

ALERT! June 2008

ALERT is a monthly update on transportation and air quality planning activities in the Delaware Valley.



CONFORMITY

DVRPC Issues Draft Conformity Finding for Amendments to *Destination 2030* Long Range Plan and FY 2009 Transportation Improvement Programs for PA and NJ.

DVRPC has published the Draft Transportation Conformity Findings for amendments to the *Destination 2030* Long Range Plan (Plan) and FY 2009-12 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The public comment on the draft document will close at 5:00 pm, on June 20, 2008.

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations in designated air quality non-attainment areas demonstrate that Plans and TIPs, and the projects contained in those documents, do not worsen air quality in the region nor impede the region's progress towards attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The Transportation Conformity analysis includes air emissions modeling from the region's existing transportation network and planned and proposed regionally significant projects. The emissions analyses results are then tested against established benchmarks established by state and federal regulations.

In the fall of 2007, both Pennsylvania and New Jersey submitted 8-hour ozone attainment State Implementation Plans (SIPs). These SIPs contained motor vehicle emissions budgets for ozone precursors for 2008 and 2009 which will replace the 1-hour ozone SIP budgets for this conformity determination. The new budgets require lower emissions levels than the 2005 budgets and are more protective of public health.

This iteration of DVRPC's Transportation Conformity findings show that the TIPs and Plan meet the established criteria contained in the respective state and federal conformity regulations as well as the proposed criteria contained in the new SIPs. Estimated regional emissions levels are below the proposed 2008 and 2009 SIP budget levels.

To view the DVRPC documents that are currently open for public comment, including the Plan amendments, FY '09 TIPs and Transportation Conformity findings, please visit: http://www.dvrpc.org/publicaffairs/publicinvolvement/notice/2008-05_notice.htm. Public comments on the documents are being accepted via mail, email at tip-plan-comments@dvrpc.org or by calling (215) 592-9125.




**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Monday,
June 16th, 2008
Philadelphia Diesel
Difference
Working Group
10:00 am**

DVRPC Conference Center
8th Floor
6th and Race Streets
Philadelphia, PA

**Friday,
June 20th, 2008
Closing of Public Comment
Period for Transportation
Conformity and Amendments
to the 2030 Long Range Plan**

Send Comments to:
Tip - Plan Comments C/O DVRPC
190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Or email:
Tip-plan-comments@dvrpc.org



ENVIRONMENT

US EPA Releases 2008 Report on the Environment

In May, the US EPA released the 2008 *Report on the Environment (ROE)*. The report tracks environmental trends for 78 indicators for the nation, ranging from pollutant emissions into the air to fish tissue toxicity, for the period 1990 to 2002. Data included in the document was gleaned from federal, state and non-governmental organizations and was subjected to vigorous quality controls before being included in the report.

The *ROE* indicates that nationwide emissions of ozone precursors have been decreasing between 1990 and 2002. Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) emissions have decreased by 17% with the largest overall decrease in absolute NO_x emissions occurring in EPA Region III (which includes PA, DC, DE, MD, VA and WV). Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) emissions have decreased by 25%. These emissions reductions are largely credited to improvements in electricity generation and on-road vehicles for NO_x and cleaner industrial processes and on-road vehicles for VOCs. The report did indicate an increase in NO_x emissions from non-road vehicles over this time period.

The entire *ROE* document and links to the regional reports are available at:
<http://www.epa.gov/roe/#>



TRANSPORTATION – AIR QUALITY

Gas Prices Prompt Increase in Transit Ridership

According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), rising gas prices are largely responsible for gains in mass transit riders. Nationwide, transit trips were up by nearly 85 million trips (a 3% increase) during the first quarter of 2008. SEPTA has seen an increase of approximately 4.7 million riders or a 10% increase, during the same period, across all modes of transit, including bus, trolley, light and heavy rail. This increase in transit ridership is accompanied by a nationwide, 11 billion mile decrease in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 2007. This is the first time since 1980 that VMT has not increased. The trend has continued into the first quarter of 2008.

The Associated Press reports that the increased use of transit is causing capacity issues in some major cities leading transit agencies to ask commuters to stagger their commute times to ease rush hour crowding of transit. Locally, SEPTA has anticipated increases in ridership and orders for new regional rail cars and buses, as well as expansion of parking facilities at regional rail stations, were included in SEPTA's fiscal year 2008 capital budget.

To view the entire APTA press release and ridership report, please visit:
http://www.apta.com/media/releases/080608_ridership_report.cfm

ALERT! is a DVRPC publication.



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