

TWO-YEAR STUDY OF ROUTE 322 CORRIDOR COMPLETED

Traffic woes along the Route 322 Corridor in Delaware County will eventually be a thing of the past, with the help of a two-year study produced by DVRPC. The recently-published *Route 322 Land Use Strategies Study* was initiated by Delaware County to supplement PennDOT's plans for large-scale improvements to the corridor.

“DVRPC's study is intended to complement PennDOT's improvement efforts on this roadway. Recognizing that expanding the highway won't fully relieve traffic concerns, the study explores other ways to reduce congestion, manage access, increase safety, and plan for future growth to minimize the burden on the highway.”

The Route 322 corridor between I-95 in Chester City and Route 1 and Route 202 in Concordville has been plagued with congestion for years. The highway serves two conflicting functions: as a regional highway connecting I-95 to Route 1 and Route 202, and as a commercial center for retail shops, restaurants, and businesses. In an attempt to alleviate the problem, PennDOT plans to expand the seven-mile stretch of highway to four lanes (from its

existing two), add jughandles to limit left turns, and separate opposing directions of traffic in some places.

DVRPC's study is intended to complement PennDOT's improvement efforts on this roadway. Recognizing that expanding the highway won't fully relieve traffic concerns, the study explores other ways to reduce congestion, manage access, increase safety, and plan for future growth to minimize the burden on the highway.

The findings are consistent with other recent land-use studies, in recommending transit-oriented development (TOD). Many of the recommendations deal with transit and pedestrian improvements along Route 322 and nearby roads, increasing transportation alternatives, and controlling vehicle access to Route 322 from adjacent businesses and retail centers.

The study also includes general recommendations for the townships, such as:

- ▼ Ensuring that multi-family and affordable housing is available
- ▼ Preserving historical resources
- ▼ Installing bus shelters to enhance transit service
- ▼ Coordinating land use planning with the expansion of water and sewer facilities, directing development to land with access to these services

- ▼ Providing adequate park and recreational facilities
- ▼ Recommending zoning strategies (with proposed zoning districts) to help accomplish desired land use patterns.

Over the past year, DVRPC and the Delaware County Planning Department held several meetings with each of the municipalities to discuss the recommendations and to ensure implementation on the local level. By addressing the corridor as a whole, the study has created a framework that allows local projects to fit in as part of a larger land use and transportation strategy. ☺

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DVRPC BOARD ELECTS OFFICERS FOR FY 2003

Bucks County Commissioner **Charles H. Martin** has been elected Chairman of DVRPC's Board and Executive Committee for Fiscal Year 2003. The Board also elected New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner **James Fox** as Vice-Chair, Camden County Freeholder **Thomas Gurick** as Secretary, and Chester County Commissioner **Colin Hanna** as Treasurer. Their terms took effect at the July 25 Board meeting, and will continue through June, 2003.

"I congratulate the new Board Officers on their elections, and look forward to working with such a strong team of leaders," said John Coscia, Executive Director of DVRPC. "I expect them to provide valuable guidance in our projects for the upcoming year, and in shaping our vision for the future."

CHARLES MARTIN, a Bucks County Commissioner since 1995, has served as Secretary of the DVRPC Board for the past two years. Martin draws from over 30 years of professional corporate experience in customer service and public relations including media relations, consumer affairs, public policy, emergency planning and quality management. A graduate of Lebanon Valley College, Martin served 12 years as a local elected township official establishing policy, developing budget and responding to constituents. In his two terms on the Bucks County Board of Commissioners, he has served as Chairman of the Board four times.

JAMES FOX was appointed by Governor James E. McGreevey to head the New Jersey Department of Transportation in February 2002. In this role, Fox oversees

16,000 employees and a more than \$3 billion budget. Fox has had a long and distinguished career in state and federal government and politics, most recently as a partner at Winning Strategies, a Washington DC government relations and lobbying firm. Prior to that, he served as Executive Director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, where he oversaw day-to-day operations for 33 national Senate races. Fox has also served as Chief of Staff to US Senator Robert G. Torricelli, and as Deputy Chief of Staff to former Governor Jim Florio. Fox is a graduate of Villanova University.

THOMAS GURICK, who served as DVRPC Board Treasurer for FY 2002, is an elected member of the Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders. He is a professional radio personality who began his on-air career at Camden's WCAM at age 16.

A third-generation Gloucester City resident, his election to the Board of Chosen Freeholders in 2000 made him the first Gloucester City resident to serve as Freeholder in forty years. In addition to his Freeholder duties, Gurick is also a member of the Camden County Planning Board and acts as Liaison to the Camden County Department of Public Works. Gurick is a graduate of Camden County College.

COLIN HANNA, a Chester County Commissioner since 1995, has also held the DVRPC Chairmanship twice in the past. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Hanna has a distinguished professional background, including positions with CBS radio and WCAU-TV, acting as President of the largest advertising agency in Chester County, and launching two businesses. ☺



DVRPC's FY 2003 Chairman, Charles H. Martin. A Bucks County Commissioner since 1995, Martin draws from over 30 years of professional corporate experience in customer service and public relations.



A PERFECT TEN

The Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force, DVRPC's freight advisory committee, recently observed its tenth anniversary. Consisting of both carriers and shippers, the Task Force is an important means for integrating freight considerations into the regional planning process. On hand for the milestone meeting were representatives of the region's trucking industry: **Kevin Fisher of Nexus Distribution** (left), **Tom Carolan of Greenfield Transport** (seated), and **Tony Gemma of Roadway Express** (right).



SMART COMMUTE MORTGAGE PROGRAM

PROSPECTIVE HOME BUYERS NOW HAVE AN EXTRA INCENTIVE TO SETTLE NEAR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

In early September, DVRPC and a number of partners launched the **Smart Commute Mortgage**, a pilot program which offers financial incentives for purchasing a home near transit. Because public transportation costs less than car ownership, transit users can use their anticipated savings from reduced commuting costs as additional qualifying income for a mortgage.

Borrowers in this program can use the money they should save by taking transit to buy a more expensive home than they could afford with a traditional mortgage. Households with two wage-earners will be able to figure in an extra \$250 a month in income (or \$200 for one wage-earner households), qualifying them for a higher mortgage, which in turn will enable them to "buy more home."

The loans, which will be offered by Citizens Bank and underwritten by the

Fannie Mae Corporation, do come with conditions. Potential homes must be within a quarter mile of two or more bus stops or half a mile of a train station and accessible to transit on foot. The buyers will also have to limit themselves to two cars per couple, or one for a single person.

"One of the best ways to prevent sprawl is to promote growth in areas where public transit is available," said Barry Seymour DVRPC's assistant Executive Director of Regional Planning. "Smart growth, through programs such as this, will help alleviate congestion, encourage development in older communities, and provide environmental benefits like cleaner air."

Similar programs have been successful in other regions of the country, but Smart Commute is unique in the Philadelphia area and the largest launch of this program by Fannie Mae. DVRPC worked with The Reinvestment Fund to identify areas in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties that are eligible for this initiative, and will work to expand the program to New Jersey in the



The **Smart Commute Mortgage Program** was officially launched at a news conference at Norristown Transportation Center in early September. Speakers, from left to right, were: **Richard Maloney**, Vice President of Communications, SEPTA; **Zach Oppenheimer**, Senior Vice President of Single-Family Mortgage Business, Fannie Mae; the **Honorable Joseph Hoeffel**, U.S. House of Representatives; **Bette McTamney**, President, Montgomery County Association of Realtors; **John Held**, Director of Mortgage Banking, Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania; and **John J. Coscia**, Executive Director, DVRPC.



PROGRAM ENCOURAGES RECENT GRADS TO CONSIDER PHILADELPHIA

The Philadelphia region offers many unique recreational and historical experiences, but it is still not considered a “destination spot” for young college students to settle after graduation—not yet, anyway. DVRPC has received a two-year, \$200,000 grant from the Department of Economic and Community Development as part of the New Communities Program. The program aims to market and promote Southeastern Pennsylvania as a desirable place to live, work and play after graduation.

DVRPC's initiative is a partnership with Greater Philadelphia First (GPF) to identify, improve and market the quality of life factors that entice smart, talented college graduates to stay in Philadelphia. The Commission is hoping to combine its

resources and knowledge of the region with GPF's marketing expertise to establish the Philadelphia region as an ideal place for new graduates and young workers to settle.

The campaign aims to make the after-college transition easier by researching what amenities young professionals seek—such as good access to public transportation, affordable places to live, and plenty of entertainment, recreational and cultural amenities nearby—and to help identify areas in the region where young people might want to reside. Based on this information, DVRPC staff will work closely with GPF to develop a targeted marketing campaign, which will result in several products as well as the creation of two committees—a real estate task force and a Regional Livability Council—to most effectively address what this region has

to offer its young workers and where the region is lacking.

But this initiative looks at more than just identifying communities that are already friendly to young professionals. DVRPC also plans to link this effort to its newly formed Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) program. DVRPC has granted \$1 million to Pennsylvania communities and \$500,000 to New Jersey community recipients looking for seed money to stir economic development and revitalization in otherwise forgotten older boroughs and first generation suburbs. Using its knowledge of factors that will attract young people, the Commission can encourage older boroughs looking to revitalize and rebuild to focus on the type of amenities and affordable housing younger people desire. ☺

DVRPC TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR PHILADELPHIA NEIGHBORHOODS

Recognizing DVRPC's planning expertise, the William Penn Foundation has asked the Commission to develop comprehensive plans for three Philadelphia neighborhoods—Mount Airy, Chinatown and West Powelton—all of which have been the focus of previous improvement projects and Foundation investments. Through this two-year initiative with DVRPC, the Foundation seeks to link each neighborhood's local plan with the larger objectives of the city and region.

One of the primary objectives of the studies is to provide guidance to the city

“The plans will be neighborhood-driven, with a strong emphasis on public participation and involvement of area institutions and businesses.”

for Neighborhood Transportation Initiative (NTI) investments. In addition, DVRPC hopes to develop a broader view of each neighborhood that includes input from community stakeholders to identify opportunities for development. The study will also provide ideas for local improvements by Community Development Corporations

and investments by other non-profit organizations and the private sector.

This is the first time DVRPC has undertaken a local planning initiative within the city of Philadelphia. The plans will be neighborhood-driven, with a strong emphasis on public participation and involvement of area institutions and businesses. DVRPC is partnering on this project with the Philadelphia Neighborhood Development Collaborative, and will also work closely with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, community development organizations, and city-wide non-profits. ☺



OZONE ACTION PROGRAM ENDS RECORD-SETTING 8TH SEASON

The eighth season of the Ozone Action Program was one for the record books. The unusually hot summer produced a record-breaking fifteen Code Red, or Ozone Action, days—making 2002 the worst ozone summer since the program was launched in 1996. In addition, another twenty days were considered Code Orange, the second highest level of ozone pollution.

Administered by DVRPC, the Ozone Action program alerts the public of ground-level ozone and forecasts Ozone Action days when the levels are unhealthy. The initiative encourages use of public transportation and ride-sharing to help reduce ozone-forming emissions, and educates the public about the dangers of ground-level ozone. Most people are unaware that ground-level ozone, an odorless, colorless gas, can rob them of oxygen and cause serious health problems.

This summer featured several new programs to assist with Ozone Action's mission. For the first time, PennDOT utilized the variable message boards on I-95 and I-76 to post notice of Ozone Action days and suggested actions. In addition, the Transit Management Association of Chester County joined other

regional organizations in offering free rides on Ozone Action Days.

“The Ozone Action program is part of Delaware Valley’s Ozone Action Partnership, a coalition of business, government and environmental groups from Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, that work collaboratively to inform the public of ways in which to improve and maintain the region’s air quality.”

But because ozone forms in sunlight and high temperatures, this summer’s particularly hot weather caused an abnormal amount of high-ozone days. The previous record for Ozone Action days in a summer was ten, in 2001. The low was two, in both 1996 and 2000.

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Guide To Economic Development Organizations Now Available

As a regional partner in economic development and planning, DVRPC has compiled a comprehensive list of organizations contributing to the development and growth of the Greater Philadelphia Region’s economy. The “Economic Development and Resource Guide” highlights the services of the various agencies shaping the regional economy, to assist both public and private sectors in locating appropriate assistance.

The Guide provides organization descriptions, services and detailed contact information. It is intended to provide a one-stop source of economic development information, as well as spread awareness of the variety of programs, opportunities and partnerships that will improve the economic future of the Greater Philadelphia Region.

To obtain a copy of the “Economic Development and Resource Guide,” contact Sharon Smith at 215-238-2828.

DVRPC WINS TWO AWARDS

Two DVRPC projects were recognized at the *Pennsylvania Planning Association (PPA) 2002 Awards Ceremony* in October. DVRPC received two Certificates of Merit—one recognizing the Route 202 Section 100 Land Use Strategies Study, and one lauding the Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI). The Route 202 study was completed in November, 2001 and provided recommendations to coordinate land use policies and encourage transit-oriented development and congestion management in the Section 100 corridor, which runs through Delaware and Chester Counties. The TCDI initiative completed its first round of funding in 2002, allocating over \$1.5 million to 26 municipalities for local development efforts. DVRPC was the only organization to win more than one award at the PPA event. ●



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE DELAWARE VALLEY?

*Find out in the **Horizons: The Year 2025 Land Use and Transportation Plan for the Delaware Valley**. If you have not received your copy, please contact Eileen Gallagher at 215-238-2817.*



DVRPC NEWS

VOLUME 24, NO. 1

PUBLISHED BY THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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DVRPC NEWS

Published by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Dept. of Transportation
Pennsylvania Governor's Policy Office
Bucks County
Chester County
Delaware County
Montgomery County
City of Chester
City of Philadelphia

State of New Jersey
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DVRPC News is funded through grants from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Pennsylvania and New Jersey departments of transportation, and DVRPC's member governments.

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Jenny Ruth and Kendall Miller, CoEditors

Design: Marketing Design Inc.



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.

FALL 2002