Meeting Highlights

Topic: Data at DVRPC

May 28, 2025 | 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Welcome & Meeting Overview

Shoshana Akins, Manager of Public Participation Planning, opened the meeting with an overview of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and its Public Participation Task Force (PPTF).

Data Culture at DVRPC

Mike Ruane, Associate Director of Data & Technology, began the evening's presentations with an overview of DVRPC's Data & Technology Division, which includes the Office of GIS, System & Web Operations, and the new Planning Innovation Team. Ruane introduced DVRPC's data culture, the guiding philosophy behind how the agency acquires, collects, generates, and manages data. He outlined how data is collected in the field, when and why it is purchased, and how new datasets are developed. His presentation emphasized data's role in planning and the importance of replicability for ensuring consistency and trust.

Community Profiles Tool

Ruane was followed by Chris Pollard, Manager of the Office of GIS. Pollard presented several of DVRPC's public-facing data tools. These tools included AccessScore, which evaluates bicycle and pedestrian access around transit stations; the Municipal Data Navigator, a platform for exploring municipal and county-level datasets; and the Traffic Count Viewer, DVRPC's most widely used web tool which provides pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle traffic counts across DVRPC's nine-county Greater Philadelphia region. Pollard also introduced DVRPC's latest initiative to develop a Community Profiles Tool. This tool aims to consolidate multiple demographic, housing, economic, and transportation data tools into a single, location-based resource.

Traffic Counts

After Pollard's presentation was Josh Rocks, Manager of the Office of Travel Monitoring (OTM). Rocks explained the role of his team in supporting the planning efforts of PennDOT, the City of Philadelphia, surrounding counties, other planning partners, and internal projects by conducting over 3,000 traffic counts annually. Rocks outlined how traffic data is collected across the region, the equipment used, and the process for verifying and preparing the data for internal and external use.

Facilitated Discussion Activity

Shoshana Akins moderated a panel discussion with the evening's speakers. The panel explored the growing importance of data literacy in planning and everyday life. They also discussed the opportunities and challenges posed by generative AI, including DVRPC's values-based approach and the role of its internal generative AI advisory committee. Attendees highlighted the need for youth-friendly data tutorials and emphasized the importance of making municipal data easier to find and use.

Meeting Close

The PowerPoint presentations and meeting recording can be found at www.dvrpc.org/committees/pptf