

# DVVRPC NEWS

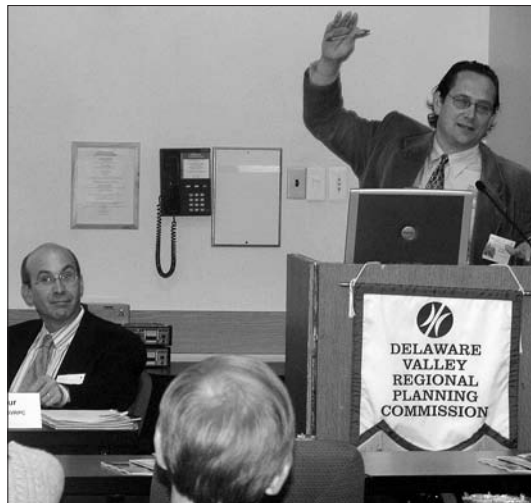
THE NEWSLETTER OF DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

## CHARTING A NEW COURSE

**D**VRPC's Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Work Program, the document that will guide this agency's work from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, represents an evolution from previous years.

To develop this Work Program, staff asked the Commission's Board and committee members to focus on priorities during the annual Board Retreat in September. The Retreat gathered more than 100 public and private sector representatives to consider an agenda for the coming fiscal year. Feather Houstoun, President of the William Penn Foundation, George Hawkins of New Jersey Future, and Steve Wray of the Pennsylvania Economy League provided introductory presentations. Participants then broke into groups to discuss ideas and vote on which initiatives they would like to see in the FY08 Work Program.

The projected Work Program, with a total budget of more than \$25 million, also represents a new direction initiated by DVRPC's Executive Director, Barry Seymour. Related projects have now been grouped together to promote increased flexibility, improved efficiency, and greater impact. Over 100 distinct projects from the FY07 Work Program have been condensed into 25 major program areas. And with the guidance of Board Retreat participants, new initiatives include such projects as *Planning for the Reuse of Brownfields*,



**George Hawkins, Esq.**, Executive Director of New Jersey Future, makes a presentation about future trends. New Jersey Future is an organization located in Trenton, NJ, which works to achieve growth that contributes to the economy without taking away remaining open spaces and farmland. Hawkins also teaches environmental law and policy for the Princeton Environmental Institute at Princeton University.



**Steven Wray**, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Economy League Southeastern PA, stresses the importance of thinking and acting regionally. The Pennsylvania Economy League is an independent, nonprofit public policy, research and development organization. It works to promote better government and more competitive regional economies by providing information and support to the civic leadership in Pennsylvania.



**Joanne Denworth**, DVRPC Board Chair, welcomed attendees.

*Planning for a World Class Region, Funding Regional Transportation Infrastructure, Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination, A Public Transportation Network Vision Plan, and Seamless Regional Transit Access.*

The success of this approach to Work Program development and the utilization of the Board Retreat as a "think tank" for guiding the future direction of the Commission has regenerated the process and now allows staff to work more cohesively as we deal with numerous timely issues.

### WINTER 2007 ISSUE:

- ▼ *Impacts of Casinos Felt Across Region* 2
- ▼ *DVRPC Works to Enhance Public Safety* 3
- ▼ *Providing Commuters Reason to Carpool* 3
- ▼ *Making the Most of Reclaimed Brownfields* 4
- ▼ *TransitChek on Board with PATCO FREEDOM Card System* 5
- ▼ *Freight for a Day Provides Complete Scan of Regional Operations* 6
- ▼ *Commission Launches Initiative to Market Older Neighborhoods* 7
- ▼ *Website Now Accessible to All Citizens* 7
- ▼ *DVRPC Adopts Title VI Compliance Plan* 8



# COMMISSION BELIEVES IMPACTS OF CASINOS WILL BE FELT ACROSS THE REGION

The introduction of four casinos into the Philadelphia region will increase congestion and elevate safety risks unless steps are taken to mitigate community impacts, according to a recent DVRPC study. With two casino sites approved at the Philadelphia Park Racetrack and Harrah's Chester Racetrack, and two more recently approved in the City of Philadelphia, the impacts of casinos will be significant.

In late December 2006, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board announced its decision to approve two of the five proposed casino sites in Philadelphia—Foxwoods Casino in South Philadelphia, and Sugarhouse Casino in Northern Liberties. Two racetrack facilities in Bensalem and Chester were approved for licenses in September 2006, and both recently opened. The two Philadelphia sites will be located along the Delaware River, creating a “Casino Corridor” along I-95 in Bucks, Philadelphia and Delaware counties.

The DVRPC study examined all eight of the proposed casino plans in the region and focused on the individual and collective land use, transportation and signage impacts. While the study did not recommend any one site over another, it found that each of the four new casinos will increase local traffic, generate additional new adjoining development, and have a strong visual impact with new signs and advertising.




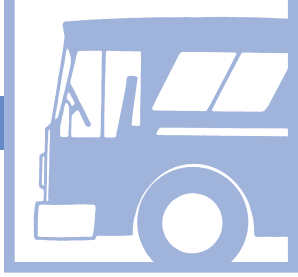
**ABOVE:** A vacant lot on Columbus Boulevard in South Philadelphia, is the future site of the Foxwoods Casino.

The collective regional impact of the four casinos on our transportation system is more uncertain, as trips will be spread over a number of highways. However, the concentration along I-95, which is already heavily congested, will likely be felt the most with increased delays and extended peak travel periods.

“The two casinos in Philadelphia are close to residential neighborhoods, and special care must be taken to decrease the negative impacts of this new development,” says DVRPC Executive Director, Barry Seymour. “Local transportation improvements are essential, and the City must now work with the casinos and community groups to protect and improve quality-of-life in the affected neighborhoods.”

The study recommends that transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, be expanded and enhanced to all of the licensed gaming facilities to serve both patrons and employees. In addition to the specific transportation improvements identified for each of the proposed casinos, the DVRPC report recommends a series of improvements along Columbus Boulevard, including improved transit service, access management, traffic calming, signal timing, intersection reconfiguration and streetscaping.

*The Impacts of Gaming in the Greater Philadelphia Area* is available on DVRPC's website, [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org) (simply click on the announcements).



# DVRPC WORKS TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

**B**etween 2003 and 2005, a crash occurred every six minutes on Delaware Valley roadways, and someone suffered a crash-related injury every ten minutes. In an effort to improve these statistics, DVRPC's Regional Safety Task Force recently completed the Executive Summary of the Regional Safety Action Plan.

***“The Plan provides a roadmap for effective cooperation, collaboration and coordination among safety professionals and stakeholders throughout the region.”***

The Plan provides a roadmap for effective cooperation, collaboration and coordination among safety professionals and stakeholders throughout the region. The Plan also maintains DVRPC's focus on transportation safety by:

- ***assessing plans, goals and priorities of institutions in the region;***
- ***determining regional emphasis areas through a cooperative process, strategies and priorities; and***
- ***integrating goals and accompanying strategies from the “Destination 2030 Long Range Plan”.***

The Regional Safety Action Plan incorporates the “4E's” of safety conscious planning — engineering, education,

enforcement and emergency management services. It attempts to match available resources with prioritized emphasis areas and strategies, and it is complementary to DVRPC's *Destination 2030* Long Range Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and New Jersey and Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation Strategic Highway Safety Plans. As the Safety Plan was being developed, stakeholders moved to implement many of the identified strategies within their jurisdictions.

The Regional Safety Action Plan will also include an Implementation Plan, and will be finalized during the Winter of 2007. For more information on the DVRPC Safety Program visit [www.dvrpc.org/transportation/safety.htm](http://www.dvrpc.org/transportation/safety.htm).

## PROVIDING COMMUTERS WITH ANOTHER REASON TO CARPOOL

**C**ommuters in Southeastern Pennsylvania now have a “safety net” for sharing the ride to and from work, thanks to DVRPC's new program, **Emergency Ride Home (ERH)**.

“With increasing gas prices, parking costs and congestion on the highways, residents are looking to alternative ways to get to work. People are often afraid of carpooling, vanpooling or taking transit in case they have an emergency or must work late unexpectedly,” said Stacy Bartels, Manager, Office of Marketing and Commuter Services, DVRPC. “This program ensures a ride to their car, home, or place of emergency, if needed.”

The program is simple. A commuter is provided a rental car when he or she has an emergency and can't ride in the carpool. The commuter must contact his or her local Transportation Management



***“The ERH program also helps companies looking to qualify for the EPA's designation as a “Best Workplace for Commuters.”***

Association (TMA) to approve usage and arrange for the rental car. The rental company will then pick the commuter up, or bring a car to his or her worksite. Registered commuters can use the service twice in a calendar year, and there is a \$5.00 co-pay when the rental car is used.

The Emergency Ride Home program also helps companies looking to qualify for the Environmental Protection Agency's designation as a “Best Workplace for Commuters.” An ERH program is a mandatory requirement to apply for this designation. Companies who qualify as a Best Workplace use this status to attract and retain employees, and keep a competitive edge over their peers.

For more information about Emergency Ride Home or to sign up for the free Share-A-Ride program, visit [www.share-a-ride.org](http://www.share-a-ride.org), or go to [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org) and quick link to MAP.





# MAKING THE MOST OF RECLAIMED BROWNFIELDS

The Delaware Valley is home to hundreds of brownfields — previously developed, underutilized properties such as abandoned factories and rail yards, gas stations, parking lots. Many of these sites are located near rail lines, established commercial areas, and major highways — ideal settings for many forms of new development. DVRPC advocates for the clean-up and reuse of brownfield properties as a means of supporting community revitalization. In an effort to help inform municipalities about the benefits and resources available to them, the Commission has released a new **Municipal Implementation Tool** on reclaiming brownfields.

Facilitating and investing in brownfield redevelopment projects can stimulate investment in underutilized properties, elevating the economic and social well-being of the community. The development also encourages efficient land use and enhances public and environmental health through the remediation of contaminated properties.

**“Facilitating brownfield redevelopment projects can stimulate investment in underutilized properties.”**

The Municipal Implementation Tool offers information about national and state-level policies and procedures, as well as case studies of brownfields in the region that have been successfully developed. The brochure also includes resources and searchable websites for locating brownfields.

Copies of the new Municipal Implementation Tool are available in the DVRPC Resource Center, or on DVRPC's website, [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).



**BEFORE:** An underutilized industrial property in Camden, New Jersey, which was previously an RCA factory.



**AFTER:** The redeveloped site, now the Victor Lofts, a luxury apartment building.



**BEFORE:** A former brownfield, just south of Commodore Barry Bridge in Chester, Pennsylvania.



**AFTER:** Barry Bridge Park, which now provides residents of Chester with attractive recreational space and a direct link to the Delaware River waterfront.

Photos courtesy of Wallace Roberts and Todd



# TRANSITCHEK ON BOARD WITH PATCO FREEDOM CARD SYSTEM

**C**ommuting will soon be even more convenient for PATCO riders. PATCO is rolling out its new fare collection system — the FREEDOM card. Featuring smart-card technology, the FREEDOM card is a credit-card sized, stored-value card that will eliminate the need for coins and tickets.

TransitChek staff has been working closely with PATCO to ensure that PATCO riders can use the FREEDOM card while still enjoying the tax savings of TransitChek. TransitChek users will be able to load their TransitChek benefit amount onto FREEDOM cards in a variety of ways:

## 1. ➡ EASY ELECTRONIC UPLOAD

*Electronic benefits transfer is the recommended, easiest way to use TransitChek and FREEDOM cards. Along with their usual order for paper vouchers, employers should include a separate list for FREEDOM card participants with their benefit amount. TransitChek forwards this order to PATCO. The next time a TransitChek commuter taps his/her FREEDOM card at the fare gate, the TransitChek benefit is automatically loaded onto the card.*

## 2. ➡ IN-PERSON REDEMPTION

*TransitChek vouchers may be redeemed at the Broadway Customer service window. The voucher amount will be immediately placed on the FREEDOM card.*

## 3. ➡ MAIL-IN REDEMPTION

*Customers can mail TransitChek vouchers directly to PATCO, and the value will be downloaded to the FREEDOM card. This option entails a longer waiting period and may only be available for a limited time.*

**“PATCO riders can use the FREEDOM card while still enjoying the tax savings of TransitChek.”**



Electronic uploading of TransitChek benefits will be available once the FREEDOM system is launched system-wide, which is planned for early 2007. With electronic uploading, employers will no longer need to order paper TransitChek vouchers for their PATCO-riding employees and the cost of administering the program will not change.

According to PATCO's website ([www.ridepatco.org](http://www.ridepatco.org)), staff plans to meet passengers in the stations during roll-out to facilitate signing up for the FREEDOM card. At other times, FREEDOM cards can be purchased at the new Automated Vending Machines (AVMs).

Please note, employees who commute via other transit systems in our region (SEPTA, NJ Transit, RiverLINE, Amtrak, DART) can continue to redeem paper vouchers on these systems and will not be eligible for the FREEDOM card.

Questions about the electronic transfer of TransitChek benefits to FREEDOM cards, should be directed to TransitChek

staff at **215-238-2855** or **215-238-2865**. For information about the FREEDOM card system, visit [www.ridepatco.org](http://www.ridepatco.org) or call PATCO Customer Service at **856-772-6900** or **215-922-4600**.

## INCREASE IN TRANSITCHEK MONTHLY CAP

*As of January 1, 2007, the IRS monthly maximum for tax-free transit benefits is \$110, an increase of \$5 from 2006.*

*Employers and employees are encouraged to adjust their TransitChek orders to take advantage of increased tax savings.*

**TransitChek**





# FREIGHT FOR A DAY PROVIDES COMPLETE SCAN OF REGIONAL OPERATIONS

Last fall, DVRPC conducted the first-ever comprehensive scan of freight operations in the Philadelphia-Camden-Trenton region. This unique data-sharing exercise, called **Freight For A Day**, documented activity on the region's extensive freight network for one full, 24-hour period.

The purpose of the scan was to prepare a snapshot of daily freight activity and to demonstrate how vital this activity is to the region. Special emphasis was placed on the Delaware Valley's main freight corridors, consisting of interstate highways, the major rail lines, the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers, and Philadelphia International Airport. *Freight For A Day* also provided a framework to identify issues and opportunities which can be addressed by DVRPC's freight planning program.

Over 50 planning partners furnished data to DVRPC regarding their activities and shipments. This included trucking firms, railroads, ports, warehouse operators, and others. The majority of the participating companies and agencies are active members of DVRPC's freight advisory committee, the Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force.

## RIGHT: WATCHING FREIGHT IN MOTION

Five teams, consisting of a total of 50 volunteers from the DVRPC planning community and Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force, participated in organized site visits in conjunction with "Freight For A Day" and the NHS connector evaluations. Pictured is the team which visited port facilities in Camden, NJ.



**ABOVE: SERVING CONSUMER NEEDS** Each day, countless shipments of goods are made to businesses, industries, and residences within the Delaware Valley. The purpose of "Freight For a Day" was to capture a snapshot of typical activity and to collect data about goods being moved by air, highway, rail, and water.



**ABOVE: NHS CONNECTOR EVALUATIONS** A special focus of "Freight For A Day" was the systematic evaluation of NHS connectors that serve the region's intermodal facilities and carry 100 or more trucks per day by direction. The evaluations considered items such as pavement conditions, turning radii, directional signs, and land use issues and community impacts.



A wide variety of information was collected about the freight activities in the region in this 24-hour period, such as:

- The last port of call for some of the cargo ships serving Delaware Valley terminals was as far away as Brazil, West Africa, and Australia.
- CSX, Norfolk Southern, and the Canadian Pacific operated 51 freight trains to, from, and through the region (note: this was augmented by additional local service).
- Aggregated hourly traffic data for check points on 5 major highways revealed that the percentage of trucks (all sizes) can range from 4-20% of total traffic over the course of the day.
- Over 21,000 cases and 23,000 bottles of wine and spirits were delivered to 60 Pennsylvania "State Stores" in the region.
- As part of region-wide enforcement, safety, and security activities, the U.S. Customs scanned 49 shipping containers and one Mercedes Benz in search of contraband and explosives.
- On the Sunday preceding "Freight For A Day," there were 45 "help-wanted" ads for truck drivers in one local newspaper.

Additional related activities were organized in conjunction with *Freight For A Day*, and involved planners from DVRPC member governments and freight facility operators. The activities included evaluations of National Highway System (NHS) connectors, tours of operations centers, and overnight visits to truck rest stops and service plazas.

For more information about *Freight for a Day*, visit the freight section of DVRPC's website at:

[www.dvrpc.org/transportation/multimodal/freight.htm](http://www.dvrpc.org/transportation/multimodal/freight.htm)



# COMMISSION LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO MARKET OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS

Older suburbs and urban neighborhoods will be getting some much-needed attention, thanks to **Coming Home**, a new DVRPC initiative. The project will create a multi-faceted, multi-media marketing campaign that promotes these older communities as attractive places to live, work, shop and play.

“Older communities are often at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to attracting new businesses and residents,” says Barry Seymour, DVRPC Executive Director. “With attractive and affordable housing, downtown shopping, and convenient transportation options, these could be the communities of choice in the Delaware Valley. Yet, many suburban municipalities and urban neighborhoods lack the resources necessary to launch sophisticated and effective marketing programs.”

**“Many suburban municipalities and urban neighborhoods lack the resources necessary to launch sophisticated and effective marketing programs.”**

*Coming Home* is among the first regional marketing efforts of its kind in the country. The initiative will promote residential investment and economic development opportunities in older communities throughout the Philadelphia region, both in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. DVRPC will oversee the development of a marketing strategy that will benefit older suburbs and urban neighborhoods as a whole, and also provide individual municipalities with the tools they need to launch their own campaigns in the future.

Last year, DVRPC issued a Request for Proposals to select a consultant team that

could assist with the market research and media components of *Coming Home*. A selection committee comprised of regional stakeholders and DVRPC staff reviewed the 12 submitted proposals and ultimately selected the partnership of GoldsmithKahn Associates, LevLane, Reed Group, and Triad Associates. These four Philadelphia-area firms collectively offer extensive experience in municipal outreach, advertising, grant writing, community development, and real estate market analysis.

*Coming Home* is funded through a grant from the William Penn Foundation and is part of DVRPC's larger *Strategies for Older Suburbs* initiative. The grant enables DVRPC to supplement the ability of local officials to undertake and support reinvestment efforts in older areas.

For more information on the *Coming Home* project, contact **Karen Cilurso** at **215-238-2813** or visit [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).

## COMMISSION WEBSITE NOW ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CITIZENS

To meet the needs of the region's increasingly diverse population, the DVRPC website ([www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)) is now accessible to non-English speaking residents who wish to translate documents into Spanish, Russian, and Traditional Chinese. DVRPC examined the region's demographics in order to determine which languages to offer on the website.

“DVRPC's commitment to making our information accessible to as many citizens as possible is a serious one. Our decisions in transportation and land use planning are based on equitable treatment for every citizen,” said Jane Meconi, DVRPC's

**“We are among the nation's first Metropolitan Planning Organizations to directly address the issues of equity, opportunity, community awareness and citizen cooperation.”**

Public Involvement/Title VI Compliance Manager. “We are among the nation's first Metropolitan Planning Organizations to directly address the issues of equity, opportunity, community awareness and citizen cooperation. By making our website available to all citizens of our region, we are better ensuring that everyone's needs, opinions and concerns will be considered in our decision-making process.”

DVRPC had some of its core documents and reports professionally translated, such as the Citizen's Guide, Marketing Guide, the DVRPC newsletter, Annual Report, and portions of the Planning Work Program and the Environmental Justice report. However, this is a very costly endeavor. In order to make the rest of the website readable by visitors to the Translations Webpage, the Commission offers “on-the-fly” machine translations through a link at the bottom of every webpage.

Visitors can log on to the DVRPC website ([www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)) to view information about the Commission and how to get involved; to access reports and studies; and to learn about issues affecting the region.

# DVRPC ADOPTS TITLE VI COMPLIANCE PLAN

DVRPC has a long history of meaningful and inclusive public involvement. As one more declaration of this intent, the Commission has adopted a *Title VI Compliance Plan*. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as well as subsequent statutes, mandates that no person on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any federally funded activities.

DVRPC's Plan establishes a framework for the Commission's efforts to ensure compliance with Title VI, as well as with other environmental justice and non-discrimination mandates, and outlines how Title VI and environmental justice considerations are reflected in the Commission's Work Program,

***"DVRPC has a long history of meaningful and inclusive public involvement."***

publications, communications, public involvement efforts and general way of doing business.

The adoption of the Plan followed a 45-day public comment period which included outreach to more than 2000 constituents, a public meeting, and documentation of comments received. For information regarding the Title VI Compliance Plan, or to request a copy, please contact Jane Meconi, Manager of Public Involvement and Title VI Compliance at 215-238-2871 or [jmeconi@dvrpc.org](mailto:jmeconi@dvrpc.org). An electronic version of the draft Plan is also available on DVRPC's website, [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).



PUBLISHED BY THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
190 NORTH INDEPENDENCE MALL WEST, 8TH FLOOR,  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106-1520

PHONE: 215-592-1800  
FAX: 215-592-9125  
WEBSITE: [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)

## DVRPC NEWS

Published by Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Office of Communications and Public Affairs

Candace Snyder, Director

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

Elise Turner, Editor

State of New Jersey

New Jersey Dept. of Transportation

New Jersey Dept. of Community Affairs

Burlington County

Camden County

Gloucester County

Mercer County

City of Camden

City of Trenton

## FY 2007 BOARD OFFICERS

Joanne R. Denworth, Chairman

Jerald R. Cureton, Vice Chairman

Barry Seymour, Executive Director

Charles E. Romick, Secretary

Carol Aichele, Treasurer

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, view the DVRPC website ([www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org)) or call (215) 238-2871.

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.*

WINTER 2007