



DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



HIGHLIGHTS OF JULY 31, 2007 MEETING

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting began with Jerry Lutin, Chairman of the Regional Safety Task Force, welcoming everyone. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and mentioned the organization they represented.

2. Summary of April's Meeting

Jerry Lutin asked for a motion to approve the Highlights from the April 2007 Regional Safety Task Force meeting. The meeting highlights were approved.

3. Presentations

Roosevelt Boulevard Corridor Study – Pedestrian Initiatives

DVRPC staff member, David Anderson, Manager of Office of Corridor Planning gave a presentation on the Roosevelt Boulevard Corridor Study highlighting short term pedestrian initiatives along the corridor. Located in the NE section of the City of Philadelphia, Roosevelt Boulevard is a major north-south regional roadway and is considered one of the most dangerous highways in the region, especially involving pedestrians. The purpose of this study was to identify transportation issues and to develop safety improvements for the corridor. The 8 mile stretch of the corridor under study has recorded over 2,000 crashes between 2001 - 2005, which has resulted in 120 pedestrian injuries and 13 pedestrian fatalities. Demographics along this corridor include a young population, approximately 44% between the ages 5 to 17 years old. Approximately 22% of residents in this area walk to work within a half mile of Roosevelt Boulevard. The rate of car ownership is relatively low in this section of the city. Nearly 80% of citizens rely on public transportation. One of the main initiatives of this study was to address crosswalk safety. Given the high pedestrian volumes, numerous schools, 11 mid-block crossings and 40 traffic signals located throughout the corridor, a crosswalk analysis was conducted to inventory pedestrian movement within the corridor. This assessment recorded a peak hour pedestrian utilization of intersections and mid-block crosswalks during weekdays and Saturdays. Mr. Anderson went on to describe in detail more of the issues associated with the typical crosswalks located at intersections, including the long profile of 12 lanes, 3 medians, high vehicular speeds, and high density land use. Some of the problems identified at mid-block crosswalks were the inadequate signage, poor visibility, and proximity to crossovers. An action plan was developed to establish priorities for short-term and long-term mitigation

measures as well as establishing an implementation plan for the strategies that were identified. The improvements developed fell within the following 3 categories: engineering, enforcement and education. Some of the engineering strategies for improving pedestrian safety include signal coordination, installing pedestrian countdown signals at all of the crosswalks, increasing pedestrian crossing time, signaling all of the mid-block crosswalks with pedestrian activation, and adding speed display and crosswalk advisory signs. Some of the recommendations from the analysis included closing off some of the crossovers, consolidation of midblock crosswalks especially in close proximity of crossovers and relocating some crosswalks which would require moving bus stop locations as well. Traffic enforcement is a key element in providing for the safety of pedestrians along the corridor. Some of the tools identified in the study are already in operation such as red light cameras. Earlier this year Roosevelt Boulevard was designated as a safe corridor where fines are doubled for persons caught speeding within the corridor. Police and emergency pull-off areas were another enforcement strategy which will be instituted.

Stacy Bartels, Manager of Commuter Services briefed the Task Force on the educational campaign for the Corridor. PennDOT currently has a RFP for a broad and extensive public awareness campaign of the Boulevard. While the RFP is being processed, DVRPC through its Safety Program jump started the educational campaign. With the support from the education subcommittee of the Roosevelt Boulevard Safety Task Force, a basic campaign was developed to market the safety initiatives on the corridor. The tools developed from this campaign include posters, flyers, bumper stickers and SEPTA interior bus cards. These tools have been distributed to legislative offices, libraries, police offices, senior citizen centers, and schools located in the corridor. PennDOT will address the physical changes that will be made as part of the marketing campaign.

In discussion that followed, it was mentioned that this is a great example of collaboration within the Safety Task Force, where one group has an idea and another group is able to support the idea with funding for implementation. It was pointed out that red light running violations have dropped as a result of the red light cameras, which has resulted in a drop in the number of crashes. Approximately \$3 million of federal funding for 2 years has been allocated for safety improvements along Roosevelt Boulevard.

Brain Injury.....What You Need to Know

Wendy Berk, from the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, delivered a presentation on "Brain Injury.....What You Need to Know". The Brain Injury Association of New Jersey is a non profit organization funded through the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic and Safety, and provides education, outreach, and support services for the state and persons dealing with brain injuries. There are two types of brain injuries, traumatic brain injury (TBI), which is an insult to the brain, caused by an external physical force and acquired brain injury (ABI) which is caused by medical conditions such as stroke, tumors, and infections. For this presentation the focus was on TBI. An estimated 5.3 million Americans currently live with disabilities resulting from brain injuries which is the

leading cause of death and disability among children and young adults and 4th leading cause of death overall. More than 1 million children sustain a brain injury each year, which results in an estimated 3,000 deaths among children under the age of 14. Ms. Berk went on to explain the different causes of brain injuries, in which half are caused by vehicle crashes. TBI is more common compared to other injuries and disabilities such as spinal cord, epilepsy, and Alzheimer's diseases, and is largely unrecognized as a major public health problem. More people are surviving brain injuries than ever before due to better emergency response systems, improved medical technology and safer vehicle features (i.e. car seatbelts, airbags, child safety seats). There are three affects of brain injury: (1.) cognitive – impairment of the thought process, speech, (2.) physical – loss of the use of limbs, seizures, tremors, and (3.) emotional – stress, depression, or anxiety. Anyone can get a brain injury, yet more people are at risk including older adults over the age of 75 with a higher risk from falling, or individuals who have already sustained one or more concussions. In South Jersey, Cumberland County has one of the highest rates of brain injury in the state, which could be a result of the low seatbelt usage. The incidence of TBI in New Jersey is higher in the urban areas. For example the rate of TBI cases in the City of Camden is 303.7 per 100,000 which is more than double the New Jersey State average of 144.2. Ms. Berk explained that several of the motor vehicle related causes of TBI are preventable. Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of brain injuries among children ages 4 to 14 because children are improperly restrained. Seatbelts are 57% effective in preventing traumatic and fatal brain injuries. Pedestrian injuries remain one of the leading causes of unintentional injury-related deaths among children. Seniors represent an increasingly high percentage of pedestrian injuries in New Jersey and nationally. Statistics show that between 70 to 80% of all fatal bicycle crashes involve brain injuries, and wearing a helmet can prevent 85% of bicyclist head injuries. The state of New Jersey has enacted laws to help prevent some of these injuries. The existing helmet law was expanded to include all children under the age of 17 and requiring that helmets be worn when riding a bicycle, scooter, skateboard or in-line skates. Another New Jersey law requires that children up to age 8 or 80 pounds must ride in a safety booster seat in the rear seat of the vehicle. Although there are monetary costs associated with brain injuries, the real costs involve the loss of choice, personal freedom, dreams and goals due to physical impairments. Applying the 4 E's of safety conscious planning can help in the prevention of these types of injuries such as (1.) engineering to improve the roads for the safety of all users, (2.) education in conducting community outreach programs to educate the public on how to prevent accidents, (3.) enforcement in coordinating with police on activities such as the helmet program and Click It Or Ticket (4.) emergency services in educating EMS workers on how to properly care for persons with brain injuries. Ms. Berk mentioned a fifth "E" which is empowerment, encouraging all of us to do what we need to do to be safe and make good decisions because we often do not get second chances.

Safe Passages on Our Roadways

Sgt. Gregory Williams from the New Jersey State Police gave a presentation on Safe Passage on Our Roadways - *"Combating Fatalities through a Statewide Crash Awareness and Reduction Effort"*. In 2006, there were 770 fatalities on New Jersey's

highways. The Safe Passage on Our Roadways Symposium consists of several multi-state traffic safety agencies that meet on a monthly basis to communicate and share resources to promote safety on New Jersey highways. The goal of the group is to reduce the number of fatalities on New Jersey's highways by 8% through education, engineering, and enforcement. The first meeting of the Symposium took place on December 12, 2006. Sgt. Williams showed a video depicting various images of the after effect of crashes caused on New Jersey's highways and provided highlights from the first meeting of the Symposium. New Jersey State Governor Corzine, New Jersey State Police Colonel Fuentes, and Chief Scagnelli of the New York City Police were some of the noted guest speakers at the first Symposium. Other activities that the Symposium have sponsored and participated include presentations on promoting safety on the *101 Critical Days of Summer*, conducting outreach efforts at the Motor Vehicle Commission to promote Safe Driving – A Parent's Guide to Teaching Teens and formulating partnerships with resource officers in the school system. The NJDOT Variable Messages Sign (VMS) program has been an effective tool in encouraging safe driver behavior through messages such as "Report Aggressive Driving: Dial #77" and "Slow Down Your Family Will Wait", "Don't Drink and Drive Come Home Alive", which will be on display starting in August. The New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJ HTS) is a lead partner in this initiative. *Highly Visible Enforcement Deters Impaired Driving* is another type of program where prevention is the key in advocating driver safety. The *Positive Think Program* is another safety initiative that awards helmets to citizens practicing bike safety habits. The Drivers Ed Forum is an educational endeavor involving driver education teachers, which focuses on teaching driver safety in conjunction with passing the driver's education exam. *Click It or Ticket* and the *Safety Cruiser* sponsored by the Division of Highway Traffic Safety were other programs that members of the Symposium participated in.

Planning for Safe Routes to School 2007

John Madera, Senior Transportation Planner, DVRPC began the presentation by providing an overview of the Safe Routes to School initiative. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program under the SAFETEA-LU. Under this federal legislation, funding was set aside in the amount of \$612 million dollars to be allocated to the states for Fiscal years 2005 to 2009. Mr. Madera explained that the SRTS program is designed to enable and encourage children from grades K to 8 to walk and bike to school, encourages a healthy and active lifestyle, makes biking and walking safer, and ultimately reduces traffic, pollution and fuel consumption associated with children being driven to school. In 1970 nearly 65% of children walked or biked to school compared to less than 15% in 2000. The rate of childhood obesity has increased from less than 5% in 1970 to an estimated 15% in 2000. The intent of the SRTS program is to reverse these trends. Some of the common barriers to walking and bicycling as identified in a 2005 survey conducted by The Center for Disease Control (CDC) are the following: long distances (62%), traffic danger (30%), adverse weather (19%), and fear of crime and danger (12%). Pennsylvania has been a leader in SRTS. Pennsylvania created a program in 2004 which took money from the Transportation Enhancement (TE) program to fund projects to promote biking and walking to school. Combined with the state's Home Town Streets program there is a total of \$200 million (both state and federal

funds) allocated for SRTS and other TE programs. In New Jersey, \$15 million in federal funds has been set aside for SRTS. The New Jersey DOT recently completed the first round of project selection. Ashbrook Elementary School in Lumberton Township, Burlington County is one of three state demo projects selected to demonstrate the benefits of SRTS. Mr. Madera mentioned that the demand for SRTS programs outweighs the supply of funding available. In New Jersey, seven projects were awarded \$889,500 out of an application pool of 64 requesting \$17.2 million of SRTS funding. In Pennsylvania, \$4.6 million was awarded to 9 projects out of 89 TE, HTS, and SRTS applications.

The purpose of the DVRPC Safe Routes to School Planning project for FY 2007 is to improve the quality of the application process and to increase the program effectiveness. At this stage it is too early to judge the project effectiveness however the overall goal is to see how successful these SRTS projects are in shifting transportation modes in getting more children to walk and bike to school. This project is required to serve as a demonstration to be applied broadly by others in the region, to work with willing partners at the local level and to involve both states. In order to demonstrate the usefulness of the SRTS program, Road Safety Audit (RSA) principles were used, which allowed for stakeholder feedback in developing solutions. Through this process, audit tools such as checklists were improved to cater to the SRTS process. The process used in searching for potential partners in the SRTS program included reviewing the large number of rejected funding applicants, utilizing the PA Advocates for Nutrition Activity (PANA) organization as source to identify schools who participate in the SRTS sponsored "Walk to School Day" event, identifying PennDOT Hazardous Walking Routes, as stated in a law where PA will pay for a portion of school bus costs for children who live within a hazardous walking zone, and TMAs. Two sites were identified, Hancock Elementary School in Norristown, Montgomery County and Bass River Elementary School in New Gretna, Burlington County. Hancock Elementary School was selected based upon a \$10,000 grant awarded and the partnership through the DVRPC, SafeKids SE PA, Montgomery County Health Department, PennDOT. The school is located within an urban community and lies adjacent to US 202. Bass River Elementary School was recommended by the Cross County Connection TMA. Prior to being selected, the township was unsuccessful in the previous term of SRTS application process; however this project should assist the township in the next round of SRTS applications. The school is located in a rural village setting off of US 9 and CR 679 and is in the eastern section of Burlington County. Both sites are located near US highways which has been a major cause of concern by locals. The audit program for both locations included a pre-audit briefing where the audit team, comprising of DVRPC, DOTs, and other local officials was presented information on existing conditions, walking field view utilizing checklists for both pedestrians and field observations, compilations of field view findings and defining strategies for improvements. These strategies were later ranked and scored based upon cost, implementation, impact on traffic and adjacent property owners. Mr. Madera shared observations from the audit including issues with nearby parking blocking pedestrian movement, faded pavement markings, and conflict with vehicular traffic. In New Gretna, a malfunctioned traffic signal was fixed, and citations were given for parking violations. In Pennsylvania,

PennDOT has been active in coordinating implementation responsibilities with Norristown and have developed plans for Dekalb Street. Some of the lessons learned from this project are: crash data is not helpful in site selection, local interest is critical, schools must be proactive, the RSA process is a valuable tool, however one size can't fix all, some things can be fixed immediately, and team may shy away from making choices in prioritizing solutions.

In the discussion that followed, it was noted that the RSA process may be an important criteria in the selection of SRTS sites. Law enforcement is a vital component in the process, where recommendations are not only geared towards engineering, but also may include increased police presence to make the routes safer for children. Traffic calming solutions were recommended within the two audits performed. Some parents are fearful in letting their children walk to schools due to potential danger; however the number of reported child abduction has been in recent decline. Walking school buses (walking in numbers) may be a possible solution along with educating parents is key in calming fears. The SRTS is a continuous program on the DVRPC Work Program and updates on the FY08 round SRTS of projects will be mentioned at the next RSTF meeting.

4. Implementation of the Regional Safety Action Plan

Rosemarie Anderson, Manager of the new Office of Safety and Security Planning began by mentioning that the Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) was recently adopted by the DVRPC Board in May. There are plenty of copies available of Plan which is also accessible on the DVRPC website. Since the distribution of the Plan there has been positive feedback; especially from some of the elected officials, including U.S. Senator Robert Menedez (NJ), U.S. Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz (PA), PA State Senator Connie Williams and PA State Representative David Steil, who have been supportive of the Task Force efforts. For FY08, there are over \$700,000 worth of safety specific projects identified in the DVRPC Work Program. Some of the projects within the Work Program are continuous however there is some leeway in conducting additional safety programs as identified. Ms. Anderson commented that the RSAP is a tool, setting up a framework that will provide guidance and make it easier for practitioners to do their jobs in terms of safety. She then briefly went over the six areas of implementation for the Plan. **(1.) Training practitioners:** DVRPC has hosted many training courses, such as ITS and Safety, Road Safety Audit, and recently Older Driver Design Workshop which addresses some of the areas as identified in the Plan. Task Force members were asked for ideas on other training opportunities and to spread the word to engage interest from the local municipalities (engineers, elected officials). John Ward, Associate Director of Planning mentioned that we have opportunities to bring free courses into the area if we can identify programs through the locals help on what courses would be beneficial and publicize the courses as additional resources. Jessica Savidge, Gloucester County mentioned that Gloucester County recently received a grant and will be offering a free Road Safety Audit course. **(2.) Coordination:** Coordinating with other agencies is an important factor in learning and sharing information on what others are doing. DVRPC will continue to attend the county traffic safety meetings in New Jersey and hopefully in Pennsylvania. One example of coordination is efforts with the NJ Department of Motor

Vehicles along with the NJ Department of Education and NJDOT to develop a consistent statewide driver education curriculum program. These and other relationships with various agencies will foster opportunities to expand existing smaller programs, which could be applied on a regional level. **(3.) Outreach:** One area of outreach opportunity needed is establishing a relationship with members from the judiciary system to discuss issues such as plea bargaining for drunk driving and other related matters. We are also looking to continue to coordinate programs such as Survival 101 programs, Smarter Driver Safer Street which would be more accessible to more users, and spreading the word throughout the region. **(4.) Communication:** Communication is the exchange of information. This is done by developing mechanisms in which to get information exchanged between two or more parties such as between police officers and engineers or police officers of different jurisdictions. There are research tools being used in other areas, which can be considered for our region. **(5.) Policy:** Many of the initiatives are based on establishing policies that do not currently exist. However, through collaboration we can be successful in getting some policies in place to get some of the safety initiatives instituted. Recently, Representative, David Steil, sent the RSTF a letter expressing an interest in helping the Task Force. It was suggested that Representative Steil, who is a champion of safety could be a guest at a future RSTF meeting. We have also received interest from Senator Menedez's Office in working with the Task Force, which could be used for our advantage for the implementation of the legislative actions. A lot of the EMS strategies identified in the Plan are currently being done through the Incident Management Task Forces facilitated by DVRPC. **(6.) Funding:** The RSTF will be working closely with the DOTs, Department of Highway and Traffic Safety and FHWA to discuss in detail on how to gain a better understanding and make the process easier on obtaining funding. Identified within the Plan there are two funding opportunities available that the RSTF will take the lead on conducting; to identify non public sources of funding for safety programs and identify projects that will pay for themselves. Ms. Anderson mentioned that most of the work identified in the Action Plan and in the Implementation process will be done through the subcommittees. A new legislative policy subcommittee will be formed, where members from other sub committees are encouraged to join. Subcommittee meetings will be planned for the fall and will focus on implementing the Action Plan. The Break on Fatalities Day is October 10th. Ms. Anderson talked about the past campaign that was conducted with limited funds, and asked that the RSTF coordinate our efforts on developing a project for this year's campaign.

In a discussion after Ms. Anderson's presentation, it was noted that in terms of funding there may be opportunities to elevate and establish priorities of projects in the TIP, especially if the counties are proactive during the TIP process.

5. Open Forum

Next an open forum was held for members to share and exchange information. Jerry Lutin had announced the 3rd Annual Traffic Engineering and Safety Forum Awards Luncheon to be held on November 28, 2007. This awards program sponsored by the Transportation Safety Resource Center (TSRC) will honor individuals and or groups for outstanding efforts in helping to reduce vehicular crashes on New Jersey roadways in

the areas of engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services. Handouts on the announcement were made available after the meeting for Task Force members to pick up. For those who were interested, Ms. Sarah Weissmann, TSRC mentioned that she can forward the nominating forms electronically. All nominations are due into TSRC on September 26th. Individuals, groups, or self nominations will be considered in the nomination process.

Sgt. Robert Tyler, co-chair of the Task Force and member of the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) mentioned that the PSP Troop K recently hosted *Operation Night Hawk*, a week in which the state and local police units from across the region joined forces to focus on combating DUI and aggressive driving behavior. Sgt. Tyler explained that half of the Operation was an instruction period where representatives from the District Attorney's Office, MADD, and DUI Association shared with officers the different stages of DUI cases from detection to prosecution. The officers were also given techniques on how to follow up and properly handle victims of DUI fatalities and injuries. The last Operation held in this region occurred in 2003, where 53 DUI arrests were made in a 2 day period. Sgt. Tyler commented that after this two day enforcement initiative the officers made 73 DUI arrests, wrote 518 traffic citations, arrested 31 individuals for underage drinking, took into custody another 31 individuals for either misdemeanors and felonies, picked up 13 wanted persons, and an excess of 400 warnings. The goal was not about writing tickets but it was about bringing in impaired drivers.

John Boyle, Greater Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition informed the Task Force on the Quick Release Bill that is currently in the New Jersey State Senate. The bill proposes to eliminate the quick release wheels for children bicycles, and there is also an amendment that requires that the existing quick releases on adult bicycles be made illegal also. There is a secondary quick release that is not commercially wide-spread. The Bicycle Coalition and bicycle retailers in New Jersey are not in favor of the bill because it is a consumer product issue that will impact bicycle sales. This may be an opportunity to address real bicycle related issues such as the 500,000 annual bicycle injuries in this country versus focusing on the estimated 100 from quick release, which is likely caused by consumer or retailer error, not the proper manufacturing of the bikes. This issue has stirred up the bicycle community in New Jersey which could be beneficial in uniting the bicycle community to work for better bicycling in NJ. Therefore this is something to watch this fall when the legislature comes back in session.

Mr. Matthew Anderson from the Chester County Planning Commission mentioned to the group that Chester County had an article on the adoption of the Regional Safety Action Plan in the County's newsletter. The County has also made available copies of an appendix that describes the steps that can be taken to improve safety, which can be utilized as a toolbox for municipalities identifying improvements that can be done locally, are low cost, and short term.

Attendees

Aiken, David	Senator Connie Williams' Office
Anderson, David	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Anderson, Matthew	Chester County Planning Commission
Anderson, Rosemarie	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Mark Armbruster	Delaware River Port Authority
Bartels, Stacy	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Becker, Michael	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Berk, Wendy	Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc.
Boyle, John	Greater Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition
Burke, Erin	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Cassell, Mark	TMA of Chester County
Castellano, Michael	Federal Highway Administration
Coscia, John Jr.	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Dula, Justin	Delaware County Planning Department
Ferraro, Donna	Street Smarts, Philadelphia Health Management Corporation
Fogel, David	SEPTA
Frenzel, Mark	New Jersey Transit Police
Fullerton, Dave	PATCO
Gerald, Michael	Mercer County Sherriff's Office
Hacker, Joseph	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Hoffman, William	Federal Highway Administration
Johns, Bob	Bucks County Community Traffic Safety
Johnson, Anthony	Street Smarts, Philadelphia Health Management Corporation
Johnson, Dave	Bucks County Planning Commission
Kozak, Diana	Camden County Highway Traffic Safety
Lawson, Matthew	Mercer County Planning Division
Loberto, John	Camden County Highway Traffic Safety
Lorentson, Theresa	Delaware County Highway Safety
Lucas, Jessica	Gloucester County Planning Department
Lutin, Jerry	New Jersey Transit
Madera, John	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Merlin, Debbie	City of Philadelphia Commission on Aging
Moore, Regina	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Moran, Brooke	Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
Murphy, Kevin	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Patel, Ashwin	PennDOT
Quick, Susan	Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc.
Ragozine, William	Cross County Connection TMA
Reeve, Raymond	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
Rossi, Catherine	AAA Mid-Atlantic
Schmidt, Mark	Upper Makefield Township Police Department
Schultz, Frank	Senator Robert Menendez Office
Spino, Sam	Camden County Highway Traffic Safety
Tindall, Al	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
Thomas, Carol	Burlington County Engineer's Office

Tyler, Robert Sgt.	Pennsylvania State Police
Ward, John	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Washington, Mark	Philadelphia Streets Department
Waters, John	Upper Merion Township
Weiner, Bonnie	MADD Southeast PA
Weissman, Sarah	Transportation Safety Research Center
Williams, Gregory Sgt.	New Jersey State Police
Ziemer, Karl	Delaware River Port Authority