

# DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



Highlights of December 19, 2005, Emergency Services Subcommittee Meeting

## **Attendees**

Rosemarie Anderson  
Craig Dougherty  
Carmine Fiscina  
Scott Kasper  
Frank Lafferty  
Regina Moore  
Kevin Murphy  
John Waters

## **Organization**

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
PA State Representative Gene McGill Office  
Federal Highway Administration  
Virtua Health  
Assistant Chief, Haddon Heights Fire Department  
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission  
Chief Fire Marshal, Upper Merion Township

## **Introductions**

Everyone in attendance introduced him or herself and briefly mentioned their relationship to the transportation safety community, and their involvement in specific programs and projects.

Kevin Murphy, Senior Transportation Planner chaired the meeting and began with opening remarks. From the 4 E's concept of safety conscious planning, the purpose of the subcommittee is to focus on the emergency services component of the Regional Safety Action Plan by identifying current programs, and developing transportation safety strategies for the region.

## **Overview of the Meeting and Program Goals**

Rosemarie Anderson, Manager, Office of Corridor Planning and Project Manager for DVPRC's Safety Program briefed the committee on the emphasis areas identified by AASHTO, PennDOT, NJDOT, and DVRPC. Both PennDOT and NJDOT have adopted AASHTO's goal of 1.0 fatality per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (PMVMT) by 2008. The current fatality rate for the region is 1.3 PMVMT where PA is 1.43 (based on 2003 data), and NJ is 1.07. The five counties in PA are lower than the PA state average rate of 1.48. The four counties in NJ are higher than the NJ state average rate of 1.05.

## **Overview of Emphasis Areas**

The handout provided in the folder, listed AASHTO, PennDOT, NJDOT, and DVRPC emphasis/focus areas. SAFETEA-LU legislation mandates that all states need to have a strategic highway safety plan. AASHTO identified 22 goals. Both states used

AASHTO goals as the basis in developing their plans. PennDOT has identified 19 areas for emphasis on safety. The other 4 areas listed will be included in the plan; however the emphasis areas for funding will be the 19. NJDOT has identified 8 emphasis areas. These 8 actually represent a total of 11 areas because three areas—pedestrian, bike, and railroad crashes—have been combined into one. Hit fixed object crashes have been included in the minimize run off the road crashes category to formulate the other emphasis area.

An analysis of crash data from PennDOT and NJDOT served as the basis for developing DVPRC's list of 13 emphasis areas. DVRPC will be concentrating on these areas for the region's action plan. Therefore, the main purpose of the subcommittee meeting is two-fold: 1) to gather information on projects and programs currently in use and to discuss their effectiveness, and 2) to identify areas of need and to identify potential strategies to meet those needs. This was determined to be the first logical step toward meeting the goals of the regional safety plan, to reduce the rate of fatal crashes.

### **Emergency Services in Relationship to Emphasis Areas**

The primary focus of emergency services is saving lives after a crash has occurred, preventing secondary crashes at the scene of an accident, and protecting the responders, whereas engineering, education, and enforcement techniques are primarily focused on preventing crashes. This subcommittee meeting concentrated on these concepts and related issues, and not on the identified emphasis areas that were the focus of the other subcommittee meetings.

### **Meeting Highlights**

At this the second meeting of the EMS subcommittee we were fortunate to have a more representative cross-section of EMS professionals from the region, for some of whom this was their first meeting. After a brief recap of the first subcommittee meeting, the discussion turned to the role that EMS has played in educating the public on injury prevention through programs such as the Governor's Helmet Safety Grant that provides helmets for cyclists. Other initiatives include EMS bike patrols during civic events, seatbelt and child safety seat training programs, among other grant funded programs. DVRPC staff will coordinate with the education and enforcement subcommittees to ensure these programs are included.

The discussion then turned to preventing secondary crashes. In some states, Tennessee and North Carolina for example, motorists are required by law to pull off to the side of the road when an emergency vehicle approaches. This law does not exist in New Jersey, and we are currently unsure about Pennsylvania. Staff will follow up on this item.

The group revisited the topic of getting to the crash scene, in particular the role of signal preemption. It became obvious that the committee needs to establish baseline data regarding systems currently in use and where, types of systems, and planned systems.

In addition, this technology is regarded highly and should be implemented region-wide. Staff, with assistance of the committee members will, work on this task.

The Federal Highway Administration provides funding for the implementation of signal preemption technology, but only to municipalities that have an implementation plan, as an 80/20 match. The details of this program will be formally included in a future correspondence. It was noted that a signal preemption policy is needed to require that the technology be added during appropriate signal work, i.e. upgrades or replacements. Currently on the Pennsylvania side of the region, only select townships have implemented the technology. From a correspondence following the meeting we've learned that in Camden County there seems to be no one presently utilizing the equipment in EMS vehicles. Several are utilizing traffic preemption devices mounted in the station which are manually activated prior to leaving the station on a call. Issues regarding liability of maintaining the equipment were also mentioned.

Another topic revisited was the need for coordination between EMS entities. Some examples of success stories were shared, including one in Orlando, Florida. A local example is the DVRPC's *I-295, I-76, NJ 42 Incident Management Task Force* which has developed a policy agreement and protocol between responding agencies from neighboring municipalities regarding emergency response to this interchange location. Also known as "closest unit response", the purpose is to provide the best and quickest response to an incident regardless of municipal jurisdiction. This agreement may serve as a model for other locations in the region. A similar initiative to coordinate services between Burlington and Camden counties is also being pursued.

The group spent considerable time discussing other issues related to response time and efficiency, including: parochialism, staffing levels, funding, politics, duplication of services and equipment, and career versus volunteer personnel. Staff will conduct research into EMS services in the region to establish a baseline of data regarding where services are being provided and for what jurisdictions, staffing levels, required training and costs, response protocols and plans in place, plus any additional information that will be useful in developing recommendations which would aid EMS professionals in saving lives.

### **Follow Up Items**

The following data items were identified in the meeting as being necessary before the group can move forward.

#### **DATA:**

- Model Response Plan – research other agencies to identify best practices
- Insurance Implications – research data regarding the insurance and billing issues related to a company responding to an emergency outside of its jurisdiction
- Baseline Service Data – summarize and compare the number of EMS, fire (volunteer vs. career), and police departments/personnel in the region by MCD, county, and state
- Standards/Terminology – define the differences between PA and NJ

- National and State fire and EMS Standards
  - example: NFPA (1710, 1720, etc.)
- Fatality Report Data – dispatch time, turn out time, on scene time, off scene time, at hospital time
- Fatal Crash Data (EMS) – quantify and analyze number of fatalities occurring at the scene, en route to the hospital, and at the hospital
- Public Education – research plans currently in place and approaches for getting the information to the public
- GIS/GPS Technologies – where are they being used (summarize) and is there data on effectiveness, funding (?)
- Fatal Accident Reporting System Data (FARS)

#### OTHER INFORMATION

- Signal Preemption\_– FHWA will provide funds for the upgrade of signals to include pre-emption technology under an 80/20 local match program (specific details to come), local MCDs must have a plan
  - Frank Lafferty/Scott Kasper volunteered to research their local counties for plans currently in place
  - Research pre-emption manufacturers for data regarding effectiveness of the technology, other related data
  - Explore signal pre-emption policy that requires addition of the technology whenever signal work is being done
- Model after Orlando’s goal of appropriate resources, properly equipped vehicles, properly trained personnel
- Coordination between responding agencies in neighboring jurisdictions – I-295/I-76/NJ 42 Incident Management Task Force Policy and Procedures Manual
  - Closest unit response

#### **Next Steps**

Staff, in conjunction with committee members, will begin to research and compile data items discussed at the meeting. As these pieces come together, staff will forward them to subcommittee members for review in advance of the next subcommittee meeting, to be announced.

#### **Please mark your calendars**

Please accept this invitation to attend DVRPC’s upcoming **Regional Safety Task Force meeting**. The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 31, 2006, 9:00 AM** at our offices located at 190 North Independence Mall West (corner of 6th and Race Streets), 8th Floor, Philadelphia, PA.