



dvrpc news

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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ISSUE 02

Be Counted!



United States Census 2010

The U.S. Constitution requires that a national census be taken once every ten years to count every person living in the country. Data collected during the 2010 Census will be used to determine how many seats in the U.S. House of Representatives each state will have and to decide how federal and state funds are distributed. This includes more than \$400 billion per year in federal funds

for projects like hospitals, schools, senior citizen centers, and job training facilities.

National Census Day was April 1. **Make sure you are counted – take 10 minutes to complete and return your questionnaire!**

As an affiliate of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey State Data Centers, DVRPC is committed to ensuring

that every community in the Greater Philadelphia region is accurately counted.

More details and fact sheets for elected officials, community organizations, and other populations are available at www.dvrpc.org/census. Updates and data will also be posted on the website, as it becomes available.

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Annual Dinner

DVRPC Conference Helps Build Livable Communities



On March 17, over 300 local planning partners, developers, and decisionmakers gathered at the Union League in Philadelphia for DVRPC's **Breaking Ground: Building Livable Communities in Greater Philadelphia** conference.

The day was kicked-off with a welcome by DVRPC Executive Director, Barry Seymour, and a morning plenary session featuring

Deputy Secretary Ron Sims from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Mr. Sims spoke about a new partnership with HUD, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The initiative will improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower infrastructure costs while protecting the environment. This partnership will result in smarter decisions that will promote equitable development and help to address the challenges of climate change. In addition, Melissa Castro-Marmero from U.S. Senator Robert Menendez's office shared

information on the proposed Senate Bill 1619, the Livable Communities Act.

The workshop featured breakout sessions on creating livable neighborhoods, mixed-use development, green infrastructure, municipal regulations, energy efficiency, and more. Over lunch, Randall Arendt, Senior Conservation Advisor at the Natural Lands Trust, discussed his new book entitled, *Envisioning Better Communities: Seeing More Options, Making Wiser Choices*. That afternoon, Mr. Arendt led a special workshop on reinventing commercial strips. Conference proceedings can be viewed at www.dvrpc.org/breakingground.



1. Deputy Secretary Ron Sims is the second most senior official at HUD and is nationally recognized for his work on transportation, homelessness, climate change, healthcare reform, urban development, and affordable housing. He is a proponent of smart growth programs and the preservation of open space.

2. Randall Arendt of the Natural Lands Trust led a special hands-on exercise to redesign a commercial strip.

3. Over 100 planners and partners participated in the workshop.



Pictured above from left to right are: Michael Worth, Field Office Director for the HUD Camden office; Brenda Laroche, Deputy Director for HUD Region III; Deputy Secretary Ron Sims; Melissa Castro-Marmero; and Barry Seymour.

Air Quality Partnership Gears Up for Ozone Season

**Warm Summer Weather =
Unhealthy Levels of Ground-Level Ozone**

As warmer weather approaches, so does the onset of ground-level ozone. Fortunately, ozone levels are being monitored and the public is alerted when levels become dangerous. A program of DVRPC, the Air Quality Partnership (AQP) educates residents about the dangerous effects of ground-level ozone and provides air quality forecasts to the public.

The AQP's ozone season kicks off in late-April and runs through September. In the summer, sunlight and high temperatures "bake" pollutants emitted by motor vehicles, power plants, and other sources of pollution to form high levels of ground-level ozone (ie. smog). The AQP provides summertime ground-level ozone forecasts and encourages voluntary actions to reduce air pollution, such as taking transit and not topping off your gas tank.

This year, the AQP introduced a new air quality alert system. The EnviroFlash Air Quality Alert system is a U.S. EPA email service that allows individuals and organizations to sign up for air quality alerts and receive advisories when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy. Unlike the Partnership's old alert system, EnviroFlash will allow partners to manage their own alert levels and the format in which the alerts are delivered.

Also in 2010, the AQP elected its new Board Officers. Maureen Farrell, Manager of Operations at Greater Valley Forge Transportation, will serve as Chair; and John Hainsworth, Senior Transportation Specialist at Cross County Connection, will serve as Vice Chair.

For daily air quality forecasts and helpful tips on how to reduce air pollution, visit www.airqualitypartnership.org. To receive air quality forecasts and alerts, click on the "sign up for air quality forecasts" button.



DVRPC and TreeVitalize Municipalities Support Local Trees

Recognizing the need to restore tree canopy in our region, DVRPC is a key partner in the TreeVitalize Municipalities Program. A program of the overall TreeVitalize initiative, it operates in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties to help communities overcome obstacles to restoring and managing their tree canopy. It challenges municipal leaders to treat trees as part of their community's infrastructure, and to consider trees in their plans, ordinances, and capital improvement projects.

Recently, DVRPC completed a series of five case studies that highlight successful projects funded by the TreeVitalize Municipalities Forestry Incentive Grant Program. They include projects along Baltimore Avenue in Delaware County, in Cheltenham, in Hatfield Township, in Phoenixville/Schuylkill Township, and in Yardley/Morrisville.

Visit www.dvrpc.org/green to view the case studies. For more information about the TreeVitalize program, visit www.treevitalize.net.

DVRPC to Develop a Local Energy and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Tool Kit

DVRPC is developing a new tool kit for townships and boroughs to provide step-by-step

guidance for identifying, prioritizing, and implementing cost-effective strategies to reduce energy demand and curb greenhouse gas emissions in municipal operations. It will help municipal leaders scrutinize current energy use to identify

where to conserve. The tool kit will contain specific actions to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in municipal operations, including information about their costs and benefits. The tool kit is expected to be completed later this spring,

and will be distributed to all municipalities in the region. DVRPC plans to conduct training sessions throughout the region as well.

For more information, visit www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate.





FY 2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for PA Underway

DVRPC is working with its member agencies to develop the draft FY 2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Pennsylvania. The TIP, required under the federal legislation of SAFETEA-LU, is an agreed upon listing of all priority, regionally significant transportation projects (as well as all other projects seeking federal funds).

The draft TIP documents will be available June 1 - June 30, 2010 for public and agency comment, and there will be public meetings scheduled during that time. Visit our website at www.dvrpc.org for updates and more information.



Mercer County Interactive Bikeability Map Available Online

In February 2010, DVRPC launched a new website for Mercer County residents and bicyclists to help them plan bicycle-friendly routes to ride. The website allowed the public to suggest routes or make comments on an interactive map.

The site will help planners identify priority bicycle corridors and facilities to be considered in the future.

The information gathered will influence policy and project priorities, and is relevant to the development of the Mercer County long-range transportation plan.

To view the map and for more information about the project, visit www.dvrpc.org/asp/bikemercer/.



Commission to Acquire New Aerial Imagery

This spring, DVRPC is partnering with the U.S. Geological Survey to acquire new aerial imagery for the 9-county region. This cooperative agreement will serve both Federal government missions and DVRPC member government needs by reducing costs for each party, and avoiding duplication of effort. The data produced will be used to update the National Spatial Data Infrastructure and

the National Map. The specifications for the 2010 imagery will mirror those for DVRPC's 2005 imagery: one foot pixel resolution, natural color, ortho-rectified, 1"=200' design scale. This digital ortho-imagery is ideally suited for use in a Geographic Information System (GIS) where it can be used for mapping purposes, or as a backdrop for existing spatial data. For more information about DVRPC's ortho-imagery, visit www.dvrpc.org.



Corridor Studies *encourage* Smart Growth

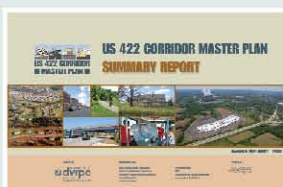
DVRPC corridor studies strengthen the link between land use and transportation, promote multi-modal transportation solutions, and encourage municipal action. They also encourage smart growth principles in an effort to build a more livable, sustainable region – one of the main components of DVRPC's long-range plan, *Connections*. Below are a number of corridor studies completed recently, or now underway.



US 30 (Lancaster Avenue)

DVRPC recently embarked on a two-year study of the US 30 corridor, from the Chester/Delaware County line to 52nd Street in West Philadelphia. It will address critical issues including needed roadway improvements, pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety, access to public transit, smart growth land use decisions, and more.

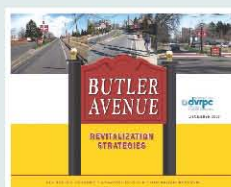
A series of public meetings were held in late-March to inform local residents about the study and gather input. For more information about the study and future meetings, visit www.dvrpc.org/Corridors/US30.htm.



US 422

DVRPC's *US 422 Corridor Draft Final Master Plan* identifies strategic steps and investment decisions to sustainably accommodate growth and mobility for the long-term future—across a corridor spanning 24 municipalities in Berks, Chester, and Montgomery counties.

A series of municipal outreach meetings are scheduled for this spring. Planning staff will act as civic brokers to present the key content of the Plan to elected municipal officials, and identify appropriate techniques and programs that should be pursued at the municipal level. The meetings will offer a final opportunity to garner comments and complete the project. The Draft-Final report is available online at www.422corridor.com.



Butler Avenue

The opening of the US 202 Parkway (anticipated by 2012) will relieve traffic volume along Butler Avenue. In turn, the expected reduction of through traffic from the artery introduces the opportunity to consider the five-mile-long Butler Avenue corridor as a destination, not just a thoroughfare.

A multi-municipal initiative, DVRPC conducted the *Butler Avenue Revitalization Strategies* study. DVRPC staff performed planning, visioning, and public outreach exercises to develop a conceptual streetscape and circulation plan for the Butler Avenue study corridor. Placemaking and transportation management techniques and improvements were identified to foster a safer and more vibrant corridor, and also support its transportation needs. To view the report, visit www.dvrpc.org/reports/08060.pdf.

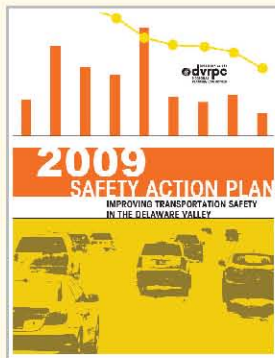


US 322

DVRPC recently completed a corridor study along US 322 in western Chester County. Improving the linkage between land use and transportation is essential for the future of this corridor, as this part of the region sees significant growth pressures due to its location near major employment centers and availability of developable land.

With the support of the Chester County Planning Commission, DVRPC worked with study area municipalities and state agencies to assess transportation facilities, land use practices, and environmental policies. To view the entire report, visit www.dvrpc.org/reports/09063.pdf.

Working to Improve Transportation Safety



Crash fatalities in the Delaware Valley are down for the second year in a row, and the Commission is working to push the number even lower.

Adopted last fall, the *Safety Action Plan* identifies seven key emphasis areas – factors which contribute to 96% of vehicle-related fatalities in the Delaware Valley.

The Regional Safety Task Force was important in shaping the *Safety Action Plan*. This multidisciplinary group has met quarterly since 2005 to reduce crashes and vehicle-related fatalities. The meetings help to implement the Plan by focusing on one emphasis area

per meeting. Recent meetings have covered ensuring pedestrian safety, curbing aggressive driving, and making the design and operation of intersections safer.

Other DVRPC initiatives to improve safety include:

- **Road Safety Audits (RSAs)** – An interdisciplinary team of partners focus on a section of road with safety problems to identify a range of solutions focusing on low-cost, quick-turnaround projects. DVRPC's most recent RSA was conducted on a section of Levittown Parkway in Bucks County.
- **Congestion and Crash Site Analysis Program (CCSAP)** – This is a technical analysis of a high-crash, congested intersection conducted by a range of partners to find low-cost improvements.
- **Crash Analysis** – DVRPC offers a range of ways to analyze crash data to get to the root of safety issues. This helps with selecting the most effective countermeasures.

Visit www.dvrpc.org/transportation/safety/ for more information.

Transportation Security Planning a Priority at DVRPC

*In addition to reducing crashes in the region, DVRPC is engaged in the broader issue of transportation security planning. It is essential that the region be prepared for major events like hurricanes, acts of terrorism, or planned events like a World Series parade. A wide-range of professionals have a role to play in transportation planning, and a new publication will provide an overview, specific steps for many partners, and grant information. **Fitting the Pieces Together: Improving Transportation Security Planning in the Delaware Valley** will be available in spring 2010. Visit www.dvrpc.org for more information as it becomes available.*



US 202, Section 200

Recommendations Lead to Implementation

DVRPC recently conducted a Transportation Operations Audit of US 202 in West Chester, between the US 30 and Matlack Street Interchanges. The initiative grew out of the successful efforts of road safety audits, and was completed in partnership with the Chester County Planning Commission and PennDOT. The audit identified various transportation management and operations deficiencies in the corridor and helped to

develop possible low-cost mitigation strategies to preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability of the transportation system.

It was a two-day process including an all-day physical examination of existing roadway conditions by a team of technical and local experts.

When this project was initially envisioned, there were no foreseeable major capital projects along this section of US 202. However, with funding available from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), there is now a project to mill and overlay portions of the study area along US

202 from Stanton Avenue to the PA 100 Bypass, which coincided with the conclusion of the operations audit last December.

The timing of the audit and the ARRA project provided a unique opportunity to immediately incorporate some of the audit's low cost recommendations directly into this construction project. Based on further discussions with PennDOT, FHWA, DVRPC, and Chester County, several low-cost items will be incorporated into the ARRA construction project. For more information, visit www.dvrpc.org/Operations.



Richard G. Bickel, Jr.

*Director of Planning,
Delaware Valley Regional
Planning Commission*

Richard Bickel Elected to AICP College of Fellows

Richard G. Bickel, Jr., Director of Planning at DVRPC, has been elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Fellowship is granted to planners who have achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching and mentoring, research, public and community service, and leadership. The College of Fellows includes only 450 members; they represent the top echelon of the American Planning Association whose total membership is 43,000 and includes 13,083 active AICPs.

Mr. Bickel was inducted into the College of Fellows at the National Planning Conference in New Orleans, which was held in mid-April. In addition, he received the Site Visitor of the Year Award by the Planning Accreditation Board for his volunteer work reviewing planning school programs.

Public Participation and Outreach Efforts Set National Example

Recently, DVRPC's public participation and outreach efforts were part of a study sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration, entitled *Enhancing Public Participation in Regional Public Transportation Planning*. As one of three case studies of public outreach initiatives at Metropolitan Planning Organizations, DVRPC's Regional Citizens Committee (RCC) and the "Dots & Dashes" program were specifically highlighted.

The RCC is the primary forum for Delaware Valley residents and interested stakeholders to actively participate in the regional planning and decision-making process. It provides an open avenue of communication between the public and DVRPC. The RCC meets monthly to review issues and make recommendations to the DVRPC Board, as well as

hear presentations on a variety of topics in the fields of transportation and transit, land use and housing, and the environment.

"Dots & Dashes" is an outreach exercise developed as a way to engage citizens and stakeholders on their preferences for public transit investments in the region. Through the exercise, which took the form of a board game, participating groups prioritized regional public transit projects, improvements, and investments over a 30-year time horizon. The information gathered from these exercises was used to help inform DVRPC's *Long-Range Vision for Transit* and helped to inform the *Connections 2035 Long-Range Plan*.

For more information on getting involved, visit www.dvrpc.org.

DVRPC Announces New Chair of Regional Citizens Committee (RCC)



Aissia Richardson

*Chair of Regional Citizens
Committee (RCC)*

Aissia Richardson of Philadelphia has been elected as Chair of the Regional Citizens Committee (RCC). As Vice President of Operations at the Uptown Entertainment and Development Corporation, Ms. Richardson is responsible for creating and implementing the organization's Fund Development Plan. Her most recent accomplishment was helping to secure over \$1.5 million in public and private funding for the renovation of the Uptown Theatre in Philadelphia.

In addition, Ms. Richardson has been the President of the African American United Fund since 2006. Highly active in her community, she is a member of several organizations including the SEPTA Citizens Advisory Committee.



Deadlines have been extended for sponsorships and RSVPs.
For information, contact Candace Snyder,
Public Affairs Director, at 215-238-2875 or csnyder@dvrpc.org.

DVRPC News Going Electronic!

In an effort to be more sustainable, *DVRPC News* is going paperless. Starting this summer, the newsletter will be sent out via email on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. This will allow us to share news with you in a more timely fashion, while producing less waste.

To subscribe to the e-newsletter or request a hardcopy be printed and mailed to you, please contact Elise Turner, Communications Manager, at eturner@dvrpc.org or 215-238-2941.



Traffic Can Be A Good Word!

Close to 350 transportation professionals and stakeholders attended The Traffic Club of Philadelphia's recent Annual Dinner in Philadelphia. The Traffic Club is a historic volunteer association that promotes the Delaware Valley's freight and logistics industry. Head table dignitaries at the dinner included (l-r): PennDOT Deputy Secretary, Eric Madden; FHWA Director of the Office of Freight Management and Operations, Tony Furst; Sunoco's Chairman, CEO, and President, Lynn Elsenhans; DVRPC Executive Director, Barry Seymour; and ARAMARK Vice President of Strategic Fleet Operations, Kevin Fisher.

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