BREAKING GROUND 2015
Building Livable Communities in Greater Philadelphia: The Next 50 Years
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UNION LEAGUE, PHILADELPHIA, PA

Conference Proceedings
Thank you for joining us at Breaking Ground 2015: Building Livable Communities in Greater Philadelphia: The Next 50 Years! This year, DVRPC celebrates 50 years of planning for the Greater Philadelphia region. We’ve accomplished a great deal since 1965. This year’s conference theme focused on our vision for the future. The keynote speakers and break out session topics considered the changing technology, society, and transportation network that Greater Philadelphia faces over the coming decades. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) and the conference’s sponsors put together a program that you will hopefully find informative and rewarding. We can’t wait to see where the next fifty years will take us.

9:00 AM – Welcome and Introduction

Barry Seymour, Executive Director of DVRPC, welcomed participants to the Breaking Ground conference and described the event as an opportunity to share success stories and stories from their communities. This is the third but one in a very long line of programs that have been developed by DVRPC to help our 352 municipalities. Over the years, DVRPC has focused on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment and enhancing the economy.

Progress comes from working in partnership. A special thank you to our Gold Sponsor, Urban Engineers, and our Silver Sponsors: RBA Group, AECOM, McCormick Taylor, eXude, and Pennoni. Mr. Seymour gave a special thank you to the Delaware Valley Smart Growth Alliance and all the program supporters. He explained how everyone here helps build livable communities in our region to bring together different people that have a common goal, and also thanked our speakers and presenters sharing their expertise.

This year marks DVRPC’s 50th anniversary. Mr. Seymour explained that today’s conference is not only about looking back on our history, but also looking forward to the next 50 years. The panel sessions were designed to help you look forward and address your planning challenges today and tomorrow. The panel sessions cover current and emerging issues – climate change, the next industrial revolution, energy efficiency, community participation in the digital age, efficient transportation, reviving older neighborhoods, and transforming traditional suburban office parks.

Mr. Seymour spoke about DVRPC’s mission as regional with a focus on improving all our communities. In the past year, DVRPC has been able to improve new communities, enhance transportation services, build new trails and enhance our food economy. We were able to add $10 billion of new projects to our regional TIP thanks to Act 89 funding, as well as update the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which brings together 60 different economic development organizations to prioritize over $7 billion dollars-worth of projects. DVRPC also
invested $1 million through the TCDI municipal grant program and invested over $20 million to over 30 trail projects as part of the Circuit. Mr. Seymour concluded by mentioning the DVRPC Board and the important task they have been handed. Their support and vision helps shape our region. Mr. Seymour then introduced Diane Ellis-Marseglia, Chair, DVRPC Board.

Ms. Diane Ellis-Marseglia, Chair, DVRPC Board, began by sharing her experience as a social worker, acknowledging that planners could have designed better communities if we had let them. Social problems prove that you need livable communities, with access to food, healthcare or housing. Misconceptions and missteps have caused us not to create better communities. When she moved to Levittown, someone told her that once you move there you get stuck. That is because it is a livable community, where you can access four municipalities while only having to cross two major roads. She shared that less than a quarter miles from her house, are all the types of services she needs. Kids can walk to school; train station is less than a mile away.

As a Bucks County Commissioner she talks to and learns about what residents care about: issues such as the speed of traffic, new trails, school siting, and transportation options. In trying to make Bucks County more sustainable, she focuses her efforts on the economic issues, needs of children, aging population, employment, access to healthcare and job training. These topics drive considerations in Bucks County as well as DVRPC. Bucks County focuses on creating livable communities by paying attention to residents’ needs as well as the physical infrastructure. These topics are championed by federal leaders as well as the conference’s morning speaker. Ms. Ellis-Marseglia then introduced Ms. Harriet Tregoning, Director of HUD’s Office of Economic Resilience.

9:15 AM – Morning Plenary

Ms. Harriet Tregoning, Director of HUD’s Office of Economic Resilience

Ms. Tregoning thanked everyone for their kind words. She noted that DVRPC is a leader in the country and should be proud of its accomplishments. Bringing communities together to talk about the future is difficult. Ms. Tregoning noted that her speech was going to focus on the future and what is going to be different. Four areas of focus for her presentation: First, choices are going to be important. People want choice. Second, regions are engaged in a contest to win the economy. Third, the sharing economy will have a big impact on cities and residents. Last, the role of failure and its relationship to innovation. Cities are competition. The internet fills the gap when amenities and
services are missing in a place. Retail that is an experience is the only thing that will survive in a locality.

Choice in communities and transportation is really important. We have options all around us. It is not any different when it comes to housing or transportation. Choice in transportation leads to other great things for cities. Walkability is fundamental and every community can improve. We aren’t the connoisseurs of walking we should be. It requires an enormous number of facilities. Some people walk for leisure, and need trails and paths. Some people walk for a purpose- utilitarian walking – people going place to place in a big hurry; they need countdown signals and broad sidewalks. There is also strolling / lingering – When you go on a date, or to people watch, you’re looking for places that are beautiful. There is promenading – places where young people like to gather to see and be seen. Special walking for parades, protests. They are not all the same. Need to think about what use you are trying to promote in order to decide what type of facility you need to build. Catering to the different types of walking is very important.

Bicycling is also very important. It enhances transit by expanding the transit shed. You never imagine doing it until everyone else is doing it. It gets you door to door with no parking problems and it is usually the fastest mode in a city. It requires travel at low speeds which enhances safety. Most importantly, it works for people at every age and a capacity that is usually already present in every city. Almost every city in the country is looking to expand their transit system. The reason people like fixed guide-way transit is that provides an armature for development, and can accommodate more people with less impact. Some people don’t care about transit, they care the changes on the street because of transit. Changes happen years before transit is actually servicing that particular neighborhood. Transit service expands walk sheds and opens opportunities for development in nearby neighborhoods. Evaluate what exists and what needs to be enhanced.

Ms. Tregoning then began to talk about HUD’s Regional Planning Grants. They are giving communities funds to gather together and think about the future. Majority of grantees focused on economic development, transportation and housing. If a community doesn’t have a common vision, they are already behind. Communities focused on the same issues. They developed cohorts so they could continue to work together.

HUD put together a tool that looked at housing and transportation costs for every major city and region in the country. Drive to where you qualify. Affordability pushes you to the edge of a region so you can afford the house but your transportation costs increase because driving is the only option.
In Boston, MA, two of the poorest communities in the region had rail lines going through them, but they didn’t stop there. The HUD community planning challenge grant was to plan for stations in those communities. The new stations will charge lower fares for patrons using these new stations. This effort shows that even if we want to add density, or address equity issues, it won’t happen on its own. There has to be planning.

Planners love to plan but we need to implement. Together North Jersey created subgrants as local demonstration projects to implement pieces of their regional plan. The subgrants funded more than 80 small projects across the region. The City of Providence, RI improved bus service because they couldn’t afford rail. The Rhode Island School of Design put art in bus stations that reflects the community. Had nine community hubs and identified underutilized and vacant land. Used build out scenarios to visualize what would happen. Do more with what you have.

Denver, CO had a big infusion of money for rail (after raising sales tax on 3rd try). Planning grant to ensure that investment in rail/new stations won’t disrupt existing access, or displace lower income people.

Oakland, CA is on the comeback. Prices are high in the Bay area becoming a place where middle-income people can’t live (lots of services for low-income populations, not so much for middle income). Not much they can do much to lower housing cost in San Francisco and most middle income people cannot be there. Increasingly better transit is helping making other parts of the region more desirable.

After highlighting a few examples of good planning work, Ms. Tregoning moved her presentation to talk about the value of choice and it makes a difference. Jobs are following talent, rather than people following jobs. Companies are looking to open where the workforce is. What is a factor for young people? College grads have crushing debt. Young grads are looking for places where they can live without a car so they can pay off debt. Young college graduates want to live where they do not need a car to keep costs down for them. Places that provide this option are winning the population race. Washington DC has the highest concentration of college debt in DC, but 2nd lowest default rate. People are finding jobs in the DC region. This choice is also valuable for empty nesters. Savings are substantial for young people and empty nesters. Two bulges in District – college age and empty nesters. The comeback story has to do with the push factors: push factors: schools, crime, taxes. We need more pull factors. To integrate the public schools and give these communities and low-income households a change to get ahead: Washington DC implemented universal pre-k, which is essentially free all day daycare. This instantly integrated the public schools for all income groups. It is worth about $20,000 per child per household. It frees single-parent families to work more and allowed families to form. HUD predicts that Washington DC will move from 21% of households with kids in the district to 22.5 percent by 2030. It has caused people to stay in DC, and even move in and did a lot besides improve education.
Transportation has advantages; DC households spend just 11 percent of their income on transportation vs. 19 percent at the regional and US levels. Where does the money actually get spent? If you are buying gas, most of it goes to international corporations, doesn’t stay in the community. If you are spending it on other things, you have a better chance of keeping it in the region. In essence, you are making more of an investment in your community.

Every city aspires to return back to previous population highs. The population is returning to the District of Columbia, which improves the tax base. We need to make sure that we have more need more choice in housing and more choice for schools. Amenities are important to young people, need to zone for those amenities. It is where you can walk to meet your daily needs. Workplace is changing, not everyone goes to the office every day. Some work from home and all of a sudden every neighborhood has a daytime population.

Ms. Tregoning shifted her presentation to talk about the Sharing Economy. Boomers and their millennial children are very close and it has accelerated the pace of change in cities. Kids are doing it (biking, Uber, etc.) and telling their parents about it. In suburbs housing units are too large, and are not a good match for the size of households today. Capacity is excessive in communities. The sharing economy is about using assets in a more efficient way, while allowing the owner’s economically benefit from it.

The tax code never intended for every person to be a small business owner selling/leasing things. A private parking space may be leased to a nearby business. Millennials are figuring out how to have a quality of life without paying for it. Automobiles are a depreciating asset that are used 5 percent of the time and parked 95 percent. Millennials have figured out that this is not a good value proposition. This is why car sharing is growing so fast.

Car sharing is a gateway drug for bike sharing. A new term comes along with this, dock blocking – when you have a bike share and you go to your destination station and there isn’t an available dock. Capital bike share is the 2nd bike sharing effort in DC. The first one was a terrible failure, run by Pepco with 100 bikes at 10 stations. It didn’t work. All the things that didn’t work with the first system were fixed with the second one. It was regional, solar powered, etc. You have to be willing to fail and to take risks.

Learning to fail is important. Cities need to fail. Things are changing and if we are so afraid to innovate and take a risk, we will be the last to adopt something. Innovation is part of a city’s brand these days; the future will be created in our cities but you have to manage people’ expectations about failure. For instance, Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington DC was restriped 7 times until they found a good solution acceptable to the community. We wanted to get it right. Learn by doing is a valid way of attempting an innovative concept.

Even in the most booming times vacancy is an urban condition, need to find uses for this space and activate it. Street activating uses are key. This enhances safety. People are more willing to rent space
if there are benign uses already there. For instance, DC began allowing food trucks 3 years ago to occupy vacant spaces. It became a startup for new restaurants. The successful one’s then moved into brick and mortar locations.

The original popup was a trailer, which was used to test out retail. DC need a lot of temporary arts based uses in poorer neighborhoods of DC. LUMEN8 Anacostia – activated poorest neighborhood in DC. Highest retail sales ever occurred on these days. The 20 vacancies in this neighborhood were filled in the next year.

Use all the space you have. Office lobbies are wasted, pass-through spaces. Meanwhile, bookstores are going away. DC invented Nerds to the Lobby – used lobby space to create bookstores, coffee shops, other uses. Started out as a 3 month experiment, 2 years later it is still successful. This effort helped to lease the building. These are chances to create the next big idea.

Not everyone communicates well. It turns out millennials hate being yelled at by old people. But they love doing things. We have designed our planning process with a doing part. Implementing the plans before the ink is even dry.

Success that urban places had during the recession but different communities are recovering very differently. Part of DC’s success is because of transportation choice. In 2008 hundreds of cars were disappearing off DMV rolls. People were able to manage the changes and they rebounded very quickly. Every part of the region now sees that they need access to transit and mixed use communities. The future is in transit. If you are not one of those places, you are hurting. 28% of real estate value within half mile of the Metro, on 4% of the land. Office space is within ¼ miles of metro. Need to be here! The future is here.

Questions and Answers:

1. *Do you have any advice for local governments that are afraid to fail?*
   Pilot and temporary. It’s about transparency, and if the public doesn’t like it we can go back to the way it was. Manage expectations. Once you’ve had a few successes you’ll have an appetite for more.

2. *Is universal pre-k throughout the district?*
   Yes.
3. **How do you pay for it?**

   Through general revenues. Keeping residents in the city is the only hope to generate additional tax revenues. More than 50 percent of the district’s land is off the tax rolls (federally owned, or non-profit).

4. **How do you get past the insurance issue when using vacant spaces?**

   Sometimes you have to get waivers signed. Other times, participants have to self-insure. At some point the government may have to underwrite. Obviously you aren’t using dilapidated buildings, or doing something that is an obvious safety risk. In some cases you may have to move it out to the street.

**10:30 AM – Concurrent Morning Sessions**

**Rainy Days and Hot Summer Nights: Planning for Hazards in a Changing Climate**  
**Moderator: Chris Linn, DVRPC**

The session opened with introductory remarks by Chris Linn, Manager of DVRPC’s Office of Environmental Planning. He noted the importance of resilience and climate change adaptation planning as growing concern for planners. While climate and weather hazards are long standing issue for planners, anthropogenic climate change means we can no longer use the past to guide the future. Planners have always looked to risk and acceptability for different levels of risk in their work. However, adaptation to climate change means a new vocabulary and approach needs to be translated to other areas of planning, such as land use planning, particularly flood risk. Allocating costs equitably is challenging, and need to be kept in mind in this conversation.

DVRPC has participated in this area through projects with the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the City of Chester, Pennsylvania, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

**Anne Choate, Vice President, ICF International**

Anne talked about climate and extreme weather in the planning process; including what can we learn from experience to be more resilient in the long term.

Planners deal with risk all the time, so why is planning for climate change more difficult? Climate change and extreme weather are challenging because they are complicated. Some climate change hazards are novel (e.g., sea level rise) and some are exacerbation of existing stressors (e.g., high
temperatures, heavy precipitation). The impacts fall across all sectors—energy, transportation, water, health, ecosystems, etc. The impacts touch on capital planning, operations & maintenance, hazard mitigation planning, emergency response, customer communication (e.g., shut operations during extreme weather), etc. The timescales range from today through 2100 and beyond. A successful response requires working across sectors, and working across very different time scales, and requires dealing with an uncertain future. The complexity can be overwhelming.

So, the question is “What can we do now?” There are several already well-established entry points to resilience planning, including: hazard mitigation plans, sustainability plans, asset management plans, long-range transportation plans, project-level NEPA assessments, and electricity reliability plans.

Most of the focus of effort and expenditure has been on post-event/disaster response and recover, rather than preparedness. This is where the money is. But, if a community has not done the preparedness planning, your recovery will not reduce your risk and vulnerability in the next disaster. What can be done to move the effort to the “left” (prior to the disaster on the timeline) in order to reduce cost of future disasters?

There are several ways to factor in climate now:

1. Make climate data available in units and formats that are useful to decision makers. E.g., how may more hot days can we expect? How will future rainfall be different? Locally-downscaled metrics relative to thresholds (where system response changes) are needed, but are very resource intensive to develop. FHWA has addressed this challenge by developing the CMIP Climate Data Processing Tool. This free tool processes readily-available downscaled climate projections into outputs that are directly relevant to planners.

2. Conduct cost-effective, tiered, vulnerability assessments – need to drill down to identify where vulnerabilities are highest. Several tools are available at the global and regional level. For the transportation sector at the municipal and project level, FHWA has developed the Vulnerability Assessment Screening Tool (VAST). This free tool helps transportation agencies evaluate the relative vulnerability to climate change of all of their transportation assets through a structure scoring and evaluation process.

3. Move to adaptation quickly in areas where there are “no regrets” solutions. Do things that will work before you even carry out the vulnerability studies, such as raise electrical infrastructure that would be submerged in a flood? A thoughtful discussion with operations personnel can identify many no- or low-cost actions that can reduce vulnerability.

4. Integrate climate adaptation / resiliency planning with disaster risk reduction. Pre-event planning is essential. What would happen if slate is wiped clean? How would you rebuild? Investing time in answering these questions can prepare a community to rebuild in a way that will reduce or eliminate—rather than rebuild—vulnerabilities. Ms. Choate gave the example of Assateague Island, which is often damaged by storms. After several rounds of replacing
restrooms at the beach, they have installed mobile restrooms, which can easily be moved to a safe location when a storm is expected.

5. Build capacity for improved tracking, monitoring, and awareness of the costs of inaction. Monitor what happens in a disaster so you can know what to expect and prepare for. Build capacity by training on tools, engaging stakeholders, and using local data and understanding. For instance, if your community has a lot of renters, it is important to engage building owners, as tenants have little to no say over alterations to their residences that might decrease vulnerability.

Erik Johanson, Manager of Strategic Planning, SEPTA

SEPTA’s effort has been guided in part by their sustainability plan.

This region has experienced a 67 percent increase in rainfall since the 1950s, and has had four FEMA Major Disaster declarations since 2010. This increase in extremes presents a real challenge—they present new events that have never happened before, and for which the system was not been designed. Data show increase in high heat, high rainfall, and variability in recent years.

The FTA pilot program provided SEPTA with funding to better understand climate projections and the vulnerability of their system to under anticipated future conditions.

The project focused on Manayunk-Norristown line, which has experienced a lot of weather-related disruption, in part due to flooding from the Schuylkill River.

The study documents several resilience strategies already being implemented, including:

- Capital investment strategies: improve slope stabilization, raise signal huts so electric and electronic equipment is above flood waters, install a turn back on the line outside the most frequently flooded area of the line so that trains can provide service on the remainder of the line, purchase of large, mobile emergency electricity generators that can provide power during disruption.

- Operating and maintenance strategies: diligent tree trimming to minimize disruptions from falling branches and trees, sandbagging vent wells on subway lines to minimize rainfall and runoff intrusion, staging fleets in higher grounds to avoid loss of equipment in heavy flooding, emergency response tracking to assure coordination.

- Administrative strategies: develop a post-closure policy of focusing first on the core of the system and restoring outward to assure the whole system is restored most smoothly, keep customers in the loop through clear communications, interagency cooperation to assure disruptions are as well-managed as possible, and planned service suspensions when extreme weather is predicted to avoid stranding passengers on the system during such events.

Mr. Johanson noted that many of these strategies were already being done. The study helped put them into the context of climate change adaptation.
Interestingly, the completion of this report gave SEPTA the opportunity to successfully apply for “Sandy Zone” funding from the FTA. SEPTA’s application included improvements in power resiliency, right of way hardening, flood mitigation, and improved emergency communications. In total, SEPTA received $87 million from the FTA, providing a 75 percent match for $115 million in projects throughout its service region.

**Stephen Marks, Municipal Manager, City of Hoboken**

Hoboken is a small municipality directly across the Hudson River from midtown Manhattan. It has population of 52,575 in 26,855 households in just over 1¼ square miles. Most of the landmass is in a FEMA-designated flood zone. Hurricane Sandy had significant impacts on Hoboken, flooding over 1,800 homes and businesses, and damaging or destroying over 2,000 automobiles. 95 percent of Hoboken lost power for 10 days. Evacuation routes were not passable. Transit was shut down.

Mr. Marks summarized 12 lessons from Sandy:

1. Flooding from more intense storms and sea level rise will continue to adversely affect coastal communities.
2. Tidal waterfronts are particularly vulnerable.
3. Emergency responders need better training, equipment and facilities. Emergency responders did not have high water vehicles—vehicles running in salt water are very problematic.
4. Electrical substations need to be elevated and protected.
5. Evacuation routes must remain passable.
6. Transit facilities need better protection, for instance from water intrusion.
7. Rolling stock should be moved to higher ground (transit agencies need better climate adaptation and contingency plans).
8. Communities cannot evacuate all residents before/during events. It is simply not possible, so there has to be some ability to deal with residents locally.
9. There is a need for more shelter space and evacuation capacity. It would be helpful to regionalize both.
10. Small businesses are particularly at risk.
11. Even major sectors & industries are vulnerable. Supply chain logistics are fragile and subject to disruption.
12. Food and fuel distribution were interrupted. Hoboken had to rely on the National Guard for food, often MREs.
13. Public information breakdown (Public notice by message board and town hall meeting).
14. Telecommunications breakdown. Cell phone service failed; telephone lines were down. Cascading effects on entire system of system components.

15. After the hurricane comes a tsunami of debris—can overwhelm disposal capacity.

16. The problem demands federal and state leadership and resources.

**Hoboken’s 9 Point Resiliency Plan**

1. Energy Resiliency: Develop a micro-grid structure that will meet performance targets when islanded from the utility using Sandia National Labs’ Energy Surety Design Methodology (“ESDM”).

2. Coastline Protection: Build armored levees and seawalls that can serve as public waterside spaces when not flooded.

3. Flood management through flood pumps

4. Stormwater Management through “Green Infrastructure”

5. Multi-functional public spaces: parks with stormwater retention; parks with a parking garage that can serve as flood storage.

6. Resilient Communication Systems: Wi-Fi enabled kiosks (“Mile mesh”). This also serves as an economic development tool.

7. Flood proof critical community facilities

8. Resilient zoning & building codes: Buildings designed so first floor is flood ready


**Questions and Answers:**

1. *Who should pay for resiliency?*
   Integrate it in all decisions – not as a separate program. Plan for backup and resiliency.

2. *How do we get communities that have not had the shock that Hoboken had pay attention?*
   How to get public to wake up is challenging. Hoboken has had 8 unnamed flooding events since Sandy. But the City Council recently voted 6-3 rather then 9-0 for $10M bond issue for flood pumps.
3. How to look at this on a regional level, particularly as Sandy was supposed to come up the Delaware?

   It is important to looking at impact of current climate change through recent extreme events. Also look at thresholds for metrics—what levels of temperature, rainfall, sea-level rise result in problems?

4. What is process for suspending SEPTA service?

   Meteorological projections are very difficult and becoming increasingly difficult due to increased variability as the climate changes. SEPTA staff looks carefully at lots of meteorological data and errs on side of caution.

**From Blight to Bright: A Toolkit and Case Studies on How Communities Can Effectively Reclaim Abandoned Properties**

*Moderator: Liz Hersh, Executive Director, Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania*

Ms. Hersh opened the session by explaining that blight is an issue that both political parties care about eradicating, that everybody hates blight. There are many antiquated laws, as older laws from the beginning of the 20th century, when the country was filling up with new immigrants, never envisioned that people would walk away from their properties. These state laws need to be updated to remove barriers to facilitate action at the local level. The session will cover what we’ve learned, and what is being worked on at the state, community, and grassroots levels.

From the Blight to Bright Toolkit project, we learned that communities are fed up with blighted properties and many want to take a can do approach. There are tools out there to use, but it is often an issue of leadership to not accept blight as a norm. Blight is not a victimless crime. Studies have measured the true cost of blight in terms of crime, lost taxes, and lost economic development. Overcoming blight reduces crime, improves residents’ health, increases property values, and increases revenues.

PA Act 90 “The Neighborhood Blight Reclamation and Revitalization Act” provided more aggressive tools for municipalities to fight blight. It allows municipalities to criminalize blight by taking actions against owners of blighted properties by attaching personal assets, by denying property permits, and by citing vacant properties for missing windows and doors. These actions have resulted in 32% increases of nearby home sales values, and the enforcement is self-financed by the fees charged.
New thinking about code enforcement augments traditional strategies to create a culture where violations are not tolerated. Code enforcement is much like supervising an employee – start with light supervision and mild corrections, and pursue a progressively disciplined approach if the employee/ violator does not respond accordingly.

A three-pronged approach to moving liabilities to assets is needed:

1. Code enforcement with zero tolerance for violations
2. Modern land recycling system, i.e. land banking
3. Proactive Strategy – unless community is in a “hot” market, good strategic planning is needed to attract development

Karen Black, Principal, May 8 Consulting, Inc.

Ms. Black started her portion by explaining that there is different legislation governing abandoned properties in PA and NJ. In NJ, there is the 2004 Abandoned Property Act, which can accelerate foreclosures, facilitate special tax sales, and provide proper property valuation (if the property is worth zero, there is no need to pay the property owner). The Act has served NJ communities well.

PA has taken a different approach. The Blight to Bright Toolkit describes tools available.

Finding the needed funding for strategic code enforcement can come from 1. Fees 2. Fines and penalties (the longer the violation is unabated, the higher the fines get); 3. Private asset attachment (authorized under ACT 90, requires judicial action, based on good record keeping and data); and 4. Blight fund (municipality can adopt increase in real estate tax to create a fund).

PA has two categories of new tools:

1. Tools that enable establishment of a data-driven, strategic code enforcement system to prevent and address blight.
2. Tools to address long-term vacant properties that pose a threat to health and safety where code enforcement has been ineffective.

In enacting these new tools, it’s good to go after the long-term abusers and to target the 3-5 worst properties that have the most negative impact on the neighborhood.

One effective tool is posting a “Hall of Shame” webpage showing the list of long-term abandoned properties and their owners. This inspires others to comply, rather than be listed.

It is important to demolish or transfer the worst properties to responsible new owners by drawing from the following state enabled tools: asset attachment, eminent domain, conservatorship, open estate to transfer property and a land bank.
The Blight to Bright handbook found at www.pablightlibrary.com is a living document with sample ordinances, pleadings, petitions, documents and updates online.

**Nora Lichtash, Executive Director, Women's Community Revitalization Project**

Ms. Lichtash and the Women's Community Revitalization Project work in Eastern North Philadelphia, where one of four pieces of land is vacant. The area has market pressure on all sides, and is moving from seeing vacancy as a problem to an opportunity. The WCRP works on social and economic justice for women and their families by building homes and leadership.

The WCRP conducted a Listening Project to determine the right course of action regarding the creation of a community land trust. They conducted over 350 intentional conversations/interviews with area residents, and reported back to the community on how a community land trust could help solve problems in their neighborhoods.

WCRP has developed a number of permanently affordable homes that are lease – purchase. They also help struggling homeowners make repairs to their homes, they place restrictive covenants on properties – when a homeowner decides to sell, the Community Justice Land Trust has the first right of purchase, and if not bought by the CJLT, it must sell at a reduced price.

WCRP joined 44 community, faith, and labor groups to pass a law to give communities control of vacant land in their neighborhoods. They built public pressure for the Land Bank through community meetings, presence at City Council, engaging with residents, community clean ups, and calling attention to the danger of blight with signage at blighted sites.

Recent analysis shows that incomes are stagnant or shrinking while housing costs are skyrocketing, especially in gentrifying neighborhoods. In addition, in gentrifying neighborhoods, people of color are being displaced. A new campaign, Development without Displacement - www.phillyaffordablecommunities.org has been formed to address these issues.

**Curt Macysyn, Executive Director, Camden Community Development Association**

Mr. Macysyn explained that Camden Community Development Association is an umbrella organization that represents seven CDCs in Camden. Redevelopment in Camden will take decades to complete. A multi-pronged approach is needed, and government-driven solutions are not the only answer. Take inventory of assets in each neighborhood, fill existing voids, network, and do not over-promise what can be delivered.

One of their most successful programs is the Decorative Board-Up Program, which hires unemployed residents, trains them and treats the training and work like a job with strict attendance policies. The program weatherizes, stabilizes and beautifies vacant buildings to create the appearance that they are occupied. The beautification of properties creates pride in the neighborhood.
Camden has also experienced challenges with demolition contracts. A contractor backed out of a large scale demolition project to take down over 530 blighted buildings throughout the city. The lesson was to be nimble, and residents were trained and employed.

The CamConnect project catalogued all vacant properties by using tax maps and students to canvass neighborhoods. The database shows condition of the property and is a helpful tool.

Additional resources: http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/swell/fromblighttobright

http://www.pablightlibrary.com

**Makerspaces and the Next Industrial Revolution**

*Moderator: Christina Arlt, DVRPC*

Ms. Arlt opened the panel with the proposition that the maker movement is a hard-to-define concept, but that at its essence it involves passionate, creative manipulation of materials to create useful objects. The movement is fostered by the new availability and affordability of various tools, epitomized by 3D printing, for small-scale and custom manufacturing. Chris Anderson, author of Makers: The New Industrial Revolution has posited that this mixture of Do-it-Yourself-ism, entrepreneurialism, and democratized technology will result in a third wave of industrial revolution.

**Evan Malone, Ph.D., President of NextFab**

Mr. Malone started by further defined terminology surrounding spaces for creation. He defined a “hackerspace” as a “clubhouse” for like-minded individuals to gather and create. A “fablab” is a community-accessible facility, often operated as a non-profit. A “makerspace,” like NextFab, is operated as a business to provide facilities and time-shared equipment to makers. NextFab originated out of Evan’s frustration with continued off-shoring of manufacturing jobs and diminishing manufacturing talent. In its two locations, NextFab provides a variety of tools in a “one-stop” manufacturing workshop setting. Its mission is to foster creativity and creation at all levels of its “services ladder.” NextFab builds “awareness” by exposing community members to manufacturing; provides “access” to tools, experts, and a community of makers; builds “competence” through training and certification; and promotes “commerce” as a business and product incubator. By bringing manufacturing into communities, NextFab strives to show today’s manufacturing jobs for what they are—high-paying occupations requiring a highly creative and highly skilled (though not necessarily a college-educated) workforce.
Michael Cooper, **Director of Philadelphia’s Office of Manufacturing & Industry**

Mr. Cooper posited that today’s local “maker economy” is the next step in Philadelphia’s history as a manufacturing hub. As enterprises that originate in small workshops grow, the city must be in a position to help incubate these businesses with financing, services, and through “place-making for manufacturing.” The city has prioritized maintaining and increasing manufacturing jobs, and has sought to maintain space for such activity. The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation’s (PIDC) Industrial Land & Market Strategy inventoried existing industrial and industrially-zoned properties and identified industrial protection and intensification areas as well as areas that should be allowed to transition to other uses. The city and PIDC are actively pursuing these goals through new industrial zoning and land acquisition. Responding to recommendations of the Mayor’s Manufacturing Task Force, the city has also implemented new financing mechanisms to support product development and prototyping and has adopted changes to business income & receipts tax.

**Ralph Bingham, MLS, Head of Reference & Digital Services for the Gloucester County Library**

Mr. Bingham discussed the library system’s MakerStudio@GCLS. Carrying out the Gloucester County Library System’s mission to democratize learning, the library system successfully sought out funding to develop a fablab. MakerStudio@GCLS provides access to a number of small-scale and custom manufacturing tools as well as video and audio production equipment. The studio also offers programming, much of it volunteer-led or supported by donated time and materials. The MakerStudio@GCLS is a community space where people gather to learn, create, and have fun. The library has continued to play its traditional role as a center for the written word, while at the same time introducing this new forum for learning—a forum that has brought new clients into the library, including the “elusive” 20-30 year old population, and kept the library relevant in the 21st century.

**Building Healthy, Active, and Well Buildings and Places of the Future**

*Moderator: Karin Morris, DVRPC*

Ms. Morris opened the session with an overview of the role planning and design play in promoting healthy lifestyles, highlighting the significant role public works projects have played throughout history in combating infectious diseases. Ms. Morris went on to describe what is meant by healthy (good mental and physical health), active (physical activity), and wellness (health pursuits). Before introducing the panel, Ms. Morris touched on DVRPC’s program areas that promote healthy and active lifestyles including smart growth, active transportation, food systems, and transportation safety planning.
Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director of AIA Philadelphia

Ms. Johnson’s presentation focused on six approaches to achieving health through the built environment and design, identifying the issues and the related design and policy approaches to overcome them. The six approaches are: environmental quality, natural systems, physical activity, safety, sensory environments, and social connectedness. After detailing each of the six, Ms. Johnson shared examples of local initiatives that have put these approaches into practice. Examples include Philadelphia’s “Healthy Rowhouse Project”, and the Philadelphia Health Department’s “Get Healthy Philly”, which envisions a Philadelphia where all residents can live, work, learn, shop, worship, and play in environments that promote healthy eating, active living, and a smoke-free existence. Ms. Johnson left the audience with this takeaway: “a simple message that our built environment is impacting our health will connect and resonate with the public and our civic and thought leaders.”

Sara Ridenour, Associate Principal, Ballinger

Ms. Ridenour’s focus was specific to active design trends in healthcare, examining how healthcare is typically reactionary, though change is coming via evidence-based design (EBD): the process of basing decisions about the built environment on credible research to achieve the best possible outcomes. After giving an overview of how EBD has evolved since the 1970s, Ms. Ridenour echoed the six approaches to achieving health through built environment design & policy covered earlier. Exemplifying the critical role design plays in healthy living, Ms. Ridenour highlighted a quote by the Rear Admiral Boris Lushniak, the former U.S. Surgeon General: “Architects are public health workers. We have a partnership–public health professionals and architects and planners. Our minds have to talk because we have an influence on America’s public health that we’re only now beginning to grasp.” Ms. Ridenour touched on the Urban Land Institute’s Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places (put people first!) before ending with a case study from the University of Maryland Medical Center, and praise of great staircases including those famously mounted by Rocky Balboa at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Anita Kramer, Senior Vice President, ULI Center for Capital Markets and Real Estate

Ms. Kramer broke form from her co-panelists and began her presentation by posing this question to the audience: “My favorite healthy place is __________, and why?” The responses were varied and interesting and provided the impetus to explore how “healthy” can be found anywhere, and that it can mean many different things. Ms. Kramer then highlighted several developments, and their creators, that were designed to enable and promote healthy and active lifestyles. They included ECO Modern Flats in Fayetteville, AR (Jeremy Hudson, CEO, Specialized Real Estate Group), Innovation Park in Charlotte, NC (Chris Epstein, President, BECO South), and Grow Community in Bainbridge, WA (Marja Preston, President, Assani Development). Common features among these developments included clean indoor air, support for social interaction and for bicycling, chemical-free outdoors, and general physical and pedestrian activity, all achieved through project design. Ms. Kramer ably
demonstrated that healthy/active design is desirable and valuable from a real estate market perspective.

**Kevin Michals, Principal, Cross Properties**

Mr. Michals’ firm Cross Properties—headquartered in Philadelphia—is a developer of several important Philadelphia area properties including Icon in Center City, and The Legacy at Drexel Arms student housing complex adjacent to St. Joe’s University, both featuring suites with WELL Signature™ amenities. The WELL Building Standard, developed by Delos in partnership with scientists, architects and thought leaders, looks at many ways in which building design can foster healthy living and well-being with a focus on air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind. Mr. Michals’ work with Cross Properties has made great strides in developments that are strategically located to maximize walking to shops, transit, and employment with building designs that incorporate WELL amenities like aromatherapy, filtered air and drinking water, Vitamin C filters in showers, and lighting designed to promote better sleep and circadian rhythms. Mr. Michals identified a few retailers that he considers promoters of healthy living including Trader Joe’s and Whole Foods, noting that locating near these businesses promotes healthy lifestyles.

**12:00 PM – Keynote Speakers**

**Robert G. Gibbs, AICP, ASLA, CNU-A, President, Gibbs Planning Group**

Mr. Gibbs’ engaging presentation focused on the principles for urban retail, and the challenges and opportunities that retail can bring to communities. Mr. Gibbs began by noting that retail has the highest failure rate of any type of commercial development—almost 30 percent of shopping centers fail within 10 years. There are all sorts of challenges related to urban retail: parking, streetscape design, and changes in discretionary spending. In order to plan for successful retail, communities must undertake retail analysis surveys, and keep up with how the retail environment is changing. For instance, shopping habits have significantly changed over the years. People spend more money in less time, and 70% of all retail expenditures happen after 5:00 PM. The days of leisurely, daytime shopping are over, and businesses need to respond (such as having later opening hours.) And while it is women who are predominant retail shoppers, men DO shop, they just shop differently. Also, there are perceptions in developing retail that may not be accurate. For instance, there is a bias toward low-income communities, and many stores will not locate there. However, studies show that there is great demand in these communities—people need to shop for things no matter what their economic status.
He then presented several fundamental retail “rules”:

1. Walkability: A Walk Score of 85 or higher. Walkability equals higher rents, increased home values, and greater sales for stores.

2. The “X-Factor”: Perhaps the most difficult to define, as you know it when you see it, but there is not a tried and true equation to reach it. The X-Factor is about providing an emotional connection for the shopper to the retail area. Successful ways to accomplish this include integrating new development with old, mixing national retailers with regional/local retailers, bringing in artists, and striving to create a special, unique place.
   a. Pop up shops and restaurants may bring the x-factor to a retail district by creating unique shopping experiences. Pop up shops help landlords fill vacant space, and help entrepreneurs try out their ideas without the necessity of significant upfront capital.
   b. Another successful development is The Grove, which is an outdoor shopping mall of national retail chains that was developed adjacent to the existing, very local Los Angeles Farmer’s Market.

3. Parking: Accommodating parking is important, yet misunderstood, and different approaches will work for different communities. Some facts about parking:
   a. Every metered stall in a shopping district represents $175,000-$200,000 in sales.
   b. Each parking space may turn up to 15 times a day.
   c. Meters are not for everywhere, all the time. For instance, in a beach town, take meters out for the off season.
   d. If a driver cannot see the storefront from their parking space; they will choose not to go to that store—and they won’t drive around the block to look for another spot!

4. Anchors: An anchor can be civic or commercial, and need not be standardized for every community. For instance, the original Wanamaker’s in Philadelphia was the equivalent to eight Walmart’s. Anchors spend on advertising and bring shoppers to a destination—in many instances, anchors pay cheaper rent than other retail stores in the shopping center.
   a. Big box stores can work in downtown locations—Target and Walmart have both entered to the marketplace. Retail districts may consider an “anchor wrap” which wraps smaller retail around the big box store.

5. Urban is in: All retailers want to be downtown.
   a. Downtowns need shops that people need—not just gift shops and candle stores.
   b. Communities should consider retail analyses that include retail demand and market studies and to see the spending potential of different types of shoppers: students, tourists,
office workers, etc. Another component of a retail analysis is merchandising strategy—what types of shops and services mix should there be and where they should go.

c. Tourists are an important group to retail. They spend more time shopping than on other leisure activities. Tourists also appreciate recognizable brands, but in unique settings.

d. Retail development success is also heavily dependent on visual merchandising. Window displays are critical—the “Eight Second Rule” is that shoppers take eight seconds to decide if they are going to enter a store. Any number of things can prevent a shopper from entering a store. Mr. Gibbs gave an example of a delicatessen that had too many signs in its window, preventing people from seeing inside. When the owner removed the signs, his sales went up.

i. Windows should be 70% clear glass.

ii. Open doors= 3x more store traffic.

iii. A table at the front of the store with an interesting visual display will draw more shoppers in.

e. Urban design is important, but it is not necessarily the most important. Street trees can have a hindering effect on businesses if they are not located properly. Signs should be sculptural and unique, and town sign ordinances should accommodate this.

At the conclusion of Mr. Gibbs’ presentation, there was a brief session of questions and answers. Questions related to:

- The value of parklets in retail areas? (Parklets can increase sales, but there is no definitive proof that the loss of parking spaces is worth it—parking is crucial to small retail!)

- Population size required supporting retail without parking? (You would need three million people to have retail without parking. There is not enough demand from bikes and transit to eliminate parking unless you have significant population.)

- Impact of internet shopping on in-store retail metrics? (Online presence is a great benefit for small retail, as it broadens its audience. Online shopping is projected to reach 10%, but that still leaves lots of need for bricks and mortar stores.)

- How to bring this info to local municipalities? (Encourage municipalities to meet with commercial brokers and complete a retail analysis.)

Mr. Gibbs’ book “Principles of Urban Retail Planning and Development” is available on Amazon, and there are many events planned throughout the year through the Urban Retail Institute (www.urbanretailinstitute.com).
2:00 PM – Afternoon Concurrent Sessions

Adapt or Die: The Future of Transportation in a Rapidly Changing World
Moderator: Gregory Krykewycz, DVRPC

Mr. Krykewycz introduced the panel and topic by noting that in looking forward 50 years, we’re interested in what will be the forces of changes or the “game changers.” Act 89 that was passed in PA last year is one of these forces. Identifying the other “game changers” on the horizon helps ensure that as we continue to add things to the new, long-term pipeline of projects to be funded, we’re making the right bets in the right places.

Erick Guerra, Assistant Professor, PennDesign

Mr. Guerra provided an overview of the future of autonomous vehicles (AVs). This technology is still rapidly advancing and improving so there are a number of questions and factors that are unknown. Existing prototypes are still very expensive, but a number of sources estimate that a market option AV could be available as soon as 2020. He then presented a number of primary and secondary impacts in a range of categories that will result from AV use. The primary impacts will be an increase in road capacity due to vehicle spacing and platooning, and an increase in road safety due to a decrease in fatalities and collisions because human error will be removed. Secondary impacts include: economic restructuring resulting from a decrease in driver labor, changes in public transit due to possible expansion of AV use, and a decoupling of parking and land use since vehicle could drop passengers off at destinations and park itself.

These primary and secondary impacts will lead to changes in cities; however, the exact changes are heavily dependent on the technology and its capabilities. There are two main scenarios that will likely occur. The first would be an increase in shared point-to-point mobility, leading to less auto ownership, less need for parking and an increase in density and urbanity. The second scenario is based on increased personal mobility leading to increased car ownership and vehicle miles traveled. AV would primarily be privately owned. This would likely lead to the presence of zero-occupancy vehicles and a continued increase in long-duration commutes.

Mr. Guerra posited that we’ll see a bit of both scenarios and that the proportion of each will vary across states and cities. Moreover, these changes won’t happen overnight due to existing technical and regulatory hurdles. Additionally, the standard personal fleet turnover length is 11 years.
Toby Fauver, Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, PennDOT

Mr. Fauver discussed the wide-ranging changes that have been and continue to happen at PennDOT since he first started there in 2004. He then detailed a number of current focus initiatives. Transit: State is looking to encourage additional consolidation of systems. Consolidations, like the recent one between Reading and Lancaster systems, save money on administration and IT expenses and increase efficiency in some services, like shared-ride systems. They are also working on a statewide paratransit system that would cover a 22 county area and allow for information sharing that could lead to improved efficiency. Rail Freight and Ports: For both rail freight and ports, additional strategic planning is necessary to ensure that investments are leading to economic development and aren’t simply reactionary. Bicycling and Walking: PennDOT continues to work on the statewide issues stemming from the current bicycle occupancy permit requirements. Mr. Fauver stated that PennDOT knows that the current requirements don’t make sense and they intend to introduce incremental improvements this year.

Intercity Rail: PennDOT continues to work on improving the state’s intercity rail, despite difficulties due to uncertainty of funding from US DOT. PA is now required to pay 100% of capital and operating costs for intercity rail in the state. Funding from Amtrak now must be negotiated. Still a high-speed rail plan for service to Pittsburgh has been released. PennDOT continues to look for other ways to partner with SEPTA and Amtrak to rebuild necessary rail infrastructure.

Joseph Casey, General Manager, SEPTA

Mr. Casey shared many highlights from SEPTA’s Rebuilding for the Future plan. With the passage of Act 89, SEPTA has for the first time a predictable, bondable and inflation-indexed source of funding. Rebuilding for the Future is SEPTA’s capital plan to address its large backlog of state of good repair needs. He then discussed the following projects that are included in the Rebuilding for the Future plan:

- Bridges: Average bridge age in SEPTA’s system is 80+ years old. 4 viaducts on the Media/Elwyn Line will be replaced including the Crum Creek Viaduct, Darby Creek Viaduct and Cobbs Creek Viaduct.
- Power: Replacing catenary wires and substations including Jenkintown Substation.
- Railcars: Will purchase new locomotives and multi-level coaches
- Other vehicle replacements: Expand articulated bus fleet and purchase modern trolley vehicles that will be articulated, ADA accessible and a higher-quality experience.
- Stations: Several stations will be modernized and updated (Exton, Conshohocken) and parking at several stations will be expanded (Lansdale, 69th Street).
- TOD developments: SEPTA is coordinating on a number of TOD developments along the Manayunk/Norristown Line, including at Spring Mill, Ivy Ridge and Conshohocken.
- Bicycle Action Plan: Looking for opportunities to improve multi-modal access to stations including adding bicycle parking and integrating trails and transit.

Finally, Mr. Casey shared a few projects that are future-oriented improvements to SEPTA’s system including SEPTA’s modern fare system Key, Norristown High Speed Line extension to King of Prussia, and overhauls of Dilworth Park and Center City concourses. More information can be found at SEPTA.org/rebuilding.

**Andrew Stober, Chief of Staff, Philadelphia Mayor’s Office of Transportation and Utilities**

Mr. Stober concluded the session by discussing the impending opening of Philadelphia’s bike share system: Indego. Bike share is a new form of public transportation that can be found in 60+ US cities. It’s best for short trips and like a bus; users go from station to station, but on their own schedule. The systems are very user-friendly, safe and secure and professionally maintained. The city’s goals for Indego are that it be a new, affordable transportation mode that will increase accessibility, be a new means for exercise and city exploration, and that it be available to all, both in relative proximity and in cost, including low-income folks. Station locations were narrowed down from a pool of about 100 locations through a public outreach process that received 10,500+ comments from 5,600 unique individuals (final locations will be announced soon). Each station will have 15-40 docks, be solar powered, cell-phone connected and feature a map and advertising panel. All station operations, cleaning and maintenance will be done by Bicycle Transit Systems. The system will have a three-level fare structure based on monthly memberships, a pay-per-trip option, and a walk-trip purchase option.

To monitor the Philadelphia system with the hope of developing a replicable and socially equitable bike sharing model, the city will be the lead partner in the Better Bike Share Partnership. This group will operate initially from 2014-2017 and will conduct research and track results of various efforts. Work in 2014 included outreach and focus groups with low-income residents around bike share and potential barriers to use. Early outcomes include 20 bike share docks in low income census tracts as well as appropriate and targeted marketing to these groups.
Saving Money through Energy Efficiency

Moderator: Elizabeth Compitello, DVRPC

Dianne Herrin, Director of Energy Programs, Practical Energy Solutions

Ms. Herrin explained that seven percent of global primary energy consumption is by buildings, much more than is used by transportation. Pennsylvania has more local governments (2,564) than any state except Texas and Illinois, each with buildings they operate for the long term. It is estimated conservatively that municipalities in PA spend a billion dollars per year in energy costs for these buildings, based on an estimate of two percent of their budgets. Not only can municipalities save money through energy management, they can save headaches from the volatile costs of energy. In addition, energy conservation is required by the Pennsylvania municipal planning code. Ms. Herrin has worked with over 100 municipalities and 15 school districts. Some of this work was through her serving as the lead technical consultant for DVRPC’s Circuit Rider for Energy Efficiency in Local Government Operations (Circuit Rider) program.

Several lessons have emerged from Ms. Herrin’s work:

1. Track energy use and costs to be able to see anomalies

2. Controlling the building systems that are already installed may be the most effective approach in some cases

3. Plan for new equipment holistically to ensure that equipment is compatible, rather than focusing on the lowest bidder for new equipment. This is especially important in new construction, but applies to existing buildings as well.

4. New equipment may not operate efficiently if it isn’t installed properly

5. A thoughtful approach can maximize savings so think about a whole building plan, especially with new construction. Proceed in a stepwise manner with retrofits for maximum efficiency beginning with lighting and base load, and leading up towards HVAC replacements.

Schools spend more money on energy--$7.5 billion per year--than on books and computers combined. Energy Performance Contracting has enabled some schools and school districts to make much-appreciated energy management retrofits and whole-building improvements at their facilities, leveraging Pennsylvania’s Guaranteed Energy Savings Act (GESA). Energy performance contracting allows schools to pay for the cost of some retrofits with the realized energy cost savings. Ms. Herrin
described how this was done at the Garnet Valley School District. Well-done school energy retrofits can result in cost savings, reduction in environmental impacts, educating students about energy-related matters, and empowering students by involving them in changes.

**Craig Totaro, Borough Manager, Lansdowne, PA**

Mr. Totaro started by describing Lansdowne, which is a small, dense, first generation suburb of Philadelphia. It has 15 traffic signal-controlled intersections, which used incandescent fixtures. Many of their 625 street lights were also older and inefficient. Mr. Totaro organized a joint application by five municipalities to update equipment at 25 traffic signal-controlled intersections from incandescent to LED and upgrade 500 street lights to high-pressure sodium lamps. These projects were partially funded by a grant from PA Conservation Works! Preparing the application was more effort than expected but resulted in significant savings. Their streetlight energy bill went from approximately $100,000 to approximately $60,000 and the savings with the traffic signals were even more significant.

Lansdowne had the opportunity to work with Practical Energy Solutions on an energy audit and retrofit of several facilities. This work was done funded through the Delaware County Energy Smart program and DVRPC’s Circuit Rider program. Highlights included:

- Borough hall retrofits included replacing the windows which also made the council chamber quieter. Adding zoned heating provided big savings because it allowed the portion of the building that operates as a 24-hour police station to be conditioned continuously, while allowing the remainder of the building to be set back at night and on weekends when the facility is not in use.

- The 104-year-old community center did not have air conditioning. By following a holistic, thoughtful approach they were able to install it without impacting the historic character of the building. This included improving insulation and installing louvers on windows to reduce the size of the air conditioning equipment needed.

- Improvements at the fire station included switching from T12 to T8 florescent bulbs. Mr. Totaro noted the need to speak with building occupants while doing retrofits to try to move toward results everyone likes as well as saving money.

Some lessons learned in Lansdowne included the value of knowledgeable and capable staff, having well-developed projects ready for opportunities, and conducting regular tune-ups so infrastructure operates well.
C. Baird Brown, Partner, Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP Environment and Energy Practice Group

Mr. Brown began his presentation with a broad overview of approaches to improving energy conservation and energy management. Baird then described the Pennsylvania Sustainable Energy Finance Program, which is an energy performance contracting program that is available to government and non-profit organizations that are eligible for tax-exempt financing, which includes schools and municipalities.

Baird walked participants through the PennSEF program basics and steps, which are described in the brochure found here. PennSEF leverages PA’s Guaranteed Energy Savings Act, which allows municipalities to procure a flexible process to hire an energy services company that will design and construct agreed conservation measures on a fixed schedule for a fixed price. The ESCO must provide a Guarantee that energy and water savings (after operating costs) will exceed financing payments.

There are a variety of ways to finance different energy efficiency projects. It is important to use the one appropriate to the specific project. Financing techniques include:

- Tax-exempt bonds, which currently have a great rate
- Tax-exempt leasing
- Taxable bonds, commercial loans or equity investments

Sources for more information include

- Pennsylvania Sustainable Energy Fund (SEF) - http://freefutures.org/pennsef/about
- Meetings being organized throughout Pennsylvania as part of trying to set up a one-stop shop for funding energy conservation projects

Community Engagement in the Digital Realm
Moderator: Karen Cilurso, DVRPC

Youngjin Yoo, Principal Investigator, Fox School of Business, Temple University

Mr. Youngjin Yoo discussed Temple University’s Urban Apps & Maps Studios. The program is a university wide, interdisciplinary initiative that brings Temple University’s research and education capabilities together with community members, local schools, non-profit organizations, governments, and businesses to catalyze urban innovation and foster
civic leaders among Philadelphia’s youth using digital technology. Over 600 high school students and 200 college students have participated in the Studios, and produced more than 30 technology-based start-up ideas in education, urban farming, health and public safety.

Apps & Maps aims to reduce the “digital creativity gap” by preparing the next generation of urban civic entrepreneurs through immersive education and mentoring programs. The goal is to empower local community members to develop their own data, and to solve their own problems. It provides workshops in web design and programming, and mobile app development.

An example app that was developed by the students is GrowShare, an online tool that helps users find and develop vacant lots in Philadelphia into viable urban farming projects. It builds on the Google Maps API (application programming interface) and overlays the locations of vacant lots throughout the city with other public information such as crime statistics. It shows the location of abandoned lots and gardening projects that are currently underway or completed and allows users to buy or sell resources such as tools, produce and labor using open auction functionality. The site enables civic exchange by allowing users to connect with other people interested in transforming vacant lots into urban farming projects so that they can share resources, collaborate and literally change the landscape of their communities. Ultimately, the project team sees the tool as a means of revitalizing urban neighborhoods, creating jobs, and reducing crime through urban farming.

Michelle Lee, CEO of Textizen

Ms. Michelle Lee discussed how Textizen is able to help government agencies to connect and communicate with the public using text messaging. The company uses web platforms to send, receive, and analyze text messages.

An example application involved seeking input from residents of Philadelphia on the best locations for bike sharing stations throughout the City. At candidate locations, the sidewalk was painted with the Bike Share logo, the question “Is this a good spot for a Bike Share station?”, and “Text Yes or No to 215-987-6034 to tell us”. It was also possible to participate via the Bike Share website.

They were able to get results very quickly. Within one month of launch they had received 10,500 comments from 6,000 individuals, and within 2 months they were producing reports analyzing the data, and a revised station location map based on responses. The speedy results were achieved by first figuring out what data was essential for decision making, and not wasting time and energy on extraneous info. The software was then configured based on the input data, and how it needed to be processed and analyzed to reach a decision. The application they developed uses documented APIs (JavaScript Object Notation (JSON)), and standard data formats (.csv data format) to enable integration. The structured data enabled real-time analysis and response.

In summary, Ms. Lee recommends governments use this technology to inform students about college prep resources; grow participation at events via invites and reminders; diversify input for decision
making; increase attendance at workshops and meetings based on text reminders; and follow up on outcomes of public services.

**Christina Rothman-Iliff, Manager, Access Princeton**

Ms. Rothman-Iliff discussed Princeton’s Access Princeton department. The department’s motto is “One call does it all”, and it was established to promote citizen engagement using technology and social media. Access Princeton can be accessed via their walk-in center, phone, email, website (http://www.accessprincetonnj.gov/), Twitter, and Facebook. It basically operates as a clearing house for any and all questions pertaining to Princeton. The goals of the department are to become the only call citizens need to make, whatever their question; increase transparency; promote citizen engagement; increase mobile app usage; and streamline communication.

The department uses Facebook and Twitter to send information to the public, and to drive people to the town’s website for more information. They share information from various other departments (Police, Recreation) with the community. Department staff also uses social media to respond to inquiries, offer health and safety tips, and promote town events.

A key component of the program is the SeeClickFix public forum/blog. Citizens can enter issues or concerns. For example, pointing out snow removal violations, and requesting that a public sidewalk be cleared of snow. And they can follow progress on getting their issue resolved via the blog. Comments can be made by both the public and staff. They have also developed a mobile app that provides live updates.

The use of social media platforms has definitely improved the relationship between citizens and government. It has bridged the communication gap that existed between the public and Municipal Departments. Reporting issues has become a lot easier, and questions are now answered promptly. Residents feel like they are being heard, and that their concerns are being addressed.

**Meagan Tuttle, Planner, State College Borough**

Ms. Tuttle discussed how State College Borough uses technology to facilitate public participation and citizen feedback. The Borough has had a long history of using “traditional” social media and technology to engage with the public and share information. These included social media accounts; “notify me” list serves, Citizen Request Tracker, and C-NET recording of all community meetings. However, the Borough noticed that there was something missing from these early tools. In particular, citizens were not really becoming engaged. There was no feedback.

The Borough really wanted to develop something that would promote facilitated on-line communication, both between the Borough and citizens, as well as between citizens. To address this issue, the Borough developed a new process called Community Issue Review that was launched in 2014. It is a facilitated online system designed to foster civic engagement, online deliberation, and
decision making for community planning. When an issue arises that the Borough would like feedback on, they invite members of the community to participate. For each issue, a panel of demographically diverse taxpayers is assembled. The “issue” is disclosed to the panelists after they have been selected and agreed to participate at a facilitated meeting with Borough representatives. The panelists then work on their own over a 7 to 10 day period, using the online platform to review relevant documents, ask questions, and form an opinion. Then, the panelists reconvene to discuss among themselves what position they propose / advocate, and to collectively draft a group statement.

An example issue was whether the Borough should install security cameras in a residential neighborhood. For this issue, the Borough selected 10 panelists, and they were given 7 days to review relevant materials via the online platform. This group reconvened and developed a position statement. They then met with, and presented their position to the Borough neighborhood committee that was developing the proposal for the camera system, as well as residents of the neighborhood.

Ms. Tuttle said the pros of this new process include its ability to involve new people in civic dialogue, and a better informed and more balanced discussion, with all sides of an issue being represented. The challenges include determining whether a statement posted on the online platform is legitimate (e.g., is it actually from a resident of the Borough). There was also an issue of whether all members of the community were equally conversant and comfortable using the online platform. For example, some of the older residents preferred face-to-face meetings, to using computers and software.

**Transforming Suburban Office Parks into Vibrant Future Work Places**

*Moderator: Michael Boyer, DVRPC*

*Brian O’Leary, Section Chief of County Planning, Montgomery County Planning Commission*

Mr. O’Leary began by describing economic conditions in Montgomery County, which is home to over a half million jobs, leads the Commonwealth in high-tech and manufacturing jobs, and has a lower unemployment rate than either the Commonwealth or the nation. The county also imports workers in from the surrounding counties each day, with more jobs than resident workers. Although the county’s economy is strong, however, the recession has slowed development, job growth has been lackluster, and the county’s business parks (located primarily adjacent to the Pennsylvania Turnpike) are aging. Mr. O’Leary discussed mixed-use areas as an alternative to single use office parks, noting that some companies are locating purposefully locating near older mixed-use downtowns to appeal to younger workers.
Mr. O'Leary then described changes that are occurring in several of the County’s business parks, including Bala Cynwyd, Conshohocken, Swedeland, King of Prussia, Valley Gorge, Collegeville, Blue Bell, Horsham, Willow Grove, and Fort Washington. To accomplish their objectives, the County’s office parks are using a variety of techniques, including the creation of business improvement districts; the development and implementation of master plans; zoning code revisions; and (in the case of Fort Washington) the development of a transfer of development rights ordinance that transfers development out of a floodplain and allows additional uses in the park’s uplands. Changes in the parks will most likely include increased activity, a wider range of uses, expanded transit access, improved walkability, more amenities, and an increased focus on green spaces and sustainability.

Eric Goldstein, RLA, PP, Executive Director of the King of Prussia District

Mr. Goldstein began by noting that suburban office parks are not obsolete. He noted that nearly 80 percent of the region’s employment is located in the suburbs, which offer lower taxes, better schools, and lower crime rates than does the City. He then described the King Of Prussia (KOP) Business Park, which is home to almost 20,000 employees, five hotels, over 63,000 square feet of corporate meeting and event space, and over 3 million square feet of office space. Additionally, the KOP Park is located within ¼ Mile of Valley Force National Historical Park and ½ mile of the King of Prussia Mall. Challenges that threaten the Park’s continued success, however, included outdated zoning regulations (which severely limit the potential for a mix of uses); a lack of reinvestment; an over-supply of commercial office space; limited public transit access; a lack of direct access to the surrounding highway network; and its lack of a sense of place.

Mr. Goldstein then described the park’s new mixed-use zoning district ordinance, adopted by Upper Merion Township in September 2014. The overlay district allows mixed-use development; promotes sustainable land use and building practices; establishes design guidelines; and mandates a pedestrian-friendly environment. He also discussed ongoing and proposed transportation improvements, including the implementation of a “road diet” to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety; the KOP Connector, a transit service which links the Park to SEPTA regional rail stations; the construction of new Turnpike interchanges and slip ramps, to improve highway access; and the proposed King of Prussia Rail Extension, which could potentially drive smarter development while reducing congestion.

Other improvements planned or underway at the Park include improved marketing and physical improvements, including enhanced gateways and linear landscaping. Mr. Goldstein ended by stating that today’s employers and employees are looking for communities that offer a healthy mix of residential, commercial, and recreational amenities, and noting that suburban communities who proactively work to reposition themselves now will continue to compete well with urban centers.
Brenda Nyce-Taylor, IIDA, LEED® AP ID+C, Managing Director, Life Sciences Practice Area Leader, Principal, Gensler

Ms. Nyce-Taylor first described the current status of suburban office parks, noting that most suburban office buildings are between 25 and 30 years old; are usually accessible only by automobile; were generally built as large campus-style spaces for one single user; and are now on average 20 percent vacant. She next discussed the “drivers of change,” trends that are changing what employers (and employees) are looking for in a work place. These drivers include greater mobility of workers; an increasing number of corporate mergers; new collaborations occurring between corporations and academia; increasing densities; freelancing; and globalization. Demographics are also shifting, with millennials (people generally born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s) now accounting for 36 percent of the workforce—and 77 percent of millennials want to live close to each other and walk rather than drive.

Given these drivers, Ms. Nyce-Taylor then described what the ideal office building of the future should be, noting that employers and employees are looking for settings that are accessible by transit, sustainable, and efficient. She described the concept of “well” buildings, noting that employees who are dissatisfied with their work spaces call in sick more often than those who are satisfied. She also discussed the need to create mixed-use life style centers, which provide opportunities for people to live, work, and play, and noted that work places of the future should provide a sense of community.

Ms. Nyce-Taylor described several examples of successful office parks, and noted that in response to demand for new or updated space, many landlords have begun to rethink the design of existing office buildings that no longer meet the needs or desires of their tenants. She stressed that there is hope for existing under-utilized or obsolete suburban office buildings, providing several examples of buildings and campuses that have been redeveloped, repositioned, or reconfigured into successful work places. Ms. Nyce-Taylor ended by stating that “the power of design can positively affect people, organizations, and communities on many different levels.”
Breaking Ground Social Media Recap #BG2015

DVRPC live-Tweeted the event, and posted a news article on Facebook as it was published in the middle of the day, which reached 184 people. http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2015/03/12/center-city-conference-allows-regional-planners-to-compare-notes-on-community-building/

There were a number of reporters at the conference, from outlets such as PlanPhilly, FlyingKiteMedia, and CBS. See the Tweet below from Alaina Mabaso of Flying Kite Media.

Alaina Mabaso @AlainaMabaso
Happy to shake hands w/@PlanPhilly's @Saksappeal, @jongeeting & @jeffpastva at @DVRPC's #BG2015. Hope we cross paths again soon.

During the conference, there were over 200 Tweets from 24 individuals and organizations, with even more of their networks interacting with the Tweets. Tweets from just the DVRPC account were seen 7,678 times, not to mention Tweets from everyone else using the #BG2015 hashtag. Popular tweets are shown throughout the conference proceedings.

Below are some of the top Tweets of the day, based on engagement.

Alaina Mabaso @AlainaMabaso
People don’t care about new transit as much as the local changes transit allows, @HTinWDC says. #BG2015 @DVRPC @FlyingKiteMedia

Christina Arlt @ChristinaArlt
@HTinWDC: cities have lots of underutilized assets--like parking spots--and they need to use them better. #sharingeconomy #BG2015 @DVRPC

Amy Cornelius @AmyAtGreenbeams
Love this "#BikeShare is like a gateway drug for bike riding” H. Tregoning #BG2015

DVRPC @DVRPC
Check out our #Ridescore tool to see how accessible your transit station is by bike http://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/ridescore/ ... #expandingthetransitshed #BG2015
Flying Kite @FlyingKiteMedia
Strategic code enforcement via @PAHousing's Blight to Bright Toolkit
http://bit.ly/1F3aqDW @KarenBlackMay8 #BG2015

MaGrann Associates @MaGrannAssoc
"People are attracted to healthy properties"
@ecomodernflats @ULIPhiladelphia @USGBC #LEED #innovation @aiaphiladelphia #BG2015

DVRPC @DVRPC
NJ has an upcoming Maker's Day on 3/21! http://njmakersday.org #theneweconomy
@njmakersday #BG2015

Alaina Mabaso @AlainaMabaso
There's nothing wrong w a major big-box store in your downtown, if it's designed well,
@urbanretail says. #BG2015 @DVRPC @FlyingKiteMedia

Jim Saksa @Saksappeal
The retail consultant at @DVRPC's #BG2015 is so good, I feel compelled to just give him money right now.

Christina Arlt @ChristinaArlt
Eric Goldstein from @KOPBID says the Philly suburbs are NOT dead. Cites city taxes, public safety, city schools, & jobs. #BG2015 @DVRPC

And finally:

PartnershipTMA @PTMA19454 - INSPIRED! 1 week since @DVRPC #BG2015 and I'm still reeling from all the ways given that we can plan a better world!