



DVRPC NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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DVRPC Study Compares Philadelphia to Other Large U.S. Metro Areas

Analyses Examines the Region's Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

The Philadelphia region is one of the nation's largest labor, housing, and sales markets. In order to compete effectively, the region must be prepared to stand up to comparison with the nation's other large metropolitan areas. A new DVRPC study, **Rating the Region: The State of the Delaware Valley**, compares the Philadelphia metropolitan area to the nation's nine largest metros plus Boston, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore, as regional competitors.

The study found that in comparison to other regions, our transportation network,

strong financial resources, diverse economic base, low unemployment rate, and research and development capabilities position us for economic growth.

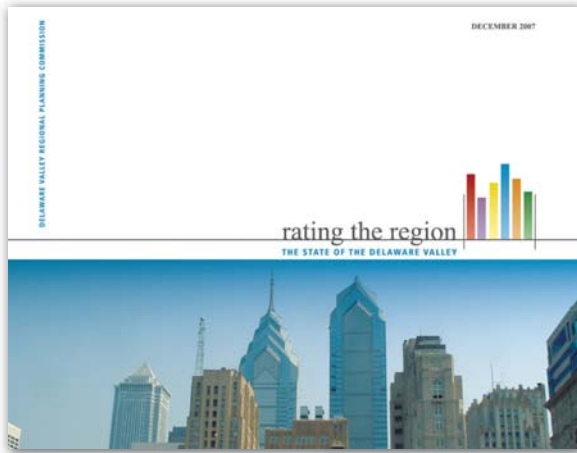
These strengths, however, threaten to be checked by the disparities between city and suburban income, low labor force participation, and poor educational attainment in the cities.

Likewise, our quality of life assets – many colleges and universities, extensive healthcare network, arts and cultural resources, and affordable housing – may be countered by

challenges that include a rapidly aging population, limited recreational resources, and fragmentation (and the resulting difficulties in implementing change) caused by a number of government entities.

Fortunately, many of the resources needed to address the region's weaknesses are already in place. The challenge now facing the region is capitalizing and building on its strengths while recognizing and working to address its identified weaknesses.

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Examples outlined in the report include:

- *The region's extensive health care network will be of tremendous value as the region works to meet the needs and demands of its growing elderly population. Likewise, health care providers can continue to improve the delivery of services and by doing so help to lower the infant mortality rate.*
- *Suburban employers should continue to increase the opportunities for meaningful employment for city residents through job training and development. This training, combined with ongoing improvements to the region's existing transit and highway network, can increase labor force participation and lower unemployment in the city.*
- *The region's colleges and universities should become more actively involved with the local elementary and secondary schools to increase the motivation and performance of students, particularly in the region's urban districts.*

- *The region must also continue to market its strengths, including its extensive educational resources, affordable housing, arts and cultural opportunities, and short average commute times, to attract young, college-educated professionals back into its cities and mature suburban neighborhoods.*

Comparisons were made in the following categories: the human environment (*population, age, diversity, income*); the economy (*employment, real estate*); the built and natural environment (*housing, density*); transportation (*commute, mode, air quality*); and the civic environment (*political representation, taxes and revenue, arts and culture*).

The report is a follow-up to a similar report released by DVRPC in 1993. Using comparable data from the Census Bureau and other federal agencies, existing conditions and trends of the region are measured against other metropolitan regions around the country.

DVRPC Presents New Agenda for Design Excellence in Philadelphia

Great cities have great civic design. Cities with a strong design culture are famous for their well-built and livable neighborhoods and their extraordinary public spaces. Civic design excellence not only creates a stronger city for its own residents, but is critical for a city's development and business climate, tourism, and reputation. Philadelphia's civic design is the result of hundreds of years - layers upon layers - of development decisions. As a result of Philadelphia's recent urban renaissance and building boom, we are now faced with rapid development and revitalization.

DVRPC has released a new report, *Promoting Civic Design Excellence in Philadelphia*, which looks at the state of civic design in Philadelphia and makes recommendations on how the City can value civic design in all its departments and initiatives.

The report focuses on some big ideas for promoting civic design excellence, among them design review, design guidelines and design education and advocacy.



It discusses the first critical steps to change policy to value civic design. It also examines civic design challenges in Philadelphia and looks at best practices from other cities, including Tampa, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Austin, and Los Angeles.

This document is intended to be a starting point for discussion about the importance of civic design in Philadelphia's future. With the inauguration of Mayor Michael Nutter in Philadelphia, it is critical for the City to now enact policies and programs that encourage strong civic design in every neighborhood. However, change must also come from civic groups, nonprofits, advocacy organizations, foundations, and from a public that understands the essential elements of civic design and why it matters.

TO VIEW REPORT, VISIT:

www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/07043.pdf

TO RECEIVE HARD COPY OF REPORT, CONTACT:

Mary Bell at 215.238.2841 or mbell@dvrpc.org

TO VIEW REPORT, VISIT:

www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/07049.pdf

TO RECEIVE HARD COPY OF REPORT, CONTACT:

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Commission Takes In-Depth Look at the Region's Bicyclists

New information about the habits, attitudes and desires of bicyclists in the Philadelphia region is now available. A new DVRPC report, entitled ***Bicycling in the Delaware Valley in 2005***, provides information about the behavior of adult bicyclists and the trips they make. Data was collected about trip purpose, length and duration of the trip, use of supplemental modes of transportation (*transit, vehicle*), frequency of bicycle travel, reasons for riding, crash experience, safety habits and more.

Key findings included:

- Nearly two thirds of daily bicycle trips are for utilitarian transportation purposes, rather than for exercise or recreation.
- Approximately 60 percent of adult bicyclists were observed without a helmet.
- One out of three bicyclists reported having been in a crash or fall in the preceding year and slightly more than one in six were involved in a crash involving a motor vehicle.

- Bicycle lanes are favored by bicyclists over any other facility type; other popular facilities included wide roadway shoulders and education of motorists on sharing the road.

The survey drew a sample of the region's estimated 133,000 daily bicycle trips and 1 million adult bicyclists. To collect the data, field staff intercepted passing bicyclists at select locations across the Delaware Valley and administered a short interview. In addition, participants were given a postage-paid, mail-back questionnaire with more in-depth questions. In all, over 1,200 surveys were completed and 372 individual interviews were conducted.

The results of this survey, a "snapshot" of bicycling in the Delaware Valley, will help planners and policymakers better understand the underlying trends in bicycling and plan for future bicycling facilities.

TO VIEW REPORT, VISIT:
www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/07050.pdf
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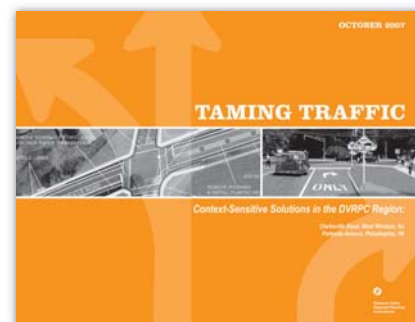


Photo simulation of conceptual recommendations for Clarkesville Road, West Windsor Township.

Traffic Calming Recommended in Two Locations

In an era when automobile transportation has become the mode of choice for most trips, traffic caused by our daily routines can have a negative impact on neighborhoods. There are planning techniques in place that can help us to retain our sense of place, and even improve our quality of life. Context-sensitive solutions (CSS) look beyond the pavement to the role that streets and roads can play in enhancing communities and natural environments. This planning method promotes the idea of streets as transportation routes that serve multiple modes of travel, including walking and bicycling, and not just driving.

The Commission has issued ***Taming Traffic: Context-Sensitive Solutions in the DVRPC Region***, which examines two locations in the Philadelphia region that would benefit from CSS and traffic calming techniques. Parkside Avenue, in the City of Philadelphia, was chosen as an urban case study location.

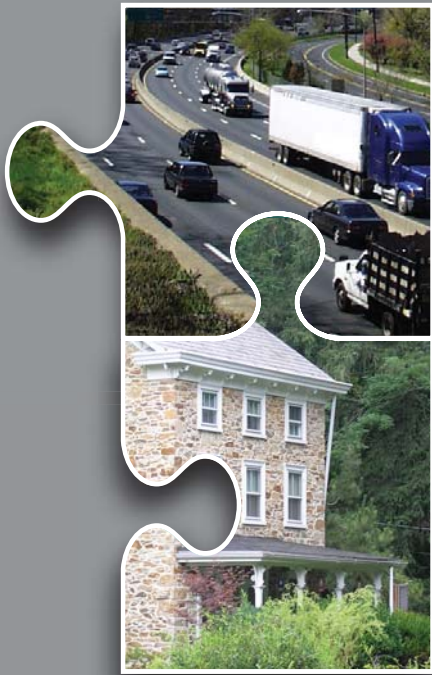


It is an arterial road that provides access to Fairmount Park and several institutions including the Mann Music Center and Please Touch Museum. Issues that can be addressed with CSS include the need for better pedestrian and transit amenities and the disconnect between the park and the corridor.

Clarkesville Road (CR 638) in West Windsor Township, Mercer County, New Jersey, was selected as the suburban case study. This two-lane facility carries a mix of local and regional traffic; the greatest concerns are the behavior and speed of the traffic and the potential for conflicts with pedestrians, especially school students.

TO VIEW REPORT, VISIT:
www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/07054.pdf
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New Guide Helps Planners Link Transportation and Land Use

Corridors form the primary connections between cities, neighborhoods, suburbs, and the region as a whole. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), like DVRPC, are in a unique position to plan for corridors given our multi-county jurisdiction, enabling DVRPC to conduct a planning exercise across municipal and county boundaries.

Corridor plans connect infrastructure to development decisions, and coordinate redevelopment by building partnerships between numerous public and private agencies and organizations.

A new DVRPC guide, *Corridor Planning Guide: Towards a More Meaningful Integration of Transportation and Land Use*, discusses the

process at DVRPC, including how corridors are selected for study, a typical study methodology, common elements included and the agency's public involvement process. The guide includes an extensive "toolbox" of data, techniques, maps, and recommendations that can be used to link land use and transportation planning in a corridor study.

TO RECEIVE HARD COPY OF REPORT, CONTACT:

Karin Morris, Manager, Office of Smart Growth, at 215.238.2858 or kmorris@dvrpc.org

New Interactive Application Organizes Detour Routes

DVRPC, in coordination with PennDOT, has developed a new application, Interactive Detour Route Mapping (IDRuM), which organizes all existing Emergency Detour Routes within the Southeastern Pennsylvania region

(PennDOT Engineering District 6-0) in a manageable, easy-to-use web interface. It can be viewed at www.dvrpc.org/transportation/operations/IDRuM.htm

This version (1.0) of IDRuM is strictly a review version, and is intended to gather feedback from regional stakeholders. If any errors and/or technical issues are

discovered, or if any general comments are needed, please utilize the "Provide Feedback" form included on the above website, as well as the IDRuM application page.

This technology is now being expanded to New Jersey, specifically Camden and Burlington Counties. DVRPC hopes to offer IDRuM to the entire state of New Jersey in the future.



FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS APPLICATION OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Matthew West, Senior Transportation Planner, at 215.238.2818 or mwest@dvrpc.org

TIP FACTS

TIP Facts is a new regular feature in *DVRPC News* which will provide you with tidbits of information about the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Check out each issue for a new fact about the TIP!

The FY07 TIP for Pennsylvania and the FY08 TIP for New Jersey can be viewed on DVRPC's website, www.dvrpc.org/transportation/capital/TIP.htm Anyone with internet access can search and review current and past TIPs. Features of this website allow the user to search project listings and descriptions as well as view interactive TIP project maps. Current and past TIPs are also available through DVRPC's Library.



DVRPC Incident Management Task Force Honored

The NJ Route 42/55, I-76/676/295 Incident Management Task Force, managed by DVRPC, has been recently honored with two prestigious awards. The first is a Traffic Engineering and Safety Award from the New Jersey Transportation Safety Resource Center, for an innovative approach to improve emergency response to highway incidents. In addition, the Camden County Fire Chief's and Fire Officer's Association honored the Task Force with the Bill Tucker Award, for taking a proactive approach in the fire service industry.

DVRPC, in coordination with the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and New Jersey State Police (NJSP), established the Incident Management Task Force to improve the coordinated response to highway incidents in this heavily traveled area. The Task Force developed a multi-disciplinary **Policy & Procedures Manual**, which establishes operational guidelines for emergency responders as they deal with highway incidents. The guidelines document an improved process, aimed at saving the lives of those involved in traffic-related crashes, as well as protecting the responders themselves. Since the manual was implemented in 2005, incident duration has decreased by 34% on I-676, by 10% on I-76, and by 14% on I-295.

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Freedom Card Update

You've heard the buzz about the FREEDOM card and you've noticed the changes at PATCO stations. FREEDOM Card implementation began in December, 2007 and is expected to be complete by the end of February, 2008. Parking lot upgrades are expected to start at the end of February and be complete by July of this year.

WHAT IS THE FREEDOM CARD?

The FREEDOM Card utilizes smart card technology with an embedded computer chip that stores value on your card. You will use the same FREEDOM card for your commute on PATCO trains, and for eventual use in PATCO's parking lots. You just tap your FREEDOM card at the turnstile, and continue on your commute.

FREEDOM gives riders flexibility and convenience, with new automated vending machines and electronic transactions replacing sales outlets.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT TRANSITCHEK CUSTOMERS?

TransitChek has been working with PATCO to accommodate our clients, and can guarantee that employees and companies will not lose out on the tax benefits of TransitChek. Now that FREEDOM cards are available to the public, employees will need to provide their employers with their 20-digit FREEDOM Card number.

When preparing the next TransitChek order, employers will need to compile these serial numbers using the FREEDOM Card spreadsheet, along with the TransitChek value (any whole dollar amount can be specified).

Email this spreadsheet to Commuter Check/Accor Services, then mail the re-order form along with a hard copy of the spreadsheet and include the appropriate payment.

Every two weeks, Commuter Check/Accor Services sends a file to PATCO with these serial numbers and the cards are loaded by PATCO. TransitChek, Commuter Check/Accor Services and PATCO have been testing this process since the start of 2007 and are ready for full implementation. We have found that this is the best way to accommodate our TransitChek clients.

TO ACCESS FORMS:
www.gettransitchek.org
**MORE INFORMATION
ON PATCO'S
FREEDOM CARD:**
www.ridepatco.org

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The NJ Route 42/55, I-76/676/295 Incident Management Task Force is comprised of organizations responsible for incident management in this area, such as local and state police, fire and EMS groups, NJ DOT, towing companies and other highway incident responders. The purpose is to foster communication and cooperation between organizations involved in responding to traffic incidents along this interchange area.



Task Force members accept the Bill Tucker Award, presented by the Camden County Fire Chief's and Fire Officer's Association, in January 2008.

Pictured in row one are: Michael DePieri, Barrington Emergency Management; Joe Haines, Garden State Towman's Association; **row two:** John Ward, DVRPC; Bob Obarski, Camden County Communications; Assistant Chief Frank Lafferty, Haddon Heights Fire Department, SFC Jim Daly, NJ State Police; **row three:** Lt Brian Kelly, DRPA Police; Captain Bill Robb, Blackwood Fire Department; Chief Joe Eisenhardt, Barrington Police Department; Dennis Caltagirone, NJDOT, Traffic Operations South; **row four:** Chief Tom Calhoun, Bellmawr Park Fire Company; Chief Jim Burleigh, Bellmawr Fire and Rescue No. 1.

DVRPC's 7th Annual Celebration of Regional Excellence

Please mark your calendar for DVRPC's 7th Annual Celebration of Regional Excellence to be held on **Thursday, May 15, 2008** in the Ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel, Philadelphia. Watch for more details in the mail to you soon!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Laurie Matkowski,
Senior Transportation Engineer, at
215.238.2853



A Traffic Engineering and Safety Award was presented to the Task Force in December 2007. Pictured: Bob Obarski, Camden County Communications/Bellmawr Fire Department; Laurie Matkowski, DVRPC Senior Transportation Engineer; Bill Robb, Blackwood Fire Department/NJSP; and Patricia Ott, New Jersey Department of Transportation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ATTENDING THE DINNER OR BECOMING A SPONSOR, CONTACT:
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