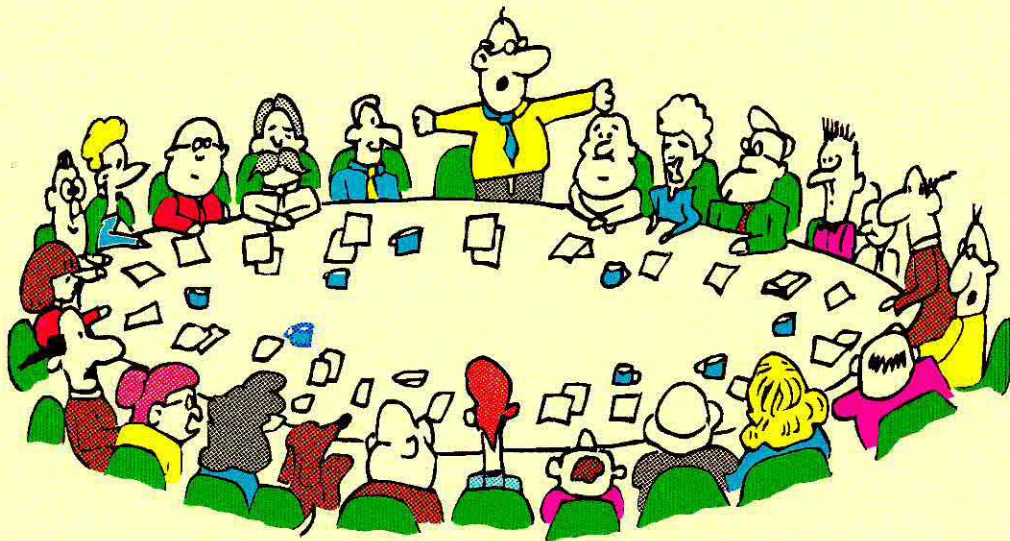


GLOUCESTER COUNTY

**EAST-WEST CORRIDOR
TRANSPORTATION EVALUATION**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OUTREACH INITIATIVE



Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

October 1996

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Prepared By:



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Prepared For:

New Jersey Department of Transportation

Gloucester County Planning Commission

October 1996

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Created in 1965, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is an interstate, intercounty and intercity agency which provides continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning for the orderly growth and development of the Delaware Valley region. The region includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties as well as the City of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties in New Jersey. The Commission is an advisory agency which divides its planning and service functions among the Office of the Executive Director, the Office of Public Affairs, and four line Divisions: Transportation Planning, Regional Planning, Regional Information Services Center and the Office of Administration and Finance. DVRPC's mission for the 1990s is to emphasize technical assistance and services and to conduct high priority studies for member state and local governments, while determining and meeting the needs of the private sector.



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DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Publication Abstract

TITLE	Date Published: October 1996
GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	
	Publication No. 96012

Geographic Area Covered:

Logan Township, Woolwich Township, East Greenwich Township, Borough of Swedesboro, South Harrison Township, Harrison Township, Mantua Township, Borough of Glassboro, Elk Township, Franklin Township, Monroe Township, Washington Township, Gloucester County.

Key Words:

public participation, public meetings, suggested improvement strategies, newsletters, questionnaires

ABSTRACT

Through this initiative, New Jersey DOT, Gloucester County and DVRPC formed a partnership to work with representatives of the Gloucester County Mayors Association in order to provide opportunities for the general public and municipal officials to identify traffic problems and suggest potential improvement strategies in the US 322 Corridor.

This report documents: 1) the public participation process utilized, 2) the improvement strategies suggested by the general public and municipal officials, 3) the level of support for each of those strategies and 4) identifies a set of actions which should be considered as the next steps toward defining the appropriate improvements for the corridor.

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Introduction

The highway network in Gloucester County, like in many of the other counties in the region, was developed in a radial orientation towards Camden and Philadelphia. These spoke-like highways offer many options for north-south travel through Gloucester County and played a large part in the development patterns of the county. The major deficiency of this network, however, has been the lack of adequate facilities to accommodate east-west travel across the county. Because of the County's projected high growth rates for population and employment, the county will see an increasing need to facilitate east-west travel. In the Summer of 1994, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) was asked by Gloucester County to review the east-west traffic patterns in the corridor between the Commodore Barry Bridge and NJ 55 and identify a combination of state, county or municipal roads, which with moderate improvements, could function as an integrated network to increase east-west mobility. During that effort, it became apparent that input from the public would be beneficial in understanding the problems and developing potential solutions.

This realization stemmed from the community reaction to proposals by the New Jersey Turnpike Authority to construct a limited access facility across Gloucester County and prompted New Jersey DOT, the Gloucester County Freeholders and County Planning Department to request that DVRPC include a public outreach initiative in the ongoing East-West Corridor Study. Through this initiative, New Jersey DOT, the County and DVRPC formed a partnership to work with representatives of the Gloucester County Mayors Association in order to reach out to the general public and municipal officials to identify traffic problems generated by the continuing growth in the area as well as the recreational traffic which has traditionally used this corridor to reach the South Jersey Shore. Because of the sensitive nature of transportation improvement recommendations within the study area, it was imperative that the local communities were brought into the process and were able to contribute toward the solutions. Previous experience demonstrates how quickly the local citizens can be mobilized in response to transportation infrastructure proposals in this area. The development of a public participation process led to locally generated problem identification and suggested improvement strategies.

The purpose of this report is to document: 1) the public participation process utilized, 2) the improvement strategies suggested by the general public and municipal officials, 3) to indicate the level of support for each of those strategies and 4) to identify a set of actions which should be considered as the next steps toward defining the appropriate improvements for the corridor. This report is being prepared for New Jersey DOT and Gloucester County for their use when preparing capital improvement plans for this corridor.

Executive Summary - Recommended Actions

This section of the report will identify those actions needed to keep the momentum moving towards developing a capital improvement plan for this corridor. The public outreach effort was aimed at understanding the problems faced by the residents of this corridor and assessing the level of support for various suggested improvements. Local officials now have an opportunity to use this document as a vehicle to formulate an improvement plan for this corridor. It is important that any improvements identified have the support of the local municipalities. The actions listed below should be considered the next steps towards defining the specific improvement recommendations, conducting technical analyses where necessary and advancing the appropriate improvements to implementation. A specific long range plan of improvements will not be presented here.

In addition to the actions presented here, DVRPC is working with Gloucester County, as mentioned earlier, to develop a set of smaller scale improvements to the existing roadway network which will improve east-west mobility in the corridor between the Commodore Barry Bridge and NJ 55. These improvements will be presented in a report titled Gloucester County East-West Corridor Traffic Study.

Through this public participation process as well as in response to previous plans for a New Jersey Turnpike Connector, the majority of citizens and elected officials made it clear that they did not want a new highway built on a new alignment across the county. Neither a limited access toll road nor a freeway would be embraced by the residents of this corridor. Therefore, this study does not recommend that a new east-west highway be constructed across Gloucester County.

Because of conflicting interests within the corridor and often within municipalities, no single strategy has risen to the forefront as the clear favorite through this public outreach process. Even the do-nothing strategy had some support. However, based on the responses to

the opinion survey of the suggested improvement strategies, the questionnaire and the testimony at the public meetings, it was possible to identify a level of support for each strategy. The following actions appear to be the most widely accepted and beneficial to the corridor.

A. Reconstruct Horizontal Curve on US 322 East of I-295 - The existing alignment of the roadway includes a sharp curve which has been the site of numerous accidents. The north side of the road is currently undeveloped and owners of the industrial park on the south side have agreed to work with NJ DOT to facilitate this improvement. NJ DOT should complete this improvement.

B. Pursue Operational and Safety Improvements Along US 322 - These are short term improvements which can provide operational and safety benefits as well as increase the efficiency of the existing infrastructure and produce some congestion relief along the corridor. Many of the public comments indicated a desire to fix-up the problems on the existing road system. Locally acceptable improvement recommendations should be developed jointly by the municipalities, the county and NJ DOT. These public comments are consistent with current federal guidelines which discourage the construction of major new highways or major widenings to solve traffic congestion problems. The emphasis now is to make the existing transportation system operate as efficiently as possible. This means using a mix of strategies such as traffic engineering and operational improvements where appropriate. A number of operational and/or safety issues were identified by the public or municipal officials at the public meetings and NJ DOT has agreed to address the following issues:

- overhead signing at US 130 and US 322
 - street lighting east of US 130 where US 322 narrows from four lanes to two lanes
 - signing at the Conrail Bridge east of US 130
 - liquor store access and median breaks east of I-295
 - warning signing in the vicinity of the curve east of I-295
 - remove 50 MPH speed sign in the eastbound direction between I-295 and the curve
 - signal operation at the Commodore 295 Industrial Park
-

- signal operation at US 322 and NJ 45 intersection
- "No Turn On Red" signing at US 322 and NJ 45 intersection
- pedestrian crosswalks on Main Street in Mullica Hill
- repositioning stop sign at Mill Road(US 322) and Church Road in Mullica Hill
- signal progression in Richwood
- speed limits along US 322
- installation of raised pavement markings
- passing zones
- US 322 and CR 538
 - relocate signal standard
 - repair shoulders
 - investigate channelization, restriping for left turn lanes
 - obtain count data
- US 322 and CR 551
 - review signal operation
 - investigate channelization, restriping for left turn lanes
 - obtain count data
- US 322 and NJ Turnpike Entrance
 - investigate channelization, restriping for westbound left turn lane
 - obtain count data

C. Construct Missing Movement Ramps at NJ 42 and I-295 - This improvement was recognized during the public participation process as having potential benefits for the US 322 corridor. New Jersey DOT is actively working on this project. In addition to other benefits, the construction of these ramps is expected to remove some traffic from the east-west corridor

D. Spread Traffic Among Existing Facilities While Considering Local Sensitivities - The existing roadway network provides options, both inside and outside the corridor, for east-west travel across the corridor. Available options could be identified at any given time through the

use of variable message signs. Each option has something to offer in terms of serving east-west travel but also has its own limitations. These limitations (ability to serve the need, safety, local opposition, etc) must be addressed before a facility is promoted as an alternative. If the missing ramps between I-295 and NJ 42 were constructed, this route would be an excellent option for east-west travel across the county for traffic to/from Atlantic County. However, its limitation is the ability to serve the needs of traffic to/from Cape May County. CR 538 has potential to be an option for east-west travel but also has some limitations. Residents and elected officials of South Harrison Township have expressed opposition to any measures which would increase east-west traffic on CR 538.

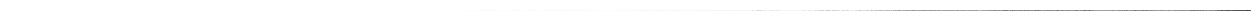
E. Use Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Technologies - These technologies increase the effectiveness of a transportation system without adding new capacity. ITS includes using changeable message signs, highway advisory radio and closed circuit TV among others to get real time traffic information to motorists so they can make the most informed choice about the best route to take. Strategically placed closed circuit TV cameras could monitor traffic flow on area highways; appropriate messages concerning alternate routes could be sent to changeable message signs positioned at the base of the Commodore Barry Bridge and real-time traffic information could be broadcast over highway advisory radio.

F. Add New Capacity Where Necessary - In some instances, traffic engineering improvements to the existing system may not be sufficient and it may be appropriate to add new capacity to US 322. Examples of new capacity include: major intersection widening, localized roadway widening, major roadway widening or bypasses. DVRPC's Fiscal Year 1997 - 2001 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides an opportunity to implement capacity improvements along US 322. The TIP includes a project to do the preliminary design for improvements on US 322 between US 130 to NJ 45. The limits of this project should be extended eastward to NJ 55. The specific improvements have not been identified yet and should be developed in conjunction with and supported by affected municipalities. This project, funded

by New Jersey DOT, is programmed for FY 97 and provides local municipalities with a chance to work together with NJ DOT towards implementing improvements along US 322.

G. Continue to Provide Opportunities for Public Input - The local residents and elected officials should be continuously involved in the improvement process. The Gloucester County Mayor's Association could play this important role by establishing and strengthening the Transportation Task Force to keep the public informed about the status of issues facing the east-west corridor. As NJ DOT and Gloucester County develop improvement recommendations, they should be presented to the public for their review. Adoption of resolutions of support by local officials is recommended to show NJ DOT and the County their acceptance of improvements.

H. Develop Coordinated Multi-Jurisdictional Circulation Plans (especially west of NJ 55) - Neighboring municipalities should work together to develop local circulation plans. This improves mobility for local residents and can help reduce congestion on major roads. Developments in one municipality can have spillover effects into other municipalities. A coordinated approach towards addressing local mobility can ease some of these effects and reduce congestion.



Data Collection

The effort initiated by Gloucester County and DVRPC in 1994 included a comprehensive data collection phase. Information was obtained on summer and non-summer traffic counts, physical description of the road network in the corridor, intersection controls, cultural features and peak period congestion locations. After the traffic counts had been completed, inquiries were made about the make-up of the traffic (in-state vs. out-of-state vehicles) and why they chose the route that they took. It was determined that a license plate survey and a travel time survey would be helpful in answering these questions and could prove useful in developing improvement plans.

License Plate Survey

The intent of this survey was to identify the mix of traffic travelling through the corridor; vehicles registered in New Jersey vs. vehicles registered in a state other than New Jersey. Although it is entirely possible that out-of-state vehicles have destinations within the corridor for personal, shopping or business trips, they are largely perceived by the community as outsiders passing through the corridor primarily to get to the shore. These out-of-state vehicles are generally seen as the cause of most of the traffic problems.

There is a distinct seasonal influence on the traffic volumes in this corridor and within the seasonal influence there is a directional element which results in heavy volumes eastbound on Friday evenings and westbound on Sunday evenings in the summer. This occurrence of heavy traffic figured significantly in selecting the times and locations for the survey. The traffic was sampled during a period when the traffic problems are most evident: eastbound traffic on a Friday evening in August. This survey is not a representative sample of all the traffic in the corridor but provides a limited sample of data during a worst case scenario. Five sites were

selected in the corridor. Four sites were along US 322 to observe the change in out-of-state vs in-state vehicles travelling through the corridor. The fifth site, on CR 538, recorded the mix of traffic on another east-west road in the study area. The location of these sites are displayed on Figure 1.

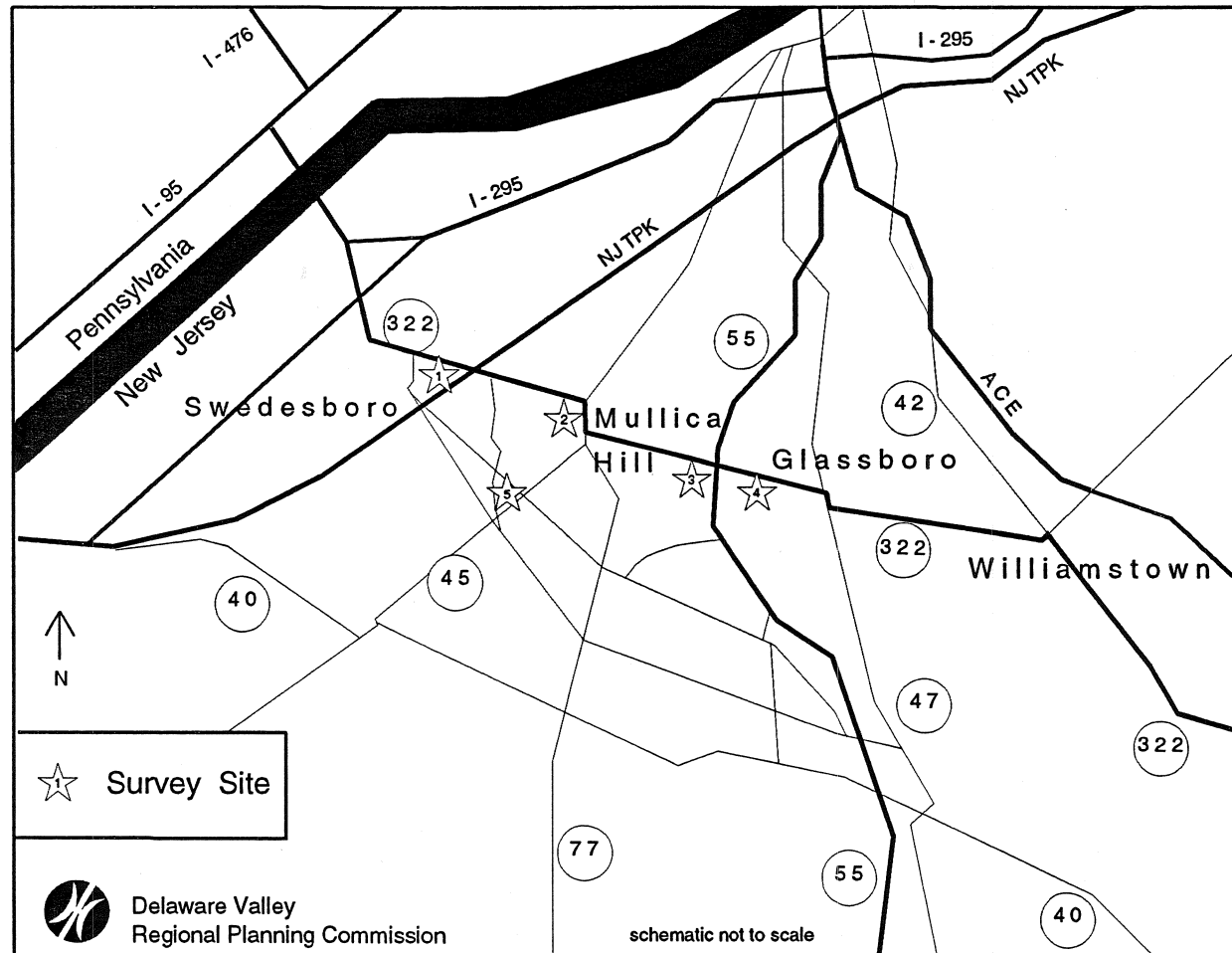
No.	LOCATION	No.		%		Total No.
		In-State	Out of State	In-State	Out of State	
1	US 322 west of CR 551	490	1,602	23.6%	76.4%	2,092
2	US 322/NJ 45 south of Mullica Hill Bridgeport Rd	1,678	1,658	50.3%	49.7%	3,336
3	US 322 west of CR 609	895	1,531	36.9%	63.1%	2,426
4	US 322 west of Bowe Blvd.	1,298	447	74.4%	25.6%	1,745
5	CR 538 west of NJ 45	363	673	35.0%	65.0%	1,036
	TOTAL	4,724	5,911	44.5%	55.5%	10,635

Survey stations were set up at the following locations: 1) on US 322 west of CR 551, 2) on US 322/NJ 45 (Main Street) south of the Mullica Hill Bridgeport Rd. and Bridgeton Pike intersection, 3) on US 322 west of CR 609, 4) on US 322 west of Bowe Blvd. and 5) on CR 538 west of NJ 45. Data was collected on every vehicle that passed the survey station in the eastbound direction between 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM on Friday, August 11, 1995.

Some interesting findings of this survey are presented below:

- During the survey period, the three sites on US 322 west of NJ 55 averaged about 1,600 out of state vehicles while the US 322 site east of NJ 55 recorded 447 out-of-state vehicles. It appears that approximately 70% of the out-of-state vehicles surveyed on the western side of the corridor were destined to NJ 55.

FIGURE 1
LICENSE PLATE SURVEY LOCATIONS



- CR 538 carries a significant number of out-of-state vehicles during the survey period; almost 700 out-of-state vehicles were observed. This is 40 percent of the out-of-state traffic on US 322 west of NJ 55.
- The mix of traffic on Main Street in Mullica Hill (EB US 322) during the survey period is equally split between in-state and out-of-state.

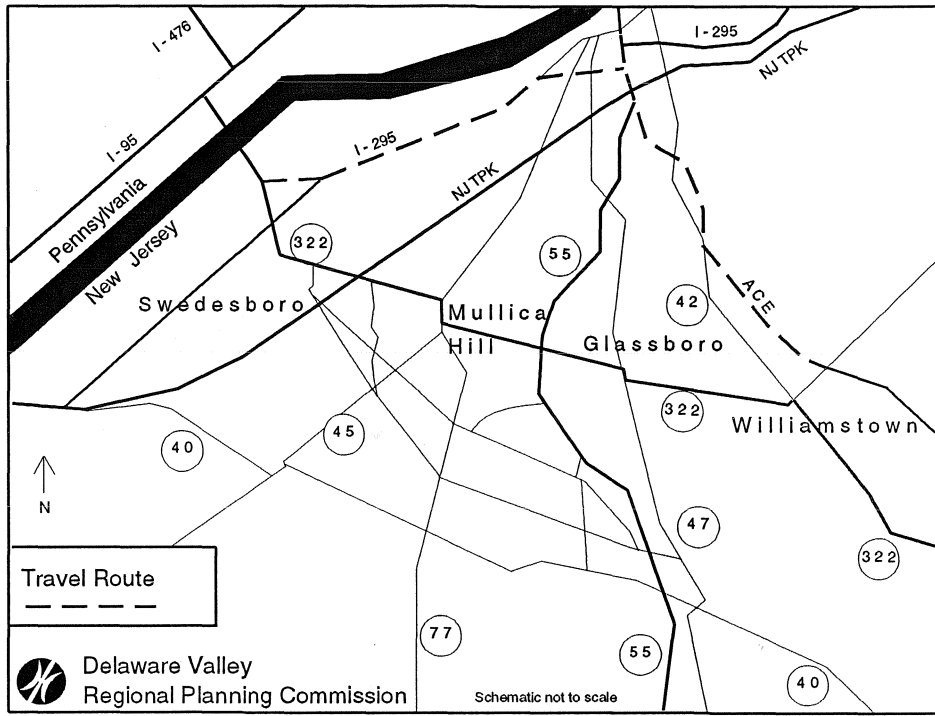
Travel Time Survey

In reviewing the road network in the corridor, it is apparent that there are other facilities besides US 322, both inside and outside the corridor, that could provide access to either NJ 55 or to the Atlantic City Expressway. In order for any of these facilities to be considered an alternative to US 322 some additional factors should be reviewed. These include: type of facility, traffic volumes, congestion, adjacent land uses and travel time. A travel time survey was conducted as part of this study to determine the time it takes to reach destinations across the county using various combinations of roads. Like the license plate survey, the survey was conducted during a period when the traffic problems were most evident; eastbound on a Friday evening in August. This day was assumed to exhibit typical traffic conditions for a summer Friday and the weekend weather forecasts were monitored to make sure a forecast for bad weather did not keep traffic volumes uncharacteristically low. Nine travel routes were selected, all of which started at the base of the Commodore Barry Bridge. Two routes (1 and 2) measured the time that it took to get to the Atlantic City Expressway at Interchange 38. The remaining seven routes (3 through 9) recorded the time that it took to reach the interchange between NJ 55 and US 40. Results of the travel time survey are displayed on Figures 2 through 10.

A floating car method was used during the travel runs. In this method, the recording vehicle was to travel at the prevailing speed of the road, passing approximately as many vehicles as passed it. Drivers of the test vehicles were instructed to make as many runs through the corridor on their assigned roads as possible during the 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM time period.

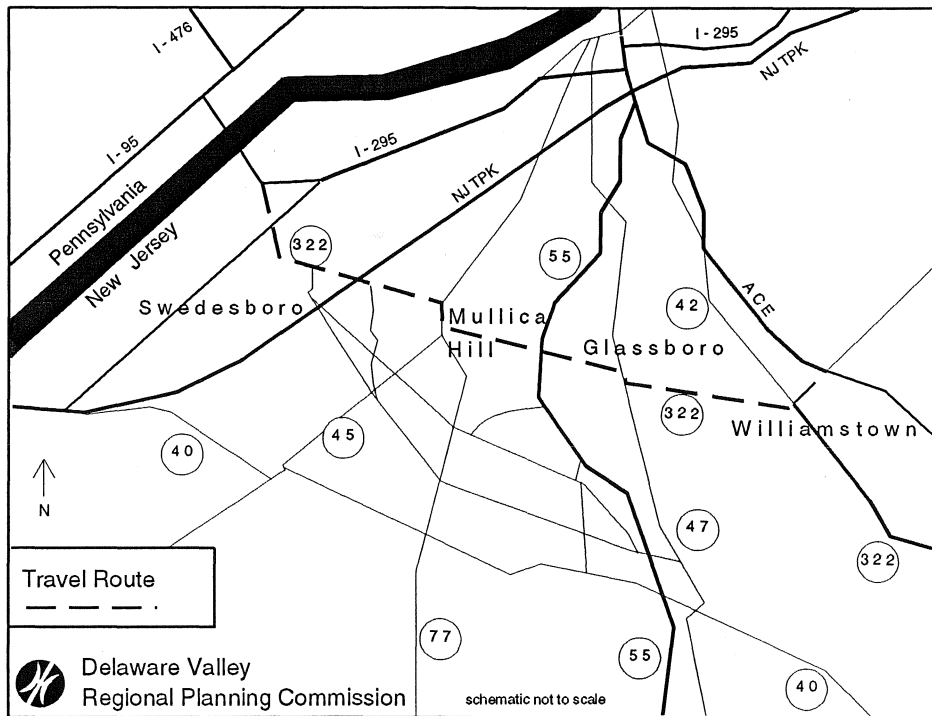
- The most interesting finding of this survey was that although travel route 1 takes vehicles out around the corridor and is over eight miles longer than travel route 2, it was recorded to be approximately six and a half minutes faster. Travel route 1 even includes a circuitous connection between I-295 northbound and NJ 42 southbound because direct ramps to accommodate this movement do not exist. The indirect connection took approximately 10 and a half minutes to complete. The construction of these missing movement ramps could increase the time savings of travel route 1 to about 17 minutes over travel route 2. This savings would certainly be beneficial to those vehicles travelling all the way across the county to the Atlantic City Expressway and coupled with appropriate signing would be the most efficient route to Atlantic City.
 - Travel route 3 surveyed travel times on a route using US 322 and NJ 55 to get from the Commodore Barry Bridge to the NJ 55 and US 40 interchange. Routes 4 through 9 used a combination of state, county and municipal roads through or around the study area but having the same endpoints as route 3 and serving as alternatives to US 322. Routes 4 through 8 were between three to five and a half minutes faster than route 3 (US 322 - NJ 55).
 - The longest route and longest travel time between the Commodore Barry Bridge and the NJ 55 and US 40 interchange was recorded on travel route 9 which uses all freeways (I-295, I-76, NJ 42 and NJ 55).
 - The quickest route across the county was on travel route 6 which uses CR 538 to a large extent.
-

FIGURE 2
TRAVEL ROUTE 1 TIME : 41:35



I-295
I-76
Market St
I-76
NJ 42
AC Expy

FIGURE 3
TRAVEL ROUTE 2 TIME : 48:08



US 322
CR 536 Sp

FIGURE 4
TRAVEL ROUTE 3 TIME 38:52

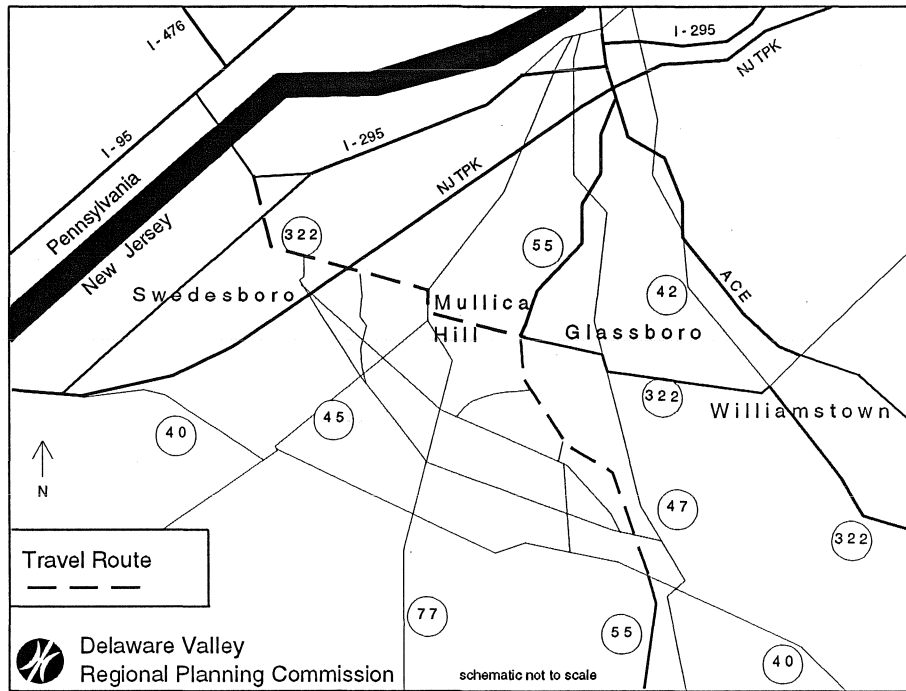


FIGURE 5
TRAVEL ROUTE 4 TIME 35:52

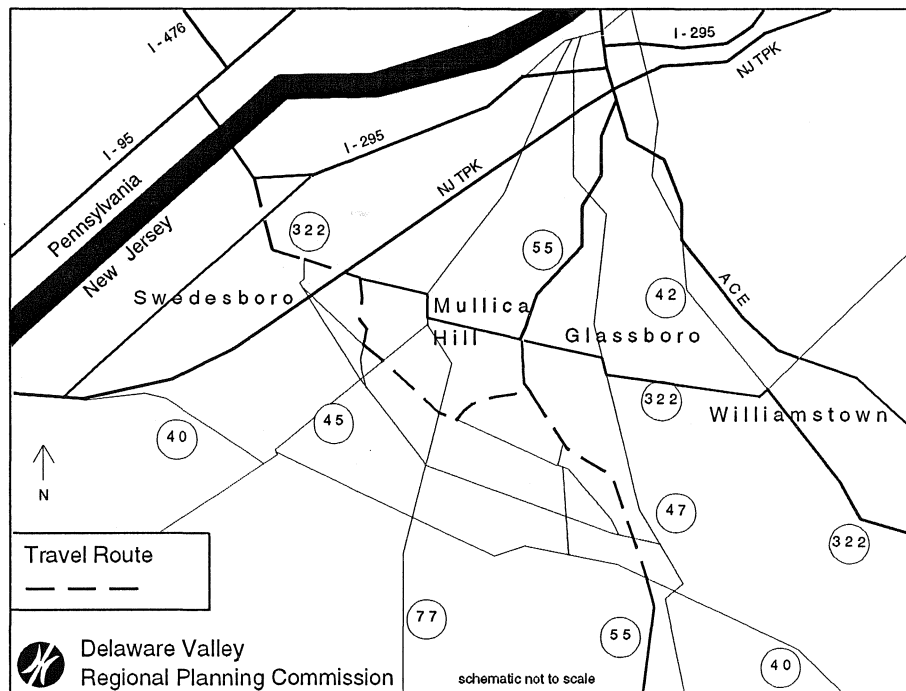
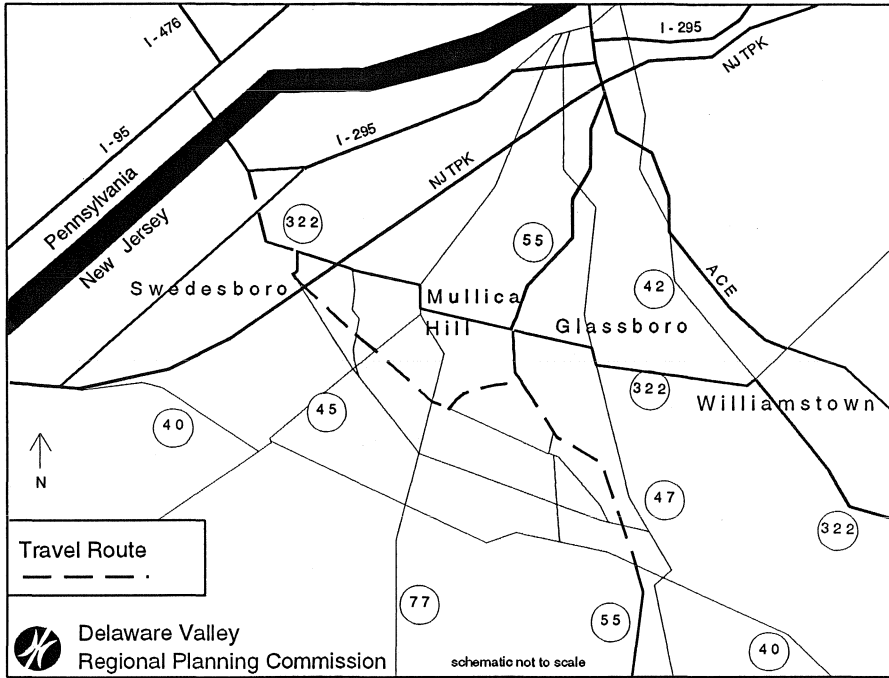
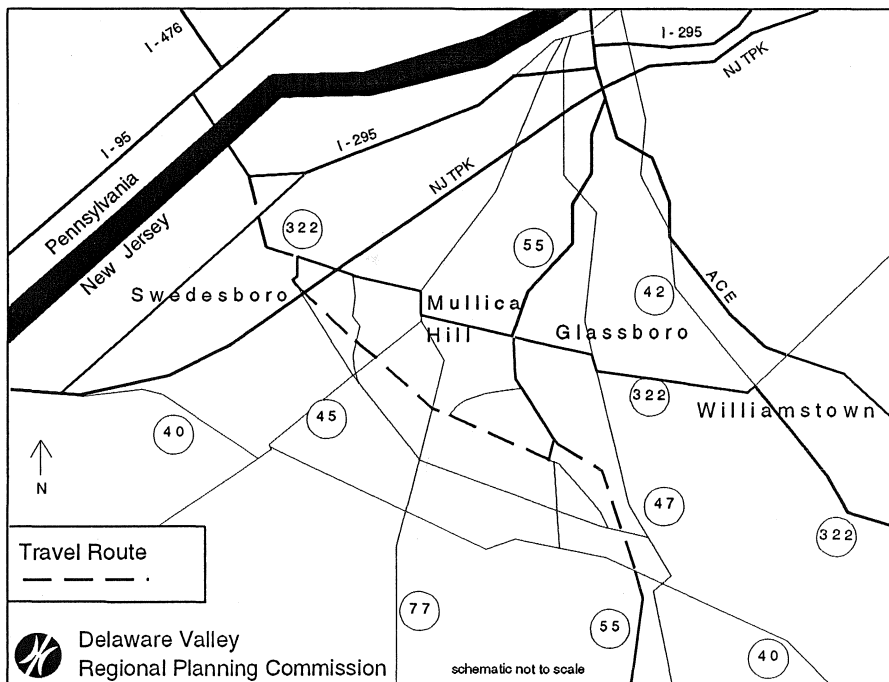


FIGURE 6
TRAVEL ROUTE 5 TIME 35:13



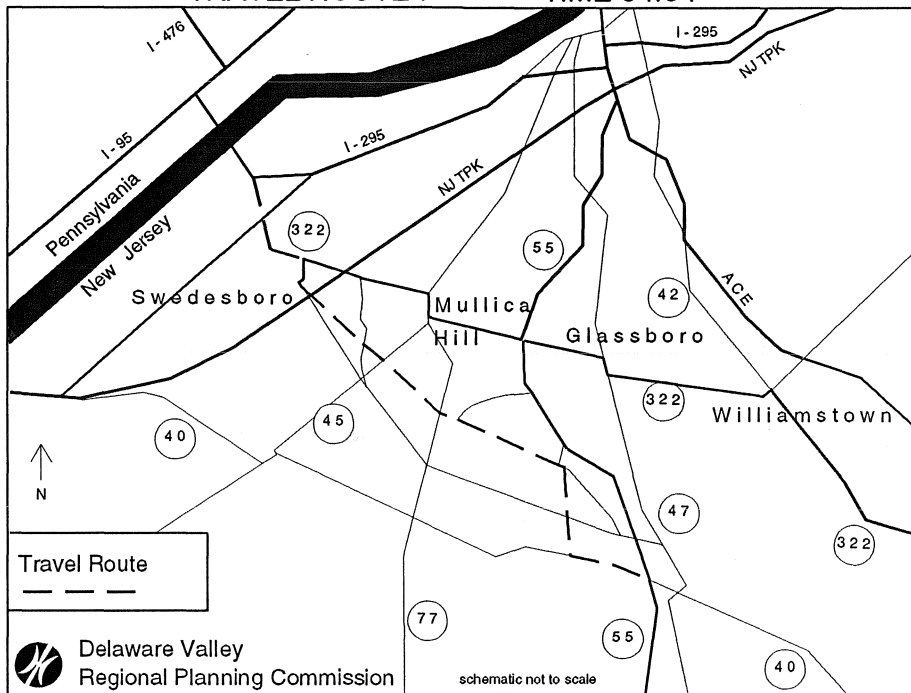
US 322
CR 538
CR 641
NJ 55

FIGURE 7
TRAVEL ROUTE 6 TIME 33:28



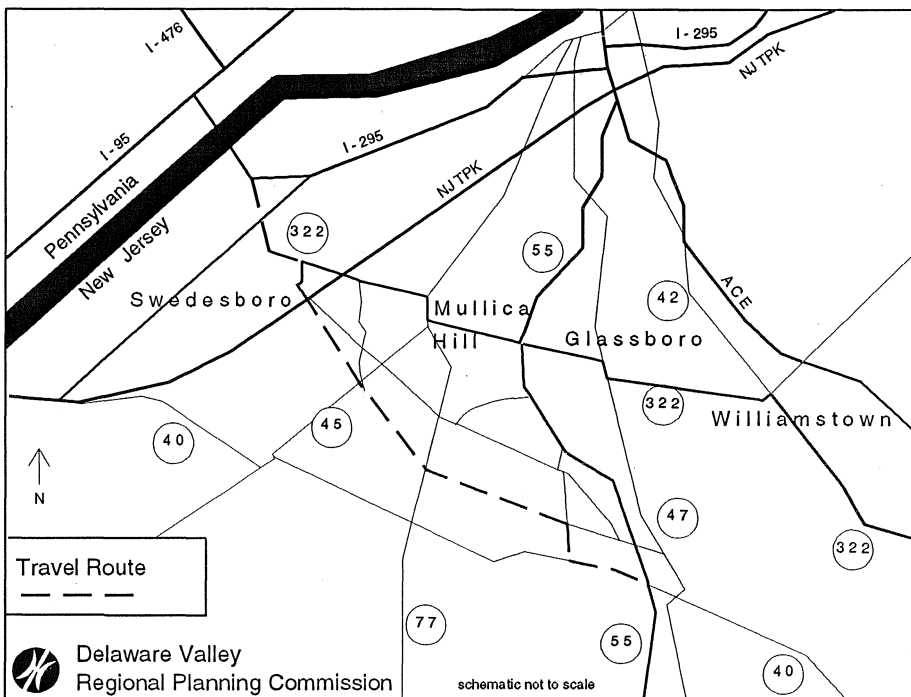
US 322
CR 538
CR 553
NJ 55

FIGURE 8
TRAVEL ROUTE 7 TIME 34:34

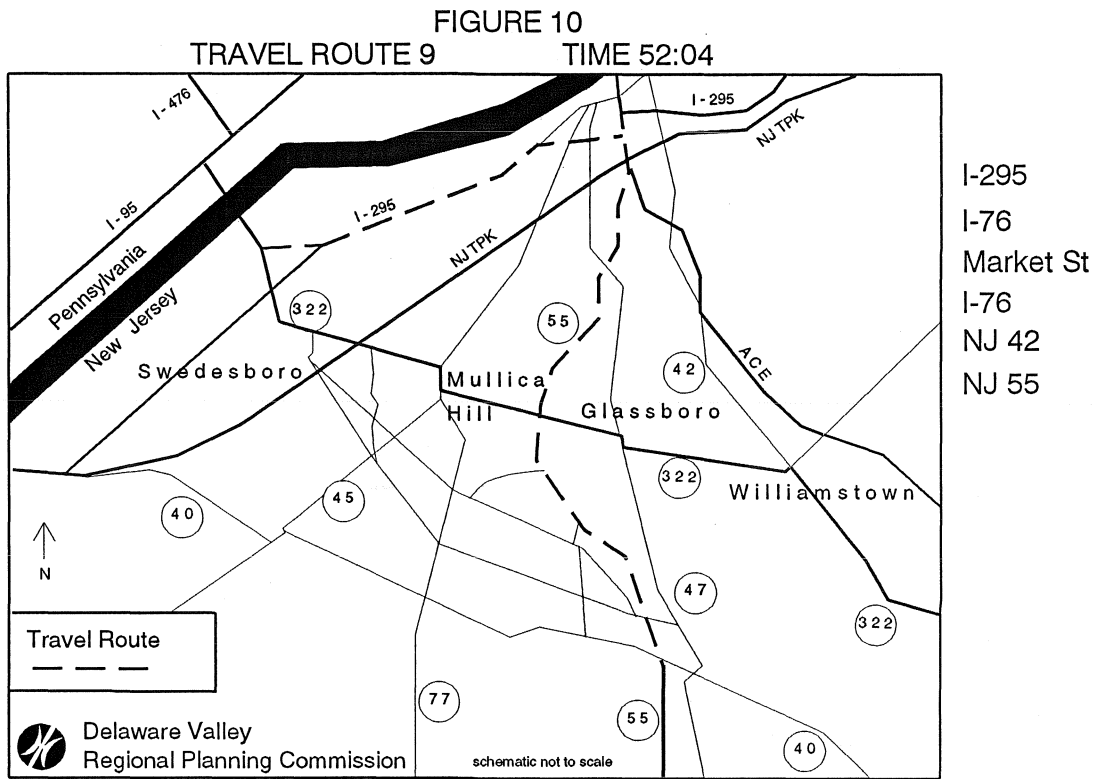


- US 322
- CR 538
- Willow Grove Rd
- NJ 40

FIGURE 9
TRAVEL ROUTE 8 TIME 36:06



- US 322
- CR 538
- CR 694
- CR 604
- Willow Grove Rd
- NJ 40



Public Participation Process

The primary intent of this effort was to create opportunities for local officials, community groups and the general public to provide input on the problems associated with east west travel across Gloucester County, to identify potential solutions and to gauge community acceptability on a set of alternatives. This section of the report will document those tools used to conduct the public participation process.

Transportation Task Force

One of the first steps in the public participation process was the establishment of a task force to assist and guide the study team (New Jersey DOT, Gloucester County and DVRPC) in its outreach activities. The task force was composed of members of the Gloucester County Mayors Association whose municipalities are most effected by this corridor and several County Freeholders. The role of the Mayor's Association was to provide guidance in the development and implementation of the public outreach activities as well as to review the recommendations which resulted from the process. Members of the Mayor's Association provided vital links to the community, set up and hosted public meetings, encouraged the public to provide input, and provided insight on getting the most effective input from the public as well as identifying traffic problems in the corridor and suggesting potential solutions.

Several mayors offered to hold special meetings in their municipalities to provide their residents with an opportunity to discuss their specific problems associated with east-west travel and to present potential solutions.

Municipal Meetings

Three municipalities elected to meet individually with the study team to discuss specific problems with east-west travel through their municipality. To publicize the meetings, press releases were prepared and distributed, announcements were sent to the local cable TV stations to post on their community bulletin boards and probably most effective, the mayors used word

of mouth within their communities. Meetings were held in Woolwich, South Harrison and Harrison Townships and were attended by approximately 30, 80 and 150 people respectively. These meetings proved to be very valuable and excellent input, both about their problems and about suggested improvements was provided. Summaries of each of these meetings can be found in Appendix A.

The most important thing that came out of these meetings was that a matrix of suggested improvement strategies was developed from the meetings. All the strategies listed in the matrix were suggested by the municipal officials or the public at the municipal meetings. This matrix can be found in Table 2.

Matrix of Suggested Improvement Strategies

Individual comments from the municipal meetings were synthesized into generalized strategies for improvements to the corridor. Fourteen individual strategies were identified and listed in the matrix. Several themes began to unfold as comments for or against specific improvements continued to be repeated. A land use theme stressed growth management, access and setback controls or provision of local internal circulation roads. Another theme suggested using existing facilities to spread the traffic out specifically on CR 538, US 40 or providing the missing movement ramps so that I-295 and NJ 42 could be used. Strategies calling for adding new capacity in the corridor, specifically widening US 322, constructing a bypass around Mullica Hill and building a new highway on new alignment represented another theme.

In addition to listing the strategy on the matrix, pro's and con's associated with each strategy's impact on the corridor were also identified. This matrix was later used at additional public meetings to assess the level of support for each of the strategies.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES *			
Strategy		Pro ¹	Con ²
A	Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no expenditure of public funds No disruption to existing land uses does not induce additional trips into the corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides no relief for the corridor local as well as thru trips will continue to be effected by the congestion congestion will worsen as local development increases
B	Institute growth management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prevents uncontrolled development controls growth of local traffic promotes good land use planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides minor congestion relief serves small portion of total trips full effects not realized until long term
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves mobility for local traffic reduces traffic on thru routes promotes good land use planning reduces congestion and improves safety at development access points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides minor congestion relief serves small portion of total trips creates new local circulation patterns no short term impact limited long term effect
D	Provide local transit opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves mobility for local trips serves some east-west trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> serves small portion of total trips doesn't address other deficiencies meets only partial needs of the corridor
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves east-west traffic flow reduces congestion on US 322 reduces east-west travel time low cost high potential for feasibility serves majority of east-west trips requires no right-of-way acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides short term relief increases traffic on other roads doesn't address other deficiencies
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves east-west traffic flow reduces congestion on US 322 reduces east-west travel time less expensive than new highway moderate potential for feasibility serves some east-west trips requires minimal right-of-way acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides short term relief increases traffic on other roads
G	Improve Route 538	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves east-west traffic flow reduces congestion on US 322 reduces east-west travel time moderate cost moderate potential for feasibility serves some east-west trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides short term relief increases traffic on Route 538
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improves east-west traffic flow redirects some traffic out of the corridor reduces east-west travel time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> potential feasibility problems high cost meets only partial needs of the corridor

GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES *			
Strategy		Pro ¹	Con ²
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●moderate cost ●moderate potential for feasibility ●serves majority of east-west trips ●requires minimal right-of-way acquisition ●provide safety benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides short term relief
J	Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion in Mullica Hill ●reduces east-west travel time ●serves majority of east-west trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●requires significant right-of-way acquisition ●high cost ●potential residential, farmland and business takings ●potential feasibility and environmental problems
K	Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●serves majority of east-west trips ●decreases traffic on other roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●requires significant right-of-way acquisition ●very high cost ●potential residential, farmland and business takings ●potential feasibility and environmental problems
L	Construct a new highway on a new alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●serves majority of east-west trips ●decreases traffic on other roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●requires significant right-of-way acquisition ●extremely high cost ●potential residential, farmland and business takings ●potential feasibility and environmental problems
M	Improve US 40		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●doesn't serve this corridor ●increases congestion in towns along US 40
N	Construct east-west rail line		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●does not serve the needs of the corridor

* These improvement strategies have been suggested by the public and/or municipal officials

1 Indicates a strategy's positive impact on the corridor

2 Indicates a strategy's negative impact on the corridor

Newsletter

In order to keep as many elected officials and citizens as possible informed about the status of this effort, a project newsletter was developed and distributed. Two issues of the newsletter were prepared, one distributed in March and the other distributed in June. The initial newsletter provided background information on the purpose of the study, a notice of public meetings to be held, identified the study area, the partners involved in this effort, and a summary of some of the data that had been previously collected. The second publication reported on the individual municipal meetings and the matrix of suggested improvement strategies, announced the dates for the three additional public meetings and provided information on some things municipalities could do to address traffic congestion. Copies of the project newsletters can be found in Appendix B.

Regional Public Meetings

Three public meetings were scheduled across the county in order to accommodate as many people as possible. The intent of these meetings was to bring together elected officials and residents from several municipalities to work together to discuss potential improvement strategies for the east-west corridor. The meetings were held at Clearview Regional High School in Harrison Township, Kingsway Regional High School in Woolwich Township and Washington Township High School in Washington Township. Attendance was approximately 45, 45 and 12 respectively. To publicize the meetings, press releases were prepared and distributed, announcements were sent to the local cable TV stations to post on their community bulletin boards and an announcement was put in the project newsletter which was distributed through a mailing list which contained local, county and state elected officials as well as interested citizens.

In addition to meeting with the public, we also met with the Transportation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey. This provided us with a business perspective on improvements for east-west travel through the corridor. The meeting was attended by 13 members of the committee.

The agenda for each meeting was identical and summaries of the meetings can be found in Appendix C. After presenting the background of the study and the findings of the previous data collection activities a summary of the municipal meetings was given. The matrix of suggested improvement strategies was reviewed and the audience was given a sheet to offer their opinions of each of the strategies. They were asked to mark down whether they agreed, disagreed or had no opinion about each of the strategies. They were also given the opportunity to write any specific comments regarding the strategies. This opinion survey was collected at the end of the meeting and the responses were tallied by DVRPC. The intent of this exercise was to determine the level of support for individual strategies.

A questionnaire was distributed in which the audience was asked to identify the problems with east-west travel and potential opportunities for improving these cross county movements. The questionnaire was designed in a manner that it could be filled out and handed in at the meeting or taken home if the respondent needed more time and mailed back to DVRPC. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

The meeting was then opened for public comment. Verbal comments from this portion of the meeting are documented in the meeting summaries found in Appendix C. Written comments and other materials submitted by elected officials or residents will be made available to New Jersey DOT as an addendum to this document. Comments written on the opinion survey have been documented in Appendix E.

Findings

This section of the report documents the findings of the outreach effort as they relate to the following three opportunities for input: 1) the opinion survey of the suggested improvement strategies, 2) the questionnaire and 3) testimony given at the public meetings.

Opinion Survey

As mentioned earlier, the audience at each public meeting was given a sheet of paper to offer their opinions of each of the strategies. They were asked to mark down whether they agreed, disagreed or had no opinion about each of the strategies. The results of this survey were tallied and are presented in Table 3. The results also include any sheets which were mailed back to DVRPC after the meetings. It is important to note that most people realized that no single strategy alone would solve the east-west traffic problems but that a coordinated package of improvements are needed.

A total of 85 responses were collected. Respondents identified nine municipalities as their place of residence. Although several responses did not indicate a place of residence, they were counted equally in the results. The surveys came from the following municipalities: Harrison (35%), Woolwich (21%), South Harrison (9%), Washington (8%), Mantua (4%), East Greenwich (4%), Swedesboro (2%), Logan (1%) and unidentified (14%).

The most one-sided response to any strategy was the overwhelming disagreement with a do nothing strategy (A). The rationale for this strategy was that any roadway improvements will induce additional traffic into the area and will bring more development as well. This view was not shared by many people as 87% of the respondents disagreed with this strategy.

The most popular strategy (I) suggested strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322. This strategy deals with improvements such as straightening the curve near I-295, adding turning lanes at intersections, increasing turning radii at intersections, signaling some unsignalized intersections, retiming some traffic signals, interconnecting

TABLE 3				
Results of Public Opinion Survey				
Strategy		Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
A	Do nothing	11%	87%	2%
B	Institute growth management strategies	78%	19%	3%
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	68%	18%	14%
D	Provide local transit opportunities	27%	39%	10%
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	76%	24%	0%
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	73%	25%	2%
G	Improve Route 538	73%	23%	4%
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	75%	17%	8%
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	83%	15%	2%
J	Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	52%	43%	5%
K	Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	44%	53%	3%
L	Construct a new highway on a new alignment	38%	56%	6%
M	Improve US 40	22%	62%	16%
N	Construct east-west rail line	13%	68%	19%
		Sample size - 85 responses		

signals, increasing no-passing zones or reducing speed limits. 83% of the respondents agreed with this strategy.

An issue of special note concerning an improvement addressed by Strategy I is the elimination of the sharp curve on US 322 east of I-295. This location was identified by residents or local officials at every meeting as a safety problem. All comments were in favor of improving this location by easing this curve.

Another operational improvement to note which was suggested and raised a lot of discussion from supporters and opponents was the installation of a "No Turn On Red" sign for the eastbound approach of Mullica Hill Bridgeport Road (US 322) at the intersection with Main Street (US 322/NJ 45) in Mullica Hill. Supporters of this sign claim it is necessary to create gaps in the traffic so pedestrians are able to cross Main Street in times of heavy traffic. Opponents believe it will increase the eastbound queue length on Mullica Hill Bridgeport Road which can exceed 30 vehicles during times of heavy traffic. A petition against a "No Turn On Red" sign was signed by 114 residents of Harrison Township and presented at a public meeting. This petition can be found in the addendum to this document.

Strategies E, F, G and H which deal with improvements to existing facilities and spreading the traffic onto those facilities had strong support with 73% to 76% of the respondents agreeing with this concept. Although the responses to this survey indicate strong support for spreading traffic among other facilities, the elected officials and residents of South Harrison Township made it very clear at their municipal meeting and at other meetings that they were opposed to any effort which would increase traffic on CR 538 or CR 694 through their township.

The South Harrison Township Committee directed the chief of police to gather accident data and operational information on CR 538 and CR 694 within the township's borders. This

information was forward to the members of the study team and is found in the addendum to this report.

The strategies that deal with adding new capacity in the corridor (J,K,L) got much more of a mixed response. Strategy J, which suggests to construct a bypass around Mullica Hill received only 52% agreement from the respondents. This improvement was presented in conceptual form only since there is no actual alignment drawn on paper. It is not possible at this time to attempt to identify an alignment for a bypass. Only 44% of the respondents agreed with the suggestion to Widen US 322 to four lanes in conjunction with a Mullica Hill Bypass. The support for the construction of a new highway on a new alignment across the county was even less enthusiastic with only 38% of the respondents agreeing to this strategy. At the South Harrison Township meeting, a gentleman presented a package of aerial photographs with his recommendation for an alignment of a new highway from I-295 to the Atlantic City Expressway through Gloucester, Salem and Atlantic Counties. This package is included in the addendum to this report.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was prepared by the study team and distributed to the attendees of each of the Regional Public Meetings. This was another tool for the study team to use to gather information on the public's feelings concerning opportunities for east-west travel across Gloucester County. The results that follow were tabulated from a total of 47 returned questionnaires. A copy of the questionnaire used can be found in Appendix D.

Question 1. This question asks how you would allocate funds to improve east-west travel if you were given a hypothetical \$100. This question was summarized in two ways; the percentage of respondents that said they would spend money for a given alternative and the average amount that they would spend.

- 61% for maintenance of existing roads and intersections
- 56% for minor improvements to existing roads and intersections
- 54% for widening existing roads and intersections
- 46% to build major new roads
- 02% for public transportation
- 02% other (enforcement of traffic laws)

- \$30.98 to build major new roads
- \$27.43 for widening existing roads and intersections
- \$21.22 for maintenance of existing roads and intersections
- \$19.51 for minor improvements to existing roads and intersections
- \$00.61 for public transportation
- \$00.25 other (enforcement of traffic laws)

Most respondents felt that it was important to spend some money on maintaining existing roads and intersections as well as providing minor improvements to them but the amount of money they were willing to spend was not commensurate with their support. On the other hand, less than half the respondents wanted to spend money to build major new roads but those that did were willing to assign a lot of money to that improvement.

Question 2. This question asks the respondent to list the most congested locations (up to 5) during the summer weekends and the most congested locations (up to 5) at times other than summer weekends. The top five responses for each are:

Summer WeekendsUS 322 in RichwoodUS 322 and NJ 45Main Street in Mullica HillUS 322 and CR 538US 322-Comm. Barry Bridge to Richwood**Other Times**US 322 in RichwoodUS 322 and NJ 45Main Street in Mullica HillMain St and Woodland Ave in Mullica HillI-76 from I-295 to Walt Whitman Bridge

All of the top five summer locations occur on US 322 as well as 4 of the top five non-summer locations.

Question 3. The respondent is asked to rank the issues which they feel create the worst problems for east-west travel across the county (1 = creates worst problems, 7 = creates least problems). The average ranking for each alternative is given. Thus, the lower the number, the more severe the impact on the corridor as perceived by the respondents.

- 4.0 New residential and retail developments in the corridor
- 3.8 Travelers unfamiliar with other east-west roads besides US 322
- 3.8 Truck traffic in the corridor
- 3.2 Lack of east-west roads
- 2.9 Out-of-state pass-through traffic
- 2.9 Insufficient capacity on US 322 in older towns (Mullica Hill, Richwood, Glassboro, Williamstown)

The results indicate that the new residential and retail developments occurring in the corridor are creating the worst problems for east-west travel in the corridor. This issue can best be addressed at the local level as municipalities have control over the zoning and subdivision regulations within their borders.

Question 4. The intent of this question is to determine the level of support for several improvement strategies. Respondents could check multiple options. The results indicate the percentage of the respondents who indicated support for a particular strategy.

- 66% Mullica Hill Bypass (recognizing that some homes or businesses would need to be taken for the new road)
- 55% Improve major intersections along US 322
- 51% Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42
- 49% Spread traffic among existing roads with signing, intersection improvements and upgrading selected county roads
- 45% Construct a new highway on new alignment
- 32% Widen US 322
- 28% Improve US 322 in older towns even if it required some residential or business takings
- 26% Mullica Hill Bypass (only if **no** homes or businesses would need to be taken for the new road)
- 04% Other enforcement, complete NJ 55 to the shore

The responses to this question are not consistent with the results of the public opinion survey. The public opinion survey indicates that 73% and 75% of the respondents respectively agree with spreading traffic among existing facilities and constructing the missing ramps between I-295 and NJ 42. Only half of the questionnaire respondents supported these strategies. Only one-quarter of the questionnaire respondents indicated support for a Mullica Hill Bypass if it had to avoid taking homes or businesses while two-thirds of the respondents supported a Mullica Hill Bypass even if it would require taking homes or business.

Question 5. This is an open ended question which asks the respondent for ideas on how the residents or local officials can help to reduce congestion. On most of the returned forms, this response was left blank but those that were answered are summarized below.

- outlaw coin drops in Gloucester County
 - enforce existing traffic laws
 - obtain state aid to support police in effected municipalities
 - no "Right Turn On Red" at US 322 eastbound approach to NJ 45
 - Harrison Twp. needs to address its own home building and planning practices
 - Make plans for future expansions
 - don't allow uncontrolled growth and development
 - Improve existing roads
 - tolls for "out-of-staters"
 - Widen US 322 intersections in Richwood and US 322 and Main Street
 - ban trucks
 - use local police departments to direct traffic on summer weekends
 - complain more
 - work with elected officials on alternatives
 - fight to improve dangerous intersections
 - eliminate speed traps on US 322
 - turn the lights and the stop signs to the side streets (NJ 45, NJ 77, CR 538, CR 551)
 - reduce speed limits on CR 538 and CR 694
 - change signal timing at US 322/CR 538 and US 322/CR 551 to add green arrow
 - get the state to build a 4 lane highway from Commodore Barry Bridge to Williamstown
 - build a bypass below Mullica Hill to NJ 55 at Ferrell interchange
 - spread out traffic over existing roads with signs
 - build new highway with tie-ins to NJ 42, I-295, NJ Turnpike and NJ 55
-

- construct a new highway for out-of-state summer shore traffic from I-295 to NJ 42 and/or NJ 55
- stop with housing developments
- construct new road like I-295 and do not worry about farmers because they are selling their land to developers anyway making congestion worse
- find the shortest route from the bridge to Atlantic City Expressway; there must be a little corridor left somewhere that hasn't been developed
- police should check speeders on US 322 in Richwood during the week

Question 6. The respondent is asked to rank the land use strategies which they feel would best shape the future of the corridor. (1 = best strategy, 5 = worst strategy). The average ranking for each strategy is given. Thus, the lower the number, the more favorable the strategy as perceived by the respondents.

2.4 Build new east-west roads

2.6 Preserve open space and farmland

3.1 Provide for more parks and recreational areas

3.1 Concentrate new development near existing infrastructure (roads, waterlines, sewer lines etc.)

3.7 Expand growth into undeveloped areas

As with question 4, the responses to this question are not consistent with the results of the public opinion survey. The public opinion survey indicates that only 38% of the respondents agree with the construction of a new highway whereas the questionnaire respondents chose building new east-west roads as the best strategy. The second favorite strategy, preserve open space and farmland, would appear to be in conflict with building new roads.

Question 7. This question asks for the respondent's municipality of residence. The responses are:

<u>42%</u> Harrison Township	<u>17%</u> Woolwich Township
<u>09%</u> South Harrison Township	<u>09%</u> Mantua Township
<u>04%</u> East Greenwich Township	<u>02%</u> Swedesboro Borough
<u>02%</u> Logan Township	<u>02%</u> Washington Township
<u>02%</u> Pilesgrove Township (Salem Co.)	<u>11%</u> unidentified

Question 8. This question provides respondents the opportunity to add any additional comments concerning east-west travel across Gloucester County. Most of the responses were not filled in but those that were answered are summarized below.

- the solution is a combination of a short term fix on existing roads then a major improvement on US 322 to NJ 55 with appropriate bypasses
 - widen and improve existing roads; do not add new roads
 - don't allow uncontrolled growth
 - there is no single solution to this problem, there must be a combination of some number of options
 - there are 35 dealers (antiques) that will be out of work if you destroy the charm of Mullica Hill by widening US 322
 - absolute vehicle gridlock especially mornings, late afternoon and weekends; we have to depend on drivers courtesy to leave our driveway
 - find a way to share construction burden with those using the shore; this may be a surtax on shore rentals, property taxes or tolls
 - alleviating bottlenecks and poor traffic patterns on US 322 would solve most of the problems; traffic lights, regulated entrances to US 322 and coordinated flow through all towns is essential
-

- need a road from Delaware Memorial Bridge to NJ 55 which should be finished to connect to shore points
- Put in a major new road ASAP; the stop gap measures that we are taking are making our towns like those along the White Horse Pike
- these are all trick questions so it will be easier for you to make your recommendations; your draft "cons" either provide little or no relief; you want the people to recommend an east-west road; sorry, it won't work
- do not turn US 322 into a 4 lane highway like White Horse Pike; spend the money now to construct a 295/55 type road that will have to be built within next 20 years
- if there were a significant toll from Friday through Sunday for users of US 322 (assess booth at beginning where out-of-state people come), I believe traffic would significantly decrease
- I live on 322 - my wife and I had an addition put on the back of house to get away from noise; please note that from here to post office there are 11 persons over 80 years of age
 - don't force us out
- it must be done!

Public Meeting Testimony

In general, the testimony at the public meetings indicated a feeling of frustration in the community. People said they are tired of meetings and studies and surveys, they want to see some action. They want the state and the county to get something done about the traffic problems. Several comments were made about the state at least getting a recommendation for US 322 on the table and letting the residents and local officials react to it. There is a fear that if something is not done soon in Gloucester County, the money will be spent in North Jersey. Some people feel that they are not getting their fair share of funding for highway improvements in South Jersey.

Several people raised the question about the possibility of receiving state funding for municipalities who bear the brunt of traffic problems. This money could be used by police departments to direct traffic at congested intersections on summer weekends and for enforcement of speeding and passing in no-passing areas. Several other comments suggested reducing the speed limits on US 332 and also on CR 538. The possibility of having out-of-state traffic pay a toll for using US 322 was raised at several different meetings.

One issue that was continuously raised and that potentially has a solution is the straightening of the curve on US 322 east of I-295. Residents and municipal officials stressed the accident history of this location and the number of fatalities. They questioned why something has not been done.

At a meeting of the Transportation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey, members indicated to the study team that they had presented testimony at a public hearing held by Senator Rand in May 1990 concerning an East-West Travel Corridor in Gloucester County. According to the testimony found in the addendum to this report, the Chamber's position was, and still is, that a widening of CR 538 to four lanes would be the most beneficial improvement in meeting the east-west travel needs of the business and residents of South Jersey.

Additional testimony from the public meetings can be found in the summaries of each meeting which are found in Appendix A and Appendix C.

Appendix A

Municipal Meeting Summaries

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

**Woolwich Township Meeting Summary
April 18, 1996**

The meeting was hosted by Mayor Joseph Garrozzo. Three additional members of the Township Committee were in attendance as were Freeholders Ray Zane, Steve Atkinson and Ginny Weber. Chuck Romick represented the County Planning Department and John Ward represented DVRPC. In addition to those named, approximately 25 residents attended.

Mayor Garrozzo thanked everyone for coming out, mentioned that this meeting was a result of a suggestion at the March 4th Transportation Task Force meeting to reach out individually to the municipalities and then introduced Chuck Romick.

Mr. Romick gave an overview of the study process, identified NJ DOT and DVRPC as partners in the process and gave a quick status of how the study has gotten to this point. He then introduced John Ward.

Mr. Ward began by presenting much of the data which has been collected as part of this study. This included: comparisons of traffic counts taken in the same locations during the non-summer and again during the summer season, cultural features in the study area which may be sensitive to highway improvements (churches, cemeteries, parks, schools, historic structures, etc.), travel time surveys and license plate surveys. Mr. Ward then asked the audience for their comments or concerns regarding traffic or travel problems.

The following is a list of issues and potential solutions which were expressed by the audience:

There are turning radii problems at the intersection of US 322 and Kings Highway

- add turning lanes (center left turn lanes and channelized right turn lanes with raised concrete islands) on all approaches at the intersection of US 322 and Kings Highway
- add protected phases for left turns on all approaches at the intersection of US 322 and Kings Highway

There are turning radii problems on the southeast corner at the intersection of US 322 and CR 538 - the traffic signal standard is frequently hit

- install channelized right turn lanes with raised concrete islands at all signalized intersections along US 322

There is a sharp horizontal curve on US 322 east of I-295 which has caused numerous trucks to flip over

- reconstruct US 322 to ease the curve east of I-295 (ultimate solution)
- erect more and better warning signs for the curve on US 322 east of I-295 (interim improvement)
- there is a 50 MPH speed limit sign for eastbound US 322 immediately east of I-295 and a reduce speed sign for the curve shortly thereafter; the 50 MPH sign should be removed since it is deceptive and should be replaced with a warning sign or reduce speed sign (interim improvement)

There is a vertical curve on US 322 between Kings Highway and Kelley Road which creates sight distance problems

- level the section of US 322 between Kings Highway and Kelley Road to eliminate the sight distance problems

Many sections of US 322 are dark and night time driving can be hazardous

- install street lighting along US 322 east of US 130 where US 322 narrows from 4 lanes to 2 lanes
- install raised reflectorized pavement markings and improve pavement striping

Motorists often travel at unsafe speeds along US 322

- reduce the speed limit from 50 MPH to 45 MPH between the NJ Turnpike and I-295
- prohibit passing between the NJ Turnpike and I-295

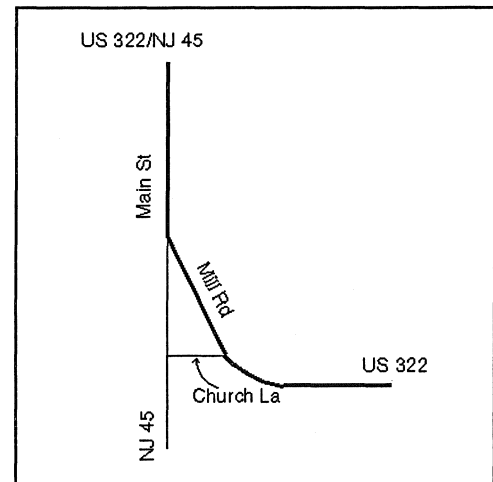
Motorists often make unsafe movements between US 322 and the NJ Turnpike interchange

- install a traffic signal at the intersection of US 322 and the NJ Turnpike interchange

There are several other east-west roads which could serve as alternate routes to US 322: CR 538, CR 694, NJ 40

- before any major improvements are done to US 322, the use of the existing infrastructure should be maximized (disperse traffic among other existing roads)
- erect directional signs to encourage motorists to use alternate routes to the South Jersey shore
- develop a pamphlet with information on alternate routes to the South Jersey shore and distribute them at point of sale of beach tags
- construct missing movement ramps between I-295 and NJ 42
- complete NJ 55 into Cape May County

There was a comment concerning a proposed improvement to improve traffic flow along US 322 in Mullica Hill. The improvement proposed to convert Mill Rd to one-way northbound and prohibit southbound left turns from Main St to Mill Rd. A traffic signal was proposed for the intersection of Main St and Church La. Main St is wide enough at this intersection to allow a center left turn lane and a through lane in the southbound direction.



**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

**South Harrison Township Meeting Summary
April 30, 1996**

A special meeting was held by the Township Committee to discuss East-West Travel issues across Gloucester County. The Township Committee took action on an unrelated resolution, then Mayor Russell Marino introduced Chuck Romick of the County Planning Department. Dave Cox was there to represent NJ Department of Transportation and John Ward represented DVRPC. In addition to those named, approximately 80 residents attended.

Mr. Romick gave an overview of the study process, identified NJ DOT and DVRPC as partners in the process and gave a quick status of how the study has gotten to this point. He then introduced Dave Cox.

Mr. Cox identified several NJ DOT projects on the current Capital Program which have impact on this east-west corridor. Ramps to complete the missing movements at I-295 and NJ 42 are in preliminary engineering and there is a scoping project on US 322 between US 130 and NJ 45 to investigate the potential for widening this facility. Mr. Cox fielded several questions from the audience concerning NJ DOT activities and turned the presentation over to John Ward.

Mr. Ward began by presenting much of the data which has been collected as part of this study. This included: comparisons of traffic counts taken in the same locations during the non-summer and again during the summer season, cultural features in the study area which may be sensitive to highway improvements (churches, cemeteries, parks, schools, historic structures, etc.), travel time surveys and license plate surveys. Mr. Ward then asked the audience for their comments or concerns regarding traffic or travel problems.

The following is a summary of issues and potential solutions which were expressed by the audience:

First and foremost, the overall consensus was loud and clear that the residents of South Harrison Township do not want any improvements done to CR 538 which would serve to make this route an alternative to US 322 for east-west traffic. This municipality advocates a low-growth scenario for development and are fearful that improvements to CR 538 would not only

bring increased pass-through traffic but would increase development pressures in their municipality. Most residents made it clear that they felt the traffic problems on US 322 were caused by out of state traffic passing through the area and from the uncontrolled development in Harrison Township which was permitted to occur. These residents also stated that that traffic should stay up on US 322 in Harrison Township and that they shouldn't have to accept any of that traffic on their roads in South Harrison Township.

Several residents expressed concern that highway improvements would benefit other municipalities at the expense of South Harrison Township.

Another common suggestion was to widen US 322 to four lanes and build a bypass around Mullica Hill. Bypass alignment suggestions included: constructing a new alignment somewhere around Mullica Hill to the north or extending US 322 straight across NJ 45 through the grocery store at the traffic signal and tying back into existing US 322 east of Mullica Hill.

Existing US 322 is not adequate to serve the east-west movements across the county and improvements to it are problematic because of the adjacent development in several areas. There is abundant undeveloped and available land in the vicinity of the Gloucester County/Salem County border.

- the construction of a new road was recommended which would run from I-295 in the vicinity of Oldmans Township in Salem County to the Atlantic City Expressway north of Hammonton in Atlantic County. A resident presented a package which contained a map with a rough alignment penciled in and a series of aerial photographs which display the area surrounding the proposed alignment. This package also listed some descriptive information such as: the facility should be a four lane principal arterial and recommended the main intersecting roads as NJ Turnpike south of Exit 2, NJ 45 north of Woodstown, NJ 55, NJ 47 south of Franklinville, CR 555, US 322 north of Collings Lakes and AC Expressway north of Hammonton. Identified advantages included: travel through mostly open country, control wetlands run off, provide more firebreaks for the Pinelands and allow east-west traffic from all bridges.

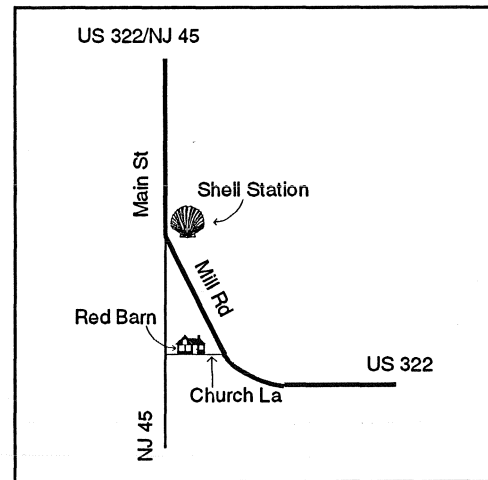
Several residents advocated construction of the missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42. Their feeling was that if these movements were available and motorists were educated about their existence, traffic that might pass through the county on US 322 would now be enticed to stay on the freeways.

A connection between I-295 and the NJ Turnpike in the vicinity of NJ 42 was also recommended.

A resident who claimed to work in Pennsylvania and was very familiar with the problem spots on US 322 presented an eastbound trip on US 322 from the Commodore Barry Bridge to Richwood. The following are his identified problems and suggested solutions:

- he started by saying that the problems on weekends were caused by out of state traffic headed to the shore.
- at the base of the Commodore Barry Bridge, lane drops for the exits to US 130 north and US 130 south create weaving maneuvers by motorists wishing to proceed east on US 322. This weaving could be eliminated by better overhead signing.
- after crossing over US 130 and the Conrail tracks on an elevated structure, there is a vertical curve coupled with a horizontal curve right where US 322 narrows from two lanes by direction to one lane by direction. This situation creates sight distance and weaving problems. Early warning signs should be erected to warn eastbound motorists.
- US 322 widens to a four lane cross section as it passes over I-295. East of I-295 it narrows back down to one lane by direction. A liquor store and a median break in the area where the road tapers down to one lane by direction, causes access problems. He again recommends better and earlier warning signs.
- there is a sharp horizontal curve on US 322 east of I-295 which has caused numerous accidents because vehicles try to negotiate the curve at too high a rate of speed. His suggestion was to have the curve straightened.
- the traffic signal at the entrance to the Commodore 295 Industrial Park creates extreme congestion on US 322 while one or two vehicles exit from the park's driveway.
- the signalized intersection on US 322 at CR 538 experiences congestion because turning movements block through traffic. A nearside jughandle for eastbound US 322 traffic would provide eastbound left turns better access to the gas station and eliminate the need for eastbound right turns to cut through the Wawa parking lot.
- he claims that the traffic signals along US 322 are not synchronized and that synchronization would help traffic flow.

- there was a comment concerning a proposed improvement to improve traffic flow along US 322 in Mullica Hill. The improvement proposed to install a traffic signal at the Shell Station at Main St and Mill Rd. and add a southbound left turn lane for traffic proceeding on eastbound US 322. This proposal also called for the removal of the stop sign behind the Red Barn at the intersection of Mill Rd. and Church La. which controls eastbound US 322 traffic.



- his final suggestion was to retime and interconnect the traffic signals in Richwood.

Another resident stated that motorists often make unsafe movements between US 322 and the NJ Turnpike interchange and called for the construction of turning lanes on US 322 to permit safer turns between US 322 and the NJ Turnpike interchange.

A resident complained about a large pothole on the eastbound approach of the intersection of US 322 and CR 538 which prevents right turning vehicles from bypassing vehicles queued up to go straight or turn right.

A resident handed in a written sheet with questions and comments.

- he asks if there was any consideration given to building a parking garage at the New Jersey side of the Commodore Barry Bridge coupled with bus service? This question was followed by a listing of benefits : A) reduce shore traffic by reducing the number of vehicles thru Gloucester County and allowing busses to be redirected through county roads to even out traffic flow, B) reduce emissions - ETRP: garage can be used during weekdays by commuters and on weekends by vacationers, C) serve local residents by allowing more economical commute during weekdays.

A woman asked about the potential of constructing a roadway within an existing utility right-of-way which carries electrical power lines. This right-of-way is north of and generally parallels US 322 west of Mullica Hill. The power lines then cross over US 322 east of Mullica Hill.

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

**Harrison Township Meeting Summary
May 6, 1996**

A special meeting was held by the Township Committee to discuss East-West Travel issues across Gloucester County. Mayor Charles Tisa hosted the meeting. In addition to the mayor there were three other Township Committee members present. Freeholders Ray Zane and Steve Atkinson were also in attendance. Mayor Tisa introduced Chuck Romick of the County Planning Department. Dave Cox was there to represent NJ Department of Transportation and Don Shanis and Mark Roth represented DVRPC. In addition to those named, approximately 150 residents attended.

Mr. Romick gave an overview of the study process, identified NJ DOT and DVRPC as partners in the process and gave a quick status of how the study has gotten to this point. He then introduced Don Shanis.

Mr. Shanis began by presenting much of the data which has been collected as part of this study. This included: comparisons of traffic counts taken in the same locations during the non-summer and again during the summer season, cultural features in the study area which may be sensitive to highway improvements (churches, cemeteries, parks, schools, historic structures, etc.), travel time surveys and license plate surveys. Mr. Shanis then asked the audience for their comments or concerns regarding traffic or travel problems.

The following is a summary of issues and potential solutions which were expressed by the audience:

A common perception is that the traffic backups are caused by weekend trips generated by Out-of-State drivers heading to the Jersey shore.

Some residents feel that the whole township should not suffer because of Mullica Hill, therefore, improvements through Mullica Hill should be considered. Likewise, Mullica Hill residents and businesses should not suffer because of the traffic generated by the rest of the township.

Motorists are beginning to use Woodland Avenue as a cut-through to avoid the congestion on US 322 approaching NJ 45 and the congestion along Main Street. This is causing congestion on Woodland Ave which has a narrow one-lane approach onto Main Street. Motorists wishing to turn right onto Main Street can't get by vehicles queued up to turn left onto Main Street.

One resident pointed out that Harrison Township is an attractive place to live, in part because Mullica Hill is a historic area and it needs to be preserved. However Mullica Hill also needs some traffic to support the businesses in the historic area.

The dangers of Dead Man's Curve near the boundary of Logan and Woolwich Townships were discussed and a suggestion was made to take the state owned land adjacent to US 322 and re-align the road to make it safer for motorists.

There was a suggestion made to divert traffic away from US 322 and use CR 538 as an alternative route for shore traffic. Other suggestions included possible connections into US 40 and new roads through Salem County.

At this point, Dave Cox identified several NJ DOT projects on the current Capital Program which have impact on this east-west corridor. Ramps to complete the missing movements at I-295 and NJ 42 are in preliminary engineering and there is a scoping project on US 322 between US 130 and NJ 45 to investigate the potential for widening this facility.

NJ DOT was asked if they intended to or if they ever had considered constructing a ramp to connect NJ 55 North to NJ 42 South, as well as the reverse direction.

One common suggestion was to build a bypass around Mullica Hill. Another bypass alignment suggestion included constructing an extension of US 322 straight across NJ 45 through the grocery store at the traffic signal and tying back into existing US 322 east of Mullica Hill. It was mentioned that if a bypass or new road is constructed, it would be to Harrison Townships best interest to make it a limited access road. This idea would take motorists around Mullica Hill and make local travel more efficient. Various residents stressed that improvements or widening of US 322 west of NJ 45 would not solve the problem. If improvements were made to this section of US 322, the additional traffic generated would have nowhere to go once it reached NJ 45.

Another suggestion included the construction of a series of one way roads to serve local traffic and parking. These roads would benefit local resident movements, but would not be a

feasible alternative for through trips. Parking for Main Street businesses would be available on these newly constructed roads and parking on Main Street could be removed.

There was agreement among residents on the fact that traffic must be diverted away from US 322 closer to the Commodore Barry Bridge. Traffic should be signed to travel North or South on I-295 and connect into other limited access routes to continue their trip. Combined with the placement of signs, posted speed limits along US 322 should be lowered in order to make travel less desirable to through trips.

Residents mentioned the grid-lock experienced within Richwood. They feel that left turn lanes and left turn signals should be installed at the CR 609/CR 618 intersection with US 322 and the CR 635/CR 667 intersection with US 322 within Richwood to increase flow. Residents feel that designated left, thru and right turn lanes at these intersections would better control flow through Richwood.

Other suggestions included a rail station located at the base of the Commodore Barry Bridge and a rail line be built to carry passengers from that point to the shore resorts. Another idea was to build a bypass which would be either elevated above small towns or possibly an underground highway.

Residents urged that NJ DOT install a No Turn on Red sign at the intersection of US 322 and NJ 45. They claimed to have continuously sent letters to NJ DOT requesting a sign be installed and have yet to see any action. Some residents feel that this action combined with additional signs, left turn lanes along US 322 and speed limit reductions would be an initial response to the problems that exist. They feel that this is small step to an ultimate solution, but its a start.

A question was asked about the potential of constructing a roadway within an existing utility right-of-way which carries electrical power lines. This right-of-way is north of and generally parallels US 322 west of Mullica Hill. The power lines then cross over US 322 east of Mullica Hill.

There was a suggestion about making a connection between I-295 and NJ 55 with access to NJ 42 in the Deptford Area.

Several comments dealt with traffic flow on Main Street (US 322) in Mullica Hill:

- remove parking along Main Street from the Harrison House to Mill Street
- there is a problem with truck traffic in Mullica Hill

- Pedestrian crosswalks do exist on Main Street but are not effective because traffic does not stop to allow pedestrians to cross

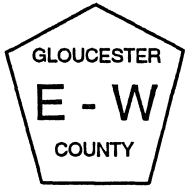
A comment was made concerning a sight distance problem on US 322 in the vicinity of Visalli's Market (mile post 10.6) west of NJ 45. The resident requested to have the speed limit lowered in that area.

A suggestion was made to place variable message signs in the vicinity of US 322 and I-295 to divert traffic away from Mullica Hill when congestion is heavy.

An observation was made that by design, most new developments are constructed with their point of access onto a state highway and become self contained units. There is no consideration given to providing local circulation between adjacent developments. This development pattern creates access problems to and from the state highways and concentrates the congestion at these points.

Appendix B

Project Newsletters



Gloucester County East West Corridor Public Participation Outreach Initiative

Issue 1

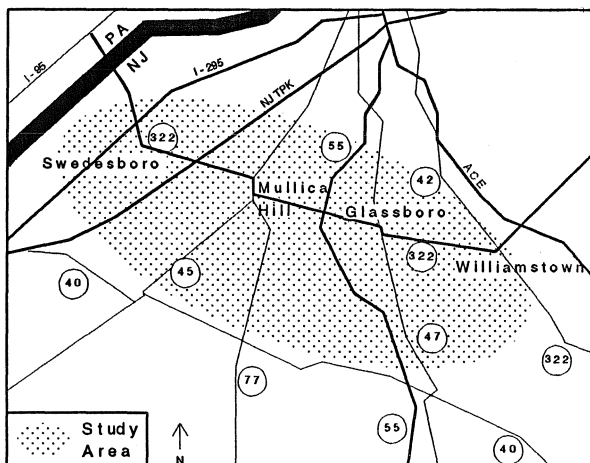
March 1996

This newsletter is produced by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission for residents and elected officials throughout Gloucester County in an effort to provide accurate and timely information about this study.

County Traffic to be Examined

How has residential and commercial development affected traffic conditions in Gloucester County? What additional effect does traffic bound for the New Jersey shore have on communities along major east-west roads? If you live in a community struggling to deal with these issues, you will probably answer that traffic congestion increases each year and that you're tired of the delays.

In response to this dilemma and in order to determine community attitudes about traffic conditions and solutions, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) is conducting a widespread Public Participation Outreach Initiative. The shaded portion of the map below displays the general study area of this effort and illustrates the area of east-west travel about which we are most concerned.



PUBLIC MEETINGS

Several Public Meetings Will Be Scheduled During The Course Of This Study. Dates And Locations Will Be Announced When They Are Confirmed.

This work is being undertaken in partnership with the Gloucester County Freeholders, the County Planning Department and the New Jersey Department of Transportation. This project is **not** a revisiting of the New Jersey Turnpike Connector Study.

DVRPC serves as the official planning and review agency for the nine-county metropolitan region which includes Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey and Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania. Through data collection, research, coordination and planning efforts, DVRPC sets a framework for governmental decisions affecting development within the Delaware Valley.

DVRPC Seeks Local Input

DVRPC will reach out to municipal officials and the general public within the next four months to identify traffic problems associated with east-west travel across the county. To accomplish this objective, the Commission has asked for and received the support of the Gloucester County Mayors' Association. At an Association meeting on February 23rd, the mayors agreed to participate on a Transportation Task Force that will guide the study.

Having produced many plans and studies over the years, DVRPC is keenly aware of the importance of public involvement in resolving complex issues. According to Donald Shanis, DVRPC's Associate Director for Transportation Planning, "involvement of the public, especially for identifying problems and developing solutions, is an important element in planning transportation improvements".

Traffic Data Collected

In addition to the public participation outreach initiative, DVRPC continues to work on a project initiated in 1994 at the request of the County Planning Department. That project, *Gloucester County East-West Corridor Traffic Study*, seeks to identify a network of state, county or municipal roads which, with minor improvements, (intersection improvements, traffic signals, signing, etc.) will relieve congestion and disperse traffic through the East-West Corridor between the Commodore Barry Bridge and NJ 55.

To date, DVRPC's efforts have focused on collecting traffic data. This data will be used to help define problem areas and develop potential improvement scenarios. Traffic counts were taken during the summer (July/August) and non-summer (April) in 1994 and 1995. The following table summarizes some of the data which has been collected.

1994 Daily Traffic Volumes *				
Road	Limits	Day	Non Summer	Summer
US 322	US 130 to I-295	Fri	18,978	23,866
US 322	Richwood	wkdy	14,540	16,050
US 322	Richwood	Fri	15,163	19,132
55 SB on ramp	322 EB to 55 mainline	Fri	3,196	6,384
US 322	Richwood	Sun	14,004	19,095
55 NB off rmp	55 mainline to 322 WB	Sun	2,650	6,244
CR 694	CR 616 to CR 581	Sun	1,605	2,547
CR 538	Ferrell	Fri	2,736	4,146
CR 668	Harrisville	Fri	583	651

* Estimates based on limited field surveys

People, Jobs & Travel Forecasted

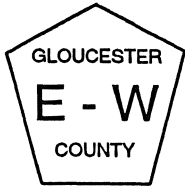
Gloucester County's anticipated growth is shown by the population, employment and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) forecasts that were prepared as part of DVRPC's long range plan. (VMT is expressed in millions of miles of daily travel and is an indicator of vehicle travel on the roads in the county.)

Gloucester County Forecasts			
	1990	2020	% Change
Population	230,082	314,971	36.9%
Employment	86,079	122,904	42.8%
VMT	5.7	8.9 *	56.1%

* Preliminary DVRPC forecast

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Gloucester County East West Corridor Public Participation Outreach Initiative

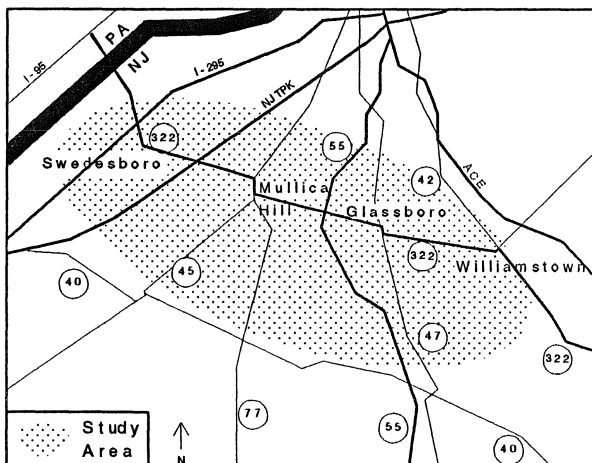
Issue 2

June 1996

This newsletter is produced by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission for residents and elected officials throughout Gloucester County in an effort to provide accurate and timely information about this study.

Municipalities Discuss Solutions to RT 322 Traffic Problems

Residents and elected officials from several Gloucester County municipalities recently met with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), New Jersey DOT and the County to discuss community attitudes about traffic conditions and potential solutions in the US 322 corridor. These meetings were part of a widespread Public Participation Outreach Initiative designed to obtain a local perspective on east-west travel across the county. The shaded portion of the map below displays the general study area of this effort and illustrates the area of east-west travel about which we are most concerned. Valuable input was provided by residents and elected officials. A listing of improvement strategies culled from these meetings is provided on the reverse side of this newsletter.



Additional Meetings Scheduled

If you missed the earlier meetings, fear not, you still have opportunities to offer suggestions, ask questions or just find out what's happening about east-west mobility through Gloucester County. Three additional meetings (time and location listed below) have been scheduled to provide municipal officials and the general public an opportunity to work together to address traffic problems which effect all the municipalities and residents in the study area.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

JUNE 11TH CLEARVIEW SR. HIGH SCHOOL

HARRISON TWP.

7:00 PM

JUNE 19TH KINGSWAY HIGH SCHOOL

WOOLWICH TWP.

7:00 PM

JUNE 26TH WASHINGTON TWP.

HIGH SCHOOL

7:00 PM

The improvement strategies identified by the public at the earlier meetings will be reviewed and residents will be asked for their feelings on the effectiveness of these strategies.

DVRPC, the County and NJDOT are extremely interested in finding out the level of local support for these suggested strategies.

Opportunities for written comments will also be available through questionnaires which will be distributed at the meetings. People who don't wish to speak at the meeting or who would like to provide additional detail can do so by completing a questionnaire.

Congestion Reduction Tools for Municipalities are Available

Traffic congestion not only impedes our mobility but also pollutes our air, wastes fuel, hinders economic growth and effects our quality of life. Many areas of the country are grappling with congestion problems including the East-West Corridor across Gloucester County. However, there are proven techniques and strategies that are available to address this serious issue. Building new roads or widening existing ones are not a cure-all for this problem. The most effective approach is to package a set of improvements together which can effect congestion in many different ways. There are even strategies that municipalities can implement to help in reducing congestion. It may be argued that, individually, the following strategies do little to reduce congestion however when implemented in a coordinated fashion and bolstered by some physical roadway improvements the cumulative effect on congestion is positive.

Growth Management - use of public policy to regulate the location, geographic pattern, density, quality and rate of development.

Site Design to Minimize Traffic - developments

can be designed to include multiple land uses, internal circulation systems, linkages to other developments and access to transit service.

Auto Restricted Zones - area where vehicular traffic is regulated, controlled or restricted to 1) preserve and enhance vitality of urban centers, 2) improve environmental quality in urban centers, 3) encourage use of non-auto modes.

Parking Management - altering the supply, operation or demand of a jurisdiction's parking system to influence travel behavior.

Pedestrian/Bike Facilities - construction of pathway system to promote non-vehicular modes

Land Use Policies to Improve Transit Access - identifying areas for increased residential or employment densities.

Suggested Improvement Strategies

The table on the following page is a generalized listing of the improvement strategies that were suggested by the municipal officials and the public at meetings in Woolwich Township, South Harrison Township and Harrison Township. This matrix will serve as the basis of discussion at the remaining meetings in an attempt to get neighboring municipalities and their residents working together to create a package of improvement strategies for the corridor. It is also important to determine the level of support for selected strategies. Additional improvement suggestions can also be added to the discussion.

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**GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR
SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES ***

Strategy		Pro ¹	Con ²
A	Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●no expenditure of public funds ●No disruption to existing land uses ●does not induce additional trips into the corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides no relief for the corridor ●local as well as thru trips will continue to be effected by the congestion ●congestion will worsen as local development increases
B	Institute growth management strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●prevents uncontrolled development ●controls growth of local traffic ●promotes good land use planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides minor congestion relief ●serves small portion of total trips ●full effects not realized until long term
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves mobility for local traffic ●reduces traffic on thru routes ●promotes good land use planning ●reduces congestion and improves safety at development access points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides minor congestion relief ●serves small portion of total trips ●creates new local circulation patterns ●no short term impact ●limited long term effect
D	Provide local transit opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves mobility for local trips ●serves some east-west trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●serves small portion of total trips ●doesn't address other deficiencies ●meets only partial needs of the corridor
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●low cost ●high potential for feasibility ●serves majority of east-west trips ●requires no right-of-way acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides short term relief ●increases traffic on other roads ●doesn't address other deficiencies
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●less expensive than new highway ●moderate potential for feasibility ●serves some east-west trips ●requires minimal right-of-way acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides short term relief ●increases traffic on other roads
G	Improve Route 538	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●moderate cost ●moderate potential for feasibility ●serves some east-west trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides short term relief ●increases traffic on Route 538
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●redirects some traffic out of the corridor ●reduces east-west travel time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●potential feasibility problems ●high cost ●meets only partial needs of the corridor
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●moderate cost ●moderate potential for feasibility ●serves majority of east-west trips ●requires minimal right-of-way acquisition ●provide safety benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides short term relief

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR
SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES ***

Strategy	Pro ¹	Con ²
I Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●moderate cost ●moderate potential for feasibility ●serves majority of east-west trips ●requires minimal right-of-way acquisition ●provide safety benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●provides short term relief
J Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion in Mullica Hill ●reduces east-west travel time ●serves majority of east-west trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●requires significant right-of-way acquisition ●high cost ●potential residential, farmland and business takings ●potential feasibility and environmental problems
K Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●serves majority of east-west trips ●decreases traffic on other roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●requires significant right-of-way acquisition ●very high cost ●potential residential, farmland and business takings ●potential feasibility and environmental problems
L Construct a new highway on a new alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●improves east-west traffic flow ●reduces congestion on US 322 ●reduces east-west travel time ●serves majority of east-west trips ●decreases traffic on other roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●requires significant right-of-way acquisition ●extremely high cost ●potential residential, farmland and business takings ●potential feasibility and environmental problems
M Improve US 40		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●doesn't serve this corridor ●increases congestion in towns along US 40
N Construct east-west rail line		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●does not serve the needs of the corridor

* These improvement strategies have been suggested by the public and/or municipal officials

1 Indicates a strategy's positive impact on the corridor

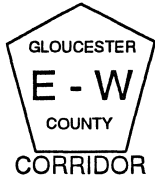
2 Indicates a strategy's negative impact on the corridor

DVRPC serves as the official planning and review agency for the nine-county metropolitan region which includes Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer counties in New Jersey and Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania. Through data collection, research, coordination and planning efforts, DVRPC sets a framework for governmental decisions affecting development within the Delaware Valley.

This initiative is being undertaken in partnership with the Gloucester County Freeholders, the County Planning Department and the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

Appendix C

Regional Public Meeting Summaries



Gloucester County East West Corridor Public Participation Outreach Initiative

REGIONAL PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

<p>June 11, 1996 7:00 PM Clearview Regional High School Harrison Township</p>	<p>June 19, 1996 7:00 PM Kingsway Regional High School Woolwich Township</p>	<p>June 26, 1996 7:00 PM Washington Township High School Washington Township</p>
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1. Study Background
2. Findings of data collection activities
3. Summary of municipal meetings
4. Matrix of Suggested Improvement Strategies
5. Questionnaire
6. Public Input
7. Next Steps

** This Public Participation Outreach Initiative is being conducted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in Partnership with the Gloucester County Freeholders, Gloucester County Planning Department and NJ Department of Transportation.*

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

Regional Public Meeting Summary

Clearview Regional High School
June 11, 1996

The first of three public meetings was held for the residents of Gloucester County to discuss East-West Travel issues across the county. The meeting was conducted by DVRPC and attended by about 40 to 45 people. In addition to the residents, Freeholders Ray Zane and James Atkinson were also in attendance as well as Harrison Township Mayor, Charles Tisa. Chuck Romick and Morris Bayer represented the Gloucester County Planning Department and Dave Cox represented NJ Department of Transportation. Don Shanis, Mark Roth and John Ward represented DVRPC.

Mr. Shanis gave an overview of the study process and identified the County Freeholders, County Planning Department and NJ DOT as partners in this initiative

Mr. Ward presented highlights of DVRPC's multi-year data collection effort for this study. This included: county growth projections, findings of the traffic counting program, observations from the summer weekend field views, travel time surveys and license plate surveys.

Mr. Ward then gave a summary of the meetings which DVRPC held with individual municipalities regarding their specific east-west traffic or travel problems.

Mr. Shanis presented a matrix of 14 strategies which had been suggested by the public and municipal officials at the earlier municipal meetings. The pros and cons of each strategy's impact on the corridor were reviewed; residents were provided with a separate form and asked to indicate their opinion of the strategy; either agree, disagree or no opinion. Residents were encouraged to write any additional comments on the sheet and hand them in after the meeting. Twenty-seven response sheets were handed in and the place of residence of those respondents is as follows: Harrison Twp. - 18, South Harrison Twp. - 2, Mantua Twp. - 2, Woolwich Twp.- 2, Washington Twp. - 2, Pitman Borough - 1.

Following is a summary of the responses for each strategy:

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Suggested Improvement Strategies
Survey Results from 6/11/96 Meeting at Clearview Regional H.S.**

Strategy		Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
A	Do nothing	3	23	1
B	Institute growth management strategies	14	9	2
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	14	6	5
D	Provide local transit opportunities	11	14	0
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	22	5	0
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	22	3	1
G	Improve Route 538	22	3	1
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	17	7	2
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	20	5	0
J	Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	10	14	1
K	Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	13	14	0
L	Construct a new highway on a new alignment	8	15	2
M	Improve US 40	6	16	3
N	Construct east-west rail line	4	18	3
		Sample size - 27 response forms		

A questionnaire was distributed which residents could fill out and hand in or take with them and mail them back to DVRPC. Mr Shanis read through the questionnaire and asked if any questions needed to be clarified. Only 5 questionnaires were returned at the meeting.

The floor was then opened to the public for comments. The following is a summary of their suggestions:

- conduct a test case on a summer weekend using changeable message signs to divert some of the traffic off US 322 and onto other roads
- have summer weekend traffic conditions in the corridor broadcast on the radio along with alternate routes

- implement safety improvements on county and local roads before any additional traffic is shifted to them
- use some existing rail or utility right of way to construct a Mullica Hill Bypass
- install traffic signals on CR 538 at NJ 45 and NJ 77
- make state funding available to municipalities who must bear the burden of the summer weekend traffic (some funding could be used to employ police officers to direct traffic at heavily congested intersections)
- if US 322 is widened, include a two-way center left turn lane for a five lane cross section
- investigate the feasibility of constructing US 322 below grade through Mullica Hill
- no single strategy alone will solve the congestion problems but a coordinated package of improvements are needed

The next steps of the process were reviewed. Two more public meetings will be held, the opinion survey on the suggested improvement strategies will be conducted and the questionnaire will be distributed. After these two opportunities for public input, DVRPC will document the suggested strategies along with the level of support for each and prepare a report for NJ DOT and the county. Reports will also be made available to the municipalities.

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

Regional Public Meeting Summary

Kingsway Regional High School
June 19, 1996

The second of three public meetings was held for the residents of Gloucester County to discuss East-West Travel issues across the county. The meeting was conducted by DVRPC and attended by about 45 people. In addition to the residents, Woolwich Township Mayor Joe Garozzo and Swedesboro mayor Dave Azzari were in attendance as well as several elected officials from Woolwich Township, South Harrison Township and Logan Township. Chuck Romick represented the Gloucester County Planning Department and John Ward represented DVRPC.

Mayor Garozzo opened the meeting by thanking the people for coming out and introducing the elected officials in attendance. He indicated his support for this effort and indicated that he had hosted a previous meeting in Woolwich Twp. for this study. He then introduced Mr. Romick and Mr. Ward.

Mr. Romick gave an overview of the study process and identified the County Freeholders, County Planning Department and NJ DOT as partners in this initiative

Mr. Ward presented highlights of DVRPC's multi-year data collection effort for this study. This included: county growth projections, findings of the traffic counting program, observations from the summer weekend field views, travel time surveys and license plate surveys.

Mr. Ward then gave a summary of the meetings which DVRPC held with individual municipalities regarding their specific east-west traffic or travel problems.

Mr. Ward presented a matrix of 14 strategies which had been suggested by the public and municipal officials at the earlier municipal meetings. The pros and cons of each strategy's impact on the corridor were reviewed; residents were provided with a separate form and asked to indicate their opinion of the strategy; either agree, disagree or no opinion. Residents were encouraged to write any additional comments on the sheet and hand them in after the meeting.

Thirty-two response sheets were handed in and the place of residence of those respondents is as follows: Woolwich Twp.- 16, South Harrison Twp. - 4, Harrison Twp. - 3, East Greenwich Twp. - 3, Swedesboro - 2, Mantua Twp. - 1, Logan Twp. - 1, unidentified - 2.

Following is a summary of the responses for each strategy:

Gloucester County East-West Corridor Suggested Improvement Strategies Survey Results from 6/19/96 Meeting at Kingsway Regional H.S.				
Strategy		Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
A	Do nothing	5	25	0
B	Institute growth management strategies	24	3	0
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	22	3	3
D	Provide local transit opportunities	10	9	7
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	21	8	0
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	18	9	1
G	Improve Route 538	19	9	1
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	23	5	3
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	29	1	1
J	Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	21	10	1
K	Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	16	12	1
L	Construct a new highway on a new alignment	7	21	2
M	Improve US 40	7	15	7
N	Construct east-west rail line	2	20	8
		Sample size - 32 response forms		

A questionnaire was distributed which residents could fill out and hand in or take with them and mail them back to DVRPC. Mr Ward read through the questionnaire and asked if any questions needed to be clarified. Seventeen questionnaires were returned at the meeting.

The floor was then opened to the public for comments. The following is a summary of their suggestions:

- a resident presented a petition against the installation of a "no turn on red" sign for the eastbound approach of US 322 at NJ 45. This petition was signed by 114 residents of Cider Press Estates (located on EB side of US 322 approximately 2,000 feet west of NJ 45)
- an accident survey of CR 538 and CR 694 within South Harrison Twp. was conducted by the South Harrison Police Department and presented by a township official. This report covers the time period 1990 to present but does not include accidents responded to by the NJ State Police who patrol these roads on weekends. This report also does not include accidents involving deer hits. With those constraints, this report documents 160 accidents in the six-year period 1990 through 1995 (26.7 per year) and 10 accidents through the first five months of 1996. This township official claimed that this is a significant number of accidents for these roads and that this number would increase if traffic increased as a result of spreading some of the traffic off of US 322. He expressed his concerns for safety along these roads also in light of the fact that subdivisions totalling 250 units have been approved with direct access to CR 538.
- another South Harrison elected official wanted to go on record that he is strongly opposed to designating CR 538 as an alternate route to US 322. He stated that South Harrison has been designated as a Core Agricultural Area in the State Master Plan and increased traffic and development along CR 538 would be contradictory to that designation.
- there was a suggestion made that a new highway could be built in the vicinity of the Gloucester Co./Salem Co. boundary where developed land is at a minimum and that this new road would better serve east-west traffic than improving the existing facilities.
- another resident immediately stated that a new highway is not wanted, it would destroy valuable farmland and that citizens would organize to fight it
- a resident suggested that state funding should be made available to municipalities who must bear the burden of the summer weekend traffic (some funding could be used for enforcement of speeding and passing in no-passing zones)
- several residents complained about the lack of action, that they were tired of studies and wanted to see something built
- another resident proposed that development should be slowed down in this area
- no single strategy alone will solve the congestion problems but a coordinated package of improvements are needed
- there was a comment that more money should be spent on improvements in South Jersey and that North Jersey gets more than its fair share

The next steps of the process were reviewed. One more public meeting will be held, the opinion survey on the suggested improvement strategies will be conducted and the questionnaire will be distributed. After this last opportunity for public input, DVRPC will document the suggested strategies along with the level of support for each and prepare a report for NJ DOT and the county. Reports will also be made available to the municipalities.

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

Regional Public Meeting Summary

Washington Township High School
June 26, 1996

The last of three public meetings was held for the residents of Gloucester County to discuss East-West Travel issues across the county. The meeting was conducted by DVRPC and attended by about 12 people. In addition to the residents, Senator John Matheussen was in attendance. Police Chief Sowney represented Washington Township. Morris Bayer represented the Gloucester County Planning Department and John Ward represented DVRPC.

Chief Sowney opened the meeting by welcoming the people to Washington Township and thanking them for coming out. He then introduced Mr. Ward.

Mr. Ward gave an overview of the study process and identified the County Freeholders, County Planning Department and NJ DOT as partners in this initiative

Mr. Ward presented highlights of DVRPC's multi-year data collection effort for this study. This included: county growth projections, findings of the traffic counting program, observations from the summer weekend field views, travel time surveys and license plate surveys.

Mr. Ward then gave a summary of the meetings which DVRPC held with individual municipalities regarding their specific east-west traffic or travel problems.

Mr. Ward presented a matrix of 14 strategies which had been suggested by the public and municipal officials at the earlier municipal meetings. The pros and cons of each strategy's impact on the corridor were reviewed; residents were provided with a separate form and asked to indicate their opinion of the strategy; either agree, disagree or no opinion. Residents were encouraged to write any additional comments on the sheet and hand them in after the meeting. Five response sheets were handed in and the place of residence for all respondents was Washington Township

Following is a summary of the responses for each strategy:

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Suggested Improvement Strategies
Survey Results from 6/26/96 Meeting at Washington Township H.S.**

Strategy		Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
A	Do nothing	0	5	0
B	Institute growth management strategies	5	0	0
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	3	0	2
D	Provide local transit opportunities	2	3	1
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	5	0	0
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	5	0	0
G	Improve Route 538	2	3	0
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	5	0	0
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	5	0	0
J	Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	3	2	0
K	Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	4	1	0
L	Construct a new highway on a new alignment	0	5	0
M	Improve US 40	1	3	0
N	Construct east-west rail line	1	4	0
		Sample size - 5 response forms		

A questionnaire was distributed which residents could fill out and hand in or take with them and mail them back to DVRPC. Mr Ward read through the questionnaire and asked if any questions needed to be clarified. No questionnaires were returned at the meeting.

The floor was then opened to the public for comments. No new improvement strategies were suggested, however several questions were asked about spreading traffic and what types of traffic flow and operational improvements could be done on US 322. The audience appeared to support these strategies (E, F and I) and the results of the survey confirm that. Other Questions dealt with the construction of ramps between I-295 and NJ 42; specifically on what impact it would have on the east-west corridor. There was also support for this strategy.

The next steps of the process were reviewed. All the public meetings have been held, DVRPC will tabulate the results of the opinion survey on the suggested improvement strategies and the questionnaires. DVRPC will then document the suggested strategies along with the level of support for each and prepare a report for NJ DOT and the county. Reports will also be made available to the municipalities.

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Public Participation Outreach Initiative**

Regional Public Meeting Summary

South Jersey Chamber of Commerce
June 27, 1996

The South Jersey Chamber of Commerce invited DVRPC to attend a meeting of their Transportation Committee and discuss the work being done in the Gloucester County East-West Corridor. The meeting was attended by 13 members of the committee. DVRPC was represented by John Ward.

John Burkhardt, Urban Engineers, opened the meeting by asking the people around the table to introduce themselves. He then introduced Mr. Ward.

Mr. Ward gave an overview of the study process and identified the County Freeholders, County Planning Department and NJ DOT as partners in this initiative

Mr. Ward presented highlights of DVRPC's multi-year data collection effort for this study. This included: county growth projections, findings of the traffic counting program, observations from the summer weekend field views, travel time surveys and license plate surveys.

Mr. Ward then gave a summary of the meetings which DVRPC held with individual municipalities regarding their specific east-west traffic or travel problems.

Mr. Ward presented a matrix of 14 strategies which had been suggested by the public and municipal officials at the earlier municipal meetings. The pros and cons of each strategy's impact on the corridor were reviewed; committee members were provided with a separate form and asked to indicate their opinion of the strategy; either agree, disagree or no opinion. They were encouraged to write any additional comments on the sheet and hand them in after the meeting. Ten response sheets were handed in.

Following is a summary of the responses for each strategy:

**Gloucester County East-West Corridor
Suggested Improvement Strategies
Survey Results from 6/27/96 Meeting at the South Jersey Chamber of Commerce**

Strategy		Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
A	Do nothing	0	10	0
B	Institute growth management strategies	9	1	0
C	Initiate access and setback control/provide for local internal circulation	10	0	0
D	Provide local transit opportunities	1	7	2
E	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements	7	3	0
F	Spread traffic among existing facilities by signing and intersection improvements and upgrade network of county roads	8	2	0
G	Improve Route 538	8	1	1
H	Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42	8	1	1
I	Strategic intersection and operational improvements on US 322	8	1	1
J	Construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	3	5	2
K	Widen US 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill	3	6	1
L	Construct a new highway on a new alignment	6	3	1
M	Improve US 40	1	7	2
N	Construct east-west rail line	1	6	2
		Sample size - 10 response forms		

A questionnaire was distributed which members could fill out and hand in or take with them and mail them back to DVRPC. No questionnaires were returned at the meeting.

The meeting was then opened to comments. Chamber members indicated that they had presented testimony at public hearings held by Senator Rand in May 1990 concerning an East-West Travel Corridor in Gloucester County. The Chamber's position was, and still is, that a widening of County Route 538 to four lanes would be the most beneficial improvement in meeting the east-west travel needs of the business and residents of South Jersey. A gentleman who identified himself as the owner of the I-295 Commodore Industrial Park indicated that he had told NJ DOT that he was willing to reconstruct US 322 to ease the sharp curve adjacent to

his property but has not gotten any response on his offer. He asked for suggestions on how to proceed with this project. Mr. Burkhardt suggested that he contact his state legislator. Another suggestion was to contact Bill Dickinson of NJ DOT Region 4 office in Mount Laurel. Mr. Ward indicated that he would certainly document it in his report and convey it to the NJ DOT representatives who have been involved with this project.

The next steps of the process were reviewed. All the public meetings have been held, DVRPC will tabulate the results of the opinion survey on the suggested improvement strategies and the questionnaires. DVRPC will then document the suggested strategies along with the level of support for each and prepare a report for NJ DOT and the county. Reports will also be made available to the municipalities.

Appendix D

Questionnaire

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR
PUBLIC OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. If you were given \$100 to spend to improve east-west travel across the county, how would you divide up the money?

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| \$ _____ for maintenance of existing roads and intersections | \$ _____ to build major new roads |
| \$ _____ for minor improvements to existing roads and intersections | \$ _____ for public transportation |
| \$ _____ for widening existing roads and intersections | \$ _____ other _____ |

2. Although congestion on some roads increases significantly on summer weekends, congestion can be found on the road network anytime during the year. Please list the most congested locations (up to 5) during the summer weekends and the most congested locations (up to 5) at times other than summer weekends. Be as specific as you can.

Summer Weekends	Other Times
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. From the list below, please rank those issues which you feel create the worst problems for east-west travel across the county. (1 = creates worst problems, 7 = creates least problems)

- ___ Lack of east-west roads
- ___ Insufficient capacity on US 322 in older towns (Mullica Hill, Richwood, Glassboro, Williamstown)
- ___ New residential and retail developments in the corridor
- ___ Travelers unfamiliar with other east-west roads besides US 322
- ___ Out-of-state pass-through traffic
- ___ Truck traffic in the corridor
- ___ Other _____

4. Please indicate which of the following improvements you would support to reduce congestion and improve mobility for east-west travel across the county. (✓ = support)

- ___ Mullica Hill Bypass (recognizing that some homes or businesses would need to be taken for the new road)
- ___ Mullica Hill Bypass (only if no homes or businesses would need to be taken for the new road)
- ___ Widen US 322
- ___ Improve US 322 in older towns even if it required some residential or business takings
- ___ Improve major intersections along US 322
- ___ Spread traffic among existing roads with signing, intersection improvements and upgrading selected county roads
- ___ Construct missing movement ramps at I-295 and NJ 42
- ___ Construct a new highway on new alignment
- ___ Other _____

5. What could citizens or local officials in your municipality do to address congestion and facilitate East-West travel across the county.

6. Please rank the following land use strategies to best shape the future of this corridor. (1 = best strategy)

- Preserve open space and farmland
- Provide for more parks and recreational areas
- Concentrate new development near existing infrastructure (roads, waterlines, sewer lines etc.)
- Build new east-west roads
- Expand growth into undeveloped areas
- Other _____

7. Where do you live ? (Name of Township or Borough) _____

8. Additional comments and suggestions concerning East-West travel across Gloucester County. _____

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY EAST-WEST CORRIDOR
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OUTREACH INITIATIVE**

The highway network in Gloucester County, like in many of the other counties in the region, was developed in a radial orientation towards Camden and Philadelphia. These spoke-like highways offer many options for north-south travel through Gloucester County and played a large part in the development patterns of the county. The major deficiency of this network has been the lack of adequate facilities to accommodate east-west travel across the county. Because of the County's projected high growth rates for population and employment, the county will see an increasing need to facilitate east-west travel. The intent of these questions is to gather information on the public's opinions concerning opportunities for east-west travel across Gloucester County.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is conducting this survey at the request of the Gloucester County Freeholders, Gloucester County Planning Department and New Jersey DOT to identify problems and potential solutions concerning east-west travel across the county. Your answers to these questions will help shape potential transportation improvements within the county. You may give this questionnaire to DVRPC staff or if you would like more time to fill it out, you should fold it on the dashed lines, seal it and mail completed forms to DVRPC at the address below.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
The Bourse Building
111 S. Independence Mall East
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2515

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
The Bourse Building
111 S. Independence Mall East
Philadelphia, PA 19106-2515

Attention: J. Ward

Appendix E

Additional Public Comment

Many of the returned opinion surveys contained written comments about individual strategies, groups of strategies or general comments about east west travel. Listed below is a summary of those comments.

Strategy A

- something has to be done traffic is horrendous in Mullica Hill
- need solution; bypass around Mullica Hill
- do something but do not change 322 in any way except lower speed limit
- doing nothing is what got us to this point
- something has to be done; we live on 322 and have had deaths from vehicular accidents in front of our home
- doesn't address growth problem
- improvements must be made soon or options will disappear due to people growth

Strategy B

- growth is inevitable and desired to maintain quality of life
- probably to late for Harrison
- do not want state to tell me what to do with my land
- to some degree this needs to be instituted
- this should be done regardless of decision on new road
- Harrison Township must initiate better planning; developments now empty onto 322 and 45 they add to their traffic problem
- can be done in conjunction with another strategy - E
- Harrison Township should heed this patchwork mess

Strategy C

- better use of existing physical plant
 - not a solution
 - impacts homeowners on roads
 - immediate paybacks
 - it all begins with local planning and zoning
 - works for towns that have room for development not existing towns with no room for development
 - Harrison Township has local traffic mess with developments and setbacks - Cider Press on 322
-

Strategy D

- does not address out-of-state use
- increases potential development
- doesn't solve problem
- addresses some local traffic problems
- strongly agree - PATCO rail line
- people will not park their cars

Strategy E

- is a small help to situation
- best improvement; best for state and our area
- short term and safety implications unless you improve side roads
- does not address problem
- divert from 322 to other roads - 538 - 40
- causes increase traffic on township roads; small budget for repairs
- yes help signage but not detour to other roads
- traffic lights at 538 and 322 and also at Kings Highway and 322 need left turn lights or delayed green
- does not solve problem 20 years from now; existing roads, 536 and 694, can not handle increase traffic
- places road improvements onto local towns and county residents
- being done with strategy B can be helpful
- try this first

Strategy F

- is a small help to solution
 - short term and safety implications unless you improve side roads
 - does not address problem
 - widen 538 to 55
 - only places same problem elsewhere and does not address local problems
 - no increase of traffic to other roads
 - signal at Old Mill with left turn each way; make Mill Road one way north; right turn lane at Harrison House (*Mullica Hill*)
 - these are needed regardless
 - lets do it
-

Strategy G

- this would help reduce traffic on RT 322
- best plan I've seen
- the only viable alternative - bypass Swedesboro by going down Tomlin Station
- does not address problem
- from 322 to 55
- OK to improve existing road; do not widen RT 538 to take us into the 21st Century
- 538 is now crowded in AM and PM for commuter traffic; also Friday Saturday and Sunday for shore traffic; this road runs through rural towns and should be preserved
- put more double lines in and reduce speed limits
- I reside on 538, road is bad now
- yes 538 needs improvement but not to increase overflow of 322
- this should be done regardless because of traffic volume already existing
- against state master plan; will cause increase development pressure; destruction of farmland; not where the problem exists
- in conjunction with B and E can be very helpful
- this is the route supported by the Chamber (*of Commerce of Southern New Jersey*)

Strategy H

- people will not go north to go south
- 2 edge sword - could add to flow in southern corridor
- does not address problem
- give information at bridge toll booths for PA people
- yes - RT 42 and I-295 is an embarrassment
- doesn't serve people going to Ocean City and south to Cape May
- monies would be better spent in study area, traffic signals and intersection improvements
- will reduce some problems
- this is a very logical choice
- yes! yes! should have been done years ago

Strategy I

- make no-passing zones in front of developments - Mill Race Farms
 - no-passing; control the traffic flow with funds to police departments
 - should be done in conjunction with others like 538 - signing, etc
 - need subsidizing of enforcement (extra police)
 - not long term solution
-

- Make Mill Rd one way north; put light with left turn both ways at Old Mill on Main St - RT 45 (*Mullica Hill*)
- light at RT 322 and RT 45 - change light so east on RT 322 can turn right at same time as north on RT 45 can turn left onto W 322
- increase light timings at 322/45, 295 Commodore Business (*industrial park*), Wawa before 55 (*Richwood*)
- no turn on red at RT 322 and RT 45 coming from RT 322
- make a left turn lane at the Shell station and increase the left turn lane length at 322 westbound - Harrison House (*Mullica Hill*)
- 322 was planned as a major east-west route; updating to accommodate the increase in volume is the way to go
- do not widen road in front of our home - next to Wawa (*CR 538*); too noisy now
- leave RT 45 and RT 322 with a Right Turn On Red
- put traffic signal at RT 607 to control traffic flow
- reduce the speed limit between Commodore Barry Bridge and Wawa (*CR 538*) on RT 322 and enforce it; fix "the curve" near Commodore 295
- may delay major improvement needed on 322 with bypass
- improve/widen existing 322

Strategy J

- this would help cure one of the worst traffic congested areas
 - too much lost; wont save; bad for environment; will destroy business
 - around Mullica Hill but not historic Main St; no parking on 45 would help
 - RT 322 has been a major corridor through Mullica Hill for hundreds of years; residents who live there now know that traffic has always been a problem; they chose to move there; therefore you should widen 322 in the main area of Mullica Hill; don't make their problem someone else's by condemning farmland elsewhere
 - only fixes part of the issue and would impact more residential then others
 - this is the solution - how long?
 - now this makes sense combined with F, H and I
 - best alternative due to cost constraints
 - there is just as much need for a bypass around Richwood as in Mullica Hill; after Richwood the traffic divides between 322 and 55 going east; its time to get moving before the problem worsens
 - strongly disagree
 - only if immediately around Mullica Hill
-

- need to define where bypass will go; if it stays in Harrison Township I agree; if bypass extends into other townships I disagree
- takes open ground but maintains small town charm
- time has come
- construct Mullica Hill Bypass
- too much land acquisition
- seems most logical
- this is a good choice but K is better
- causes the same problems in a different location
- B/C ratio probably doesn't justify

Strategy K

- this seems to be the best solution to the problem
 - you are satisfying out-of-state drivers at the expense of Mullica Hill residents
 - widening of 322 would not be needed with a bypass
 - too much lost; wont save; bad for environment; will destroy business environmental problems
 - no - reroute 322 traffic to 538 then Old Mill Rd to 55
 - probably the best - realistic but cost prohibitive - do not widen 322 without other fix
 - would take longer to build than bypass, community opposition strong
 - too much development at this point - waited too long
 - afraid widening will encourage more traffic from out-of-state into an area which is already growing quickly
 - use existing highway to funnel more traffic
 - your traffic counts show 322 to 55 is the preferred route - make it work
 - widen 322 but not to 4 lanes and fix speed limits and double lines
 - too many homes and properties would be effected by the widening; properties could not handle the traffic increase
 - strongly disagree
 - what are you waiting for?
 - construct Mullica Hill Bypass
 - widening to 4 lanes would empty twice as many cars into Mullica Hill faster
 - better than new road with disruption across entire county
 - agree only if alternate stays within Mullica Hill; widen yes but alternate route would cut through other townships - same problem
-

Strategy L

- this would relieve traffic congestion both local and shore; and bring safety to our present road
- too much development in area, environmental problems
- unrealistic cost implications
- do it!
- not good for the environment to build new roads; use what's already there, ie RT 322
- this does not need to be built; I think we can use the roads already in existence
- this is the safest alternative for existing residents but was never explained to public
- sounds great but too many acquisitions and problems for many families
- acquire land at low cost and it will not be a band-aid solution as the strategies above are
- agree even if it was along 538; eliminate driveways onto major road
- strongly disagree
- no new highway, we'll fight it!
- too many negative effects
- must see proposed route before opinion is given
- I think ultimately the DVRPC will recommend this strategy
- disagree unless road alt. would be in far South Jersey, Salem County to handle Delaware and points south traffic
- No! No! turnpike or new 4 lane highway
- not enough information to determine overall B/C

Strategy M

- would help some
- who cares
- it isn't related
- save it for Salem County
- disagree, money is needed for this corridor
- states should improve for long term
- alt. around Woodstown would dissipate southern traffic with minimal impact to town

Strategy N

- not necessary
 - rail lines might help daily traffic but not weekends
 - why?
 - it isn't related
-

- not practical
- belongs with the other antiques in Mullica Hill
- yes Glassboro to Camden/Phila or to Trenton but not for shore traffic

General

- make 322 from Mullica Hill to Richwood a no-passing zone because this is the only straight break away to pass; the traffic picks up speed and when I want to make a left turn into my driveway I have had several near misses because the people want to pass and I have slowed down to make a left turn
 - another traffic problem is at 45 and at the Old Red Mill (*Mullica Hill*) because of the traffic problem from 45 to Mill Rd; People go straight and make a left at the Old Mill to avoid the stop sign; this endangers people at the stop sign trying to make a left on to 45 south to go to 77 south; my car was under the trailer of a truck trailer because the trucker wanted to make the left to avoid the stop sign
 - Block off Blue Route and Commodore Barry Bridge
 - Strategies F,G,H,I: combinations of any or all of these will be very beneficial; I can't see them being short term relief; also can be done relatively soon; very few cons in these categories
 - Strategies E, F, G, H, I: prefer a combination of signing, intersection improvements, and alternate routes
 - when traffic going east to 55 comes to the Shell station (*Mullica Hill*), go straight on 45 south to 77 south, to intersection of 538, turn left onto 538, at first intersection (*CR 641*) make a left it's a straight run to 55; this would relieve the traffic congestion in Richwood
 - need No Turn On Red sign at 45 and 322 (Harrison House) so Mullica Hill residents can get out of their driveways; safety issue
 - 322 could be widened but some of the highway could be below grade
 - there is no one solution; a multi faceted approach will have the most benefit
 - state has right of ways already, strategy J and K are best alternative to problem; improve 322 and construct bypass around Mullica Hill
 - put the solution where you have the problem - Mullica Hill; Lower Gloucester County is not vacant land, its the best of our farmland and what's left of our greenspace and natural areas
-

Appendix F

Press Coverage

Yield on traffic plans

Public input to help cut east-west snarls

By ELLIOT GOLDBERG
Staff Writer

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is getting ready for three public meetings to thrash out opinions about how to best deal with east-west traffic snarls in Gloucester County.

Exact meeting dates haven't been announced, but the regional planning agency says it doesn't want a repeat of the indignation that greeted the New Jersey Turnpike Authority's defunct plans for an east-west connector road.

Because of the public outcry, the turnpike panel last year killed off immediate plans for a connector that would have bisected the county and linked the toll road with the Atlantic City Expressway.

The DVRPC, however, started studying east-west traffic flows even before the ill-fated turnpike proposal emerged in late 1994. A new phase of the county study calls for public input, said John Ward, the DVRPC's senior transportation planner.

"You know what happened with the turnpike thing. They did it in a black box. Nobody knew what was going on. . . Not that we have a project like the turnpike connector," Ward said.

As a planning agency, the DVRPC has no power to build or even suggest a massive road project.

The \$93,000 traffic-count phase, now nearing completion, has concentrated on peak volume on U.S. Route 322 between the Commodore Barry Bridge east to Route 55. Most emphasis has been put on weekend days during the summer, when shore-bound traffic can boost vehicle counts by 8,000 to more than 20,000 a day on some segments of Route 322.

DVRPC and county officials expect the study to yield suggestions for having less traveled east-west roads take some of the Route 322 load, with signs directing motorists to alternate routes, intersection and signal improvements, road widening and short-segment bypasses around bottlenecks.

(See TRAFFIC, Page A-8)

Traffic

A-8 Gloucester County Times, Woodbury, N.J., Wednesday, March 27, 1996

(Continued from Page A-1)
Ward said the "public participation outreach initiative," funded with an additional \$80,000 from the state Department of Transportation, will not limit itself to the traffic study's

boundaries. The public sessions are intended to get comments on east-west traffic throughout the county, he said.

The east-west solutions are needed because all of the county's limited access superhighways — routes 295, 42 and 55 — run north-south.

"We want to reach out to the municipalities and find out some of the problems they have with east-west travel," Ward said. DVRPC has offered to hold

briefing sessions at governing body meetings in any municipality with a specific question. The Gloucester County Mayors Association, which set up its own transportation committee in response to the turnpike plans, is

also trying to increase public input for the DVRPC study. "I think the most important thing is that the turnpike connector is dead, and we have that from the governor," said Washington Township Mayor Gerald Luongo, who chairs the transportation committee of the mayors' group.

Nothing that the DVRPC's final report will likely include a "do nothing" option, as well as road modifications that be termed

"low impact," Luongo said. "It should tell us once and for all if they (county residents) want something done or if they don't want something done" about the east-west traffic.

Although there is no set schedule, Ward said the three public meetings are expected to take place in different sections of the county in May or June. The entire DVRPC study must be complete by July 1997, based on current funding, he said.

try on traffic proposal

Plans for an east-west highway went nowhere. This time, officials are making sure they listen to the community.

By David Klane
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

WOODBURY — One year after residents scuttled proposals for a four-lane highway that would have sliced through Gloucester County backyards, businesses and farmland, a different planning commission is nearing the end of a three-year traffic study.

And treading very gingerly. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, in fact, wants to make it clear that it is not the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the agency that faced massive public opposition to its toll-road proposal before killing it last April.

Likewise, the planners at the Philadelphia-based agency are trying to avoid a label the turnpike authority wore, unfairly or not, a year ago: a bureaucracy unwilling to listen to the public.

The DVRPC is launching a four-month effort to seek input from local officials and residents. Planners will appear at meetings to answer questions about their study this month. In June, they will host three community meetings, as yet unspecified, to find out what county residents think are the most serious east-west transportation problems.

The meetings coincide with the conclusion of the commission's \$200,000 study of traffic patterns along Route 322, a popular summer-time artery for South Jersey and Pennsylvania residents headed to the Shore. The state Department of Transportation and Gloucester County paid for the study.

The commission will likely recommend some intersection improvements, minor widening of Route 322 and new signs to disperse traffic onto other county roads, said John Ward, the DVRPC planner overseeing the project.

"This is very different than what was done with the turnpike," he said.

As is often the case with suggestions for road improvements in the county, not everyone agrees. Among them is newly elected South Harrison Councilman Roger Samartino, a vocal critic of the turnpike plan who formed a group to keep an eye on discussions about the road — even after officials insisted it was dead.

"I'm a little cynical," he said last week. "I think they ultimately want one route from the Commodore Barry Bridge east-west through Gloucester County to Atlantic City, whether it's a two-lane road or a four-lane highway. The public meetings are a way to say, 'We went to the people.'"

Samartino, like others, supports widening Route 322 and building a Mullica Hill bypass, an idea the state has long studied but ultimately dismissed for lack of money.

Jane A. Mangano, another outspoken resident whose home would have been sacrificed to the toll

New highway plans won't bypass the public

EAST-WEST TRAFFIC from GL 1 road, says the DVRPC is on the right track — as long as it can educate people on both sides of the river about the travel alternatives.

"I know at certain hours, certain days, certain times of the year not to go near Route 322," the Woolwich Township homemaker said.

Others apparently do not. The commission found that summer weekends bring thousands of additional cars on certain parts of the state route, which cuts through Logan and Woolwich, winds

through Mullica Hill, then shoots through Glassboro and Monroe. The surrounding county road network sees much more modest increases during the summer.

The idea, Ward said, is to use new signs to shift some of that traffic onto different county roads, depending on where drivers are headed.

Figuring out just where to channel those cars is one aim of the public sessions. Ward says he expects some residents to oppose making their roads alternate routes to the

Shore, and figures that the county and the state will have to compromise with the townships to reach a solution.

After the public meetings, the DVRPC planners will draft a report and issue recommendations to the county freeholders and the state Department of Transportation.

"There's going to be some give-and-take, and some of the municipalities are going to have to work together," he said. "It's not just a parochial issue."

Relief for woes on 322?

Traffic solutions aired in Woolwich

By DIANE M. WATSON
Staff Writer

WOOLWICH TWP. — In the search for ways to reduce U.S. Route 322 traffic congestion, a Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission representative Thursday night jotted down suggestions from by township committee members, other local officials and residents.

The DVRPC is conducting traffic movement studies on a heavily traveled sections of the road, one of the county's few east-west arteries. The agency is sending staffers to meetings in municipalities that have requested input into possible solutions.

DVRPC representative John Ward pointed out the increase in area development over the last 10 years on maps. Gloucester County Planning Director Chuck Romick gave some background on increased traffic flows on Route 322, the only major highway running from the western portion of Gloucester

(See TRAFFIC, Page A-2)

(Continued from Page A-1)

County to South Jersey shore areas — a problem that is worst during the summer months.

"A few years ago, we asked the DVRPC to conduct a study of traffic movement in the 322 area," Romick said. "We asked them to review the network, with improvements to help the traffic flow; there has been data collection, looking at traffic counts and land use obstructions. Prior to the last phase, we recommended public outreach."

Ward kicked off his presentation by saying, "The problems can get worse if we don't do anything." He showed maps of the area as part of a "Travel Time Study," which offered several alternatives to 322, and the time it would take to reach shore points by using the alternatives. He also showed a license plate survey of the origins and numbers of vehicles heading to the shore via Route 322.

Ward also offered data suggesting long-term growth in the county also requires addressing the problem. DVRPC projections say that by the year 2020, Gloucester County municipalities will have grown by 261.8 percent in population and 277 percent in employment over 1990 levels.

"We're reaching out to municipalities," Ward said. "We're not here to say, 'Here's what you need.' You need to tell us what your problems are."

And that they did. Kingsway Regional High School Superintendent Terrence Crowley said the intersection of Kings Highway and Route 322 often creates "a real and potential impact on students" in terms of safety. He expressed concern about a lack of turning lanes and a crest in the roadway that makes for poor visibility. Problems are especially after acute after school sports events in the spring and fall, he said.

"We have not heard from the state yet on this," Crowley noted. "I'm requesting the problem be addressed, and widen turn lanes and signal controls. This will reduce accidents and the flow of traffic."

Mayor Joseph Rizzi presented

some suggestions from the township police department. They included reducing speeds in the area between New Jersey Turnpike Exit 2 and Interstate 295 from 50 to 45 mph; enacting no-passing zones between Kings Highway and Paulsboro Road, and between Exit 2 and Pauls-

boro Road; and widening the Route 322-Kings Highway and Route 322-Swedeboro-Paulsboro Road intersections.

County Freeholder Stephen Atkinson told residents county officials would be "sensitive to your concerns," and informed them of another ongoing study with Rutgers University regarding increasing east-west public transportation as a further means to reduce the number of vehicles clogging the area.

Residents expressed desires for repainted road lines; placing streetlights on dark roads, particularly Route 538; widening certain sections of Route 322 and leveling the road bed in others; adding traffic lights and turn lanes; placing signs advising shore-goers of alternate routes; and increasing the number of warning signs around dangerous curves such as one on Route 322 near Stone-Meetinghouse Road.

While people gave suggestions, Freeholder Raymond Zane II warned of potential problems that may be caused in the effort to solve others.

"Do you know how much a traffic light can cost?" asked Zane, the freeholder who is responsible for the county highway department. "From \$200,000 to \$500,000," he said.

Zane also said costs for eliminating dips in roads can also run high, pointing to discussions about a \$3 million estimate for doing the same thing along a three-quarter mile section of Breakneck Road. And he said diverting Route 322 traffic onto Route 538, a dark road, may increase accidents.

"I know we need a solution. There are some great ideas, but you've got to know what you're getting into," he added.

Ward said that three additional meetings, combining several municipalities that would be affected by any changes, will most likely be held before the summer. In the meantime, all information coming out of Thursday's meeting will be presented in a report to the municipality and for consideration by the state Department of Transportation, whose representatives were unable to attend.

Trying to unclog the corridor

Public meeting explores options to easing traffic along Route 322

By **DIANE M. WATSON**
Staff Writer

SOUTH HARRISON TWP. —

After appearing at the Woolwich Township municipal building two weeks ago, John Ward, senior transportation planner for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, continued to make his rounds in Gloucester County.

Ward paid a visit to the South Harrison Elementary School Tuesday night to discuss reducing traffic on Route 322.

The meeting was part of an ongoing study of traffic movement on the road from the Commodore Barry Bridge to Route 55. Route 322 is one of the few east-west corridors in the county and a path many shoregoers use to hit the beach during the summer.

At a municipality's request, the DVRPC will send a representative to acquire input from residents regarding minimizing traffic congestion, and present the facts and figures of their particular area to work together to achieve a solution.

Department of Transportation representative David Cox was present for the meeting, and mentioned two projects under discussion in the capital

improvements program that have bearing on the Route 322 issue. The first would involve widening 322 from two to four lanes from 295 to the Mullica Hill interchange at Route 45. The second plan would improve the use of ramps at the junction of Route 42 and Route 295 to amend traffic flow.

When one resident inquired about the bottlenecks that may occur when 322 is widened from two to four lanes to Mullica Hill, Cox said the proposition was "preliminary engineering" and the specifics still need to be fleshed out.

"We recognize there are problems in the corridor; the problems don't resolve themselves," Cox said. He said the length of time on whatever projects would be recommended by the DVRPC after the end of the year would depend on the scope of the project.

Ward presented various facts and figures. He showed maps of the area as he displayed a "Travel Time Study" in various forms, which offered several travel alternatives to 322, the time it would take to reach the shore points and how they would help cut down on heavy traffic.

He also explained a "License Plate Survey," which examined where most of the people came

from as they headed down Route 322, and noted how many cars passed through.

On a chart which compared population and employment numbers from 1990 with the projected numbers for the year 2020, the DVRPC expected South Harrison to experience a 20.8 percent growth in population and a 99.8 percent growth in employment.

In an effort to prevent the numbers from escalating any further, people are attempting to ascertain alternate routes and exploring possible improvements to the county roads.

Although many ideas were presented by concerned residents in the school gymnasium, one general consensus that received applause was that no "improvements" — or changes — be made to Route 538.

"We do not want to see Route 538 (Swedesboro-Franklinville Road) improved," one resident advised Ward. "(The problem) is not 538; we need to build a bypass around Mullica Hill. We don't want the problem shifted down south."

Others were in favor of a bypass around Mullica Hill, and one man even proposed an entirely new east-west corridor beginning in Oldmans Township and running through Salem

County to the shore, terminating much of the open land in the area "cheap" that could be utilized with a new road to provide accessibility to Routes 45, 55 and 47.

While most did not approve of creating a new east-west route, all supported the idea of improving traffic flow — whether with improvements to Route 322 or by expanding Route 42 — in an effort to direct traffic away from the area. Much of the out-of-state shore traffic is generated by Pennsylvania residents crossing the Walt Whitman Bridge.

"Why do we have to pay that price for out-of-state people to come through to go down the shore?" asked one woman.

"We don't care where they go, we just don't want them here," another man said.

Ward said that three "regional" meetings, combining several municipalities that would be affected by any changes, will most likely be held in June before the DVRPC makes its final recommendations. In the meantime, all information gained by the meeting will be presented in a report to the municipality and for consideration by the state Department of Transportation.

Rte. 322 traffic meetings a snarl

Tomorrow, Gloucester's third public session should draw bumper-to-bumper attendance. Agreement? Well . . .

By Matt White
INQUIRER CORRESPONDENT

As John Ward is discovering, building a consensus is no easy trick in the traffic business.

A month ago, Ward, the senior traffic engineer for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, began holding a series of public meetings on the future of east-west transportation in Gloucester County.

A meeting in Woolwich drew about 30 people, he said, and South Harrison had about 80. But he and local officials believe those figures will be dwarfed at the final meeting, at 7 p.m. tomorrow in the Little Theater at Clearview Regional Junior High School in Harrison.

Route 322 and its future, Ward said, have been the focus of the meetings. So far, agreement has been scarce.

"One thing everyone agrees on is that they don't want more traffic on their roads," Ward said.

In Woolwich, which is bisected by Route 322, residents spoke up for plans designed to divert traffic onto what are now quiet back roads around the county before major overhauls are considered for 322.

In South Harrison, several miles south of 322, residents wanted to throw money at 322 because the extra traffic would otherwise end up on their quiet back roads.

In Harrison, a comment about 322 traffic in any diner or antique shop will get you a conversation, if not a fight. The road splits the town lengthwise and routinely clogs the downtown strip in Mullica Hill with Shore and commercial traffic.

Harrison officials have been pushing hard to get out word of tomorrow's meeting, putting announcements on a local cable station and in newspapers.

"This is very important in Harrison," Mayor Charles Tisa said. "The DRVPC wants to help us out, and they have the money to do it. They have a possible way to bypass Mullica Hill center, but if we're going to do that, we have to be careful about how we [allow] building. We have to get on the same page."

One local businessman, however, feels the time for a bypass has come and gone.

"That's been an alternative for the past 50 years," said George Benas, owner of Harrison House, a restaurant on Route 45. "There's been so much development in the area, the routes they'd like to take are developed. Fifteen years ago, it would have been great. As a taxpayer, rather than figure it out with a big-ticket item, I'd like to try to work with what we have using alternative routes."

"That's what they'd like to do," Tisa said, "but then South Harrison doesn't like that."

Traffic in Mullica Hill can sometimes resemble that of the clogged

See **TRAFFIC** on GL3

322 traffic: Moving topic at meetings

TRAFFIC from GL1
streets of Woodbury or Deptford residents say. For close to a mile through the business district, traffic from Route 322 joins traffic from Route 45. The crush creates unsafe conditions, they say, as cars congregate through the center of town.

It is slightly safer in the summer, others contend, because the traffic is at a bumper-to-bumper crawl most every day.

"All the locals seem to know alternate routes and the times of day stay off 322," Benas said.

Other possible fixes — such as directing traffic off the Commodore Barry Bridge onto smaller roadways or completing connecting ramps between Interstate 295 and Route 42 — draw traffic to those highways have been suggested at past meetings, Ward said, and probably will be again at tomorrow's.

"What the program will lead to we'll compile input from the residents into a report for the state planners," he said. "Then they have a feeling from residents that this is what you should be pursuing."

Three more public meetings — discuss specific east-west travel problems — will be held in June though the dates have not been scheduled. The DRVPC will then submit its recommendations to the state Department of Transportation.

Suggestions on easing Route 322 traffic sought

By DIANE M. WATSON
Staff Writer

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is urging residents who have suggestions for reducing the amount of traffic along U.S. Route 322 to make them — and soon.

Over the past couple of months, DVRPC Senior Transportation Planner John Ward, Gloucester County Planning Director Chuck Romick and Department of Transportation representative David Cox have been meeting with local municipalities individually to seek comments and questions from the public concerning increased use of Route 322. Now, three regional meetings have been scheduled at separate locations across the county so the majority of residents who would be affected may attend.

The first meeting is slated for June 11 at Clearview High School; the second for June 19 at Kingsway Regional High School; and the third will be held June 26 at Washington Township High School. All of the meetings are scheduled for 7 p.m.

The DVRPC has been conducting ongoing traffic movement studies of the road, which is one of the county's few east-west arteries — and the major preference of summertime Shore-goers — resulting in heavy traffic congestion, Ward said that while the other meetings, held at a township's request, were aimed more toward a part of 322 running through their particular area, these meetings are open to anyone and everyone as a more generalized forum.

"These (meetings) are open to anybody," Ward said. "We'd like to discuss the input from the individual meetings, suggested solutions, and to give other people an opportunity who weren't able to attend the other

meetings to listen to what has been said in the past and work out potential solutions."

Ward said that Romick will again be there to represent the county, and someone from the DOT will be present also to answer questions. He said the DVRPC will most likely have a package prepared to hand out, containing both a matrix that will identify solutions proffered by residents at past meetings and possibly a questionnaire that people may fill out on the spot or mail back to the DVRPC.

He said residents have been providing valuable input regarding the present condition of the road, and have legitimate concerns about its fate. Following the local meetings which were conducted, Ward said the DOT has already taken steps in response to some of the suggestions for smaller-scale operational improvements such as street lights and speed limit signs. The larger scale improvements, he said, are those to be included in the matrix to see what the level of support they receive.

Ward noted that the locations were determined for the convenience of the residents, but the presentation will be uniform at the three meetings.

"This will basically be the same meeting at each location; we're having three so people don't have to go across the county to attend," Ward said. "People are certainly invited to come to more than one, but it's not necessary since they will all be the same. We certainly won't turn anyone away."

Indeed, Ward says, just the opposite — and encourages people to turn out to make their own suggestions before the study is wrapped up.

"This most likely the last opportunity for this study that people have to give input," he said.

Planning commission co

By DIANE M. WATSON
Staff Writer

8/31/96 ACT
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DVRPC discusses Rte. 322 options

By ROE GENTIEU
Staff Writer

WOOLWICH TWP. — In the second of three regional meetings to solicit public input, The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission here presented a number of strategies to improve traffic flow through the cross-county east-west corridor.

The input from the public "will be documented" and used to make the commission's final recommendations to the Department of Transportation, said John Ward, a commission representative.

After the commission makes its recommendations, the DOT will chart a formal plan for the corridor, he said.

Some of the members at the meeting said they were tired of talking about the situation and wanted a definitive plan to fix congestion, mobility and safety problems throughout the corridor — specifically Route 322, the only highway which runs east to west through the county.

Jay Oliva of Richwood described the meeting as a "waste of time" and "lip service," because, he said, nothing is ever resolved at the meetings.

Richwood resident Dave Dantine agreed. "We're still talking about the situation, that's why people are irritated," he said.

"We've got to have some kind of leadership. This has been going on for five years and will continue to go unless a decision

is made," said Swedesboro Mayor Dave Azzari.

John Ward, a planning commission representative, said the Department of Transportation decided to take suggestions and strategies from municipal authorities and the public before engineers drafted a formal plan.

The DOT decided to ask for input before coming up with a formal plan because the public furor created over the Turnpike Authority's bypass plan last year, Ward said.

"The DOT is staying back and asking, 'What do you want?'" Ward said. "The last time the DOT said they were going to come down and do something (without getting input from the public) they got kicked out."

A representative from the DOT could not attend Wednesday's meeting, Ward said.

But Charles Romick, director of the county Planning Department, was in attendance. "We didn't want to do it that way," he said, referring to the Turnpike Authority plan that "did not include any input from the public."

Ward presented 14 strategies at the meeting. All were suggestions brought up either by citizens or authorities at previous municipal meetings, he said.

Among the strategies was an option which called for the construction of a new highway that might improve east-west traffic flow and reduce congestion on Route 322, Ward said. Some of the drawbacks of the option, he said, are its extremely high cost and the potential

taking of property used by residences, farms and businesses.

Woolwich resident JoAnn Laughlin was opposed to the idea of building a new highway. "It will destroy what is left of our farmland and open space."

Some of the other options presented were to widen Route 322 and construct a bypass around Mullica Hill, to spread traffic among existing roads through intersection improve-

ments, and to make strategic intersection and operational improvements on Route 322.

Ward said that traffic counts on Route 322 are higher than any other road in the county that the commission studied. Ward said the commission found that 24,000 cars passed through a traffic count on Route 322 between Route 130 and Interstate 295 one Friday during the summer.

Solution sought for Route 322 traffic woes

By JEREMY KOHLER
Courier-Post Staff

HARRISON — Mullica Hill may be the gem of Gloucester County but try driving through on a Sunday night in July.

Invariably, the main drag, Route 322, will be choked with traffic, mostly Pennsylvania drivers heading home from the Jersey Shore.

Out-of-state drivers use Route 322 as a shortcut between the Commodore Barry Bridge and Route 55 or the Atlantic City Expressway.

On Monday, Mark Roth, a planner from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, met with 130 Harrison residents to discuss how to ease the highway's traffic problems. Most of the residents attending live in Mullica Hill, a quaint village known for its antiques shops.

Residents told Roth they want the state to build a bypass to ease the traffic.

"Sunday night from the Commodore Barry Bridge to Glassboro it is bumper to bumper," said Sally Murphy, who lives on the highway.

The state and county jointly hired the commission in 1993 to study alternate routes. The DVRPC had already held meetings with residents of Woolwich and South Harrison. The study is independent of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority plan proposing a four-lane bypass. That plan was abandoned in March 1995 after massive public opposition.

Harrison residents told Roth they want the state to build a new highway from the bridge to the Expressway.

"We need a new road with limited access — a 295-type of road," said Dave Dantine, who also lives on Route 322.

The commission will finish its

Route 322/Solution sought for traffic troubles in Glouco

Continued from Page 1A

report by summer and submit it to the Department of Transportation, which will decide where to make road improvements.

Ward said the commission will seek a consensus at three more "regional" meetings by June — probably in Woolwich, Harrison and Monroe.

In earlier meetings, residents of Woolwich and South Harrison have suggested remedies that would push traffic into a neighboring community, noted senior

planner John D. Ward.

For instance, Woolwich residents suggested directing traffic onto other roads, such as Route 538 through South Harrison. But South Harrison residents favored keeping the bulk of the traffic on Route 322, Ward said in an interview earlier Monday.

"The real issue for these municipalities is to realize it's not just a municipal issue," Ward said. "East-west travel is a countywide issue. There will have to be some give and take."

Please see ROUTE 322, Page 4A

Efforts continue to improve safety along Route 322

By BERNIE WEISENFELD
Courier-Post Staff

HARRISON — Just before Labor Day weekend last year, Nick Herman had a hankering for some apples from a produce stand across Route 322 from his home in Cider Press Estates.

Slowed a bit by a new knee joint on that Thursday morning, he walked across the busy country road, which is often jammed in the summer by shorebound traffic from North Jersey and Pennsylvania, and bought a basket of apples. But he never got to enjoy them.

While crossing back, Herman, 80, was hit and critically injured by a 75-year-old woman headed to a campground from Middlesex County. She apparently did not see him over a rise in Route 322 as it approaches Mullica Hill, a quaint antique store haven.

Herman died a week later and the accident prompted his daughter to campaign to make state Route 322 safer. Herman lived with his daughter, Betty Palm, at Cider Press.

Along with a neighbor, Betty Palm's letter-writing campaign to the state Transportation Department got a lower speed limit sign posted for the road. Instead of 50 mph, it's now 45.

But Palm is not satisfied. She wants the

limit reduced to 35 mph, sidewalks built into Mullica Hill and the rise in Route 322 cut down.

"They say it's going to cost too much" to lower the road three or four feet, she said.

Palm has been joined in her Route 322 campaign by a variety of residents and agencies including the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the owner of a Mullica Hill bookstore, the management of a Logan business park and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

But while Betty Palm won a minor victory in getting the speed limit lowered on Route 322, the larger traffic problems of an often-overloaded, two-lane road endure. And they worsen every summer on the route leading from the Commodore Barry Bridge, across Gloucester County, and into Atlantic City.

"It's a huge, huge problem," said Sally Murphy, owner of Murphy's Loft bookstore in Mullica Hill. "And nobody understands why something isn't being done."

A proposal to build a new bypass road, the most ambitious solution for Route 322, was beaten back by community resistance. Three alternate routes were proposed to connect the Turnpike, which has an exit on Route 322, with the Atlantic City Expressway in Washington Township.

Please see ROUTE 322, Page 5B

Continued from Page 1B

But many county residents didn't like any of the routes. Why take farms and houses to make it easier for Pennsylvanians to speed to Atlantic City? That was the question shouted by hundreds of Gloucester County residents at hearings on several bypass routes offered by the Turnpike authority last year.

Others in bypass-impacted towns like Washington Township contended that some of the heavy traffic is homegrown, coming out of the increasing number of housing developments on Route 322 in Harrison Township.

Bookstore owner Murphy, a pro-bypass organizer, blames the opposition on politicking by Washington Township resident Mary Virginia Weber, who then ran successfully for the county freeholder board last November.

"I don't want to say we've given up," Murphy said. "But I think we realize we are powerless."

Weber maintains her objections were legitimate. "It was absolutely destroying neighborhoods and towns and it was ridiculous," she said.

So the plans were shelved in March 1995. "People wanted this thing to go away," concluded state transportation commissioner Frank Wilson, a member of the Turnpike authority.

But the caravans of cars and trucks from Memorial Day to Labor Day haven't gone away. In the Cider Press development on Friday night, Saturday morning and Sunday night all summer, there is only one answer for residents who need to run an errand or pick up a youngster.

"You don't," said Betty Palm. "Unless there is a nice guy on the road that lets you out."

"There has been a steady increase in traffic for the last four or five years," said Logan deputy Police Chief Bill Dutka, who makes liberal use of back roads during the summer. "I have to go two miles, I'll drive 10," he said.

Dutka traces the volume of vehicles on Route 322 to completion of the Pennsylvania "Blue Route" highway from the Commodore Barry Bridge to King of Prussia, Pa. The effect in New Jersey wasn't anticipated, he said.

Some of the traffic never gets past Muhlbaier's curve, a sharp, hidden bend in Route 322 in front of an industrial park, Dutka said. Since 1971, 200 accidents have been reported there. Only two were fatal, but an overturned truck

can stop traffic for nearly a day, the officer said.

Liberty Property Trust, owner of the industrial park on the curve, is now negotiating with the state to turn over enough land to straighten out the road, Dutka said.

Straightening out the rest of Route 322 will be tougher, concedes John Ward, traffic planner for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The commission held a series of information-gathering meetings last spring, asking residents for their solutions. It will present them sometime this fall to the county mayors association and the state Transportation Department, Ward said.

Unlike the Turnpike authority, "we had nothing on the drawing board. We were coming out asking for input," said Ward.

Ideas ranged from the ridiculous — closing Commodore Barry Bridge — to the roundabout — diverting traffic onto Route 538, another country road from Swedesboro to Route 322 in Monroe. Some suggested widening Route 322, Ward said.

Other suggestions: impose a road improvement tax on Barry bridge users, or build a road that loops around Mullica Hill, where traffic bottlenecks on weekends as antique buffs and beach bums jam the road where Route 322 joins the town's Main Street.

Some suggestions, such as the loop, were good, Ward said. But time is the enemy, he added.

"The problem is the development that's occurring in the Harrison Township-Mullica Hill area. It's prime right now for residential development. And areas that may hold a corridor for a new road are starting to fill up."

Nor is the state Transportation Department, which commissioned Ward's report, in a hurry to fix the road.

"The big thing is New Jersey DOT would like to see some kind of support for improvements that are recommended," said Ward. Unlike the Turnpike authority, "they're not going to want to come out here to South Jersey to do something and get bashed in the head by the locals. They don't want to pour something down the throats of the locals."

Sally Murphy has her own solution. She plans to buy a vacation home down south and close her Mullica Hill bookstore for the summers.

