Anniversary Celebration

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DVRPC

Our Region, My Home

December 9, 2015 Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing



The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals, and the public with a common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work, and play, DVRPC builds

consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy. We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region — leading the way to a better future.

Shaping the way we

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From the Executive Director

DVRPC was created in 1965 for the purpose of "continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated regional planning" – which has guided our mission to this very day. And while we are very proud of the past 50 years, we also acknowledge our earlier roots. Back to 1923, when a small group of citizens asked: "Should the region be allowed to continue to grow in a hit-or-miss fashion, or should it be planned comprehensively in advance?" The answer – to plan regionally and comprehensively – resulted in the 1932 Regional Plan of the Philadelphia Tri-State District. That group of citizens – and the publicly elected officials that they worked with – dared to think at a large scale and they dared to think long term. And that is what regional planning is all about.

It's been said that "plans are useless, but planning is indispensable," meaning that the process of planning is ultimately more important than the plan itself. Because it is the process that brings people together, that encourages them to consider the world beyond their own doors – be that a neighborhood, a city, a county, or a region – and to look toward the future and dream of a better world.

I have been extremely fortunate to have spent the past 25 years at DVRPC, the past nine as Executive Director. And what makes DVRPC such a special and valuable organization is the combination of our smart, dedicated, and creative staff, and a Board of Commissioners that is committed to putting aside their ideologies, their political affiliations, and their local jurisdictions, to work together across city, county, and state lines to support what is best for the region. Thank you all for being here tonight, and for sharing in our 50th Anniversary of serving the Greater Philadelphia region.

Barry Seymour Executive Director

Opening Remarks

Barry J. Seymour, Executive Director, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Welcome

The Honorable Dana L. Redd, Mayor, City of Camden; Chair, DVRPC Board



Landmarks: *County Milestones that Shaped the Region* Introduced by Barry J. Seymour, Executive Director, DVRPC

* Bucks County: Open Space Preservation The Honorable Charles H. Martin, Bucks County Commissioner

 Burlington County: Farmland Preservation Program Mary Pat Robbie, Director,
 Burlington County Department of Resource Conservation

 Camden County: PATCO High Speedline The Honorable Louis Cappelli, Jr., Esq., Camden County Freeholder Director



- Chester County: Growth Management The Honorable Michelle Kichline, Chester County Commissioner
- Delaware County: 1-476 The Honorable John P. McBlain, Delaware County Council Member
- Gloucester County: Pureland Industrial Complex The Honorable Heather Simmons, Gloucester County Freeholder
- Mercer County: Open Space Trust Fund Leslie Floyd, Planning Director, Mercer County Planning Department
- Montgomery County: Trails Network The Honorable Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Montgomery County Commissioner
- Philadelphia: Center City Commuter Connection Tunnel Denise Goren, Director of Policy and Planning, Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities





Landmarks: County Milestones that Shaped the Region

While long-range planning is at the regional-scale, implementation happens at the local level touching the houses, businesses, roads, parks, and natural resources we know and value. DVRPC provides access to planning tools, funding sources, and critical data and offers a farsighted outlook to help inform local decision-makers as they make choices today that will shape the region for generations to come.

Tonight we recognize Landmarks: County Milestones that Shaped the Region – the transportation and economic development projects that contribute to our region's vibrancy, and the planning programs and tools that shape the communities we call home.







Bucks County: Open Space Preservation

Bucks County's open space preservation efforts began 50 years ago, following the rapid growth in Levittown. With the doubling of the county population, county officials began to take notice of the loss of farmland. By the mid-1960s, though half the county was still in agriculture, nearly 70,000 acres of farmland had been lost.

The Bucks County Planning Commission was actively engaged in identifying the county's valuable resources, including farmland, scenic areas, steep slopes, and woodlands. The county calculated that it would cost \$175 million to buy all the areas marked as important resources in 1974. County officials polled residents on their views of protecting farmland and scenic areas; 84% favored protecting these resources, demonstrating a clear public concern for the loss of open space.

Use of land development controls, transfer of development rights, tax policy, and outright purchase of land were considered by the County. In the early 1970s County Planning Commission staff invented "performance zoning," which required developers to first identify resources and features to be saved before laying out development. Performance zoning became a national standard when later endorsed and further researched by the American Planning Association.

In 1986, Bucks County appointed a Farmland Retention Advisory Committee, which eventually led to the county being among the first to participate in Pennsylvania's Agricultural Land Preservation Program. As of 2015, Bucks County has 82,000 acres of preserved land, from preserved farms to state parks. The County has committed over \$146 million in funds, and leveraged much more in state and local funding, for the preservation of farmland, natural areas, and parkland.









Burlington County: Farmland Preservation Program

Burlington County celebrates its Farmland Preservation Program, which was the first county-based program in New Jersey and one of the first in the nation.

Today, much of Burlington County's landscape remains in agricultural production. Agriculture is essential to the quality of life of all County residents - fresh produce and other farm products are available locally, positive tax revenues are generated, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities can be enjoyed, and agritourism provides seasonal entertainment for families.

In 1979, the County Board of Chosen Freeholders asked its residents by way of referendum to support the expenditure of \$1 million to preserve farmland. The public overwhelmingly endorsed the measure, and that support has never wavered. In 1985, five farms in Chesterfield Township, totaling 600 acres, became the first to be permanently preserved under the 1983 Agricultural Retention and Development Act and marked the start of a partnership between the County, the State, and local municipalities.

Since that time, Burlington County and its Farmland Preservation Program have garnered national attention as it pursues its goal to create a permanent agricultural land base. As of November 2015, 28,000 acres have been preserved through the County's easement purchase program. In total, 56,000 acres of farmland are preserved.

Burlington County's success in preserving farmland has been sustained by public support and its public sector partners. County taxpayers have approved multiple funding referenda providing a dedicated funding source for land preservation. The Department of Defense has joined as a funding partner.

Most importantly, the Farmland Preservation Program has the support of local farmers who have voluntarily chosen to preserve their farms which has led to innovation and investment for the next generation of farmers. As Burlington County reaches its preservation goals, it has begun to refocus its energies on agricultural viability – preserving the farmers' ability to keep farming in a healthy regulatory and economic environment.

MINS TO PHILA BY HI - SPEED LINE Station Part





Camden County: PATCO High Speedline

Camden County is home to the only rapid transit line connecting South Jersey to Philadelphia. Originally envisioned as early as 1951 as a result of the formation of the Delaware River Port Authority, the PATCO High Speedline was planned to meet the growing demand for easier accessibility from the New Jersey suburbs to Center City Philadelphia.

The initial proposals for the PATCO Speedline involved digging a new tunnel beneath the Delaware River. However, an alternate proposal outlined a more cost-effective project that would utilize the existing rail line on the Ben Franklin Bridge, use Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line trackage through South Jersey communities, and connect to Philadelphia's subway lines. This proposal was eventually carried to completion, and PATCO offered its first rides in 1969.

Today, the Speedline serves over 38,000 people a day, connecting Camden County residents to jobs, schools, and other city amenities. PATCO prompted significant transit-oriented development along the corridor, and continues to contribute to the County's livability – enabling a quick and easy ride 24 hours a day, spurring revitalization of traditional downtowns, and encouraging steady economic growth and strong residential property values.







Chester County: Growth Management

Chester County balances growth and preservation through Landscapes, the County's comprehensive plan, dedicating funding to farmland preservation and infrastructure investment in its urban centers.

Chester County is proud of its proactive approach to managing growth and preserving the quality of life valued by residents and businesses, alike. The Chester County Board of Commissioners, through is Planning Commission, developed a smart growth planning program through Landscapes. The program consisted of both a smart growth initiative and a preservation campaign.

As a result, the County's urban centers have experienced reinvestment through infrastructure funding assistance. To date, over \$54 million was awarded to 15 boroughs and the City of Coatesville for revitalization projects. To that end, urban centers have experienced a 5% increase in property values over the past four years.

Managed growth has taken the form of planned communities such as Chesterbrook and Eagleview, and cluster residential developments that incorporate principles of conservation design, preserving important open space and natural resources.

Chester County recognized the importance of protecting open space resources for future generations. An Open Space Initiative was established in 1989 with an ambitious goal to preserve 30% of the county. Chester County has dedicated over \$188 million. As of 2014, over 26%, a total of 127,250 acres, of the county is protected.

This quality of place has attracted and retained national and international corporations such as QVC and Vanguard to Chester County.

Chester County is proud to recognize its planning program that balances open space preservation, revitalization and smart growth development as significant to its recent history and a key to its prosperous future.





BLUE ROUTE

Delaware County: *I-476*

The Blue Route is a road of many names, from the Chester Extension to the Mid-County Expressway, from I-495 to I-476. However, its local moniker – the Blue Route – is from a 1958 map showing other possible configurations through Delaware County, connecting Chester City to Plymouth Meeting and the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Montgomery County.

I-476 was proposed as early as 1929. Construction did not begin until 1967 and was not completed until 1991 due to different communities opposing it and environmental review. In the 1970s, with the recent enactment of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), environmental review became retroactively applicable to previously approved federal highway projects.

After several Environmental Impact Statements, contentious public hearings, court battles, and negotiations with the major funder (the Federal Highway Administration), the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation came to an environmental agreement in 1985 that led to design changes, such as reducing the number of lanes south of PA Route 3, avoiding historic sites and woodlands, ramp meters regulating the flow of merging traffic, decreased grades to reduce noise,

a promise to evaluate better connections to regional rail, bus and trolley routes, and the prohibition of billboards as part of a scenic highway designation.

Since its opening, I-476 has become an essential transportation artery in the region – acting as the western part of a beltway, and has opened up central and western Delaware County communities to new housing and economic development opportunities.









Gloucester County: *Pureland Industrial Complex*

Gloucester County is home to the Pureland Industrial Complex, one of the largest warehouse and distribution centers on the East Coast, and steadily growing with more than 8,500 employees.

The Pureland Industrial Complex is a 3,000-acre planned industrial park in Logan Township. In the 1970s, the State Mutual Life Assurance Company of America bought 45 farms and issued a "Declaration of Environmental Standards" to guide development. Approximately 1,200 acres were placed in a natural reserve in perpetuity.

Today, Pureland is managed by the Pureland Group and over the last 35 years has developed new warehousing, manufacturing plants, office buildings, food processing plants, and other community and business facilities. With 16.5 million square feet, it is the largest industrial park east of the Mississippi River, and the second largest in the nation. Partly because of its close proximity to I-295, the New Jersey Turnpike, and the ports of Philadelphia and Camden, and partly because of southern New Jersey's historic roots in food production, the complex has a concentration of food manufacturers, food distributors, and warehouses, as well as logistic firms and freight companies.

Pureland is a regional employment center, attracting employers and employees. Area residents benefit from companies that offer on-the-job training and career advancement. It has also become the location of important local services, from restaurants to daycare facilities, and from an urgent care center to three hotels.







Mercer County: Open Space Trust Fund

Mercer County's Open Space Trust Fund was created by a voter referendum in 1989 to dedicate additional property tax revenue to preserve open space and farmland, develop parks, and preserve important cultural and historical properties.

The trust fund supports a number of initiatives. Some of its accomplishments are in balancing active and passive recreation needs, considering park development along with farmland preservation, and preserving ecological resources and the county's heritage. The diversity of the county's investments is impressive, from the Riverwalk Park in Trenton, which sits atop the Route 29 Tunnel, to Petty's Run, an archeological site behind Trenton's Old Barracks, to Lee Turkey Farm, a sixth generation preserved farm serving its East Windsor neighbors. The mid-century modern Trenton Bath House in Ewing Township, designed by Louis Kahn, is still actively used for its original purpose – as a community center and entrance and changing area to an outdoor swimming pool. The Trust Fund enabled Mercer County and Ewing Township to purchase the Bath House property and maintain its architectural integrity.

In 2012, Mercer County asked its residents to approve a referendum to allow the Trust Fund to support "stewardship." This new designated use signifies the county's evolving role in maintaining its investments.

Since its inception in 1991, the Mercer County Open Space Trust Fund has helped preserve almost 21,000 acres of land, approximately 25 historic landscapes and/or structures and build miles of trails. Mercer County has actively sought to partner with almost two dozen other entities to achieve significant preservation throughout the County. As a result, nearly 20% of the county is preserved open space, much of its rich history is accessible, and its park system is renowned for its depth of programming and amenities.









Montgomery County has long had a vision to create a multi-modal Trails Network, connecting people to jobs, communities to cities, and neighborhoods to amenities.

In the late 1970s, Montgomery County constructed a two-mile portion of the Schuylkill River Trail in Spring Mill, kicking off the development of a countywide trail system that has grown to over 86 miles and envisioned to grow to over 250 miles in the next 25 years.

Montgomery County's trails connect county parks to greenways, and local trails to community amenities, providing a variety of recreation opportunities and mobility options for people getting to work or other destinations. On any day, there are thousands of people enjoying the Montgomery County trails system. Schuylkill River Trail attracts an estimated 800,000 users per year, while the Perkiomen Trail, according to a 2008 study by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, is used by 400,000 users.

Additional studies on the Schuylkill River Trail and Perkiomen Trail found that an average user spent about \$10 a day on soft goods. Properties along trails also show an increase in values due to proximity. Trails attract tourism and can be an asset for large employers and office parks that want to serve employees with changing commuting patterns and active lifestyles. In October of 2015, the iconic Manayunk Bridge opened as an awe-inspiring pedestrian/bike trail connecting Lower Merion Township to the City of Philadelphia, and creating a new regional destination.

Built sections of the trail system include: 21 miles of the Schuylkill River Trail, 20 miles of the Perkiomen Trail, and portions of the Wissahickon, Cross County, Chester Valley, Aububon Loop, and Pennypack trails. Additionally, municipalities, supported by a mix of funders that includes Montgomery County, have added to the trail network by building local trails, such as the Cynwyd Heritage Trail.

Montgomery County is leading the way, demonstrating that trails are vital infrastructure making communities more attractive, healthy, and prosperous.







Philadelphia: *Center City Commuter Connection Tunnel*

Philadelphia's Center City Commuter Connection was completed in 1984 with the opening of Market East Station (now Jefferson Station) and a tunnel connecting all three Center City stations, creating a unified regional transit system. The Center City Commuter Tunnel effectively made Philadelphia the first city to have an integrated regional rail network in the United States.

An early idea for a Center City Tunnel, connecting rival railroad lines Reading Company and the Pennsylvania Railroad, was first included in the City of Philadelphia's 1911 comprehensive plan. The proposal that was eventually implemented was proposed by R. Damon Childs, a junior land planner at the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, and included in the 1960 comprehensive plan. Due to the complexity of funding, actual construction did not begin until 1972.

The \$330-million project constructed a tunnel that ran belowground from Suburban Station, under City Hall, created a new underground station, Market East/Jefferson Station, replacing the historic functions of Reading Terminal. The building process required a great deal of coordination and planning, given that it is built right below the central business district of Philadelphia and the regional rail lines and subways were already fully operating.

The new train station created many new public and private development opportunities with reinvestment into Reading Terminal Market (an indoor food market in the same location since 1860) and the Philadelphia Convention Center (which first opened its doors in 1993, reusing the Reading Terminal train shed as the dramatic Grand Hall). Today, the Commuter Tunnel continues to be an important, yet unseen, driver of economic development, regional mobility, and access to jobs. During the last half-century, DVRPC planners have collaborated with all levels of government, public and private entities, and citizens to *guide* the movement of people and goods, *protect* the environment, *support* smart growth, and *enhance* a growing economy. Take a look at the changing face of transportation and land use planning since DVRPC began in 1965.

in the beginning...

1956: President Dwight Eisenhower signs the Federal-Aid Highway Act, providing the impetus for regional transportation planning.

1959: The Penn Jersey Transportation Study is established to begin regional transportation planning for the Delaware Valley region.

1960s | Population 4,609,289

 1962: Federal Aid Highway Act identifies the need for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

• 1963: SEPTA is created by the Pennsylvania Legislature.



JUNE 30, 1965: DVRPC is created by an act of the Pennsylvania Legislature, signed by Governor Raymond Shafer, to replace the Penn Jersey Transportation Study.

1969: DVRPC's **first long-range plan** (The 1985 Delaware Valley Plan) is adopted, and includes land use, transportation, open space, parks and recreation, water supply and sewage disposal elements.

The PATCO Hi-Speedline begins service.

1970s | Population 5,128,226



1974: The **Commodore Barry Bridge** opens and the Chester-Bridgeport Ferry runs for the last time.

1975: DVRPC begins work on an **area-wide watershed management plan** to provide surface and groundwater protection, under Section 208 of the **Clean Water Act.** DVRPC provides **carpool matching/vanpool formation** services in response to gasoline shortages; the program continues today as **Share-A-Ride**.

1976: The Betsy Ross Bridge opens.







1980s | Population 5,024,422

1983: DVRPC's study of **mobility alternatives** for commuter rail service assists the SEPTA takeover of the Reading and Pennsylvania regional rail lines. DVRPC's **transit model/analysis** assesses the new **Center City Commuter Tunnel, Market East Station,** and the **Airport High Speed Line.**

1984: Market East Station (now Jefferson Station) and Center City Commuter Connection open, linking the major rail stations of Philadelphia's downtown.

■ 1985: The SEPTA Airport Line begins service. The last section of I-95 is completed in Pennsylvania, and Route 422 opens in Montgomery and Chester counties.



1990s | Population 5,182,705

1990: DVRPC undertakes **affordable housing studies** and **TMA** activities. DVRPC's **Goods Movement Task Force** is formed to better understand the priorities of freight shippers and carriers.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is enacted. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require that all transportation plans, programs, and projects attain air quality standards.

1991: DVRPC's **Commuter Benefit Program** is launched, offering a \$15/month tax free subsidy for public transit use, continuing today as **RideECO**.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush, giving significant additional powers to MPOs. The 20-mile section of I-476 known as "The Blue Route" opens in Delaware and Montgomery counties, and the last section of the Vine Street Expressway opens in Philadelphia.

1996: DVRPC initiates a voluntary **air quality program** to alert the public about poor air quality days, and to encourage actions to reduce pollution levels.

1999: DVRPC formed the first **Traffic Incident Management Task Force** in the region.

The first E-Z Pass toll collection went into operation on DRPA bridges.



2000s | Population 5,387,407

2001: DVRPC adopts the **Horizons 2025** Land Use and Transportation Plan, as well as an extensive analysis and plan for equity and opportunity.

The **September 11th** attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania lead to increased planning for safety and security of the transportation system.

2002: DVRPC launches the **Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI)**, providing planning grants to local governments to help implement the regional plan. To date, over \$14 million and 240 grants have leveraged over \$350 million in new investment.

2004: NJ Transit's **River LINE** begins service, connecting the cities of Trenton and Camden in New Jersey.



2005: DVRPC conducts the Philadelphia Metropolitan
Bicycle Travel Survey, the first of its kind conducted in the

region. DVRPC's Regional Safety Task Force begins meeting to address transportation safety.

2008: DVRPC partners with PennDOT and NJDOT to create the **Smart Transportation Guidebook**, a national award-winning effort.

2009: DVRPC adopts the first **Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy** (**CEDS**), and develops a **Regional Integrated Multimodal Information Sharing (RIMIS)** system. DVRPC adopts **Connections 2035:** The Regional Plan for a Sustainable Future, which sets goals for **managing growth**, creating livable communities, establishing an energy efficient economy, and funding a modern transportation system.

2010s | Population 5,626,186

2010: DVRPC develops plans for **"The Circuit,"** a 750-mile connected system of trails throughout the region, funded with a \$10 million grant from the William Penn Foundation. DVRPC releases the **Greater Philadelphia Food System Study**, the first of several efforts to address food and equity issues in the region. DVRPC launches the **Mercer County Bikeability Map**, the first local effort to crowdsource planning feedback using a web map interface.





2012: President Obama signs into law a new two-year transportation reauthorization bill, **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act** ("MAP-21"). **Superstorm Sandy** brings significant damage to the region, leading to increased planning for resiliency and adaptation to climate change.

DVRPC develops an **operations model for the I-76 Schuylkill Expressway**, creating the most comprehensive operations model in the country. DVRPC utilizes **Bluetooth detection equipment, video, and pedestrian and bicycle sensors to improve travel data monitoring.**

US 202 Section 700 opens in Bucks County.

2013: DVRPC adopts the **Connections 2040 Long-Range Plan**, which continues to link transportation, land use, the environment, and the economy.

I-295/I-76/Route 42 Direct Connection project in New Jersey begins construction.

2014: Choices and Voices, an online scenario planning tool developed by DVRPC, wins a national award for data innovation.

The passage of the **Act 89 transportation funding bill** in PA enables many projects to be added to DVRPC's TIP and Long-Range Plan.

DVRPC installs the **first permanent bicycle counting station in the region** and launches **CyclePhilly**, a smartphone-based bicycle route choice survey/data gathering platform.

2015: Learn what's in store for **our region's future**. **Stay connected at www.dvrpc.org**.

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here's to the next fifty! happy anniversary, dvrpc.





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Thank you for celebrating with us.



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