

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
RELATED TO DVRPC BOARD ACTION ITEMS

July 27, 2017

Agenda Item:

2b. American Street Streetscape (TIGER), (MPMS #70243), City of Philadelphia

From: The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

County: Philadelphia

Zip Code: 19102

Date Received: 07/26/2017

Comment/Question: The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia supports TIP Action PA17-49.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Your original comment was forwarded to the DVRPC Board and the Capital Programs managers at DVRPC..

Your support and continued involvement in the region's infrastructure is appreciated.

3. DVRPC Regional Trails Program New Jersey Grant Awards

From: The Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

County: Philadelphia

Zip Code: 19106

Date Received: 07/25/2017

Comment/Question: Dear DVRPC Board:

The signatory organizations are submitting this letter as a comment on the Regional Trails Program grant awards to three Circuit Trail segments in New Jersey on the July 27th Board Agenda. We proffer our support for the advancement of these three Circuit Trails segments. Thank you for your efforts to fund these projects.

We also conducted a brief analysis of the current pipeline of Circuit Trail segments in the four New Jersey counties, and we believe that there are additional next steps that should be taken to leverage DVRPC's efforts and the investment of the William

Penn Foundation. We will share this analysis and recommendations below. We have conducted an analysis of the current pipeline of Circuit Trail segments in the four New Jersey counties. The New Jersey Circuit Trails pipeline, as outlined in the attached spreadsheet, consists of 24 segments totaling nearly 50 miles that have yet to be built. Of those 24 segments:

- 19 segments are ready for construction within three years
- 14 segments have sufficient funding to be constructed
- 10 segments do not have sufficient funding to be constructed and the total funding gap is approximately \$16.775M. Of these 10 segments:

- + 6 segments have received \$748,420 in grants from the Regional Trails Program. Those 6 segments need approximately \$7.775M in order to move into construction.

- + 4 segments did not receive Regional Trails Program grants. Those five segments need \$9M in order to move into construction.

Since the program's inception, the four New Jersey counties have received over three million dollars in William Penn Foundation funding for 16 trail projects if the three projects are approved on July 27th.

The New Jersey pipeline projects must be constructed in order for the Circuit to reach 750 completed miles by 2040, a goal of DVRPC's 2040 Long Range Plan. Even before 2040, however, the Circuit Trails Coalition has set the interim goal of reaching 500 miles by 2025. All 24 of these projects should ideally be complete by 2025 in order for the 2040 goal to be achieved.

We have two recommendations for the Board's consideration to achieve both of these goals.

First, we think it is important that the four New Jersey counties strategically and intentionally leverage the William Penn Foundation's private philanthropic dollars by dedicating county, state, and federal dollars within the counties' control toward construction of those trail projects that were planned or designed by Regional Trails Program funding.

In order to make the case to the William Penn Foundation or other private philanthropies that they should continue to invest in the Circuit Trails development, it is critical to show that every dollar invested in Circuit Trails by private philanthropy has been or will be leveraged with public sector funds.

Second, we think it is important for the four New Jersey counties to strategically determine how it will advance these 10 projects that still need construction funding in order to help the region reach the 2040 goal of completing 750 miles.

We note that the four counties/municipalities did apply for and received \$5.8M from NJDOT's Regional TAP (Old TE) program in 2016 and just received \$2.08M in TAP funds in the past few months. We congratulate the four counties and DVRPC for securing these federal funds to advance seven Circuit Trail projects.

However, as noted above, there is still a gap of \$16.775M that needs to be filled in

order to advance 10 additional segments in order to complete the entire 50 miles of trails that are in this pipeline.

We strongly encourage the four New Jersey counties to consider programming eligible funds under its control—such as Surface Transportation Program or Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ)—in the upcoming FY2018 NJ TIP (and 2045 Long Range Plan update). In 2015, the Pennsylvania counties programmed \$5M of its CMAQ funds towards seven prioritized Circuit projects onto a single line item of its FY2015-2018 TIP. We think that the four New Jersey counties should take similar action.

In summary, we encourage the four counties to program a meaningful level of funds that will significantly advance construction of the 10 New Jersey Circuit Trails segments in pipeline the Draft 2018 New Jersey TIP.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Clark Stuart & John Boyle, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Olivia Glenn, New Jersey Conservation Foundation
Dana Dobson, Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Elizabeth Sewell, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Attachment: New Jersey Circuit Pipeline

Response: Thank you for your comment. Your original comment was forwarded to the DVRPC Board and the Capital Programs managers at DVRPC.

DVRPC seeks to provide mobility choices by fostering the development of a robust multi-modal transportation network. The Circuit Trails are an essential element of this transportation network. As a result of the William Penn Foundation-supported Regional Trails Program, DVRPC has granted over \$14 million to Circuit Trails planning, design, and construction projects throughout the region. This investment has been matched with at least \$34 million in direct funding.

More funding is needed to complete the network and DVRPC and its planning partners actively seek opportunities to provide funding for the Circuit Trails. For instance, DVRPC expects to open a NJ CMAQ Competitive Round in November/December of this year (roughly \$6 million) and the Draft FY 2018 TIP for NJ will indicate a set-aside of \$1 million in that program to be used for construction of CMAQ eligible Circuit Trails. Project sponsors should be working now to get their projects "shovel ready" (complete PE and final design to federal standards) so that they are ready to apply for construction funds in that program. DVRPC will provide some advance notice soon in order to give sponsors a heads up that a Competitive Program is upcoming. DVRPC staff also work actively with our partners at the New Jersey Department of Transportation to allocate other available funding to Circuit Trails projects.

There continue to be extreme funding needs for repairing our region's infrastructure and it is a challenge to address everything.

Thanks again for your comment. Your support and continued involvement in the region's infrastructure is appreciated.