

**MEETING MINUTES  
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE  
SEPTEMBER 18, 2007**

**Present:** Bill Marston, Ernest Cohen, Elaine Cohen, John Pawson, Lorraine Brill, William Faltermayer, James Farny, Ajay Creshkoff, Warren Strumpfer, Larry Shaeffer, John Boyle, Catherine Zukowski, Dennis Winters, John Burkhardt, Marilyn Wood, Kathryn Garza, Matt Bear, Emily Linn (citizens); Candy Snyder, Jane Meconi (staff)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes of the August 15, 2007 RCC meeting were approved as mailed.

**APPROVAL OF CALENDAR YEAR 2009 RCC MEETING DATES**

The Calendar Year 2008 RCC meeting dates were approved.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

Warren Strumpfer, RCC Chair, referred to last month's meeting minutes for his comments.

**RTC REPORT:**

John Boyle noted that the RTC received a presentation on the US Census, which covered the American Community Survey and its limitations compared to the Census Long Form.

He also noted that the RTC developed a position paper related to the PennDOT policy for using Act 44 Funds, which is for structurally deficient bridges that are currently not on the TIP.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION: A DISCUSSION REGARDING CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS:**

Ms. Ryan Alexander, President of Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS), presented to the RCC on the Congressional earmarking process and various efforts to make earmarking a more transparent process. She defined earmarks as directed spending for a specific item in a specific plan that falls outside of usual project prioritization. Earmark decisions are usually made by politics, not priorities, and potential for corruption can be high, since earmarks do not come under public review.

She noted that earmarks are a part of transportation spending, constituting 13% of all transportation dollars. Earmarks sometimes do not fulfill the priorities of local planning commissions.

She advised that citizens need to advocate for at least a transparent funding process. If earmarks are to be distributed, the public should be entitled to know "the who, how, what and why" of the process. Members of Congress also need to be aware of their constituents' priorities, so earmarks can go to high priority projects. In recent years, there has been some movement in both houses of Congress to increase the transparency of the earmark process, but there needs to be more.

Constituents should request lists of earmarks from their representatives.

Ms. Ryan noted that TCS was founded in 1995. Its goal is to cut wasteful government spending and subsidies in order to achieve a responsible and efficient government that lives within its means. TCS works with elected officials from both political parties. Funding for TCS comes from foundations as well as individual donors. The agency provides resources on its website that allow citizens to obtain information about all aspects of the government funding and spending processes. TCS' website is [www.taxpayer.net](http://www.taxpayer.net) and Ms. Alexander may be reached at [ryan@taxpayer.net](mailto:ryan@taxpayer.net).

### **DVRPC BOARD AGENDA ITEMS:**

The items below are agenda items for the DVRPC Board. As per the new RCC format, a "consent agenda" format is in place, meaning that the RCC does not have to address every agenda item before them.

### **TIP ACTION PA07-58: SOUTH STREET BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT (MPMS #17724), PHILADELPHIA:**

PennDOT has requested that DVRPC modify the FY2007-2010 TIP for Pennsylvania by programming an additional \$12.8 million for the design, utility and construction phases of the South Street Bridge Replacement Project (MPMS #17724). The project will include the replacement of the 20 span bridge which passes over I-76. The Schuylkill river, and the CSX railroad. The new bridge will have four lanes with a center left turn lane, intersection tie-ins to the I-76 off-ramps, as well as architectural amenities including an open barrier with illuminated stainless-steel mesh, pedestrian overlooks, towers, bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the bridge, and a stair tower and pedestrian ramp for access to the Schuylkill River Park system below the bridge.

The initial cost estimate for this project was prepared ten years ago and was estimated to be \$45 million. The cost increase for this project is mainly due to several scope additions that have been added since the initial cost estimate was prepared. The scope additions include the construction of a stair tower, pedestrian ramp, lookout gazebos, decorative railings, and lighting, which were required to satisfy the requirements of the Philadelphia Art Commission.

A detour route will be required during the construction of the bridge as there will be no access across the bridge during the estimated 18 months of construction. The South Street detour project (MPMS #72847) is underway and will include posted detour signs and an interconnection of new signals which will respond to new traffic patterns on Market, Chestnut, Walnut, and 38th Streets.

The City of Philadelphia expects to complete the final design over the next few months with construction to begin in the Spring of 2008. The total cost of this project is \$60.8 million. Funding will be programmed for final design in FY07(\$480,000 Bridge/90,000 State/\$30,000 Local), utility in FY07(\$480,000 Bridge/\$90,000 State/\$30,000 Local), and construction in FY07 (\$13,760,000 Bridge/\$2,605,000 State/\$835,000 Local) and FY08 (\$24,573,000 Bridge/\$4,607,000 State/\$1,536,000 Local).

*Discussion: Elizabeth Schoonmaker noted that she sent a query to the Philadelphia Streets department to get answers regarding questions of turning radii and other design concerns. There is concern about turning radii and safety issues. There was also general discussion over*

issues regarding the design of the bridge.

The following information has been provided by the Streets Department of the City of Philadelphia to further explain and comment on some of the bike, pedestrian and context sensitive design issues and concerns related to replacement of the South Street Bridge:

#### 1. Curb Radii

FHWA and PennDOT require the bridge to be built considering all models. This is an Interstate ramp and not an arterial, which includes heavy vehicles as well as pedestrians and bicycles. Therefore, the turning radius has to be built to address heavy vehicles turning from the right lane onto the ramps without entering the adjacent lane or running up onto the sidewalk. We are considering different types of signal phasing with the right lane being an exclusive right turn lane that would turn in a separate phase from pedestrians and bikes crossing the ramps. The right turn would overlap with the left turn off the ramp in this phasing and therefore setting the stop bars back on the ramp would not be appropriate.

#### 2 . Dedicated right turn lanes

These are being considered in one of the two signal timing phases under review. The two signal timing operations under consideration are a lead pedestrian interval which would provide a start time for pedestrians crossing the ramp before right turns are given a green indication OR an exclusive right turn phase with the pedestrians crossing on a non - conflicting walk indication.

#### 3 . Connection to Schuylkill River Trail

We are providing as part of the bridge project a set of stairs and a ramp for access to the trail below. Both have the capability of bike access. The stairs have a bike trough along the stairs edge and the ramps allow for either riding or walking one's bike on the ramp to the trail below.

#### 4 . Detour

We will be posting a detour for 24 / 7 use for pedestrians, bikes and motor vehicles. We are not against the alternate route through University of Pennsylvania property but will need their permission to direct the general public that way. We do not feel that night time use of this detour is advisable. However, there will be only one official detour.

#### 5 . Overhead Signs

We are using smaller scale signs than what was preferred by State and Federal standards. These signs are 4' x 4' and not the standard 8' x 12'. They are mounted over the sidewalk off of poles on the parapet so as to maintain a clear sidewalk area.

#### 6 . Five Lane Cross Section

The 5 lane cross section only exists at the ramps to I - 76. We begin with a 3 lane section at the eastern end at 27th St . and then open up to the 5 lane section at the ramp intersection the reduce to 4 lanes as we approach the western end of the bridge at Convention Ave. We also have separate bike lanes on each side of the roadway the entire length of the project and wider sidewalks along the length of the bridge.

The design is sensitive to the context of where this bridge is and who the users are . A Safety audit has taken place.

### **ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**The RCC recommends that the DVRPC Board not approve TIP Action PA07-58, PennDOT's request to modify the TIP by programming an additional \$12.8 million for the design, utility, and construction phases of the South Street Bridge Replacement Project because the adjacent community groups feel that they have been left out of the process and there are considerable issues related to the design of the bridge, including the lack of context sensitive solutions. Please see attached letter from John McHugh, President, South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA).**

**TIP ACTION PA07-59: MONTGOMERY AVENUE OVER AMTRAK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT(MPMS #57276), PHILADELPHIA - DEFERRAL/DELETION OF PROJECT:**

PennDOT has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2007-2010 TIP for Pennsylvania by deferring the \$2.5 million utility phase for the Montgomery Avenue over AMTRAK Bridge Replacement Project (MPMS #57276), from FY07 to FY11, therefore, technically deleting the project from the TIP since no phases will show within the four year program. This project will remain in and continue to advance through the design process.

The utility phase for Montgomery Avenue over AMTRAK Bridge Replacement Project (MPMS #57276), has been deferred from FY07 to FY11, acknowledging that the project has not completed the design phase and the utility phase requires scheduling concurrence with Amtrak. At this time both the South Street and the 40th Street Bridges are highway priorities and will need to advance through Amtrak utility phases prior to this project, hence the estimated utility date of 2011. PennDOT's estimated let date for construction is not until February of 2012. Funds from the utility phase will be programmed to cover a portion of the cost increase associated with the replacement of the South Street Bridge (MPMS #17724), which is ready to advance to construction in FY08.

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**The RCC recommends that the Board approve TIP Action PA07-59, PennDOT's request to amend the TIP by deferring the \$2.5 utility phase for Montgomery Avenue over AMTRAK Bridge Replacement Project (MPMS #57276), from FY07 to FY11, therefore, technically deleting the project from the program.**

**DVRPC FY 2008 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT: TRAFFIC OPERATIONS MODELING FOR THE I-76/I-476 INTERCHANGE/MATSONFORD ROAD BRIDGE RIVER CROSSINGS AREA:**

PennDOT has requested that DVRPC prepare a traffic operations model and visualization tool as a complement to the design development work being performed in this area as part of Phase 2 of the I-76 Widening Feasibility Study. In FY 2007, DVRPC staff initiated Phase 1 of the I-76 Widening Feasibility Study.

The breadth of the Phase 1 work addressed the potential feasibility to implement spot widening improvements, conventional widening and double-decking the highway at various locations and in varying segments between US 202 and US 1. Conceptual improvements identified in Phase 1 were developed in concert with the outcomes from the Schuylkill River Crossings Study, which was also a DVRPC FY 2007 Work Program project.

The conceptual improvements were developed from a physical feasibility perspective only and without any tools for determining the traffic benefit of the recommendations. The proposed project would apply the traffic operations model to derive performance measures from modeled outputs of DVRPC's regional travel demand forecasting model.

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**The RCC recommends that the Board amend the DVRPC Fiscal Year 2008 Planning Work Program to include the Traffic Operations Modeling for the I-76/I-476 Interchange/Matsonford Road Bridge River Crossings Area Study.**

**DVRPC FY 2008 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT: PATCO PHILADELPHIA EXTENSION STUDY ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:**

The Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) has requested that DVRPC provide existing data, travel simulation models, and technical assistance to their consultants in the conduct of the Philadelphia portion of the PATCO Extension Study. This assistance includes the provision of existing socioeconomic data, traffic counts, existing forecasting models and related computer programs. The consultants will adapt the DVRPC data and models to produce ridership forecasts for the PATCO No-build and Build alternative scenarios.

This project will be initiated and completed in FY 2008.

*Discussion: It was clarified that DVRPC would not be conducting the modeling, just providing data to the PATCO consultant.*

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**The RCC recommends that the Board amend the DVRPC Fiscal Year 2008 Planning Work Program to include the PATCO Philadelphia Extension Study Alternatives Analysis.**

**DVRPC FY 2008 PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AMENDMENT: PATCO NEW JERSEY EXTENSION STUDY ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS:**

The Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) has requested that DVRPC provide existing data, travel simulation models, and technical assistance to their consultants in the conduct of the New Jersey portion of the PATCO Extension Study. This assistance includes the provision of existing socioeconomic data, traffic counts, existing forecasting models and related computer programs. The consultants will adapt the DVRPC data and models to produce ridership forecasts for the PATCO No-build and Build alternative scenarios.

This project will be initiated and completed in FY 2008.

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**The RCC recommends that the Board amend the DVRPC Fiscal Year 2008 Planning Work Program to include the PATCO New Jersey Extension Study Alternatives Analysis.**

**APPROVAL TO RELEASE THE DVRPC DRAFT DVRPC PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN:**

This action item has been tabled and will be sent to the Board in October.

**DISCUSSION OF RCC PROPOSALS FOR DVRPC FY 2009 WORK PROGRAM:**

Sarah Oaks, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner, noted that in addition to funding core Work Program projects undertaken as part of the Transit Support and Supportive Regional Highway Planning Programs, member governments may submit Special Study projects for consideration as part of the DVRPC Planning Work Program development cycle. All preliminary project descriptions are due by October 3, 2007.

The RCC reviewed and approved for submission the attached proposals.

In addition, Warren Strumpfer and Jerry Lutin of NJ Transit had discussed a proposal related to "Focus Groups to Increase Minority Participation in the Regional Citizens Committee." This proposal stated that ... DVRPC has an active and involved citizens' participation program. However, the composition of the RCC does not reflect the diversity of the region's population. To solicit greater participation from minorities, this project would conduct a minimum of four focus groups of 12 - 14 minority participants; two groups to be conducted for leaders of the minority communities in NJ and PA and two groups for selected minority citizens in the two states. The objectives of the focus groups are to determine what transportation and planning issues are important to diverse communities in the region, how DVRPC can best reach out and communicate with minority groups, and how to increase minority participation in the RCC.

This proposal was addressed by staff before the RCC meeting. Candace Snyder, DVRPC Director of Public Affairs, informed Mr. Strumpfer and Mr. Lutin that this proposal can be undertaken within the next few months and ties in with efforts by staff at the current time for both RCC and 2035 Plan objectives, There is no need to submit it as a Work Program proposal for FY 2009.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIONS:**

**ACTION TASK FORCE:**

Sue Herman presented a number of issues related to the Bucks County Regional Traffic Study. Copies of the report can be found at [www.buckscountyregionaltrafficstudy.org](http://www.buckscountyregionaltrafficstudy.org).

**ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:**

**The RCC voted to adopt the following statement regarding the *Bucks County Regional Traffic Study- June 2007 Draft (BCRTS)*. and to forward it to the Board:**

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- Add a section to the “BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE SECTION” on page 1-1 of the BCRTS that is titled “Project Scope”.

We ask that the Regional Traffic Planning Task Force (RTPTF) support preservation of the open space Land Use of Bucks County by including a statement to that effect within this new “Project Scope” section.

- Add a section to the “BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE SECTION” on page 1-1 of the BCRTS that is titled “Each Municipality's Position on Growth”. Sub-sections within this section should include:

A. “What is the vision that each municipality has for its future?

Does the municipality want to conserve the character of the area – as suggested by separate surveys? OR are they actively promoting rapid population and business growth?

B. “How does each municipality’s vision of its future mesh with the Bucks County Regional Traffic Study (BCRTS)?”

C. “What is the vision citizens have for the future of the study area?” State that, as per citizens’ surveys, residents’ vision/ desire is for preservation of the open space Land Use of Bucks County and to avoid the creation of any new or expanded traffic corridor within central Bucks County. Residents desire to preserve the residential (collector) roads within the study by implementing traffic calming solutions; they should not be upgraded for higher volume thoroughfare access. Also state that, as per citizens’ surveys, there is a need to reclassify downward to collector roads, those roads (or portions of roads) that have been mistakenly classified as arterial, so as to reflect the residential nature of the roads.

## CHAPTER 5: TRAFFIC ENGINEERING & SAFETY STUDIES Summary Report

- We want to essentially continue the current alignment of Washington Crossing Road throughout the area. If a Roundabout treatment is considered for the intersection of Washington Crossing Road and Stoopville Road, it should be constructed in the current intersection of Washington Crossing Road and Stoopville Road. The RCC does not favor the Roundabout alignment shown for the intersection in Figure 5-3 of the BCRTS-June 2007 Draft.

### 2035 SUBCOMMITTEE:

It was suggested that an open letter to the membership be sent to help define what the goals of the 2035 Subcommittee should be; this would be due in time for discussion at the next meeting. For instance: What is the Subcommittee’s mission; What future issues should the task force address? A meeting with staff will also be held to brainstorm how the 2035 Subcommittee can be an effective part of the 2035 planning process.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Ernest Cohen outlined a book entitled Transport of Delight: The Mythical Conception of Rail Transit in Los Angeles by Jonathan E.D. Richmond and related it to the long-range plan.

The RCC will be asked to caucus by county prior to the October meeting in preparation for appointing the Nominating Committee.