

DVRPC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

A PASSPORT TO THE *REGION'S FUTURE*

On December 9, 2004, DVRPC hosted more than 140 individuals — board members, local and regional officials, and private and public sector representatives — when the Commission held its **18th Annual Board Retreat** at the Philadelphia Airport Marriott. Attendees interacted with some of the region's and the country's top individuals in the aviation, rail, port, and government sectors, and shared their thoughts on vital issues regarding aviation and freight planning.

The day's schedule began with remarks by **Douglas Doan**, Business Liaison Director for Border and Transportation Security, US Department of Homeland Security, who provided insights into defense issues facing both freight and passenger transport. Carrying the day's theme forward, the first of two panels focused on Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) as the region's economic engine. Moderated by **Charles Isdell**, PHL's Director of Aviation, the session included remarks by **Allan A'Hara**, Aviation Project Manager, DMJM Aviation; **Chris Sever**, Director, Corporate Affairs, US Airways; and **John Lindo**, Marketing Manager, Philadelphia, Southwest Airlines.

The second panel highlighted the region's freight system and was chaired by **Richard Biter**, Deputy Director, Office of Intermodalism, U.S. Department of Transportation. Incorporating trucking, rail, and port interests, the session's speakers were **James Runk**, President, Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association; **Dennis Keck**, Assistant Commissioner, New Jersey



TOP Participants who highlighted the day's events include: (L-R) **Chris Sever**, **Charles Isdell**, **Douglas Doan**, **Joanne Denworth**, **Allan A'Hara**, **John Coscia**, and **John Lindo**.

BOTTOM Board members, local and regional officials, and private and public sector representatives share thoughts at DVRPC's 18th Annual Board Retreat.

Department of Transportation; and **William B. McLaughlin III**, Director, Governmental and Public Affairs, Philadelphia Regional Port Authority.

The afternoon featured two tours: PHL's International Terminal A-West, which serves as the new arrival/departure terminal and which houses all immigration, passport control, and customs inspections; and the

PHL Ramp Control Tower and Airfield, one of three control towers located at the airport and staffed by US Airways. The day ended with a Board meeting and reception.

The Retreat was hosted by **Joanne R. Denworth**, Board Chair for Fiscal Year 2005. Commissioner Denworth is the Senior Policy Manager for the Pennsylvania Governor's Policy Office. She is responsible for policy issues in state agencies relating to land use, water and sewer infrastructure, and energy. Ms. Denworth is also a land use and environmental lawyer, and has authored numerous articles and handbooks on issues surrounding growth management and land use planning. Other officers for FY05 include: Camden County Freeholder **Thomas Gurick** as Vice-chair; Burlington County representative **Jerald R. Cureton** as Treasurer; and Bucks County Commissioner **Charles H. Martin** as Secretary. Their terms will continue through June, 2005.

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DVRPC'S ROLE IN NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING IN PHILADELPHIA

Working with a wide variety of public, private, and non-profit partners and stakeholders, DVRPC has recently completed comprehensive, asset-based plans in three Philadelphia neighborhoods. The William Penn Foundation initially approached DVRPC to undertake the project and provided funding to support a planning process of community engagement and consensus building, where each community would view their assets and opportunities in the context of the larger city and the larger region. A planning team of Kise Straw & Kolodner, Brown & Keener, Urban Partners and Lamar Wilson worked with DVRPC and the communities to develop the plans.

Each of the three neighborhoods — **Mt. Airy**, **Chinatown**, and **West Powelton** — were designated as priority areas under Mayor **John Street's** *Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI)*. The NTI program provides funding for targeted improvements in selected neighborhoods throughout the City, based on projects identified through a comprehensive planning process. With over 30 such neighborhoods to plan for throughout Philadelphia, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission was supportive of DVRPC's leadership and appreciative of the William Penn Foundation's funding, and participated as an active partner throughout.

The three neighborhoods where the plans were completed are economically, socially and physically diverse. Mt. Airy, which is sandwiched between Chestnut Hill and Germantown, contains some of the most historically significant and

diverse housing stock in the City and is bordered by the Wissahickon section of Fairmont Park. Chinatown is a high-density Center City community that is experiencing a rapid increase in its population at the same time that the push north of Center City is opening land to speculation, creating rapidly rising real estate prices. The West Powelton — Saunders Park area of Philadelphia adjoins the Presbyterian Hospital, Drexel University, and the University of Pennsylvania as institutional anchors, but also encompasses portions of Mantua, one of the most impoverished communities in Philadelphia.

“The Philadelphia City Planning Commission was supportive of DVRPC's leadership and participated as an active partner throughout.”

All three of these communities are well served by *Community Development Corporations (CDCs)* that have successfully undertaken projects and programs within their communities. The three CDCs — Mt. Airy USA, Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, and People's Emergency Center CDC — took the lead in each neighborhood to organize a local Task Force of up to 50 individuals and organizations that guided the planning process. The CDCs identified locations for meeting, helped us arrange for food to fuel those meetings, identified priority projects and even arranged for translation services in Chinatown. Through a series of local meetings and workshops, a consensus resident-driven plan was developed. In addition, a citywide Steering Committee

representing City agencies, non-profit organizations and the private sector provided overall direction throughout.

“Plans developed by each community will now be owned by the community, and will provide a framework and a blueprint for implementation actions.”

Plans developed by each community will now be owned by the community, and will provide a framework and a blueprint for implementation actions. Each of the CDCs has already used the plans to pursue additional project grants and the plans have been widely distributed in the neighborhoods and elsewhere. The plans will also provide a model approach and a template for ongoing planning in other communities throughout Philadelphia. ●

WE'RE ON THE MOVE!

Monday, May 2nd, 2005, DVRPC will be moving to:
190 North Independence Mall West • 8th Floor
(corner of 6th and Race)
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1572



ALL PHONE, FAX AND WEBSITE INFORMATION WILL REMAIN THE SAME.



DESTINATION 2030:

2030 VISIONS

For almost 40 years, DVRPC has been the principal regional agency charged with planning for the orderly growth of the Delaware Valley region. DVRPC's designation as the MPO for this region and the requirements of the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)* have given the Commission an expanded and stronger role in planning to link transportation, land use, and the environment.

DVRPC is now updating and extending its previous plan, entitled *Horizons 2025*, to the Year 2030. The three-year update and planning process, required for regions that are in non-attainment status for ozone pollution, is known as **Destination 2030**. The *Destination 2030 Long-Range Plan* offers a renewed vision and goals as well as priority actions and projects for the future of the region.

One of the first steps in developing a new plan is to look at the challenges facing the region both now and in the future. DVRPC staff assessed potential regional, national, and global issues and used a scenario planning technique to assess future alternatives and their implications for the region. Scenarios included recentralization, sprawl, regional growth, and regional decline. Each brings a varying range of different impacts to the region, and lay the foundation for the 2030 Plan.

Development of a preferred vision for the future began in the Fall of 2003. Vision statements, describing regional conditions in 2030, were prepared for eight topics: *Growth Management*, *Urban Revitalization*, *the Environment*, *Economic Development*, *Transportation Facilities*, *Transportation Operations*, *Transportation Finance*, and *Equity and Opportunity*, and are summarized to the right.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT:



Regional sprawl is minimized, as a significant share of new growth and development locates within and around defined centers and along major transportation corridors. High quality site and building design is the norm, with higher density, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development in existing and emerging communities with a strong identity and character.

URBAN REVITALIZATION:



Urban centers, boroughs, and older suburbs thrive, as a combination of public and private actions strengthen local schools; improve the quality of local services; rejuvenate our cities and older boroughs with art and culture; reduce crime; clean up brownfields sites; reinvigorate greyfields and abandoned shopping areas; build relationships with the business community to foster local entrepreneurship and business investment and create new jobs; capture and enhance existing amenities; preserve existing historical elements of significance; strive for a mix of younger and older persons; and restore disrespected neighborhoods.

THE ENVIRONMENT:



A clean sustainable environment for existing and future residents of and visitor to the region, where key natural resource areas and scenic landscapes are protected; recreation and open space facilities are provided in an integrated regional network; environmental protection objectives are incorporated into

planning activities and growth strategies at all government levels; and investment and redevelopment of urban areas results in reduced development of rural and agricultural lands.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:



A diversified and growing regional economy, attractive for new entrepreneurial and established business investment where the combination of an educated labor force, favorable business climate, and high quality of life create a competitive regional advantage with new economic opportunities created in proximity to the needed labor force.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES:



A safe, convenient, and seamless multi-modal passenger and freight system that is sufficient in its capacity, attractive and affordable to its users, accessible and equitable for all citizens and visitors to locations throughout the region and incorporating sound growth management, urban revitalization, environmental and economic development principles.

TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS:



A well-planned, reliable and safe multi-modal, regional transportation system that promotes interconnectivity among systems, keeps operators and users informed about travel conditions, responds rapidly to incident related congestion, and assures efficient delivery of goods and passengers utilizing available and new technologies.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE...

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE:



Each mode of transportation has adequate funding to maintain, modernize, and operate its infrastructure. Money is available to provided needed expansions within corridors designed for growth and reinvestment in existing centers. Funding can be used to facilitate the movement of people, vehicles, and goods, and to enhance important intermodal connections. A combination of user fees, tolls, regional and state taxes, and other creative financing mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, are in place.

EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY:



Barriers to opportunity for all residents of the region are removed through increased distribution of affordable housing throughout the region, enhanced resources, and equalized quality of education in all school districts. Transportation choices and reverse commute opportunities are provided to regional employment centers for all workers.

LINKING TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS TO LONG RANGE PLAN GOALS

All transportation projects being considered for inclusion in the long-range plan will be evaluated for their linkage to the plan's goals. Candidate projects will be evaluated against 14 criteria that are based on the six goals of the transportation plan.

OTHER UPDATES FOR 2030

The 2030 Plan will include updated *Land Use Plan* and *Open Space* maps that together depict where future development should be located and where open space should be preserved. The set of maps present a vision for both development, preservation and recreation that are intended to enhance our region's identity, quality of life, and economic competitiveness. The *Land Use* and *Open Space* maps are based on detailed, up-to-date information, but are then conceptualized to provide an image and message of land use and open space that can be more readily understood by the public. The maps also serve to geographically depict where the 2030 policies of the plan are to be implemented.

Every five years the Commission updates its employment and population forecasts. These forecasts play an essential role in multiple projects including the comprehensive plan. Building on the forecast update of 2002, DVRPC has now extended the 2025 population and employment forecasts to 2030. By 2030 we are projecting the region's population to surpass 6 million and the regions employment level to be roughly 3.2 million.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Because DVRPC has a strong commitment to public participation, several elements have been built into the plan's development. As early as December, 2003, visioning sessions were being held with various audiences to develop scenarios and to gather input. DVRPC staff has met with more than 100 organizations to spread the word about the plan and to listen to suggestions and comments. A telephone survey is planned in March to canvas a broad spectrum of individuals to add a statistically valid segment to the outreach effort. And, a public comment period has been scheduled for May-June, 2005.

DELAWARE VALLEY SUBURBS CAN BENEFIT FROM HIGH DENSITY

Building at higher densities is gaining acceptance throughout the United States, but the Delaware Valley lags behind other regions in accepting and encouraging those higher densities. Recent analyses in the Delaware Valley have revealed a trend toward lowering land development densities in suburban areas. Zoning codes heavily favor low-to-medium density developments, such as single-family homes on one-acre lots. This trend has resulted in increased land consumption and higher costs for providing municipal services, such as sewer and water infrastructure, schools, roads, and transit.

*In a new study released by DVRPC, **Realizing Density: Strategies for Compact Suburban Development**, researchers take a look at density and what it means for different suburbs in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They make recommendations about changes that can be made in the region to make the most of the space and resources available.*

The study explains that higher densities, if designed well, can yield a greater sense of community, the preservation of open space and recreational facilities, less costly infrastructure investments, and facilitate the provision of affordable housing. They can also lead to more transportation choices and better transportation efficiency. The study addresses the importance of good design as it relates to density, and summarizes local examples of successful higher density housing.

This report is geared toward municipal and township officials and planners who are seeking to enhance suburban communities through better design and higher densities. It also helps build support for policies that can make higher densities more desirable.



DVRPC RECEIVES LOCAL & NATIONAL AWARDS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE TOP

John J. Coscia, Executive Director of DVRPC, has been named **"Transportation Person of the Year"** by the *Traffic Club of Philadelphia*. This marks one of the first times a leader in the public sector was selected to receive the award. Coscia accepted the award at the Traffic Club's 97th Annual Dinner on January 25, 2005, at the Philadelphia Airport Marriott Hotel. More than 300 guests attended the event.

"John is a recognized national leader in bringing the private and public sectors together," said **William W. Shoaf, Jr.**, President of the Traffic Club of Philadelphia. "Over the years, he has been a true friend of the Delaware Valley's freight community."

The Traffic Club of Philadelphia is one of the oldest transportation clubs in the country, dating to 1907. The purpose of the Club is to promote the interests of the transportation industry, to conduct educational programs in the field of transportation, and to promote the transportation industry for the benefit of the national welfare. Its membership is comprised of representatives from industry, railroad, motor carriers, freight forwarders, airlines, steamship lines, and warehouses.

"John is a recognized national leader in bringing the private and public sectors together."

WILLIAM W. SHOAF, JR.,
PRESIDENT OF THE TRAFFIC CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

AMPO AWARDS DVRPC TOP HONORS

DVRPC received an outstanding transportation award from the *Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)*. The national award, **Outstanding Technical Merit in Metropolitan Transportation Planning for an MPO over 200,000**, was presented to DVRPC for several ITS projects that have benefitted agencies and the traveling public in the Delaware Valley. DVRPC was honored during the AMPO 2004 Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX, in the fall of 2004.

AMPO is a nonprofit, membership organization established in 1994 to serve the needs and interests of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) nationwide. AMPO offers its member MPOs technical assistance and training, conferences, workshops, research, communications, and other tools to support transportation policy development, coalition-building, and cooperative decision-making.

DVRPC RECOGNIZED FOR OUTREACH

DVRPC was one of eight recipients of an **Excellence in the Estuary Award** from the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary. DVRPC received an award in the Ecotourism category for its role as a leading advocate for bicyclists in the region. DVRPC was recognized for providing education and outreach on the rights and responsibilities of all road users; identifying, prioritizing, and designing bike lanes on suburban roads; and working with PennDOT to transform the roadways into a more "bicycle-friendly" environment. The award was presented at the *Sixth Annual Experience the Estuary Celebration*, which was held in Wilmington, Delaware.

"DVRPC was recognized for providing education on the responsibilities of all road users."

The *Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc.* is a regional nonprofit organization based in Wilmington, Delaware that is dedicated to the protection and conservation of the Delaware Estuary, where the salt water of the Atlantic Ocean and the fresh water of the Delaware River mix. The Partnership's mission is to lead collaborative and creative efforts to protect the Delaware Estuary and its tributaries. ♻️

THE COMMISSION FUNDS NEW PROJECTS IN FISCAL YEAR 2006

DVRPC's FY 2006 *Planning Work Program (PWP)* was officially adopted by the Board at its January, 2005 meeting. This year's work program addresses issues currently facing the region, while furthering long-range plans for orderly growth. The document outlines all of the federally funded planning projects slated for the nine-county region from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. The listing includes DVRPC projects, as well as projects planned by member governments and

transit organizations. The total budget for the FY2006 PWP is \$21,241,816 with over 120 individual projects.

Some of the new projects for FY 2006 include the *Gambling Facilities Land Use Study*, a study to explore the feasibility of building an additional bridge over the Schuylkill River in Montgomery County; a study to explore the possibility of extending SEPTA's R5 Regional RailLine; and a *Gloucester County Ferry Service Study*. All of the new projects were chosen from recommendations by

DVRPC's advisory committees and state, county, and city governments.

Development of the Work Program began last Fall, and a full draft was released for public review in December, 2004. After its adoption by the Board in January, the document was sent to both NJ DOT and PennDot for final approval in March, 2005. Meant to serve as a flexible document, the Work Program can be, and often is, amended to respond to the changing needs of our region. ♻️

STUDY SUGGESTS BRIGHT FUTURE FOR FOUR AREA RAIL STATIONS

While the region has over 340 fixed-rail stations, the majority of them have not developed the surrounding area to best meet the needs of transit riders. DVRPC has released a case study of four potential sites for transit-oriented development entitled, *Implementing Transit-Oriented Development: Four TOD Plans for Girard, Lansdale, Thorndale, and Woodbury*.


Transit-oriented development (TOD) encourages intensified, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development surrounding transit stations, and is intended to promote transit ridership. While automobiles are accommodated, bicycle and pedestrian paths are given equal importance to encourage multi-modal access.

The study grew out of the work done on previous studies, which addressed

the benefits and barriers of TOD, made recommendations for funding and implementation in the region, and profiled 45 stations throughout the Delaware Valley. The goal of the multiyear effort is to analyze the region's rail stations to determine a priority list of TOD Opportunity Sites. Topping the list were:

- **GIRARD STATION** along SEPTA's Broad Street Subway Line.
- **LANSDALE STATION** along SEPTA's Regional Rail R5 to Doylestown.
- **THORNDALE STATION** along SEPTA's Regional Rail R5 to Thorndale/Paoli.
- **WOODBURY**, a hub to six New Jersey Transit bus routes.

The study takes an in-depth look at the four stations, and offers recommendations to better achieve TOD at these sites. Recommendations cover such areas

as zoning, land use, comprehensive plans/master plans, access, development opportunities, and more. The framework is oriented toward asset-based plans that build off existing strengths of each community. 



PUBLISHED BY THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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DVRPC NEWS

Published by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

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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

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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.



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.

SPRING 2005