TMAs since 1992.

This program was developed to provide operating assistance to these public-private partnerships to support their travel demand management promotional work as a means to mitigate traffic congestion and improve regional air quality. This is an ongoing program, renewable annually. PennDOT requested that DVRPC assume joint oversight of work program development and execution in FY 2002.

There are currently five TMAs serving suburban areas in southeastern Pennsylvania: The Bucks County, Chester County, Delaware County, Greater Valley Forge, and Partnership TMAs, and one which serves central Philadelphia. As part of their assistance grants, each suburban TMA undertakes generally similar work. The Central Philadelphia TMA's work program is tailored to the particular transportation needs of Center City. The individual

Work Programs, in the attached packet, give a description of the work each of them plans to undertake if their application is approved. The work programs have been reviewed and approved by the respective County Planning Commission staffs, as well as DVRPC, and PennDOT staffs. The TMAs have applied for the maximum of \$160,000 each. The total application package totals \$960,000 (\$768,000 CMAQ, \$192,000 local match).

Discussion: The RCC discussed the need for better performance measures. Ms. Oaks pointed out that DVRPC looks at level of effort and travel demand management promotion. She stated that it is up to local member governments to put more demands on the TMAs. Each TMA is mandated to certify that they have co-written their work program with the appropriate county planning commission.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by John Pawson, seconded by Creighton Rabs) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve and forward to PENNDOT for their approval the FY 2005 TMA Assistance Grant Work Programs for a total of \$160,000 each (128,000 CMAQ, \$32,000 local match) to the Bucks County, Chester County, Delaware County, Greater Valley Forge Partnership, and Central Philadelphia TMA's, for a total program of \$960,000 (\$768,000 CMAQ, \$192,000 local match).

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

FY 2005 MOBILITY ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (MAP) FOR SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA DRAFT WORK PROGRAMS:

Ms. Oaks explained that the Mobility Alternatives Program (MAP) was initiated in 1995 in response to the need for measures to reduce highway congestion, including businesses, schools, and other organizations on a voluntary basis. There are currently five TMAs involved in MAP: The Bucks County, Chester County, Delaware County, Greater Valley Forge, and Partnership TMAs, along with the City of Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Transportation and SEPTA. Efforts of the contractors are directed to highly congested corridors within their service areas. Work includes outreach to employers, assistance in developing Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies for employer use, promotion of the Share-A-Ride program, and participation in outreach for the Ozone Action program.

MAP is largely a behavior modification effort to increase employers' awareness of the various TDM techniques available to them, and the benefits of participation in such activities. The success of the overall program is monitored by contractors' submission of quarterly performance reports, which show results of work toward reducing single-occupant autos. The individual Work Programs, in the attached packet, give a description of the work which will be undertaken in FY 2005.

The Bucks County TMA, Delaware County TMA, TMA of Chester County, Greater Valley Forge, and Partnership TMAs have applied for the maximum of \$67,450 each. The City of Philadelphia Office of Strategic Planning (successor to the Mayor's Office of Transportation) for \$45,000, and SEPTA for \$150,000. The DVRPC portion of the contract totals \$251,000, which includes Administration, Share-A-Ride Operations, and Marketing efforts. The application package totals \$783,250 (\$626,600 CMAQ, \$156,650 contractor match). This budget is lower than previous years as the City of Philadelphia requested less than the amount which has been traditionally allocated for their program in past years.

Discussion: Ms. Oaks explained that the TMAs report on the response they're getting to the Share-A-Ride program, as well as other performance measures that were set up years ago. However, Calvin Edgehill, formerly with FHWA, pointed out that congestion mitigation is measurable in three year intervals. Mitigation is a program that gets results that have benefits. The original intent of the program was to have a measurable, direct impact. In Pennsylvania, management of the program is decentralized. In New Jersey, one department is responsible for managing all TMAs. Ajay Creshkoff noted that not measuring results because it is not required is an inadequate response. Institutionalizing performance criteria is necessary.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Creighton Rabs, seconded by Tom Ferguson) to recommend that the DVRPC Board approve and forward to PENNDOT for their approval the FY 2005 MAP Work Program for a total of \$783,250 (\$626,600 CMAQ, \$156,650 TMA or contractor match) CMAQ funds currently available. The RCC also notes that more concise performance measures are needed for this program.

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

LAFAYETTE STREET CORRIDOR PROJECT:

Leo Bagley, Associate Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, explained that in 2000, Montgomery County initiated what was to become the Lafayette Street Corridor Project, a study to improve vehicular access to the Borough of Norristown's riverfront.

The County hired a consultant team to evaluate alternatives by identifying measures to improve the capacity of the current roadway network, and to introduce new access opportunities to the adjacent arterial highways, while considering environmental impacts.

The critical access points to and from the redevelopment area have been identified as the Dannehower Bridge at Lafayette Street, direct access to the PA Turnpike via slip-ramps,

and the extension of Lafayette Street to Conshohocken Road/PA Turnpike slip-ramps. Various options at each of the key access points were evaluated based on such factors as redevelopment options for the riverfront area; potential land uses in the area; physical constraints of improvements; and design constraints.

Following a number of meetings, the Lafayette project was placed on the FY 2001 TIP and funding was allocated for preliminary engineering and environmental studies. In 2001, consultants were selected to carry out the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements project. In addition to providing vehicular access to the Norristown riverfront, the project will also benefit Plymouth Township by providing access to the township's riverfront, which will help the redevelopment of old industrial grounds along Conshohocken Road.

Discussion: Mr. Bagley answered questions about the relocation of the pedestrian/bicycle trail in this area. Intersections are an issue that has to be addressed as does access over or under the SEPTA tracks. He also noted that the project is probably about eight years from completion. Regarding rail issues, Mr. Bagley also stated that Montgomery County is opposed to a third track through Norristown. He noted that Norfolk Southern (NS) would have to stay on the Bridgeport side of the river or use the current SEPTA tracks. NS owns the connecting track to the Trenton cut-off that would be used for the Cross County Metro. Montgomery County won't touch this track. Finally, Mr. Bagley stated that TIP funding for Lafayette Street will be in the next PA TIP at a level of \$15 million and will move into final design by the end of the year.

SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REPORTS:

Transportation Subcommittee: John Pawson reviewed his concerns relative to the Hellertown-Bethlehem Rail Abandonment Notice. Mr. Pawson stated that Norfolk Southern Corp., owner of the former Reading Company Bethlehem Branch railroad segment, has served notice of its intention to abandon the 3.7-mile segment of this line from the north end of Hellertown through the South Bethlehem section of Bethlehem City to its connection with the NS Lehigh Line (ex-Lehigh Valley Railroad main line) near Bethlehem Union Station. The Bucks County Transportation Management Association formally notified the federal Surface Transportation Board of its opposition, setting into motion the consideration by STB of alternatives to abandonment.

SEPTA owns the property south of Hellertown (approximate milepost 53), but hasn't sponsored or run commuter rail service since 1981. Chessie runs freight service beyond the present end of commuter service at Lansdale as far as Telford, and shortline East Penn Railway runs from Telford to Quakertown. North of Quakertown, the line is derelict but preserved by SEPTA ownership to Hellertown, which actually lies outside SEPTA's normal service area. The City of Bethlehem would use this abandoned part for a greenway.

Discussion: Tom Cooper pointed out that SEPTA should purchase mile 53 to 54 to safeguard its investment. Ernest Cohen noted that freight service is also a concern. This affects the DVRPC region even though it is outside regional boundaries. Lorraine Brill stated that DVRPC should be urging SEPTA to pick up this property.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by John Pawson, seconded by Lorraine Brill) to recommend the attached resolution to the DVRPC Board for action. The committee also asks that the Board pass the resolution on to the Bucks County TMA and DVRPC's Goods Movement Task Force.

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

Year 2025 Task Force: Ernest Cohen reported that his group had discussed the peaking of petroleum production.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Stoopville Road Rehabilitation Project: Sue Herman, who is affiliated with Residents for Regional Traffic Solutions, Inc., explained that residents have worked for months to mitigate the dangerous traffic conditions that exist on Lindenhurst, Stoopville and Worthington Mill Roads (minor residential collector roads). Because of the use of these roads by as many as 800 quarry trucks per day, residents are concerned that the forthcoming reconstruction of I-95 will increase the number of trucks. Ms. Herman reiterated the history of the Swamp Road, its culverts and the weight restrictions that have been in place for years.

She then noted that the Bucks County Planning Commission recently voted to forward the Stoopville Road Rehabilitation Project as a proposal in DVRPC's TIP process, instead of the Traffic Calming Projects that had been submitted for these roads. The Rehabilitation Project would encourage higher volumes of traffic at higher speeds along this residential route. The Stoopville project calls for straightening of the road and further widening of the road.

Elizabeth Schoonmaker clarified that the Stoopville Road project had been proposed but had not been selected in the first round of discussion about the TIP. Each county put in a number of projects but only one was selected. The first culvert in the Swamp Road corridor is in the preliminary draft TIP that will go out for public comment in May.

Ms. Herman cited the many near-misses between quarry trucks and school buses. She also stated that Gary Hoffman, Deputy Secretary for PennDOT, and Representative Steil will be holding regional meetings in Harrisburg shortly to resolve this issue and

decisions will be made that may not be acceptable to residents.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

MOTION (by Sue Herman, seconded by John Pawson) to urge the DVRPC Board to consider the resolution below and to forward it to PennDOT:

The DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee has learned that PennDOT will be meeting shortly to determine regional traffic solutions that will affect Lindenhurst, Stoopville and Worthington Mill Roads in Bucks County. The RCC rejects the concept of the Stoopville Road Rehabilitation Project because it exacerbates an already volatile public safety issue. We urge PennDOT to consider replacing this project with traffic calming measures that would maintain capacity and improve public safety on this minor collector road. (Currently Stoopville Road is comprised of a heavily developed residential community with the potential for a minimum of several hundred additional homes, making the safety of residents and their children a major concern.)

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