

DVRPC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE... **DVRPC FORGES PLAN FOR HISTORIC AREA**

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania represents many things to many people...a prime tourist destination, a historical site worthy of protection and preservation, and a crossroads for regional commuters and residents. While representing the best of the past, the Valley Forge National Historical Park and its surroundings also represent the worst of today's mix of traffic congestion and developmental encroachment. As a first step toward alleviating some of these problems, DVRPC has completed its yearlong Valley Forge Area Transportation Planning Study.

“While representing the best of the past, the Valley Forge National Historical Park and its surroundings also represent the worst of today's mix of traffic congestion and developmental encroachment.”

The project was initiated at the request of Montgomery County officials, who wanted a plan for transportation improvements in the rapidly growing Valley Forge area, with a special focus on the impli-



National Memorial Arch, dedicated to those who served at Valley Forge from 1777-1778.

cations for Valley Forge National Park. DVRPC has worked closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the National Park Service to develop viable multi-modal solutions to accessibility and congestion issues in and around the Park. These efforts led to recommendations for a range of highway and transit options.

One of the primary objectives in the area is to improve conditions on Route 422, thereby supporting economic development and redirecting traffic that now clogs other roads in the Park and surrounding communities. Planners were also looking to reduce traffic impacts on the Park's resources, and facilitate tourism with better access to the revitalized Park.

The resulting Valley Forge Area Transportation Study offers solutions with widespread public, interagency, and governmental support. Proposed improvements to the area include:

- ▼ **Replacement of the Betzwood Bridge**
- ▼ **Modernization of the PA 23/ US 422 interchange and relocation of North Gulph Road to provide an opportunity for a new gateway for the Park**
- ▼ **Modernization of the PA 363/ US 422 interchange**
- ▼ **Widening of US 422**
- ▼ **Connecting the King of Prussia Mall, hotels and the Park with transit service**

At its April meeting, the DVRPC Board voted on adding preliminary engineering of the study recommendations to the current Pennsylvania Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

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COMMUTING PATTERNS REFLECT A SHIFT TO SUBURBS

Knowing where people work in relation to where they live is important for many regional planning, highway and transit decisions. In March, the U.S. Census Bureau released County-to-County worker flows from the Journey-to-Work information contained in the Year 2000 Census. The information provides the county of work and residence for all workers age 16 and older who commuted to work or worked at home during the census week. This data will have implications for many regional decisions made at DVRPC.

“The data suggests an increasing need to examine the transportation system with the goal of efficiently serving current travel patterns with proper transportation modes.”

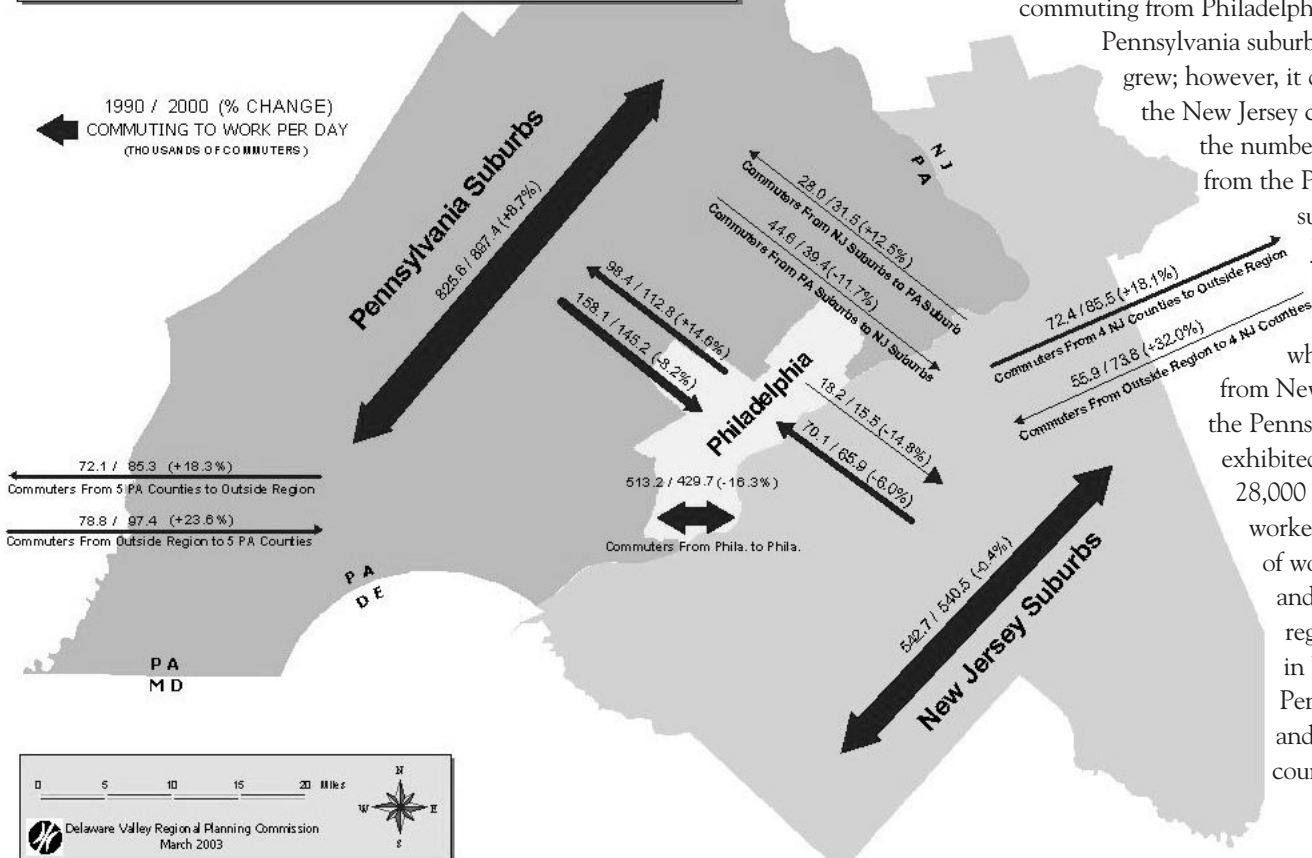
The data reflects an ongoing decline of centralized business areas, as more businesses move to the suburbs. This increasing dispersal of employment underscores the decline in use of transit and carpools for the work trip. The data suggests an increasing need to examine the transportation system with the goal of efficiently serving current travel patterns with proper transportation modes,

while providing a basis for developing policy decisions to reverse the trend toward dispersal.

The map below shows the 1990 and 2000 overall worker flows for the DVRPC region. The largest flow is for workers who both live and work in the four Pennsylvania suburban counties. These 897,400 workers represent an 8.7% increase over the number in 1990. However, the number of workers who both live and work in Philadelphia declined from 513,200 in 1990 to 429,700 in 2000, a decrease of 16.3 percent. In addition, commuters from both the Pennsylvania and New Jersey suburbs into Philadelphia declined (from 158,100 to 145,200 in the case of Pennsylvania and from 70,100 to 65,900 in the case of New Jersey). Reverse commuting from Philadelphia to the

Pennsylvania suburban counties grew; however, it declined to the New Jersey counties. Also, the number of commuters from the Pennsylvania suburbs to New Jersey declined from 44,600 to 39,400 while the change from New Jersey to the Pennsylvania suburbs exhibited growth from 28,000 to 31,500 workers. The flow of workers into and out of the region grew in both the Pennsylvania and New Jersey counties. ●

1990 AND 2000 TRENDS IN COMMUTING PATTERNS IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGION





DVRPC IDENTIFIES PENNSYLVANIA RECREATIONAL OPEN SPACE PRIORITIES

Green pastures, plentiful parks, and farmland are all part of what makes this region special. When the Greenspace Alliance of Southeastern Pennsylvania launched an initiative to establish regional priorities for protecting open space, it asked DVRPC to oversee the recreational open space aspect. Two other organizations will focus on agricultural and ecological areas; once the information is accumulated, the three areas of interest will be combined to create regional priorities for all open space. The project is designed to establish a level of consensus as to where the region's land trusts should focus preservation investments to achieve the highest benefits for the Delaware Valley.

“Our goal was to work with officials from each county and conservation groups to identify ‘hotspots’ where recreational open space is the most important.”

— Patricia Elkis, DVRPC Manager of Environmental Planning

DVRPC's study includes an inventory of parks and passive recreational facilities in five Pennsylvania counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia. Passive recreational activities include hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, picnicking, camping, cultural and heritage tourism, paddle-boating, bird-watching and environmental education.

“No previous study has ever ranked specific areas of recreational open space,” says Patricia Elkis, DVRPC Manager of Environmental Planning. “Our goal was to work with officials from each county and conservation groups to identify ‘hotspots’ where recreational open space is the most important.”

In order to create a workable ranking system, areas were classified into three categories: buffers, connectors, and focal areas. Buffers are defined as areas for expansion or enhancement of existing recreational facilities, while connectors are corridors that can link multiple facilities together. Most connectors are trails already planned by the counties, such as the Chester Valley Trail and the

Story continued on page 6.

DVRPC PLANS AT THE EDGE

Although DVRPC is only officially responsible for the nine counties in the Delaware Valley region, planning issues don't stop at county lines. Eight of DVRPC's counties (all but Philadelphia) share boundaries with areas governed by other planning organizations. While DVRPC authority extends outside the region for a few functional planning activities, such as Air Quality and Aviation Management, no standard framework exists for communication and coordination with adjacent regions on most issues.

To facilitate communication and coordination across boundary lines, the DVRPC Board supported the inclusion of the *Planning at the Edge* project in the Fiscal Year 2003 Work Program. Over the past several months, DVRPC staff has

“The goal of *Planning at the Edge* is to develop a workable approach for information-sharing within the existing framework of planning authorities.”

— Richard Bickel, DVRPC Deputy Director of Regional Planning

facilitated outreach meetings with other agencies, analyzed pertinent demographic, development and travel trends and has formed a Study Advisory Committee to identify issues and to review study products.

“Many DVRPC projects and issues have repercussions for areas outside the region,” says Richard Bickel, DVRPC Deputy Director of Regional Planning. “The goal of *Planning at the Edge* is to develop a workable approach for information-sharing within the existing framework of planning authorities.”

DVRPC collaborated with representatives of Wilmington Metropolitan Area Planning Council, North Jersey Transportation Planning Agency, South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, and the Lehigh Valley, Berks County, and Lancaster County Planning Commissions. Additional members of the Study Advisory Committee included the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland Departments of Transportation, and pertinent public transit agencies.

A full report, including successful case studies of cross-boundary coordination in Central New Jersey and the New Castle County, Delaware area, as well as proposed communication approaches to address cross-boundary issues, is expected to be released by the end of the current fiscal year. 🌱



DVRPC FUNDS CLEAN AIR INITIATIVES **\$11.7 MILLION** APPROVED THROUGH CMAQ PROGRAM

Paving the way for cleaner air, DVRPC recently approved 24 transportation-related projects to receive \$11.7 million of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds. These projects were selected for their ability to help the region reduce emissions from highway sources and meet National Clean Air Act standards. CMAQ is a reimbursement program which will cover up to 80% of project costs. A project's sponsor is required to cover at least the remaining 20%.

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Among the recently approved projects are five freight projects, which encourage reduced truck emissions and promote rail freight as an alternative to long-haul

trucks. Additional air quality initiatives include the creation of bike and hike trails and efforts to increase ridership on public transportation. Other projects focus on traffic control, such as coordination of traffic signals in several boroughs in the region.

The current round of competition for CMAQ funds began last Fall when DVRPC solicited applications from public agencies, private firms and non-profit entities. DVRPC's Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) formed a special CMAQ sub-committee to evaluate the 54 project applications that were submitted by a wide array of both public and private sector groups. The sub-committee was comprised of county, state and transit operator planners, and citizen representatives of environmental, biking, transit, and business interests. Based on their emissions reduction potential and other criteria, candidate projects were ranked and project recommendations were made to the DVRPC Board.

This marks the third successful round of CMAQ competition. The first two rounds were completed in 1994 and 2000.

APPROVED PROJECTS

NEW JERSEY

- Burlington Light Rail Link, *Burlington County*
- PATCO Targeted Marketing to Off-Peak Riders, *DRPA/PATCO*
- Advanced Travel Center Electrification, *IdleAire Technologies Corporation*
- Hutchinson Trail, *Mercer County Planning Division*
- TransitChek Mass Marketing Efforts in New Jersey, *DVRPC*
- Ozone Action Program in New Jersey, *DVRPC*
- Employment Shuttles, *Camden County Improvement Authority*

PENNSYLVANIA

- Chalfont Borough Closed Loop Signal System, *Chalfont Borough*
- Doylestown Community Bike and Hike System Extension, *Doylestown Township*
- Lincoln Highway Closed Loop Signal System, *City of Coatesville*
- Coatesville Transload / Intermodal Facility, *Brandywine Valley Railroad Company*
- Upper Darby Township Closed Loop Traffic Signal System, *Upper Darby Township*
- Ridge Pike Closed Loop System, *Lower Providence Township*
- Ridge Pike Closed Loop Signal System, *West Norriton Township*
- Adopt-a-Rack Program, *City of Philadelphia Department of Streets*
- Tidal Schuylkill River Greenway and Trail, *City of Philadelphia, Dept. of Commerce*
- Philadelphia Food Distribution Center Cross-Dock Facility, *Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp. Food Distribution Center*
- Philadelphia Naval Business Center Shuttle Bus, *SEPTA*
- Packer Ave. Marine Terminal Gate Enhancement, *Philadelphia Regional Port Authority*
- New Rail Line Track to Former Philadelphia Naval Yard, *Norfolk Southern Corporation*
- PATCO Directional Signage in Philadelphia, *Delaware River Port Authority*
- Purchase 7 Alternative Fuel Hybrid Buses, *SEPTA*
- Purchase and Installation of 235 Emissions Reduction Devices, *SEPTA*
- Regional Car Sharing, *PhillyCarShare*



ANALYZING THE REGION'S ECONOMY

THREE DECADES OF JOB GROWTH AND DECLINE IN THE DELAWARE VALLEY

Over the past three decades, there has been a noticeable shift in the types of employment opportunities throughout the region. A recent DVRPC report, entitled *Three Decades of Job Growth and Decline in the Delaware Valley* offers an analysis of these job trends, and identifies economic opportunities and weaknesses for the region.

“The region’s greatest growth has occurred in the service sector... the service industry has nearly doubled since 1969, and now accounts for roughly 40% of the region’s employment.”

In May 2002, the Bureau of Economic Analysis released its latest employment estimates, which include data from the last three decades (1969-2000). Using this data, DVRPC has tracked trends in job and industry growth, and compared the region’s performance against the national average and against other comparable metropolitan areas.

The region’s greatest growth has occurred in the service sector. While manufacturing positions have declined over the past three decades, the service industry has nearly doubled since 1969, and now accounts for roughly 40% of the region’s employment. In addition, the report identifies existing synergies, or inter-related industries that feed off each other. One of the region’s strongest synergies is in biotechnology, where the major medical

and life science research institutions and regional pharmaceutical companies work in tandem.

But overall, the analysis reflects a diverse regional economy. Employment in the Delaware Valley does not focus on specialized industries to the same degree as many comparable metropolitan areas. In addition, the region was behind the national average in most employment sectors- particularly manufacturing and government jobs, which have been two traditional sources of employment in the region.

The report suggests opportunities to support and build upon our existing strengths to create a stronger regional economy. DVRPC will use this data as it develops policies to support quality growth, and to entice workers to move into the region.🌱

COMMISSIONER SUSAN BASS LEVIN ADDRESSES DVRPC COMMITTEE

New Jersey’s Smart Growth initiative has sparked much discussion since its introduction last fall. At the February meeting of DVRPC’s Land Use and Development Committee, Susan Bass Levin, Commissioner of New Jersey’s Department of Community Affairs, addressed some of the key elements of the Smart Growth initiative to an audience of more than 80 people.

During her presentation, Commissioner Levin outlined the basic goals and principles that will guide the state’s future

investment decisions. She stated that New Jersey will not continue to subsidize sprawl, and will focus on redevelopment of cities and older suburbs. She also indicated that all State agencies will work to streamline their regulations and make it easier to develop in appropriate locations.

“She stated that New Jersey will not continue to subsidize sprawl, and will focus on redevelopment of cities and older suburbs.”

In addition, she addressed some of the confusion surrounding the “Big Map,” a conceptual map that designates areas appropriate for development. She noted that the map is still in the revision process. After her presentation, Commissioner Levin fielded several questions on the state’s development policies from the audience members.

The Land Use and Development Committee provides a forum for the discussion of regional land use and related issues as well as the development of the Year 2025 plan, and meets quarterly.🌱

●● OPEN SPACE PRIORITIES... (cont. from page 4) ●●

East Coast Greenway. In addition, the study identified twelve focal areas, such as the Delaware River Corridor, the Schuylkill River Corridor and Brandywine Battlefield, where large areas of land are unified by a single resource.

Buffers and connectors were ranked only within their own categories; they were not ranked against each other. Focal areas weren't ranked, but buffers and connectors within these areas were given extra priority. Heavy emphasis is placed on the population served by the buffers and connectors, as well as their connectivity to each other.

The ranking system was designed as a tool to assist officials as they develop a systematic approach to regional open space preservation. The full results of the recreational, ecological and agricultural components will be presented at a Regional Open Space Conference to be held in the Fall. 🍁



Dr. Donald Shanis (left), DVRPC Deputy Director of Transportation Planning, discussed economic development and transportation issues with Ex-Pennsylvania Governor **Mark Schweiker**, during the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Trip to Washington, D.C. in March. Schweiker now serves as President of the Chamber. DVRPC is planning its own trip to Washington this fall to deliver its policy papers on the Federal Reauthorization of the Transportation Act and of the Aviation System.

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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.