

DVRPC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

NATIONAL FREIGHT SUMMIT ATTRACTS LEADERS AND EXPERTS

DVRPC SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON LINKING FREIGHT AND LAND USE

The freight industry, as well as planners throughout the country, are all confronted by one critical challenge: managing rapidly increasing freight volumes as communities simultaneously grow and change. Dealing with this important topic brought more than 90 shipper and carrier representatives, policy officials, and planners to Philadelphia in mid-September 2005 for a three-day summit entitled, ***From Design to Delivery: Planning America's Freight Movement***.

The summit was conducted by DVRPC and the National Association of Regional Councils. Funded by the Federal Highway Administration, the conference was the first of its kind to examine the movement of freight, urban form, and design solutions that sustain economic growth while building great communities.

"Competition between the ports and commercial developers at waterfront locations epitomizes this struggle," said **Dr. Donald Shanis**, Assistant Executive Director, Transportation Planning at DVRPC as he opened the event. "This issue requires an informed,



TOP_ DVRPC Board Chairman, **Thomas Gurick** (right), and NARC President, **Randall Morris**, welcomed conference attendees to the Delaware Valley.

BOTTOM_ **John Hummer** of the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority was joined by MPO colleagues from other regions such as New York City, Wilmington (DE), Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Orlando, Detroit, Sacramento, Portland, Dallas, and Toledo.

sustained dialogue and the active involvement of all key players."

Crafting win-win situations that mutually accommodate freight growth and community goals was a recurring conference theme. **Anne Strauss-Wieder** outlined a ready-to-use toolkit of ***Freight As A Good Neighbor*** strategies. Other highlighted examples were North Jersey's brownfield redevelopment initiative, Orlando's freight plan, the Chicago CREATE project, and programs offered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Delaware Valley freight community was represented as were DVRPC's member governments and the Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force. Speakers included **Craig Lewis** of Norfolk Southern, **Charles McSwain** of CSX, **Sharon Daboin** and
(cont. on page 2)

WINTER 2005/2006 ISSUE:

- ▼ DVRPC Hears What Bicyclists Have To Say 2
- ▼ DVRPC Hears Public Comment On Conformity Finding 3
- ▼ Keeping You Safe 3
- ▼ TransitChek Made Easier? Believe It Or Not. 4
- ▼ Gambling On A Sound Future 4
- ▼ John C. Coscia To Retire In March, 2006 4
- ▼ DVRPC Initiates Pilot Study 5
- ▼ Walter K. Johnson 1919-2005 6
- ▼ Notice To Municipalities 6



●● **FREIGHT SUMMIT...** (cont. from page 1) ●●

Larry King of PennDOT, and **Rick Gimello** and **Talvin Davis** of New Jersey DOT. **Larry Kane**, esteemed television news anchor and author, served as moderator for the entire Summit and facilitated the discussions and audience participation.

Summit sponsors included the Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association, Lansdale Warehouse, Dependable Distribution, Gannett Fleming, and Klein and Hoffman. Delaware Avenue Distribution Center, CSX, and the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority hosted tours of local freight facilities.

Numerous presentations, and ultimately a conference summary, will be posted on the freight page of the DVRPC website at www.dvrpc.org. Information is also available by contacting **Ted Dahlburg**, Manager of Freight Planning, DVRPC (215-238-2844).

FREIGHT SNAP-SHOT

The handling of labor-intensive military cargoes at Philadelphia area ports experienced an amazing 1500% gain last year.

The United States trades with nearly 200 countries worldwide. International trade accounts for one-third of the GDP.

In 2020, the volume of freight moved on the US transportation system is expected to increase to 2.5 billion tons, worth about \$30 trillion.

DVRPC HEARS WHAT BICYCLISTS HAVE TO SAY

Whether you're an avid bicyclist or enjoy recreational rides on the weekends, DVRPC realizes the importance of bicycle facilities in our region. With your needs and safety in mind, DVRPC surveyed bicyclists in the region to find out more about individual bicycling habits.

The first of its kind and size in the nation, the survey was conducted in September and October 2005 at several locations throughout the Delaware Valley. Surveyors found out information about bicyclists' trip lengths, destinations, type of facilities, and their safety knowledge.

from that first phase for a phenomenal response rate of 29 percent.

The survey greatly surpassed its needed quota of 220 interviews. However, it fell short of the distribution target of 4,800 questionnaires. 1,800 completed questionnaires are still needed to get a reliable sample of the region's bicyclists. Therefore, DVRPC staff has embarked on a second phase, distributing questionnaires by hanging them on parked bicycles in Center City, University City, and other locations (notably train stations, main streets, and university campuses) where parked bicycles are likely to be found. Bags are also being given to participants in organized bike rides throughout the region.



LEFT One of several bike parking locations throughout the Delaware Valley where surveyors distributed questionnaires and literature to local bicyclists.

Questions were asked during a short roadside interview and through a mail-back questionnaire, which was available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Chinese.

During the first phase of the survey, volunteers distributed questionnaires to passing bicyclists at 35 locations during a 12-hour time period. In that phase, 2,605 questionnaires were distributed, and 377 interviews with bicyclists were conducted. As of mid-November, 744 questionnaires have been returned

The purpose of the survey is to help DVRPC better plan for the needs of our region's bicyclists, and ultimately to improve the air quality and increase mobility options in the region. Bicycles are an important mode of transportation because they require no fossil fuels, produce no emissions, and because they account for a significant share of trips in low income, college and university communities.





DVRPC HEARS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON CONFORMITY FINDING

DVRPC opened a public comment period in mid-December 2005, running through January 11, 2006, for the *Commission's Conformity Finding* on the FY 2005 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for PA, the FY 2006 TIP for NJ and the Year 2030 Long-Range Plan. Staff sought public comments through two public meetings—one held on December 16 at DVRPC's offices in Philadelphia, and another on January 10 in Cherry Hill, NJ.

The Conformity Finding demonstrates that all projects contained in the TIP and the Plan conform to the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments, including new designations for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) made effective in

April 2005. PM_{2.5}, or particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter, are complex mixtures of very small liquid droplets or solid particles in the air. Major sources of the pollutant include cars, trucks, construction equipment, coal-fired power plants and wood-burning stoves. PM_{2.5} is associated with increased hospitalizations and deaths due to respiratory and heart disease, and can worsen the symptoms of asthma. It is also a major contributor to regional haze, and more commonly known as soot.

At the beginning of this year, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced air quality designations for all areas for the PM_{2.5} National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Effective in April 2005, eight counties in the DVRPC

region (excluding Mercer County) and New Castle County in Delaware were collectively designated as the Philadelphia-Wilmington PM_{2.5} Non-attainment Area. Mercer County is designated as part of the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island PM_{2.5} Non-attainment area. The US EPA instructed all affected MPOs within non-attainment areas to act collectively to make a conformity determination. DVRPC has worked with WILMAPCO, as well as nine other MPOs in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, to coordinate conformity demonstration efforts. The public comment period was coordinated among 11 MPOs in five states. Copies of the conformity finding are available on the DVRPC web site, www.dvrpc.org and in the DVRPC library.

KEEPING YOU SAFE

With the long-awaited adoption of the national transportation legislation, *SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users)*, there is now even greater

emphasis on integrating safety into the planning process. This new legislation provides more funding than ever for safety-conscious planning, and DVRPC's role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has expanded to take on greater significance by integrating safety into the transportation system for all modes and users.

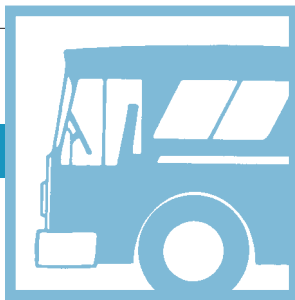
While safety considerations have always been implicit in DVRPC's programs, there is a renewed emphasis on transportation safety that will be reflected in all projects and programs. To reinforce this charge, an internal Safety Committee has been formed at DVRPC with representatives from all units within the Commission.

“This new legislation provides more funding than ever for safety-conscious planning.”

One of DVRPC's new projects, the *Transportation Safety Program*, is expected to be a continuing effort. The first phase of the program calls for the establishment of a Regional Safety Task Force, an interdisciplinary team of professionals to offer guidance and direction on safety efforts. Our first charge is to develop a Regional Safety Action Plan which is intended to highlight and enhance existing programs, where possible, and develop innovative strategies to address transportation safety issues in the region. To meet this objective, the task force has formed five subcommittees (engineering, education, enforcement, emergency services, and funding) that will meet to strategize ways

to reduce transportation-related fatalities and injuries. As the Commission develops its FY07 Work Program, staff is preparing for more specific implementation of safety-focused programs in future years, hoping to complement the Regional Safety Action Plan.

DVRPC is also working with PennDOT and NJDOT to identify emphasis areas that are important to our region and that need to be included in the states' Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). As a requirement of SAFETEA-LU, the state DOTs must prepare an SHSP which is a data-driven action plan developed by the State Transportation Department. The SHSP identifies and analyzes highway safety problems and opportunities, and is developed in consultation with major state and local safety stakeholders. It must be completed by October 2006 to qualify for federal funding that is contained in the legislation for safety improvements.



TRANSITCHEK MADE EASIER? BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT'S TRUE.

In the days of increased health insurance costs and lower 401(k) dividends, your company and employees may be feeling the pinch. Did you ever consider offering Delaware Valley *TransitChek*?

Delaware Valley TransitChek takes advantage of IRS tax code 132(f) that allows employees to set aside tax-free dollars (up to \$105 per month) to use for commuting on public transportation. The monies that are set aside are exempt from Federal Income Tax and FICA payroll taxes for the employees, and the employer saves on the matching FICA. It's a win-win for companies as well as their transit-riding employees.

TransitChek helps reduce congestion and improve air quality by encouraging commuters to take transit more regularly. Delaware Valley TransitChek has been administered by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission for close to 15 years. We've recently added a new, upgraded version of our current TransitChek program—*TransitChek Select*.

“It's a win-win for companies as well as their transit-riding employees.”

TransitChek

TransitChek Select is an efficient, cost-effective way to provide employees with the transit benefit. TransitChek Select vouchers are sent directly to employees' homes, taking the burden of distribution outside of the office. TransitChek Select works best for larger employers and/or companies with multiple branch locations.

If you aren't capitalizing on the tax savings TransitChek provides, visit www.gettransitchek.org. If you are interested in understanding how TransitChek can save your company time and energy, please contact DVRPC at **215-592-1800**.

GAMBLING ON A SOUND FUTURE

Throughout the years, DVRPC has explored a wide range of topics at its Annual Board Retreat but few have been more controversial than gambling. Because the New Jersey portion of our region has been affected by the gaming issue for a number of years, and because Pennsylvania is now poised to deal with the impact of this fast-growing industry, the Commission felt it was time to examine the pros and cons of gaming in the Delaware Valley.

With a theme of *Win, Lose or Draw?: The Impacts of Gaming on the Region*, DVRPC's 19th Annual Board Retreat was held in December 2005 at Resorts in Atlantic City, NJ. With more than 100 regional leaders in attendance, the event featured such speakers as **Linda M. Kassekert**, Chair of the New Jersey Casino Control Commission; **Thomas D. Carver**, Executive Director of the Casino Reinvestment Development

“The Commission felt it was time to examine the pros and cons of gaming in the Delaware Valley.

Authority; **Kathleen Aufschneider**, Director of Policy and Planning, South Jersey Transportation Authority; **Anne Lacour Neeb**, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board; **The Honorable Gregory Fajt**, Pennsylvania Secretary of Revenue; and **Shawn Fordham**, Executive Director, Philadelphia Gaming Advisory Task Force. Panel discussion focused on Lessons Learned in New Jersey and Making Informed Choices in Pennsylvania. The afternoon wrapped up with participants enjoying bus tours of the economic development that has occurred over the years in Atlantic City.



JOHN J. COSCIA TO RETIRE IN MARCH, 2006

John J. Coscia, Executive Director of DVRPC for more than 25 years, has announced his retirement, effective March 31, 2006.

At the October Board meeting, he stated: “It has been an honor and privilege to serve as DVRPC's Executive Director. The work of the Commission is absolutely critical to the quality of life of six million residents in this region and I truly appreciate the opportunity that was given to me to assist the Board members in completing this work.” He received a standing ovation in recognition of his many contributions.

“The work of the Commission is absolutely critical to the quality of life of six million residents in this region.”

JOHN J. COSCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DVRPC



DVRPC INITIATES PILOT STUDY TO EVALUATE COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Transportation decisions and investments always have consequences — whether they impact a neighborhood, a community or a region. These consequences can be economic, social or environmental, and sometimes they are all three. In order to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life, the Federal Highway Administration has developed the **Community Impact Assessment (CIA)**. In turn, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has initiated a pilot program which supports DVRPC's proposal to undertake such a study in southeastern Pennsylvania.

“To evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community the Federal Highway Administration has developed the COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CIA).”

Working with PennDOT and the Delaware County Planning Department, DVRPC selected the intersection of Morton Avenue and Route 420 in Morton Borough, Delaware County, as one of two pilot studies to evaluate the CIA process in Pennsylvania. This site marks the confluence of a heavily traversed North-South corridor, two neighborhood streets (Morton and Yale Streets) that merge at an off angle a few feet before they intersect the state route, and the SEPTA R3 Regional Rail line, which cuts off Route 420 when trains pass through twice an hour. In addition, the Morton-Rutledge train station and Morton's downtown commercial area share this intersection,

although there are no crosswalks or signals that allow for pedestrian safety. Obviously traffic congestion and safety are two widely held community concerns.

The CIA, as it is innocuously called, involves consultation with local stakeholders and the public before a project is implemented, and consists of six steps: **(1)** define the community study area, **(2)** develop baseline conditions, **(3)** identify and analyze potential benefits and adverse impacts, **(4)** determine the significance of potential impacts, **(5)** identify context-sensitive solutions, and **(6)** document findings. During this process, the affected

community and its residents are alerted to the likely consequences of a project, and concerns receive proper attention during project development.

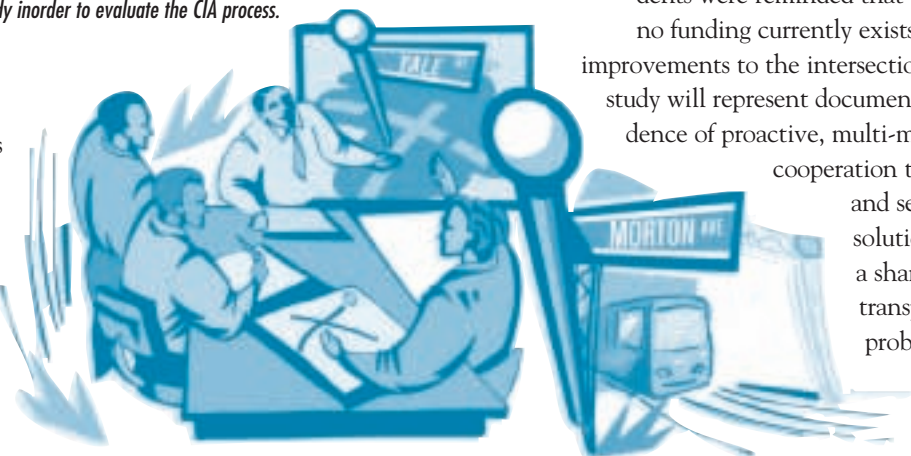
PennDOT asked DVRPC to undertake the first two steps of the six-step CIA process for the pilot project. During the first step, DVRPC found that the study area was broader than the geographic limits of the intersection. In the second step, DVRPC identified such characteristics as demographics, local identity and heritage, natural features, land use, community facilities and services, and transportation. The Commission facilitated steering committee meetings and three public meetings to educate the residents living in the study area about the CIA and to gather feedback about quality of life concerns.

“This study represents documented evidence of proactive, multi-municipal cooperation to define and seek solutions to a shared transportation problem.”

Throughout the process, residents were reminded that while no funding currently exists for improvements to the intersection, this study will represent documented evidence of proactive, multi-municipal cooperation to define and seek solutions to a shared transportation problem.



ABOVE The Morton-Rutledge train station and Morton's downtown commercial area are part of the Morton Ave. and Route 420 intersection DVRPC has selected for a pilot study in order to evaluate the CIA process.



IN MEMORIAM

WALTER K. JOHNSON 1919–2005

Walter K. Johnson, DVRPC's first Executive Director, passed away in August 2005, leaving behind a legacy of sound decision-making and thoughtful concern for the Delaware Valley.

“Mr. Johnson is one of only two executive directors to head the Commission in its 40-plus year history.”

Serving as Executive Director from 1967 to 1980, Mr. Johnson came to DVRPC two years after federal law mandated the creation of the Commission. He helped develop transportation plans that justified construction of the Philadelphia

commuter-rail tunnel, the Vine Street Expressway and the rail line to Philadelphia International Airport.

For four years until his retirement in 1980, he oversaw the development of the Year 2000 Plan, which helped determine requirements for future public facilities. He predicted the need for thousands of acres of open space in the region to accommodate recreation areas for an expanding population.

A native of Michigan, Mr. Johnson was the Wisconsin State Planning Director when he was tapped to head DVRPC. He is one of only two executive directors to head the Commission in its 40-plus year history.

NOTICE TO MUNICIPALITIES

COMING IN 2006! 

An E-newsletter featuring news for municipal officials as well as a calendar of events, workshops and other educational opportunities in the region.

If you wish to receive the E-news, send your e-mail address to Kelly Rossiter, Regional Planner, at krossiter@dvrpc.org.



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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.

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