

# DVRPC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## DVRPC ADOPTS *HORIZONS* LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR THE DELAWARE VALLEY

None of us has a crystal ball that can foresee the future, but DVRPC has developed the next best thing. For the past two years, the Commission has worked with city, county and state officials, transportation operating agencies and citizen representatives on *Horizons, The Year 2025 Plan for the Delaware Valley*. This overall effort, which consists of *Land Use and Transportation Plans*, as well as the *Regional Airport Systems Plan*, will help shape growth and development in our region over the next 25 years. In April, the DVRPC Board adopted all three plans.

"We are pleased that our Board voted to adopt *Horizons*. Our recommendations link investment decisions with sound land use practices that will help the region reach its full potential in the future," said John J. Coscia, DVRPC Executive Director.

**The Horizons Land Use Plan** focuses on planning for open space as well as centers and corridors in the Delaware Valley. Major principles include revitalization and recentralization in existing developed areas, especially the core cities of Philadelphia, Trenton, Camden and Chester; growth management with transportation linkage to curb sprawl and provide more options for transit, walking and bicycle trips; preservation of farmlands, natural features and open spaces to maintain a healthy

environment and quality of life; and enhanced community and regional character to attract national and international recognition of the Delaware Valley as a dynamic, desirable place to live and work.

**"We are pleased that our Board voted to adopt *Horizons*. Our recommendations link investment decisions with sound land use practices that will help the region reach its full potential in the future,"**

— John J. Coscia, DVRPC Executive Director

**The Horizons Transportation Plan** targets over \$35 billion over the next 25 years to rebuilding and modernizing the existing highway and transit system. In order to develop the Transportation Plan, meetings were held between DVRPC and the two state departments of transportation, each of the nine counties in the region, and the major transit operators including SEPTA, New Jersey Transit and PATCO. The plan places special emphasis on highway and transit facilities, goods movement, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. It also provides a listing of new facilities and services, significant upgrades and future study areas.



**The Regional Airport Systems Plan (RASP)** recognizes that there is insufficient future operating capacity at Philadelphia International Airport. To help alleviate pressure on Philadelphia International, the plan recommends increased commercial service at Trenton-Mercer, New Castle County, Atlantic City and Lehigh Valley airports. The plan also recognizes the need to preserve all existing suburban airports and, in selected cases, it recommends extending runways and/or purchasing land for aircraft storage. Additional airport zoning by local municipalities to prevent encroachment and safety hazards by adjacent development is also proposed.

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# NEW COMMISSIONERS NAMED TO DVRPC BOARD

**D**VRPC recently welcomed *Robert A. Baker, Jerald R. Cureton, Lewis F. Gould, Thomas Gurick, Susan Schruth* and *Thomas Hickey* to its Board of Commissioners. These individuals will in the near future examine and vote on such issues as implementation of *Horizons*, the Year 2025 Long-Range Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) adoption and amendments, and recommendations from the Regional Citizens Committee.

**Robert A. Baker** (representing the Pennsylvania Governor's Policy Office) is Director of Governor Tom Ridge's Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Office. Most recently, Baker worked as a consultant for HMS Success in Pittsburgh. He previously was Assistant Vice President for State and Local Affairs at Conrail's Philadelphia headquarters. Baker has worked for the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh.

**Jerald R. Cureton** (representing Burlington County) is a founding partner and President of Cureton Caplan, P.C., where he specializes in commercial litigation and chairs the firm's employment law department. He is a graduate of Temple University and the Marshall-Wythe School of Law at the College of William and Mary. Cureton is a member of the New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida and American Bar Associations, as well as the Burlington County and Camden County Bar Associations.

**Lewis F. Gould, Jr.** (Montgomery County), a graduate of Temple University and the Dickinson School of Law, is a partner at

Duane, Morris, & Hecksher LLP in Philadelphia, where he co-chairs the Intellectual Property Law Department. He is a member of the International Trademark Association, American Intellectual Property Law Association,

Mid-Atlantic Region in July of 2000. Ms. Schruth first joined FTA in 1988 in the Chief Counsel's Office, as the primary administrative law attorney for the agency, and then was appointed Acting Director of Civil Rights in 1993.



**DVRPC's newest Board Commissioners** include, from left, **Lewis F. Gould, Jr.** (Montgomery County); **Jerald R. Cureton** (Burlington County); **Thomas Hickey** (PATCO); and **Robert A. Baker** (PA Governor's Policy Office). Missing from the photo are **Susan Schruth** and **Thomas Gurick**.

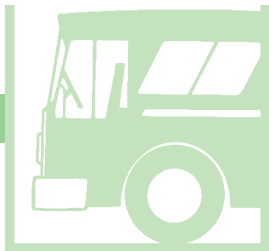
the Philadelphia Intellectual Property Law Association, and the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Bar Associations.

**Thomas Gurick** (Camden County) is a professional radio personality. He began his on-air career at Camden's WCAM at the age of 16. Gurick announces and produces for KYW-News Radio in Philadelphia. A third generation resident of Gloucester City, he serves on City Council, and as a liaison to the Camden County Department of Public Works. He is a graduate of Camden County College.

**Susan Schruth** (FTA) was appointed Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration's Philadelphia

Ms. Schruth is a member of the New York and Virginia Bar Associations. She has received numerous awards including two Secretarial Gold Medals.

**Thomas Hickey** (PATCO) is the General Manager of the Port Authority Transit Corporation. A veteran public transit professional with 23 years of experience, Hickey is a nationally recognized authority in the field of passenger rail operations and inter-modal facility design. He is a licensed member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and a U.S. Navy veteran. Hickey is a graduate of Villanova University. ☺



# NEW REPORT EXAMINES HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY

Is homeownership becoming more or less attainable for Delaware Valley residents? DVRPC poses that question and brings us answers in the new report *Homeownership: A Dream Still Vanishing?*

*Still Vanishing?* is a follow-up to a report completed in 1990 entitled, *Homeownership: A Vanishing Dream?*, which focused specifically on the ability of the region's middle-income family to purchase a median-priced housing unit in each of the region's 353 municipalities. The new study is an update of DVRPC's 1990 housing affordability assessment using 1998 housing and tax data. Unlike the first study, this report also considers housing affordability for first-time homebuyers and for families who already own a home but are considering relocating, in addition to median-income families. Difficulties in securing sound, affordable housing in accessible


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locations, once limited to the lowest income segment of the population, continue to affect moderate and median income households.

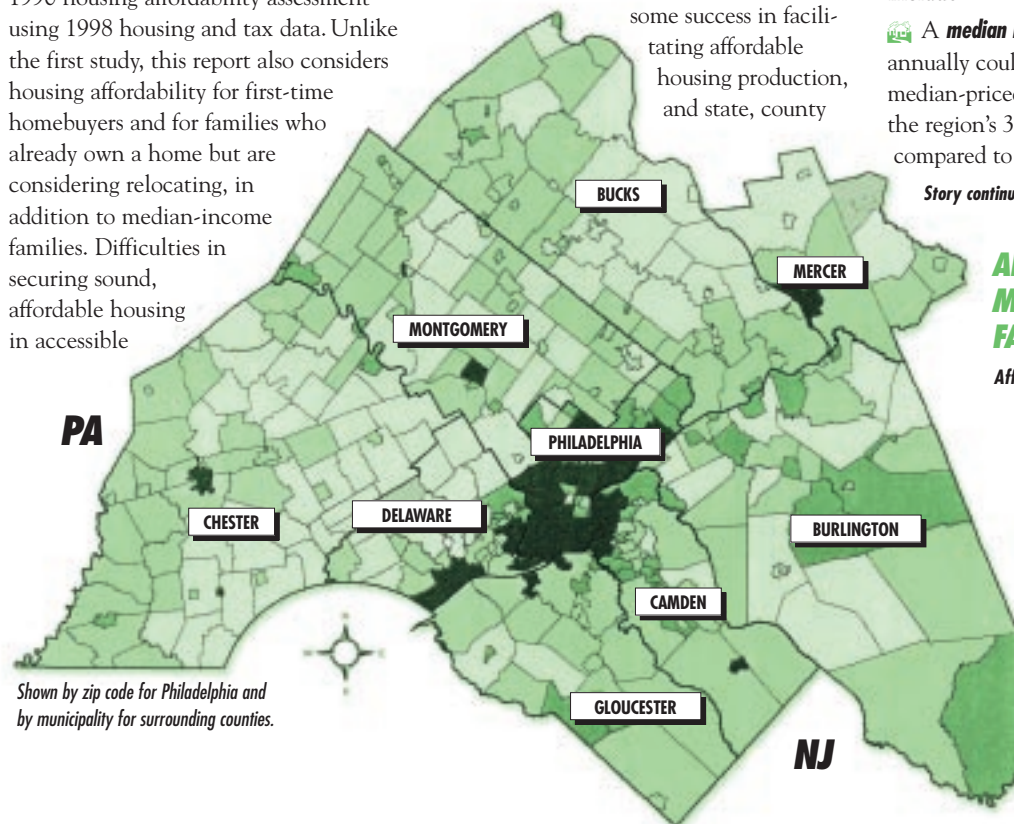
Based on the study's methodology, housing affordability for prospective middle income homebuyers has improved significantly since 1989. New Jersey's Council on Affordable Housing has had some success in facilitating affordable housing production, and state, county

and even local officials have sought to increase opportunities for homeownership by implementing programs and revising regulations. Housing has become more affordable, however, largely because of changes in the market rather than changes in land use or development practices. Lower home mortgage interest rates combined with average incomes that increased faster than housing sales prices and the ability to provide a higher down payment have enabled many families to afford a home.

Additional results from *Still Vanishing?* include:

 A **median income family** earning \$55,330 annually could afford to purchase the median-priced housing unit in 67% of the region's 353 municipalities in 1998, compared to only 19% in 1989.

*Story continued on page 6.*



Shown by zip code for Philadelphia and by municipality for surrounding counties.

## AFFORDABILITY FOR MEDIAN INCOME FAMILIES, 1998

**Affordability Index\***



\*Affordability Index equals the region's median family income (\$55,330) divided by the minimum income required to purchase the jurisdiction's median-priced housing unit. An index greater than 1 therefore indicates that a median-priced home is affordable to the region's median-income buyer.

Source: Realist Inc. and Service One Assn. of Realtors compiled by DVRPC, March 2001.





## DVRPC ASSISTS IN IMPLEMENTING PENNSYLVANIA PROJECTS

For years, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT's) District 6-0 has worked in tandem with DVRPC on vital transportation interests and concerns. Recognizing that traditional highway projects were draining much of their time and manpower (leaving little time for non-traditional, yet equally important, smaller projects), PennDOT asked DVRPC for assistance.

***“A major component of the DVRPC mission is to provide technical support and services to agencies that require it. Such work doesn't always have a high profile or a huge price tag, but leaves a lasting impression among Delaware Valley residents.”***

A major component of the DVRPC mission is to provide technical support and services to agencies that require it. As a result, DVRPC now employs a full-time staff member strictly dedicated to helping coordinate a total of 48 non-traditional federally funded PennDOT projects; projects such as bike path construction, restoration of historic transportation buildings, improvements to scenic roads, and construction of pedestrian facilities and streetscape improvements. Such work doesn't always have a high profile or a huge price tag, but leaves a lasting impression among Delaware Valley residents. These projects are usually sponsored by local governments, public agencies or private non-profit

organizations, and are most often funded through the Transportation Enhancement Program (TE), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) or the Surface Transportation Program (STP/STU).

DVRPC's primary task within the project management role is to coordinate and facilitate the implementation process. Specifically, that means assisting project applicants through the preliminary engineering, final design and right-of-way acquisition phases.

Some of the projects underway are:

- **Quakertown Train Station Restoration** in Bucks County (rehabilitation of an historic train station that was partially destroyed in a fire);
- **Downingtown Streetscape Project** in Chester County (construction of a pedestrian scale shopping district along historic US 30);
- **Media Downtown Streetscape Project** in Delaware County (streetscape improvements in the central business district);
- **Chester Valley Trail Extension** in Montgomery County (part of a larger effort to provide a cross-county trail from Chester County to Bucks County);
- **I-95/Christian Street Pedestrian Improvement Project** in Philadelphia County (streetscape improvements, lighting, landscaping, and wall murals under I-95).

For more information about DVRPC's coordination with PennDOT on these and other projects, contact **Jacob Malikkal**, Project Implementation Coordinator at 215-238- 2923. Project status information is also available at [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).



### Ozone Action Season Getting Underway

The summer of 2001 could be one filled with hot, hazy days — days that generate ground-level ozone. DVRPC, as one of the participants in the Ozone Action Partnership in the Delaware Valley, is committed to educating the public about this common health hazard.

One way of promoting this awareness is by participating in the **Ozone Action Kick-Off Luncheon**, which was held on **May 15th at The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia**. Jon Nese, chief meteorologist for the Institute, served as the program host. He was joined by more than 100 state and local officials, business partners, and members of the media who gathered to honor Summer 2000 Merit Award winners including **WHYY, Verizon, STORMFAX, and AstraZeneca**. Participants were also informed of a new initiative known as **ecommute**, a national pilot program designed to study the impacts of telecommuting on reducing vehicle emissions.

Launched in 1996 by DVRPC in conjunction with a coalition of business, government and environmental groups, the Ozone Action program prepares forecasts of ground-level ozone concentrations, then enlists the media's help in broadcasting advisories and promoting voluntary ways to limit the emissions which cause ground-level ozone.

Watch for photos and more details about the Ozone Action Program and its Kick-Off Event in DVRPC's Summer Issue of *DVRPC News*.



# ONLINE MAPPING NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH [WWW.DVRPC.ORG](http://WWW.DVRPC.ORG)...BRINGING YOUR WORLD TO YOUR FINGERTIPS

Wouldn't it be great if you could create your own custom map featuring information about your neighborhood and neighborhoods surrounding you? Well, now all of this and more is possible through DVRPC's new and improved Online Mapping. This online **Geographic Information System (GIS)** application, developed by DVRPC as part of our Regional Information Network, contains a selective subset of GIS data appropriate for the World Wide Web. There are currently two applications with a third on the way.


## GENERAL MAPPING

This application was developed to provide access to basic map information in the nine-county Philadelphia metropolitan area for the general public. In *General Mapping* you can zoom in and out of the map, identify features, and add demographic 'Theme' data to the map. You can even print your map with a legend of mapped features.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MAPPING

This application was developed for TeamPA's 7-county Southeastern Pennsylvania region to assist in economic development of the region. *Economic*

*Development Mapping* allows the user to find a feature in a given layer, measure distances between two or more points, and create a buffer around a selected feature, as well as the same functionality found in *General Mapping*.

Available in June, *Conservation Planning Mapping*, developed under a grant from the William Penn Foundation, will provide specialized mapping information for conservation and natural resource agencies across the Delaware Valley. 

# Commission Funds Projects To Increase Access To Work For Lower-Income Persons

DVRPC recently approved approximately \$3 million in projects to help fund transportation services that facilitate access to jobs for welfare and lower-income persons, as well as reverse commute trips for the general population. This funding was made possible through a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) initiative called the Job Access and Reverse Commute Competitive Grant Program.

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) received approximately \$3 million of the \$100 million available for this program, nationwide, in FY 2001. A similar amount

is expected to be available in FY 2002. Although New Jersey did not receive FY 2001 funding for this program, New Jersey Transit evaluated project proposals in anticipation of FY 2002 funding.

***“DVRPC recently approved approximately \$3 million in projects to help fund transportation services that facilitate access to jobs for welfare and lower-income persons, as well as reverse commute trips for the general population.”***

DVRPC was charged with selecting project applicants, evaluating consistency

of proposed projects with existing guidelines, prioritizing and recommending projects for funding and committing to add projects to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) following grant approvals.

To foster coordination between SEPTA and welfare-to-work related transportation providers, SEPTA shared over \$800,000 with the following sub recipients: Bucks County Transportation Management Association (TMA), Chester County TMA, Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, Greater Valley Forge TMA, and Partnership TMA. These agencies will use this funding to provide service initiatives including new transit routes, vehicles and marketing and related support services.

●● HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (cont. from page 3) ●●

**Affordable housing opportunities remain concentrated in the region's oldest cities and boroughs** (including Philadelphia as well as Chester, Camden, Trenton, Norristown and Coatesville); its first generation suburbs (eastern Delaware County and northern Camden County); and in the region's more ex-urban and rural areas, such as southern Camden and Gloucester counties and western Chester County.

**New Jersey is generally more affordable than Pennsylvania**; 80% of the homes sold in the region's four New Jersey counties in 1998 were sold in "affordable" municipalities, as opposed to only 51% of the homes sold in the four suburban Pennsylvania counties.

A **typical first-time homebuyer** can afford to purchase a median-priced housing unit in 41% of the municipalities in the region's eight suburban counties, as well as the City of Philadelphia. Many of these locations,

however, are not located within reasonable proximity to concentrated employment opportunities and are not easily accessible via public transit.

Finally, once a family is able to buy their first home, they can then as **a repeat buyer** afford to purchase a median-priced home in 85% of the region's municipalities.

It should also be noted that this study considers housing affordability, but does not address housing quality, neighborhood character or any of the myriad of other factors that make a home attractive to a prospective homeowner. Thus, "affordable" municipalities may or may not be places where many families prefer to live. Additionally, the study does not consider affordability for current residents. Finally, another challenge for the region's suburban communities lies just ahead, as aging "baby-boomers" living in low density suburban developments reach retire-

ment and face the prospect of continuing to afford to maintain their current homes and lifestyles on lower, fixed incomes.

To obtain copies of *Homeownership: A Dream Still Vanishing?* please call **215-238-2828**.

**Visit us online  
and create your own  
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information about your  
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DVRPC's new  
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[www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)  
Details inside!**



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Since its establishment in 1965, DVRPC has been instrumental in ensuring the orderly growth of the bi-state region. As the federally-funded metropolitan planning organization, DVRPC also provides data and consulting services to public and private sector organizations, and fosters cooperation among all levels of government. Shown above is the nine-county Delaware Valley region.