

**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE DVRPC REGIONAL CITIZENS COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 16, 2007**

Present: Robert Machler, Lorraine Brill, Elaine Cohen, Ernest Cohen, John Pawson, James Farny, Ajay Creshkoff, Hans Van Naerssen, Dennis Winters, Kay McKenna, Tom Cooper, Marilyn Wood, John Burkhardt, Sue Herman, John Boyle, Warren Strumpfer, Kamil Siddiqi, Kathryn Garza (citizens); Jim Leanos, Lindsay Thompson, Ph.D, Baltimore Regional Transportation Council- Citizens Advisory Committee (visitors); Candy Snyder, Jane Meconi, Elise Turner, Joseph Hacker, Don Shanis, Barry Seymour, Chick Dougherty, John Madera (staff)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the September 18, 2007 RCC meeting were approved as mailed.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS:

The Nominating Committee was appointed and includes the following members:

Bucks County:	Sue Herman
Chester County:	John Burkhardt
Delaware County:	Elaine Cohen/Ernest Cohen
Montgomery County:	John Pawson (Chair)
Philadelphia:	Ajay Creshkoff
Burlington County:	John Boyle

There were no representatives to serve from Camden, Gloucester or Mercer counties.

The Nominating Committee met following the RCC meeting to discuss the selection of Chair for calendar year 2008. The report of the Nominating Committee will be given and an election held at the November RCC meeting.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:

Candace Snyder, DVRPC Director, Office of Public Affairs, announced that the November RCC meeting date has been changed – the meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 28, 2007. A special presentation is planned for 11 AM that day, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, Southeastern PA, with a speaker invited to discuss issues related to funding transportation in the Commonwealth such as leasing the PA Turnpike and tolling I-80.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Warren Strumpfer, RCC Chair, noted the September presentation by Ryan Alexander, Executive Director of Taxpayers for Common Sense, regarding earmarks. Mr. Strumpfer stated that DVRPC staff is currently planning a legislative briefing in 2008 to discuss regional priorities with area legislators. He also noted that the RCC needs to discuss a policy regarding the review of future earmark projects. He felt that a value judgment should be made per project versus rejecting valid projects based on their earmark status alone.

RTC REPORT: John Boyle noted that the RTC heard two presentations – one on Delaware County’s Bike Plan and the other on Transportation Systems Management and Operations.

REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES:

John Pawson announced that he was resigning as RCC representative to the Goods Movement Task Force. Ernest Cohen has volunteered to replace Mr. Pawson as representative for the time being.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: DVRPC REGIONAL PRIORITIES:

Barry Seymour, DVRPC Executive Director, Don Shanis, DVRPC Deputy Executive Director and Chick Dougherty, DVRPC Director of Technical Services, presented their thoughts on DVRPC’s priorities. Mr. Seymour noted that there is so much more to DVRPC than what the RCC and the Board sees, and he really welcomed the opportunity to speak to the committee. He explained that DVRPC has been restructured into Planning and Technical Services divisions, and that there is a great desire to bring an interconnectedness between transportation and land use planning, and to expand the agency’s comprehensive point of view by utilizing environmental planners, economists etc. to be able to look at issues in a holistic way through various disciplines. Mr. Seymour explained five primary goals for DVRPC:

- A comprehensive approach to planning;
- Have DVRPC viewed as an honest broker;
- Establish an independent forum for ideas;
- Act as visionary for the future and identify emerging issues;
- Direct investment in the region in a strategic way.

Mr. Seymour stated that DVRPC completes consultant as well as discretionary work on behalf of counties and municipalities, and he welcomes the opportunity to take on these issues while maintaining the larger goals and mission of DVRPC.

Discussion: Warren Strumpfer observed that the TIP process seems to operate in a very “top down” approach, while the DVRPC Work Program operates in a collaborative, “bottom-up” fashion. Chick Dougherty replied that the various operating dynamics of SEPTA, NJTransit, and the state DOTs make the TIP process a challenge.

Mr. Dougherty also noted that DVRPC is investigating inter- and intra-regional resource sharing opportunities. Mr. Seymour declared that the boundaries of our region are blurring, and that there needs to be more connection to NYC, Washington DC, Baltimore and other metropolitan areas. Dennis Winters commended DVRPC staff and Board for addressing important issues, including the environment and sustainability. Tom Cooper cited other cities that have received FTA funding for rail projects– why don't models for our region sustain ridership counts that would allow for FTA funding? Mr. Seymour replied that the models are not the issue; the cities mentioned by Mr. Cooper (such as Salt Lake City, Phoenix and Seattle) are rapidly growing metros that have less individual municipalities to deal with, and do not require funding for maintenance of existing facilities. In addition, all the cities named passed local taxes that will bring 60-70% of funds needed to match federal dollars. Ajay Creshkoff observed that priorities need to be strengthened for thinking about the future as well as thinking holistically. The question is not only what to do, but also how to do it, and what analytic frameworks are necessary. For the future, we should look to a national view and see what contribution our region can make; DVRPC should then examine social, economic and political issues as well in addressing planning and transportation issues.

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.

PA07-63: Capital Assistance for Purchase of Accessible Small Transit Vehicles Section 5310 Program (MPMS #62150), PennDOT's Bureau of Public Transportation:

PennDOT's Bureau of Public Transportation has requested that DVRPC amend the FY2007-2010 TIP for Pennsylvania by adding a project to the TIP, Capital Assistance for Purchase of Accessible Small Transit Vehicles Section 5310 Program (MPMS #62150), by programming \$1,336,000 (\$1,068,800 FTA -5310/\$267,200 Local Match) in FY08 for the purchase of 23 vehicles for 9 agencies in the DVRPC region.

The Section 5310 program is intended to support the provision of transportation services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities who cannot be reasonably accommodated by conventional public transportation services. The program provides an opportunity for private non profit organizations and designated public agencies to apply for State-administered Federal capital assistance to pay 80% of the purchase costs of new wheel chair accessible vehicles and other related transportation equipment. The remaining 20% must be provided by the applicant.

The nine agencies receiving funds are:

Bucks County

- Bucks County Transport, Inc - funds to be used for the purchase of 5 wheelchair accessible vehicles - \$314,000 (\$251,000 FTA -5310/\$62,800 Local Match).
- Chandler Hall Health Services, Inc. - funds to be used for the purchase of 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle - \$56,000 (\$44,800 FTA-5310/\$11,200 Local Match).
- HOLLAND-GLEN, INC - funds to be used for the purchase of 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle - \$60,000 (\$48,000 FTA-5310/\$12,000 Local Match).

Chester County

- The Arc of Chester County - funds to be used for the purchase of 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle - \$52,000 (\$41,600 FTA-5310/\$10,400 Local Match).

Delaware County

- Children and Adult Disability and Educational Services - funds to be used for the purchase of 2 wheelchair accessible vehicles - \$104,000 (\$83,200 FTA-5310/\$20,800 Local Match).
- Community Transit of Delaware County, Inc. - funds to be used for the purchase of 3 wheelchair accessible vehicles - \$168,000 (\$134,400 FTA-5310/\$33,600 Local Match).
- Elwyn - funds to be used for the purchase of 1 wheelchair accessible vehicle - \$60,000 (\$48,000 FTA-5310/\$12,000 Local Match).

Montgomery County

- Suburban Transit Network, Inc - funds to be used for the purchase of 5 wheelchair accessible vehicles - \$272,000 (\$217,600 FTA-5310/\$54,400 Local Match).

Philadelphia

- Living Independently for Elders (LIFE)/St. Agnes Continuing Care Center - funds to be used for the purchase of 4 wheelchair accessible vehicles - \$250,000 (\$200,000 FTA-5310/\$50,000 Local Match).

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

The RCC recommends that the DVRPC Board approve TIP Action PA07-63, PennDOT's Bureau of Public Transportation request to amend the TIP by adding a project to the TIP, Capital Assistance for Purchase of Accessible Small Transit Vehicles Section 5310 Program (MPMS #62150) by programming a total of \$1,336,000 (\$1,068,800 FTA -5310/\$267,200 Local Match) in FY08 for the purchase of 23 vehicles for nine agencies in the DVRPC region.

**PA07-64: I-476 Reconstruction, Chemical Rd. to I-76 (RES) (MPMS #16737),
Montgomery County - Increase of Interstate Management Program/Reduction of
Regional TIP:**

Last year, PennDOT instituted the new PA Statewide Interstate Management Program (IMP) to pro-actively address the maintenance and reconstruction of the states aging interstate infrastructure; \$370 million per year (FY07-FY10) was made available statewide.

These improvements will be funded by Interstate Maintenance (IM) funds as well as a portion of NHS and Bridge funds that these miles of roadway/bridges represent, plus the appropriate state match. It was agreed that these IM funds would be for system preservation projects, not capacity adding projects. DVRPC has 12 projects in the region totaling over \$1 billion that are included in the new IMP.

The I-476 Reconstruction between Chemical Road and I-76 is one of the IMP projects and requires additional funding. Cost increases for this project total \$5.968 million for the roadway reconstruction work and for ITS improvements. A portion of the total cost increase, \$1.693 million, would be funded by schedule changes to other IMP projects per PennDOT's statewide management of the program. \$4.275 million is needed for ITS improvements that are not eligible for funding through the IMP Program. PennDOT would fund the \$4.275 million by using funds available due to "regular" regional TIP projects that have schedules that have slipped, which essentially increases the amount of funds in the IMP Program and reduces the total funding in the DVRPC Regional TIP by \$4.275 million.

The FY08 and FY09 construction phases of Bristol Road Intersection Improvements (MPMS# 13727) and Cowpath Road/Godshall Road/Broad Street Intersection Realignment project (MPMS #57864) are being shifted to FY10 and later fiscal years per the recent project schedules. The FY08 and FY09 funds made available by those shifts will be used to fund the \$4.275 million for the I-476 Reconstruction project.

I-476 Reconstruction between Chemical Road and I-76 project involves the total reconstruction of the northbound and southbound lanes of I-476 between I-76 (the Schuylkill Expressway) and I-276 (the Pennsylvania Turnpike Mid-County Interchange), a distance of 3.5 miles. Included with the project is the removal and replacement of the existing pavement, sinkhole remediation, extending acceleration and deceleration ramp lengths, and drainage and guide rail upgrades. The project includes the structural rehabilitation of 9 bridges: eight dual mainline structures and one overhead bridge. The mainline bridges will not be widened.

ITS elements of the project include Closed Circuit TV camera upgrades and ramp meter system improvements that will interconnect the signals to each other and to PennDOT's District 6 Traffic Control Center so that the system will finally work properly and will allow monitoring to see if the system is effective in managing congestion.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

The RCC recommends that the DVRPC Board not approve TIP Action PA07-64, PennDOT's request to modify the Interstate Management Program by increasing the construction phase of the I-476 Reconstruction project (MPMS #16737) by \$5.9 million. While the RCC recognizes the need for this project, the committee is opposed to using TIP funding for Interstate maintenance. Interstate funding should instead be used.

Approval to Release Draft DVRPC Public Participation Plan: A Strategy for Citizen Involvement:

DVRPC has a long history of public involvement in its plans and programs, beginning in the 1970s when federal mandates outlined the basics of citizen involvement. In 2001, the DVRPC Board adopted a Public Participation Plan, which was designed for DVRPC's Board, staff and the general public as an outline of the Commission's overall strategy for public participation; it also included the policies that were adopted as inherent to the operation of this agency into the twenty-first century. Updated in 2004, the Public Participation Plan now includes a public disclosure policy and an Environmental Justice Protocol.

It is now time to examine and reissue the Public Participation Plan, to ensure its compliance with current federal transportation legislation, specifically the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). This also provides an excellent opportunity for the Commission to reaffirm its commitment to a transparent, open and inclusive planning process.

The Draft Plan is scheduled to be released for a 45-day public comment period beginning on November 16, 2007 and ending on January 2, 2008. This comment period would include public notification to approximately 2500 citizens, business leaders, governments and organizations; documentation in regional libraries; legal notices; media outreach; and placement on the Commission's Website. In January, 2008, the Board will be asked to review comments received during the public comment period and to adopt the updated Public Participation Plan.

ACTION TAKEN BY COMMITTEE:

The RCC recommends that the Board authorize staff to open a 45-day public comment period on November 15, 2007 for the purpose of gathering public and agency comments on the Draft DVRPC Public Participation Plan: A Strategy for Citizen Involvement.

Authorization to Sign Pennsylvania Transportation Conformity State Implementation Plan Memorandum of Agreement:

This action item was previously approved by the RCC in May 2007 (see below). It will go before the Board at their October meeting.

The RCC recommends that the Board authorize DVRPC to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with PennDOT, DEP and Philadelphia Air Management Services agreeing to terms and processes for determining transportation conformity as detailed in the Conformity SIP.

BUCKS COUNTY REGIONAL TRAFFIC STUDY:

Jerry Coyne, DVRPC Manager, Office of Transportation Studies, presented the Bucks County Regional Traffic Study (BCRTS). The BCRTS is a cooperative effort of Lower Makefield, Newtown Borough, Newtown Township, Northampton, Upper Mkaefield, Wrightstown and Yardley Borough to systematically investigate and comprehensively address traffic and truck safety and mobility in the Newtown-Yardley area of Bucks County. The study identified 16 Key Roadways in the study area and components of the study include area-wide planning, outreach and public participation, informing and working with the Regional Traffic Planning Task Force, inventory of key roadway facilities, evaluating safety and operating conditions, feasibility of traffic calming methods on key roadways, viable mobility and safety improvements, and education, enforcement and engineering recommendations. Recommendations that can be implemented in the short term (1-3 years) include maintenance, signage, signalization, paving and lighting. A Lindenhurst Road traffic calming project was initiated in September. More complex recommendations can begin in the 3 year range. Mr. Coyne also noted that there had been several public meetings as well as Task Force meetings open to the public.

Discussion: Mr. Coyne explained that he doesn't know which of the recommendations contained in the study will actually be adopted. The study is just that, a list of recommendations for township officials and citizens to review. The Task Force will be presented with the final plan on October 29, 2007. The final plan, including public comments, will be released as a report to stakeholders, as a CD for the public (due to the size of the report); a copy of the study will be available in the DVRPC Resource Center, as well as available online at www.buckscountyregionaltrafficstudy.org. Mr. Strumpfer requested that a link to the Bucks County website be made available from the DVRPC website. Sue Herman reiterated comments regarding the need to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian safety. Additional questions were asked regarding the legal parameters employed by PennDOT for reducing speed limits within a community. What are PennDOT's mandates? These questions will be forwarded to PennDOT for response, and DVRPC staff will attempt to schedule a presentation by PennDOT to the RCC. The RCC also discussed planning a van tour of this area for members.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTIONS:

ACTION TASK FORCE:

Jim Farny's proposals regarding additional rail service to Philadelphia International Airport, as well as increased PATCO and SEPTA connectivity, have been forwarded to staff and will be addressed at next month's Action Task Force meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Lorraine Brill shared an obituary of Maurice Loeb.

Hans Van Naerssen noted that he attended last month's DVRPC Board Retreat and found it to be very productive.

Kathryn Garza relayed a Nobel Peace Prize winner's prediction that the polar ice caps will melt in 23 years, and that global crises are hitting home. She announced that there is a PennFuture event on October 27 at Gwynedd Mercy College, as well as a bus trip on October 20 to Washington DC, sponsored by the Delaware Valley Green Building Coalition, and a tour of sustainable homes in New Jersey on November 3, 2007.

Dennis Winters announced that the play, "Sense of Wonder", is being performed at the American College in Bryn Mawr on November 11, 2007 in celebration of the centennial of Rachel Carson's birth.

Elaine Cohen announced that the SSAP is planning a conference at Widener University on April 6, 2008. Details to follow.
