

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
RELATED TO DVRPC BOARD ACTION ITEMS

July 22, 2021

2d. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Action

**PA21-54: Henry Ave Corridor Safety Improvements, Phase 2 (MPMS #102134),
City of Philadelphia**

From: Mark Frog Harris
County: Philadelphia
Zip Code: 19101
Date Received: 7/9/2021

Comment/Question: I have reservations about reducing the turn radius around the traffic island.

Draft Response: Thank you for your comment. Your comment was forwarded to the DVRPC Board, DVRPC Office of Capital Programs, and PennDOT.

The turning radii were designed to accommodate all vehicle types that typically use this roadway, while taking into account the posted speed limit.

4. Presentation Item: Long-Range Plan Preview

From: Bridget Chadwick
County: Bucks
Zip Code: NA
Date Received: 7/21/2021

Dear Officers,

Please would you submit the following comment to the Board:

At today's Board Meeting, DVRPC staff will present a preview of the draft "2050 Connections 2050 Plan for Greater Philadelphia" i.e. the Long-Range Plan (LRP).

Having a 2050 Long-Range Plan is fine, but climate science data and weather-event evidence clearly show that we (the region and the world) are facing a climate crisis. We need a 2035 Climate Crisis Action Plan! It should show how the region will reduce GHG emissions by 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

In this Climate Crisis Action Plan, DVRPC should:

- i. Provide an annual energy/CO₂ emissions progress report (not a full GHG Inventory) with target levels;
- ii. Provide detailed analysis of the transportation sector with metrics that explain CO₂ emission trends eg vehicle miles travelled (VMT) by year and the average vehicle carbon footprint [gCO₂/mile] by vehicle class;
- iii. Explain vehicle-fuel carbon footprints and why the region should be making a fast transition from petroleum-based fuels to an electrified transport network.

Thank you,
Bridget Chadwick

Draft Response: Thank you for your comment. Your comment was forwarded to the DVRPC Board and DVRPC's Office of Energy and Climate Change Initiatives.

DVRPC agrees that the world is facing a climate crisis and is committed to taking action in the region to address the crisis. DVRPC continues to be a leader among MPOs in taking action both to reduce the region's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to prepare the region for the impacts of climate change.

This work permeates DVRPC's Work Program.

DVRPC's 2050 Long Range Plan will set a goal of net zero regional greenhouse emissions by 2050. This is in line with the goal of the Biden administration. DVRPC staff serves on the PA DEP Climate Change Advisory Committee, and played a strong role in shaping the soon to be released "Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan 2021". The 2021 Climate Action Plan includes GHG reduction strategies that could realize the net GHG reduction targets of 26% by 2025 and 80% by 2050 (from 2005 levels) set by Governor Wolf in Executive Order 2019-01.

DVRPC has assisted the Commonwealth of PA in implementing its Local Climate Action Program, which has developed local climate action plans for many municipalities and counties in the DVRPC region.

DVRPC staff also works closely with staff at the NJ DEP which is charged with implementing many of the provisions of the state's Global Warming Response Act which has a goal to reduce New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from their 2006 levels by 2050.

DVRPC has been discussing internally ways to provide a more frequent update to its Regional Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, based on a smaller set of information than we have used in the past. For instance, DVRPC is exploring annually collecting utility-provided energy usage, both electricity and natural gas, from

the 12 utilities that serve the region. DVRPC is currently determining the feasibility of doing so. However, it might be reasonable to use the data from a subset of regional utilities as a proxy for change in the region's energy use. Note that the emissions factors from generating the electricity provided to the region are provided by the US EPA eGRID system, which generally reports every two years, and is two years behind the present. Thus, emissions data for calendar year 2019 were not available until 2021.

Mobile sector emissions are provided by DVRPC's travel demand model as part of DVRPC's air quality conformity work. This model is updated every five years. We are internally exploring possible proxies for annual emission changes. However, similar to utility emissions data, this information lags the present by approximately two years.

In the past year, DVRPC has reached agreements with PennDOT and the NJ DEP to receive registration data for every vehicle registered in both states and the location at the census block group level. DVRPC expects to receive the Pennsylvania data annually, and the New Jersey data every six months. This will allow DVRPC to track the growth of electric vehicle uptake in the region (and in both states), as well as help identify the locations where electric vehicle charging infrastructure is most needed. (see "Planning for Electric Vehicles" at www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate). This information is also being used by both Pennsylvania and New Jersey to inform their funding of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

In addition, DVRPC's FY 2022 work program, which went into effect on July 1, 2021, has a new project, "Regional Electric Vehicle Planning Program" (22-33-180), with the goal of promoting electric vehicles in the region. DVRPC has already assisted several municipalities and counties in procuring EVs and EV charging equipment, and continuing to expand this assistance. DVRPC has created an Electric Vehicle Resource Kit for Municipalities (see <https://www.dvrpc.org/energyclimate/alternativefuelvehicles/evmuniresource>), and has presented on this issue in many forums.

DVRPC also serves on Drive Electric PA and advises both Pennsylvania and New Jersey on how best to meet electric vehicle uptake goals. DVRPC has emphasized in its electric vehicle work the importance of a transition from petroleum-based fuels to an electrified transport network. This is important not only for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the region's transportation sector, but also for improving the region's air quality, particularly in communities with high indicators of potential disadvantage.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

From: Sarah Yeung
County: Philadelphia
Zip Code: NA
Date Received: 7/21/2021

Comment/Question: How can DVRPC fund planning processes in communities where highways and other transportation infrastructure have created obstacles for equitable growth such as Chinatown and Nicetown?

Draft Response: Thank you for your comment. DVRPC has conducted a fair amount of planning work in recent years that relates to this question. At a regional level, this work has included our Equity Through Access plan and related Map Toolkit (<http://www.dvrpc.org/eta>), which is intended to identify different types of barriers to access by vulnerable populations, and share planning resources that can be used by those seeking to address those barriers. At the local study level, our Reviving Vine study (<https://www.dvrpc.org/Products/17070/>)--released in 2018--reflects the results of community input and DVRPC analysis on strategies to improve community connectivity through and over the Vine Street corridor. We also worked with two teams of Temple graduate students [this spring](#) to better understand the legacies of prior infrastructure planning processes and decisions on racial minority communities, including the Vine Street expressway project and Chinatown community.

Most of our local planning work is funded through our Planning Work Program, which is developed annually with projects requested by DVRPC Board Member partners, including the City of Philadelphia. Studies are typically requested by Board member partners in early Fall, with the draft work program assembled in Fall and Winter before being released for public comment. If local communities have ideas or requests for planning work, we recommend they connect with Board Member partners on possible work program requests. In the City of Philadelphia, that would include Philadelphia City Planning Commission; Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability; and/or Streets Department staff.

DVRPC has also funded many planning studies through our Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) program (<http://www.dvrpc.org/TCDI>); the timing and nature of the next round for that program is currently being evaluated.

Public comments on agenda and non-agenda items received at the DVRPC Board Meeting held on July 22, 2021

From: Reverend Glen Benson
County: Delaware
Zip Code: 19013
Date Received: 7/22/2021

Comment/Question: Reverend Benson, who lives at 1210 Kerlin Street in Chester, said that there was a contract with PennDOT to soundproof his home, which sits next to I-95. However, he was told by PennDOT that progress has been stalled due to a review by the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office. Reverend Benson asked that members of the Board reach out to the AG's office to get things unstuck and expressed his frustration that the soundproofing of his house has been repeatedly delayed.

Response:

Thank you for making a public comment at DVRPC's July Board meeting. Based on email correspondence, the contract was executed.

From: Shirley Young
County: Philadelphia
Zip Code: 19107
Date Received: 7/22/2021

Comment/Question: Shirley Young, a Chinatown resident and community leader, asked if there are any plans to cap the Vine Street Expressway through Chinatown or improve Vine Street, mentioning the "[Reviving Vine](#)" study that was published three years ago.

Draft Response:

Thank you for your question. DVRPC has released two recent studies of transportation improvements in Chinatown. In 2015, DVRPC recommended a [redesign of Race Street](#) between 5th and 9th streets, including elements such as a reduced roadway width, a protected bicycle lane, pedestrian islands, and curb extensions. Three years later, DVRPC completed the [Reviving Vine study](#), which proposed a "road diet" along the Vine Street local lanes to make the corridor more usable for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.

While the implementation of planning studies is always dependent on funding constraints, DVRPC, the City of Philadelphia, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation are working to make progress. The [Franklin Square Pedestrian Access Project](#), slated to be completed by 2024, will include the construction of pedestrian refuge islands and expanded sidewalks to improve pedestrian movement across Race

Street. Design and engineering work will also take place for [safety improvements along the Vine Street Corridor](#) based on the Reviving Vine recommendations.

To date, the possibility of capping the Vine Street Expressway has not yet been studied in depth by DVRPC. However, Representative Dwight Evans held an event in Philadelphia on July 12 to highlight \$3 billion in annual [Reconnecting Communities funding](#) that was included in the surface transportation package recently passed by the House of Representatives. Although any final federal infrastructure bill must first be approved by the Senate and signed by the President, these funds would be directed to repair the damage done by highway construction, particularly in communities of color. This could include further improvements along the Vine Street and Race Street corridors or a cap of Interstate 676 through Chinatown.

Again, thank you for reaching out to DVRPC. We deeply appreciate public engagement in the transportation planning process and look forward to working with Chinatown residents and community leaders on future projects.