



DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



HIGHLIGHTS OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2006 MEETING

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting began with Jerry Lutin, Vice Chairman of the Regional Safety Task Force, welcoming everyone. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and mentioned the organization they represented. Mr. Lutin introduced Barry Seymour, Executive Director of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). Mr. Seymour, in addressing the group commended the work the task force had undertaken and expressed the commission's support in improving transportation safety in the region.

2. Summary of April's Meeting

A motion was made for the approval of the Highlights from the April 25, 2006 Regional Safety Task Force meeting. The meeting highlights were approved.

3. Presentations

Coordinated Emergency Response

Coordinated emergency response was one of the EMS strategies which the Regional Safety Task Force (RSTF) recommended as priority. Two different models of coordinated emergency response as exemplified by the I-295/I-76/NJ 42 and the I-76/I-476 Incident Management Task Forces were presented.

I-76/I-476 Incident Management Task Force

Chris King, Senior Transportation Engineer, DVRPC began by presenting the I-76/I-476 Incident Management Task Force (IMTF) experience. This task force began in 1999 through a request from Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to form a prototype incident management corridor to evaluate the institutional relationship of incident management and identify the benefits for other corridors. The IMTF provides a casual atmosphere for emergency responders away from the scene of an incident to communicate and build relationships which are crucial during an incident. The purposes of the IMTF are to improve coordinated incident management response; foster interaction among stakeholders; identify and address critical incident management needs; and give each organizational perspective (e.g. gives the police the fire personnel perspectives). The IMTF covers 13 municipalities and portions of 3 counties. It includes police, fire, ambulance, and EMS departments of each of the townships. Federal Highway Administration, County 911 centers, PennDOT, PA Turnpike, TMAs, Legislative offices, PA Towing Association are other agencies which are involved in the task force. An action plan is developed each year to address some of the issues which have been raised over the year at the quarterly meetings. The IMTF's main success has been interagency coordination. Relationships have been built among the various stakeholders. This has enhanced communication. Stakeholders share resources and

ideas. Other successes include ramp designation signs, noise wall access for emergency personnel and equipment, and post incident response evaluation (multi-agency debriefing after major incidents). DVRPC provides support to the stakeholders in various ways – mapping, training, contact list, meeting coordination TRAA Vehicle Identification Cards and Nextel phones. The lessons learned from the IMTF are varied and include the need to identify a facilitator (MPO, County Planning Dept. or TMA) to act as central focus of the IMTF (acts as a neutral bystander). Engaging as wide a range of stakeholders as appropriate is necessary not only to responding whenever there is an incident but also to provide necessary input. Identify needs, assigning responsibilities and sharing resources are activities that are critical to the operation of the IMTF. Mr. King concluded his presentation by mentioning the 8 other incident management task forces either in operation or in development in the Delaware Valley region.

I-295/I-76/NJ 42 Incident Management Task Force

Frank Lafferty, Assistant Fire Chief, Haddon Heights Fire Department presented this IMTF's experience. He started his presentation by identifying what the problems were around the I-295/I-76/NJ 42 interchange. There were significant incidents on the stretch of interstate which posed safety and communication issues. There were dual county responses, problems with identifying who is in charge at the scene of an incident, issues with the timely response of critical information and the lack of interoperability. Mr. Lafferty said because emergency responders operated on different frequencies and inter-county communications overlapped delays in dispatch resulted. The breakdown in communications also resulted in a failure to identify the exact locations of incidents, units delayed in arriving at the scene and incidents lasting much longer than was necessary. This compromises the safety of travelers and responders and impacts the area's economy. To address these problems standardized response plan were created. The IMTF worked with New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) on signage; established a common operating frequency for all the agencies as appropriate; and trained personnel of responding agencies and dispatchers (everyone had a better understanding of the goals). There are now standard responses – units respond by direction to prevent crossovers on limited access highways, response plan are determined by access to the highway not by “home rule”, closest resources with equipment respond to the incident. These are standardized response policies which have been agreed on. There is now a common frequency for all units including EMS except police agencies. One communication center now handles all the responses. A contracts committee was formed. All response plans were standardized across the response area between municipalities and counties. All fire departments signed contracts along with communications centers and NJ state police agreeing to the response plans. The plans cannot be changed unilaterally. For example, a change may be necessitated due to a change in resources within a given department; this would require an addition/deletion from the response plan. There has been increased training for all responders (police, fire and EMS) through DVRPC and NJ State Police. As a result there has been more success on incidents due to a more unified approach. There has been greater understanding regarding each responder's task at an incident. A policy and procedures manual has been developed and distributed to all responders. It clearly defines the role and responsibilities of all responders; the resources that are their responsibility, how to access the interstate, when not to access the interstate or limited access highway. Mr. Lafferty said there is still work to be done on integrating EMS. In wrapping up his presentation, he said the group began about 20 years ago but did not

make much progress until DVRPC got involved in 2002. It was DVRPC's expertise, resources and vision that enabled the group to look beyond their immediate environment. Also, the fact that DVRPC was neutral helped to facilitate the process.

In the discussion that followed it was pointed out that the I-95 Coalition (agencies along the I-95 corridor from Florida to Maine) is in the process of developing a universal mile marker and ramp designation signage which will enable highway users to identify where they are. It was also pointed out that PennDOT and NJDOT had invested in close circuit TV cameras along the highway system which helps to identify where the crashes are and they share this information with other agencies.

John Ward, Associate Director, DVRPC said the work of NJ State Police, PA State Police, PennDOT and NJDOT with the IMTFs should also be recognized, they were also instrumental in bringing the stakeholders together. There were several interests in the Policy and Procedures Manual

4. Regional Safety Action Plan Executive Summary

Rosemarie Anderson, Manager of Office of Safety and Corridor Planning began the presentation by thanking everyone for their participation in the planning process. Pointing out that a draft copy of the Executive Summary of Regional Safety Action Plan was in each meeting packet, she told the gathering that they were being asked to review the document and pass on comments. She spoke of the Plan's development process citing the goal "*reducing crashes and fatalities on the region's roadways while maintaining compatibility with state Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSP) and bringing NJ and PA portions of the MPO in alignment*" while adopting AASHTO's goal of reducing the fatality rate to 1 fatality per 100 MVMT by 2008 for planning purposes. Given the availability of 2005 data from both states, the data was updated. There was a steady decrease in the fatality rate for the DVRPC region for the years 2003, 2004, and 2005. The rates were 1.3, 1.15, and 1.12, respectively. Both PA and NJ statewide rates did not experience the same trend but showed a decrease in 2004 but increased in 2005. In the discussion on emphasis area a table was used to show the relationship between PA and NJ SHSPs, AASHTO goals and the Plan's 13 emphasis areas. The process through which the priority emphasis areas and associated strategies presented in the Executive Summary was described; and the chairperson for each of the 4 subcommittees discussed some of the elements of the process. The priorities were selected at a synthesis workshop where task force members were divided into 4 groups, each with a mix of disciplines. Each group selected their priority emphasis areas and strategies based on the 4Es (engineering, education, enforcement and emergency medical service).

Joseph Hacker, Manager, Office of Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning and chair of the Enforcement Subcommittee said that the diversity of responses from the various groups at the Synthesis Workshop is not reflected in the final product but in the score sheets that were tabulated. The *curb aggressive driving* emphasis area was unanimous for all the groups as top priorities. As priority moved from *reducing impaired driving, increase driver safety awareness, increase seatbelt usage to improve intersection design* there was a decrease in the degree of consensus. Like the prioritizing of emphasis areas, prioritizing the strategies were unanimous in some cases but mixed in

others, of note was the unanimous support of *increasing sobriety checkpoints* and *educating during enforcement*, and *automated enforcement*.

Regina Moore, Transportation Engineer, DVRPC and co-chair of the Engineering Subcommittee stated the top five emphasis areas from the Engineering viewpoint were in order according to rank – *improving the design and operation of highway intersections*, *minimize the consequences of leaving the road*, *keeping vehicles on the road*, *sustaining proficiency in older drivers*, and *enhance safety on local roads*. The strategies listed in the action plan are the ones that received the most votes in each area. There were many other strategies that fell just short of the list but will still be considered in the range of potential strategies. *Improving the design and operation of highway intersections* was the number one priority for 3 of the 4 groups with the remaining group ranking it 2nd; and *improving intersection geometry* was the number one strategy. For the emphasis area, *enhance safety on local roads* there was unanimous agreement on *adding lighting where appropriate* as the top ranked strategy.

Stacy Bartels, Manager of Marketing and Commuter Services and chairperson of the Education Subcommittee stated for education there were 6 priority emphasis areas. These were *curb aggressive driving*, *impaired driving*, *increase driver safety awareness*, *improving pedestrian safety*, *improve young driver safety* and *occupant restraint*. She mentioned that there should be another subcommittee to focus on legislative issues. She stressed the focus needs to be on coordinating efforts since there are a number of agencies with progressive educational programs in the region. A number of the existing programs were highlighted and the importance of marketing safety. Education strategies addressed all demographic groups and all modes.

Kevin Murphy, Senior Transportation Planner and chair of the EMS Subcommittee said there were three EMS strategies that were supported by a wide majority of the synthesis workshop attendees. The *establishment of standard practices for the collection of EMS data* had unanimous support. Early on in this data-driven safety effort it became apparent that EMS data was lacking. Workshop attendees strongly supported efforts to collect and analyze such data as a way to identify new opportunities to assist EMS professionals save lives. The group supported *improved roadway signage*. Better information tools are instrumental in locating a crash scene, i.e. mile markers, ramp designation signs, CCTV, etc. *Coordinated emergency response* was considered vital to saving lives. The example referred to at the meeting—the I-295 / I-76 / NJ 42 coordination effort spearheaded by DVRPC's Incident Management Task Force—makes efficient use of resources by overcoming the issues of service territory. This program operates via memorandum of agreement at no cost to taxpayers. *Developing EMS training in high schools and community colleges* also had wide support.

In the discussion that followed several salient points were brought out:

- PA did not have a primary seatbelt law which makes it difficult for enforcement. One had to commit a primary violation first to be cited for the non-use of seatbelt and it has to be two separate citations. Additionally, the offenders have to be convicted of the first citation before they can be convicted of the seatbelt citation. If there was a primary seatbelt law it is believed that there would be more compliance.

- On the note of the data, the difference in the PA rates in the DVRPC region as opposed to the rest of the state is partially due to the fact that PA is primarily rural. The availability of 24 hour EMT and trauma centers are better in the SE than rural areas, as well as access to and from crash sites.
- The fact that only PA State Police are allowed to use radar in assessing speed violation poses difficulty for local police in enforcement. It was noted that the Police Chiefs Association is pushing for statewide legislation for local police to use radar. There has been support from the legislators in SE region but have been met with resistance west of the Susquehanna River. This has been a problem with enforcement. It was suggested that DVRPC reach out to the other MPOs and regional planning agencies in PA to garner support for local radar enforcement to support regional safety goals.
- Given, *pedestrian safety* made the priority list of 5 only under Education, was disappointing to some task force members. It was suggested that more emphasis is placed on ways to improve pedestrian safety by the group. It was pointed out that although some areas fell from the priority list did not mean that no work would be done in those area.
- CCTV - PennDOT and DVRPC have worked to get PennDOT camera feeds into Montgomery and Chester Counties 911 Centers. It is envisioned this will get to all the counties in the region and a similar process in NJ. *TrafficLand* is working with DVRPC, PennDOT, NJDOT and DRPA to take all the cameras that these organizations have, place them on a website and make it accessible over the internet. There will be a public site as well as a private location to access faster, more precise information. Currently, *TrafficLand* is in several other areas in the nation – Washington DC/Northern Virginia, New Orleans, New York.
- In discussing mile markers on the highway it was pointed out the importance of also having the highway shield and number as well as the mile location.

The relationship between the emphasis areas selected for Education and Enforcement were shown. The top 3 priority emphasis areas for both were the same. This reinforced what had stemmed from the subcommittee meeting, the importance of education to enforcement and vice-versa. Reference was made to the identified funding streams as shown in the Executive Summary but in addressing emphasis areas and strategies there should also be a focus on the many resources in the region.

The next steps are to complete the full Regional Safety Action Plan including an Implementation Plan, and proceed with actions identified. The group was then led into an exercise where they were asked to take a few minutes to make note of individual action plans using the identified emphasis areas and strategies.

5. Fiscal Year 2008 DVRPC Planning Work Program

John Ward explained to the group about DVRPC's FY08 Work Program, it's importance and why it was being development at this point. Soliciting input from stakeholders, assessing available funds, and selecting appropriate projects are some of the tasks. Soliciting input from our committees on types of projects, project ideas and programs that DVRPC should be working on is part of the process. The Regional Safety Task Force has an opportunity to direct what goes into the work program. John then told the

gathering that there was funding available for new projects and since safety was a priority for the agency there will be continued funding for safety projects. He then spoke of the current safety projects and program in the work program. There are federal guidelines which have to be followed in developing the work program document. It has to go out for public scrutiny and comments.

John Griffies, Contracts Manager told the group of the schedule for the development of the FY08 Work Program. He said the process begins each year in September when input is solicited from member governments. The list of new projects would be finalized in mid October and in order for ideas to get a fair hearing they should be sent in by the first week of October. John then distributed the development schedule.

In the discussion that followed there were several ideas from the group including:

- Impacts of land development on traffic safety (municipal outreach)
- Overcoming barriers to funding bicycle and pedestrian improvement
- Establish budget priority - help determine where money should be spent and develop a guide to where the state should focus their efforts and where state dollars are spent.
- Road diet analysis – interventions that are appropriate for each level of roadway on a regional level
- Process for developing a priority for county/municipal levels projects
- Road Safety Audits
- Local community outreach on safety issues
- Crash data system/Safety management system
- Legislative Issues – identifying high priority legislative traffic safety issues and developing information packets with data analysis address those issues

Consensus was reached on four areas to develop and present to the DVRPC board for consideration for the FY2008 work program.

During the discussion it was also suggested that in addressing the strategies from the Action Plan it should be done as a series of events on a continuing basis; analyzing the program as it is built and developed over a period of years. Additionally, on the debate of short term, quick fix projects it was resolved that short term improvements should not stand alone but be a part of a long term program. Due to the fact that DVRPC cannot lobby legislatively, and many of the issues have a legislative basis, it was suggested that a legislative subcommittee be formed to determine high priority legislative issues and how best to address them.

NEW BUSINESS

The meeting concluded with Jerry Lutin, announcing the tentative date of the next meeting of the Regional Safety Task Force, **January 18, 2007 at 9:30AM**

Attendees

Rosemarie Anderson	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
David Barber	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Stacy Bartels	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
William Beans	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Lou Belmonte	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Matt Bochanski	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Sgt. Carsten Boethig	New Jersey State Police
Sgt. George Bollendorf	Delaware River Port Authority
Richard Brahler	Bucks County Planning Commission
Larry Bucci	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Erin Burke	Delaware Valley Planning Commission
J. Thomas Butts	Gloucester County Emergency Response
Wilbur Dixon	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Justin Dula	Delaware County Planning
Lt. Raymond Evans	Gloucester Township Police Department
George Fallat	Mercer County Engineering
Charles Feggans	New Jersey Department of Highway Traffic Safety
John Griffies	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Ralph Halper	Philadelphia FD/EMS
Joseph Hacker	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Bob Hartman	Mercer County Office of Emergency Management
Peter Hecht	Philly Walks
Bill Hoffman	Federal Highway Administration – New Jersey
James Johnson	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Cpl. Daniel Jones	Upper Makefield Police Department
Bob Kelly	Camden County Public Works
Chris King	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Steve Klejst	New Jersey Transit
Officer David Lacy	Upper Merion Township Police Department
Frank Lafferty	Haddon Heights Fire Department
Matthew Lawson	Mercer County Planning
Jessica Lucas	Gloucester County Planning
Jerry Lutin	New Jersey Transit
James Madera	SEPTA
John Madera	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Sgt. Wayne Mason	Pennsylvania State Police
Debbie Merlin	Mayors Commission on Aging - Philadelphia
Regina Moore	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Brooke Moran	Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
Kevin Murphy	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Patricia Ott	New Jersey Department of Transportation
Ashwin Patel	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
William Ragozine	Cross County Connection TMA
Raymond Reeve	New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety
William Ricketts	TMA of Bucks
Catherine Rossi	AAA Mid-Atlantic

Mark Schmidt	Upper Makefield Police Department
Lt. Linda Scott	Pennsylvania State Police
Don Steele	Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission
James Sullivan	South Jersey Transportation Authority
Officer Mike Sullivan	Upper Merion Police Department
Carol Thomas	Burlington County Engineering
Joseph Saiia	Burlington County Public Safety
Sgt. Shawn Toboz	Pennsylvania State Police
Lt. Harold Vliet	New Jersey State Police
John Ward	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Chief John Waters	Upper Merion Township Fire Department
Sarah Weissman	Rutgers, Transportation Safety Resource Center
Karen Yunk	Federal Highway Administration - NJ
Brenda Zeller	Partnership TMA
Karl Ziemer	Delaware River Port Authority