

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

January 28, 2016

Agenda Item:

2a. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action

PA15-68: I-95, Columbia Avenue to Ann Street (GR1), (MPMS #79686), City of Philadelphia

From: Leonard Fritz

County: Gloucester

Zip Code: 08094

Date Received: January 19, 2016

Comment/Question: I am pleased to see the funding being directed to this project to assist in its completion. Anytime congestion on I-95 and its accesses can be upgraded it should be done expeditiously.

Response: Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager and submitted to the DVRPC Board.

2b. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action

NJ16-003: CR 583, US 206 (Princeton Ave) and CR 645 (Brunswick Circle Extension) Roundabout, (DB# 04314), Mercer County

From: Leonard Fritz

County: Gloucester

Zip Code: 08094

Date Received: January 19, 2016

Comment/Question: This is a good project that helps improve safety and provides crossings for other modes of transportation. Only question I have is this, for the pedestrians, bicyclists, etc. will there be signals (flashers) installed or will crossings be timed and included in the traffic signalization?

Response: Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager and submitted to the DVRPC Board. Modern roundabouts are often installed to eliminate traffic signals. At this location, several traffic operations currently are uncontrolled and no pedestrian crossings exist. Modern roundabouts generally have neither signals nor pedestrian warning flashers, yet they are often safer for pedestrians than signalized intersections because traffic must slow considerably to enter and pedestrians gain marked crossings and refuge islands. Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist safety and mobility are a significant benefit of this project.

2c. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action

PA15-70: Penn's Landing Project Development (Study) (MPMS #106264), City of Philadelphia

From: Leonard Fritz

County: Gloucester

Zip Code: 08094

Date Received: January 19, 2016

Comment/Question: Have there not been enough studies and analysis already performed for this idea? If anything, they should be combined and implemented rather than more paper shuffling.

Response: Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager and submitted to the DVRPC Board. Existing analyses and studies will be coordinated and inform this proposed study. The purpose of this study is to drill down further to determine in detail how structures and the configurations of proposed elements of the master plan could be realized and made into engineering projects.

From: Dr. James E. Moylan, Pennsport Civic Association; Mark Kapczynski, Whitman Council; Daniel J. Gallagher, International Longshoreman's Union – Local 1242

County: Philadelphia

Zip Code: 19148

Date Received: January 27, 2016

Comment/Question: South Philadelphia Community Leadership Comments

A Plan Philly article in 2008 indicated the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's timeframe for rebuilding the northern portion of the state highway would run from 2008 to 2016.

The article says from 2020 to 2028, the section of the highway south of Christian Street is scheduled for reconstruction and the central section is due for its rejuvenation in 2032 to 2040. Has there been a change in the priorities of the state as to which sections of I-95 will be rebuilt first: Given that \$10 Million Dollars is being dedicated to the study of rebuilding a half mile of highway in the central section, one could be excused for wondering why only \$4 million is being expended for the study of the remaining 6 miles.

Rebuilding the Caps over I-95 are legitimate transportation expenditures. One hopes, however, there are compliances and constraints preventing expenditures of transportation dollars on what will be the park portion of this plan. If so, will transportation planning dollars also be dedicated to creating similar greenspaces and better waterfront access in the neighborhoods South of Washington Avenue? It has been said the most disruptive highways are those which form a boundary between urban neighborhoods. The psychological and actual barrier caused by the highway, as well as the negative impact of the highway itself, are far more severe and extended in the South Philadelphia stretch of highway than in the central district.

From a South Philadelphia perspective, far from what has been asserted by some, a new \$250 Million park over the highway, does not a thing, to reconnect our neighborhoods to the waterfront, or to alleviate the pollution, noise, trash, congestion and crime the highways bestows on our neighborhoods daily now, and more so once the disruptions of reconstruction commence.

It appears the preponderance of proposed measures mitigating the impact of the highway is centered in just 1/40 of the area to be reconstructed (\$10 Million). The cap project promises reconnection of center city to the waterfront, but the area selected is already one of the better served areas, with much better access to green space and the waterfront than in 25 blocks of residences bordering the southern section of I-95 to be rebuilt.

The percentages of Green Space available to residents from Market Street to Washington Avenue are already impressive. Will the resources necessary to complete the cap expansion deplete resources for green space creation in the neighborhoods further south? Is the cost of the cap justifiable in the face of all the other infrastructure challenges the city and the state faces elsewhere? The \$250 Million is good for real estate development and real estate developers in the Penn's Landing area, but nowhere else. Looking at the rate of development already taking place both North and South of Penn's Landing without any park or cover, one can argue that development is very likely to continue and expand with the \$250 Million "dog park".

There is nothing in the studies description gives communities in the southern region South of Washington Avenue, hope that the deleterious impacts of the highway's reconstruction are going to be addressed, or for that matter, the impacts of the finished product.

Surveying the amount of space currently being deployed for reconstruction in the North I95, Southern communities shudder to think where and how the space needed for construction of the southern tiers will be acquired. What impacts of reconstruction should the adjacent community expect? Will there be eminent domain? Street closures? How much land adjacent and beneath I-95 will be required for reconstruction?

The Southern communities' foremost concern during the entire Penn Praxis process was the creation and preservation of Jobs.

From the standpoint of economic development and maintaining the good working order of the Philadelphia Metropolitan region, doesn't it makes sense to consider placing on and off ramps at Pattison Avenue? This would create direct accommodation of freight movement to and from South Port. It would qualify as legitimate contribution to congestion management by getting port bound trucks, off the highway sooner, especially once reconstruction begins.

Studies show that each container handled at the port generates \$1,000 into the local economy. Compared with the unverified \$1.7 Billion economic benefits claim being made for the Penn's Landing Cover Park. Building ramps onto Pattison Avenue would be simpler, safer, and an affordable option, if a choice had to be made between the Cover Park, and augmenting port efficiencies.

Nando Micale in his evaluation said "The economic value of the waterfront is based on the connectivity from city to the river. " "There is value in the land now occupied by I-95," and the overarching reason to change the highway is "economic development."

These planning studies should undertake to access the new economic realities and value potentials present in the waterfront area east of I-95 and south of Washington Avenue. This applies not only to the 5 big box commerce centers now employing 1,000 wage earners. It also applies to the immense tracts of land still fallow between I-95 and the river. These include fringe industrial and transportation holdings that may very well succumb to development and other pressures as present trends continue.

One of the advantages of big box stores is they are as easy to knock down as they are to build, and when talking about so much land as is present in this area, who knows what the future might hold?

Knowing transportation and economic development dollars are limited; our South Philadelphia communities urge the City and the State not to put all their economic development eggs in one Penn's Landing basket.

Respectfully,
Dr. James E. Moylan, President
Pennsport Civic Association

Mark Kapczynski, President
Whitman Council

Daniel J. Gallagher, President
International Longshoreman's Union – Local 1242

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Response on 1/27/2016: Thank you for your comment, which was forwarded to the project manager and submitted to the DVRPC Board. A detailed response is pending.

Response on 2/22/2016: Thank you for your comment, submitted on 1/27/2016, which was forwarded to the project manager and submitted to the DVRPC Board in advance of its January 28, 2016 meeting.

While I-95 brings many impacts to the city, and especially its surrounding neighborhoods, it also brings many services and opportunities.

This particular action item addresses the study of possible improvements for the Penn's Landing Area over I-95, from approximately the I-676 interchange south to Washington Avenue. Such a study will not limit similar plans, studies, and analyses of the I-95 sections further south. Those initiatives will include community input from neighborhoods south of Washington Avenue.

PennDOT's study of the segment of I-95 South of Penn's Landing to Broad Street has already begun and will take approximately three years to complete.

Additionally, PennDOT, its partners, and local stakeholders are learning many lessons about community input, design, and environmental mitigation that will benefit other sections and surrounding neighborhoods. As PennDOT has been developing the sections of I-95, north of I-676, a number of features have been designed and constructed with the collaboration of community groups in the River Wards neighborhoods from Center City to Port Richmond. These include landscaping, lighting, surface street geometry and bridge structure configurations. PennDOT will use the same approach to design and outreach to near neighbors and stakeholders as the plan for I-95 is developed from Center City to South Philadelphia.

Again, DVRPC thanks you for participating in the public planning process and appreciate your concerns about local impact, continued economic development, and the need for community greenspace in all neighborhoods along I-95.