

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**  
**RELATED TO DVRPC BOARD ACTION ITEMS**

**February 27, 2014**

**Agenda Item:**

**2b. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action**

**NJ14-14: Grove Street (CR 644), Reconstruction**

**From:** Cyndi Steiner (Executive Director of the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition)

**County:** New Jersey

**Zip Code:** 07043

**Date Received:** February 19, 2014

**Comment/Question:** There needs to be connectivity in the design now through signing and possible construction of small paths or wider sidewalks for the final link to the Cooper River Park. Usage will be much safer and higher if you provide this connectivity.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager.

**From:** John Boyle

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19102

**Date Received:** February 23, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia - We strongly support this project which will include bike lanes where feasible. We believe that project planners should consider a better bicycle and pedestrian circuit with the Cooper River Trail which is part of the Circuit.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager.

**From:** Dennis Winters

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19103

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Clean Air Council would like both acknowledge and support Camden County and NJDOT in their inclusion of sidewalks and bike lanes in this project, as well as the ADA-compliant curb ramps throughout this project. We appreciate the accommodation of pedestrians, cyclists, and the physically disabled.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager.

**From:** Cyndi Steiner

**County:** New Jersey

**Zip Code:** 07043

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition: NJBWC supports a better bicycle and pedestrian circuit with the Cooper River Trail which is part of the Circuit.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager.

## **2c. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action**

### **NJ14-15: CR 557 (Tuckahoe Road), Resurfacing and Safety Improvements**

**From:** Leonard Fritz

**County:** Gloucester

**Zip Code:** 08094

**Date Received:** 2/17/2014

**Comment/Question:** I am looking forward to the completion of all of the work on Tuckahoe Road since i live on it in Cross Keys (Monroe Twp.). I have only 1 question, why are curb ramps for ADA being installed if there is no other sidewalks along this road and if there were to be any in the future the ADA standards would likely have changed several times by then?

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. County of Gloucester will only install ADA curb ramps where they currently exist (i.e. in-kind replacement) through the resurfacing portion of the project, as required by Federal Highway Administration standards. As long as a ramp exists even though connecting sidewalk is not present, then the facility must be upgraded.

**From:** John Boyle

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19102

**Date Received:** February 23, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia - We want to commend Gloucester County for walking the walk by leading the state and the DVRPC region in the mileage of bike lanes constructed in the past year. Tuckahoe Rd reconstruction shows that this policy is continuing and we could not be happier. We are asking the County to look at improving the safety of the Tuckahoe Rd crossing for the Monroe Township Bike Path. While there is a marked crosswalk and road signage warning of the crossing it is our observation that the very fast moving traffic (50mph) is not yielding to trail users and gaps in traffic are not adequate for younger and older users. We suggest looking at treatments such as enhanced pavement markings, rapid flashing beacons and a pedestrian refuge island.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. The project proposes that a rapid-flashing beacon be installed at the trail crossing.

**From:** Dennis Winters

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19103

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Clean Air Council would like both acknowledge and support Gloucester County and NJDOT in their inclusion of sidewalks and bike lanes in this project, as well as the ADA-compliant curb ramps throughout this project. The Clean Air Council appreciates the the traffic calming aspects of this project as well as accommodation of pedestrians, cyclists, and the physically disabled.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment.

**From:** Cyndi Steiner

**County:** New Jersey

**Zip Code:** 07043

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition: We are asking the County to look at improving the safety of the Tuckahoe Rd crossing for the Monroe Township Bike Path. While there is a marked crosswalk and road signage warning of the crossing it is our observation that the very fast moving traffic (50mph) is not yielding to trail users and gaps in traffic are not adequate for younger and older users. We suggest looking at treatments such as enhanced pavement markings, rapid flashing beacons and a pedestrian refuge island.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. The project proposes that a rapid-flashing beacon be installed at the trail crossing.

**From:** Matthew Anastasi

**County:** Camden

**Zip Code:** 08108

**Date Received:** February 25, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Tuckahoe Road is impossible to safely cross on the crosswalk because of traffic traveling at highway speeds. Please add a flashing crosswalk light and lower the speed limit in both directions in this area for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians.

**Response:** Gloucester County appreciates the comment; our project proposes that a rapid-flashing beacon be installed at the trail crossing. Thank you.

## **2d. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action**

### **NJ14-16: (CR 553) Woodbury-Glassboro Road, Resurfacing and Safety Improvements**

**From:** John Boyle

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19102

**Date Received:** February 23, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia - We support the upgrading of the inlet grates and the installation of ADA curb cuts. Bicycle Coalition would like to see shoulders modified and marked as bike lanes as well as the inclusion of bike lane markings through the Route 55 interchange area. Mantua Township has adopted a complete streets policy in 2012 and the coordination with County road projects is critical for implementation.

**Response:** Gloucester County appreciates the comment and support. Bicycle compatible shoulders are included in this project along CR 553 through project length at the Route 55 interchange area. Project will not provide designated/marked bicycle lanes on the shoulders through the Route 55 Interchange area, as the County has a planned off-road parallel facility through this portion of Mantua Township.

**From:** Dennis Winters

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19103

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Clean Air Council wishes to express its appreciation and support for the ADA-compliant curb ramps and bicycle-safe inlet grates in this project. While there is no mention of actual bicycle lanes, we encourage their inclusion if not already part of this project.

**Response:** Gloucester County appreciates the comment and support. Bicycle compatible shoulders are included in this project along CR 553 through project length at the Route 55 interchange area. Project will not provide designated/marked bicycle lanes on the shoulders through the Route 55 Interchange area, as the County has a planned off-road parallel facility through this portion of Mantua Township.

**From:** Cyndi Steiner

**County:** New Jersey

**Zip Code:** 07043

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the NJ Bike & Walk Coalition: We support the upgrading of the inlet grates and the installation of ADA curb cuts. We would like to see shoulders modified and marked as bike lanes as well as the inclusion of bike lane markings through the Route 55 interchange area.

**Response:** Gloucester County appreciates the comment and support. Bicycle compatible shoulders are included in this project along CR 553 through project length at the Route 55 interchange area. Project will not provide designated/marked bicycle lanes on the shoulders through the Route 55 Interchange area, as the County has a planned off-road parallel facility through this portion of Mantua Township.

### **3. Technical Assistance for Implementation of the Circuit**

**From:** Cyndi Steiner

**County:** New Jersey

**Zip Code:** 07043

**Date Received:** February 19, 2014

**Comment/Question:** The NJ Bike & Walk Coalition supports this project.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment.

**From:** John Boyle

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19102

**Date Received:** February 23, 2014

**Comment/Question:** The Bicycle Coalition supports this action as DVRPC staff support is critical for the continued implementation of the Circuit.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment.

### **4. Adopt New Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Evaluation Criteria**

**From:** Jerry Fried

**County:** Essex

**Zip Code:** 07042

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Although I am from the NJTPA area, I'd like to submit the following: a) "Asset Condition" - by favoring existing infrastructure and weighting it is reactive rather than proactive... 60+ years of auto-centrism means there's way too little EXISTING bike/ped or transit-oriented infrastructure, b) "facility/asset use" - same issue... there's significantly LESS

transit usage in this era because of decisions to eliminate streetcars/other facilities and defunding "multi-modal" while highway expansion has been the default, c) "Economic Competitiveness" is not defined clearly enough and therefore is not very helpful! As we know, the culture (and economy) is moving towards urban and "walkable suburban" living so focusing on operating/maintenance "costs" leaves out TRUE costs (diminished health, safety, local economies, environmental quality)... fossil fuel use is subsidized itself and therefore is ALREADY getting "funding"

**Response:** Thank you for your comment regarding the proposed TIP project evaluation criteria. You make several excellent points, and we considered many of the issues you raise in our process. These criteria are only one of many tools that will be used to evaluate candidate projects for the region's transportation improvement program (TIP). New capacity projects, including new transit routes, or roadway widenings or extensions will undergo a more rigorous set of long-range plan evaluation criteria. The TIP evaluation will compare the benefits identified by the criteria to the project's cost. The final score will be a benefit to cost ratio, where we expect that lower cost projects, such as bike and pedestrian improvements, will generally score well.

In response to point A (Asset Condition), DVRPC worked with the public to establish priorities through outreach, including Choices & Voices results, and stakeholder input to prioritize transportation system funding in the Connections 2040 Plan: top priority is system preservation, second priority is operational improvements, and third priority is expanding the system. The project evaluation criteria reflect the significant system preservation needs for both roadways and transit. Fostering multimodal bike/pedestrian improvements is a priority for all transportation projects, and it is one of the evaluation criteria. Currently, transit projects and highway projects are funded by different pots of money, and the funding amounts for each mode are frequently beyond our control. Longer term, the criteria begin to anticipate a future where funding pots are less restrictive and the region can consider what is the best type of project to fit a particular transportation need, regardless of mode.

In response to point B (Facility/Asset Use), this measure is largely trying to gauge the overall scale of the project and number of people that can benefit from it. Facility asset use is weighted as 49 percent going to transit riders affected by the project; 31 percent by daily VMT affected by the project; and 20 percent by daily trucks affected by the project. In addition, the rating portion also varies by mode and amount of users.

In response to point C (Economic Competitiveness), projects that score points must either reduce agency maintenance or operating costs, reduce public/private user maintenance or operating costs, or support a specific economic development project or a transit-oriented development (TOD). We recognize the health, safety, and environmental costs of transportation projects; unfortunately there is not a lot of readily available data to quantify them.

We view the set of TIP project evaluation criteria as something that is trying to holistically measure projects with the best readily available data we have. This TIP evaluation criteria will be revisited and regularly refined as we move forward.

**From:** Ernest Cohen

**County:** Delaware

**Zip Code:** 19082

**Date Received:** February 25, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Sounds good

**Response:** Thank you for your comment.

**From:** John Boyle

**County:** Philadelphia

**Zip Code:** 19102

**Date Received:** February 24, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- We support the DVRPC's decision to a data driven approach to prioritizing projects in its Transportation Improvement Program. We are also pleased that the criteria includes multi-modal criteria and several specific bike/ped mentions.
- We do have concerns with the criteria selection and weighting which appears to strongly favor the status quo. We support keeping our road, freight and transit systems networks in a state of good repair, however a comfortable regionwide bicycle and pedestrian network is non-existent and therefore they will not score well under the proposed criteria.

## **ASSET CONDITION**

- There is no scoring for existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, this puts all bike ped projects at a 19% disadvantage. We propose that points are awarded for bringing existing bike ped facilities to a state of good repair and/or AASHTO bicycle and pedestrian facility design standards.

## **SAFETY**

- No examples of bicycle safety countermeasures are included in the sample checklist. should include one for reference.

## **REDUCE CONGESTION**

- We disagree with the weight given to reduce congestion. There should be an emphasis on the movement people of people and goods more efficiently and equitably.
- We propose changing this criteria to "Access and Mobility" using the CMP sub criteria only

## **MULTIMODAL BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN**

- Change "Multimodal" to "Complete Streets" as the former can also apply to freight (truck to railcar)
- Multimodal/Complete Streets should carry greater weight especially when it is included in a larger transportation project.
- Consider breaking up into two sub criteria "Complete Streets" and "Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects"
- Move Counts to "Facility Asset Use"

## **FACILITY ASSET USE**

- There is no scoring for existing bicycle and pedestrian projects, Therefore we ask that the bike ped count score goes here.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

- A project going through an IPD community is not necessarily a positive impact.
- Add a new sub criteria “Health Impact Assessment” giving points for projects that include it.

## **GREEN DESIGN**

- Bicycle and Pedestrian projects have air quality benefits and have a smaller carbon and physical footprint than motorized projects

## **INVEST IN CENTERS**

- \*Break out Freight Centers from Mixed Use Community Centers as sub criteria

## **ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS**

- Focusing on operating/maintenance costs leaves out true costs (diminished health, safety, local economies, environmental quality)
- Return on investment should be calculated for each project using a proven model

**Response:** Thank you for your comment on the TIP project evaluation criteria. The criteria were developed and weighted using Decision Lens software by a working group of the Regional Technical Committee. The criteria will be used to evaluate most TIP projects, however some specific programs such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) have developed their own criteria and will continue to use them. Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements are eligible for funding in both of these programs. The Decision Lens process scores projects using the criteria as a benefit rating. In the optimization step, the benefit rating is then compared to the project cost, in a benefit-cost ratio. As most bike and pedestrian projects are lower cost than other transportation improvements, we anticipate that they will score highly in the optimization’s benefit-cost ratio. Also recognize that a varied project mix is also an important aspect of the region’s transportation program and that these criteria are not the only input into evaluating a project.

In response to your specific comments:

Asset condition – bicycle and pedestrian facilities in poor condition will be eligible to score here. A better bike/ped asset management system would help.

Safety – while no specific bicycle strategy is included in FHWA’s proven safety countermeasures, there are some, such as road diets and pedestrian safety islands (as a traffic calming measure) that will improve bicycle safety. As FHWA adds new countermeasures to this list, they will be incorporated automatically into the criteria evaluation.

Congestion – The process for weighting criteria was collaborative and consensus building. The working group desired both the CMP corridors and a more specific measure of congestion on each facility.

Multimodal bike/pedestrian – a larger project that incorporates complete streets will score points in this category, giving it greater weight than a similar project that does not add bike/ped facilities. Generally, the group considered that most projects will either improve an area where there already are a lot of bicyclists and pedestrians (such as adding a bike lane where there are a number bicyclists), or will be in locations where there are not a lot of existing users (such as a regional trail), but there is the potential for there to be. The scoring methodology attempted to account for either scenario.

Facility Use – the working group considered incorporating bicyclists and pedestrians in this category, but ultimately preferred to place them into the multimodal bike/pedestrian criterion.

Environmental Justice – most of the projects in the TIP are safety improvements, condition improvements, signal improvements, or transit investments (system expansion type projects will fall into a separate long-range plan evaluation). These projects are benign in the worst case, and generally are seen as making investments that improve conditions in EJ communities.

Green Design / Air Quality – bicycle and pedestrian projects will score points based on their potential to lower VMT.

Centers – breaking out the Centers by type wasn't considered by the group in this version. It could be revisited when the criteria are updated.

Economic competitiveness – The criteria aimed to use readily available and widely accepted data and data sources, and focus on the goals set in the Connections 2040 plan. Long-term goals are to better account for some of the issues you raise, particularly health. While Decision Lens does not calculate return on investment, it does analyze how much of our long-range plan goals are we buying with our limited transportation funds in its optimization step.

The working group aimed to create as simple of a project evaluation process as possible to start with. However, this is a process that can improve and become more complex over time. It will be revisited in the future, and we look forward to working collaboratively with our planning partners on refining it. Thanks again for your comment.

**From:** Cyndi Steiner

**County:** New Jersey

**Zip Code:** 07043

**Date Received:** February 26, 2014

**Comment/Question:** Comments from the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- We support the DVRPC's decision to a data driven approach to prioritizing projects in its Transportation Improvement Program. We are also pleased that the criteria includes multi-modal criteria and several specific bike/ped mentions.
- We do have concerns with the criteria selection and weighting which appears to strongly favor the status quo. We support keeping our road, freight and transit systems networks



in a state of good repair, however a comfortable regionwide bicycle and pedestrian network is non-existent and therefore they will not score well under the proposed criteria.

## **ASSET CONDITION**

- There is no scoring for existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, this puts all bike ped projects at a 19% disadvantage. We propose that points are awarded for bringing existing bike ped facilities to a state of good repair and/or AASHTO bicycle and pedestrian facility design standards.

## **SAFETY**

- No examples of bicycle safety countermeasures are included in the sample checklist. should include one for reference.

## **REDUCE CONGESTION**

- We disagree with the weight given to reduce congestion. There should be an emphasis on the movement people of people and goods more efficiently and equitably.
- We propose changing this criteria to “Access and Mobility” using the CMP sub criteria only

## **MULTIMODAL BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN**

- Change “Multimodal” to “Complete Streets” as the former can also apply to freight (truck to railcar)
- Multimodal/Complete Streets should carry greater weight especially when it is included in a larger transportation project.
- Consider breaking up into two sub criteria “Complete Streets” and “Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects”
- Move Counts to “Facility Asset Use”

## **FACILITY ASSET USE**

- There is no scoring for existing bicycle and pedestrian projects, Therefore we ask that the bike ped count score goes here.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

- A project going through an IPD community is not necessarily a positive impact.
- Add a new sub criteria “Health Impact Assessment” giving points for projects that include it.

## **GREEN DESIGN**

- Bicycle and Pedestrian projects have air quality benefits and have a smaller carbon and physical footprint than motorized projects

## INVEST IN CENTERS

- \*Break out Freight Centers from Mixed Use Community Centers as sub criteria

## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

- Focusing on operating/maintenance costs leaves out true costs (diminished health, safety, local economies, environmental quality)
- Return on investment should be calculated for each project using a proven model

**Response:** Thank you for your comment on the TIP project evaluation criteria. The criteria were developed and weighted using Decision Lens software by a working group of the Regional Technical Committee. The criteria will be used to evaluate most TIP projects, however some specific programs such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) have developed their own criteria and will continue to use them. Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements are eligible for funding in both of these programs. The Decision Lens process scores projects using the criteria as a benefit rating. In the optimization step, the benefit rating is then compared to the project cost, in a benefit-cost ratio. As most bike and pedestrian projects are lower cost than other transportation improvements, we anticipate that they will score highly in the optimization's benefit-cost ratio. Also recognize that a varied project mix is also an important aspect of the region's transportation program and that these criteria are not the only input into evaluating a project.

In response to your specific comments:

Asset condition – bicycle and pedestrian facilities in poor condition will be eligible to score here. A better bike/ped asset management system would help.

Safety – while no specific bicycle strategy is included in FHWA's proven safety countermeasures, there are some, such as road diets and pedestrian safety islands (as a traffic calming measure) that will improve bicycle safety. As FHWA adds new countermeasures to this list, they will be incorporated automatically into the criteria evaluation.

Congestion – The process for weighting criteria was collaborative and consensus building. The working group desired both the CMP corridors and a more specific measure of congestion on each facility.

Multimodal bike/pedestrian – a larger project that incorporates complete streets will score points in this category, giving it greater weight than a similar project that does not add bike/ped facilities. Generally, the group considered that most projects will either improve an area where there already are a lot of bicyclists and pedestrians (such as adding a bike lane where there are a number bicyclists), or will be in locations where there are not a lot of existing users (such as a regional trail), but there is the potential for there to be. The scoring methodology attempted to account for either scenario.

Facility Use – the working group considered incorporating bicyclists and pedestrians in this category, but ultimately preferred to place them into the multimodal bike/pedestrian criterion.

Environmental Justice – most of the projects in the TIP are safety improvements, condition improvements, signal improvements, or transit investments (system expansion type projects will

fall into a separate long-range plan evaluation). These projects are benign in the worst case, and generally are seen as making investments that improve conditions in EJ communities.

Green Design / Air Quality – bicycle and pedestrian projects will score points based on their potential to lower VMT.

Centers – breaking out the Centers by type wasn't considered by the group in this version. It could be revisited when the criteria are updated.

Economic competitiveness – The criteria aimed to use readily available and widely accepted data and data sources, and focus on the goals set in the Connections 2040 plan. Long-term goals are to better account for some of the issues you raise, particularly health. While Decision Lens does not calculate return on investment, it does analyze how much of our long-range plan goals are we buying with our limited transportation funds in its optimization step.

The working group aimed to create as simple of a project evaluation process as possible to start with. However, this is a process that can improve and become more complex over time. It will be revisited in the future, and we look forward to working collaboratively with our planning partners on refining it. Thanks again for your comment.