



dvrpc news

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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You are cordially invited to join us for

DVRPC's 8th Annual Celebration of Regional Excellence

**Thursday Evening
May 14, 2009**

Ballroom of the
Four Seasons Hotel
One Logan Square,
Philadelphia, PA

Join us in honoring four programs and one individual who have significantly contributed to the unique character of the Delaware Valley. For more details, visit: www.dvrpc.org

Unique sponsorship opportunities are available! For more information, contact Candy Snyder, Public Affairs Director, at 215.238.2875 or csnyder@dvrpc.org

DVRPC Approves Transportation Projects for ARRA Funding



At its February meeting, the DVRPC Board approved a package of highway and transit projects that will take advantage of the funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The act will create millions of jobs through tax cuts and carefully targeted investments.

At the national level, Federal Highway Administration funds for roads and bridges total almost \$30 billion. Federal Transit Administration funds for public transit total \$8.4 billion. The region's share of ARRA dollars for transportation projects will total more than \$668 million.

DVRPC worked with its state partners, transit agencies, and city and county members to identify eligible projects that could advance within the Act's required timeline, benefit our transportation system, and put the region on an economic road to recovery.

The action taken by the Board amended the FY 2009 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for Pennsylvania and New Jersey to add the new projects and/or to advance existing projects, utilizing ARRA funds.

Information about the newly funded projects is available on DVRPC's interactive stimulus web page: www.dvrpc.org/transportation/stimulus.htm



What *is* Our Carbon Footprint?

For our region to become more environmentally sustainable and economically competitive, a strategy is needed to effectively address greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. Providing regional leadership on this important issue, DVRPC completed a new study to measure our region's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – its carbon footprint. The report, the *Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory*, is the first step in developing a plan to reduce energy use and the emission of gases that contribute to global climate change.

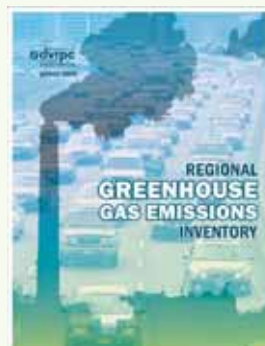
The report analyzes emissions for the entire DVRPC bi-state region, but provides detailed inventory data for each of the nine counties and 352 municipalities.

Among the key findings are:

- Of the 90.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent regional GHG emissions in 2005, 91% of those emissions resulted from energy consumption, including energy used in homes and businesses, and energy used by the transportation sector;
- Emissions per capita are about 16.5 metric tons (36,400 pounds). This is about one third lower than the national average of 24.5 metric tons (54,000 pounds) per capita;
- Regional emissions accounted for about 1.2% of national emissions; and
- Municipalities within our region with higher density and mixed-use areas produce lower per capita emissions.

“The transformation of our economy to one that uses less energy and emits less greenhouse gas is essential, but will require regional cooperation and strong coordination between the states, counties, and municipalities,” said Executive Director, Barry Seymour. “With the new allocation of federal stimulus money to develop alternative energy projects and encourage energy conservation, this analysis will be a critical resource for future policies and programs.”

View the full report:
www.dvrpc.org/climate.htm



This report is the first step in DVRPC's Climate Change Initiatives program area. Climate change and energy concerns are integrated throughout DVRPC activities, including the Long-Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which guide regional investments in transportation. This program will link greenhouse gas reduction and energy conservation to long-standing DVRPC goals, such as brownfield development, air quality improvement and ozone reduction, and transit-oriented development.

Currently, the Commission is working with a broad set of regional stakeholders to develop a regional climate change and energy action plan.

For more information about these initiatives, contact Robert Graff at 215.238.2826 or rgraff@dvrpc.org

Commission Takes Aim at Improving Parking in the Region

Parking – if designed properly – can support transit systems, reduce congestion, prevent sprawl, and enhance the character and walkability of a community. However, many parking requirements in the Philadelphia region are outdated and assume that every community's parking needs are the same. A new DVRPC study, entitled *The Automobile at Rest: Toward Better Parking Policies in the Delaware Valley*, takes a close look at parking and outlines strategies to better manage and design parking facilities.

Currently, each of the 353 municipalities in the Philadelphia region sets its own parking requirements, based on national standards, which often assume that all trips will be single trips made by car. These standards fail to recognize the different types of parking provisions that may be desirable for different contexts, such as mixed-use settings, urban downtowns, or suburban shopping districts.

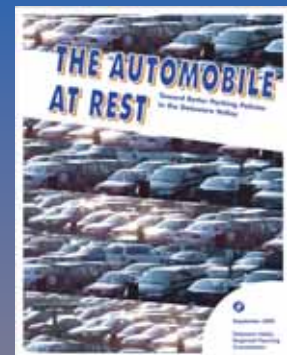
Municipal parking ordinances often require too much parking or are not flexible for mixed-use settings.

Conventional parking standards generally focus on setting a required minimum number of parking spaces for various land uses. This study examines best practices in parking, which look beyond recommended number of parking spaces to consider the local context, mix of uses, and availability of alternative modes of transportation. The study recommends reducing the minimum parking requirements for residential, office, retail, and industrial land uses, and strongly supports shared parking, reserve parking, and parking maximums. Parking management strategies such as pricing, in-lieu parking fees, and travel demand management can make better use of available parking and reduce demand.

It is also important for a parking facility to mesh well with a community's design. Surface parking should be located in side or rear lots in order to maintain the public frontage. Landscaping and screening should be required and better stormwater practices implemented to reduce runoff and improve drainage.

The report also looks at the different types of parking (such as off-street, underground, and bicycle) and describes the contexts and design treatments that best match each type. In addition, transit parking is discussed, including the role of park-and-rides and transit-oriented development.

This report is intended to educate decision-makers and the public about the role of parking to create better places, and to facilitate local planning and action to improve parking throughout the region. Updated and modern parking policies can accommodate the automobile while creating more livable communities.



View the full report:
www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/08081A.pdf



DVRPC's
Report Asks...



What if we had more transit? ”



Over the past two decades, a host of major transit projects have been proposed and studied within the Philadelphia region. How would these projects impact development and travel patterns in our region? Has consideration been given to increasing oil costs and energy availability? Is a more transit-focused region possible? In order to explore a future scenario with enhanced transit services, DVRPC has examined a set of transit expansion and enhancement projects in a new report, entitled *Long-Range Vision for Transit*.

The purpose of the report is to highlight the benefits of a modernized, integrated transit network that is coordinated with land development. To achieve this, DVRPC identified several potential transit projects and grouped them into four “vision narratives,” or topic areas. **They include:**

1. Service extensions in the urban core;
2. Transit as an anchor for waterfront development;
3. Reconnecting and reinforcing older suburbs; and
4. Improving traditional, reverse, and intersuburb commutes.

The publication details how these projects would fit within the region's existing transit system and land use planning. Improvements to the existing system are also discussed, including modernized fare collection compatible with all transit carriers, improved passenger information systems, and higher frequencies for all services. The report identifies key challenges, including funding, that will need to be overcome to achieve the vision.

Projects and priorities highlighted in the report were drawn from public and stakeholder outreach, as well as ongoing analysis by DVRPC, NJ Transit, PATCO, SEPTA, and others.

Transit plays an integral role in DVRPC's Long-Range Plan; this report will provide important input to the development of the final list of projects to be included in the next long-range plan, *Connections: 2035*, which will be adopted in July 2009.

For more information about DVRPC's Long-Range Plan, visit: www.dvrpc.org/connections



View the full report:
www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/08068.pdf



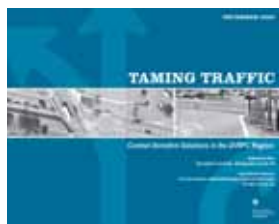
BEFORE: EXISTING CONDITIONS ON BETHLEHEM PIKE NEAR THE INTERSECTION WITH MILL ROAD



AFTER: PHOTO SIMULATION OF RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS SHOWS A NEW CROSSWALK, A THREE-LANE CROSS-SECTION, SHARED-LANE MARKINGS, A DEDICATED PARKING LANE, STREETSCAPING, AND CURB EXTENSION

Traffic Calming

More than Just Road Improvements



View the full report:
www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/reports/08044.pdf

Context-sensitive solutions (CSS) for traffic calming go far beyond traditional road improvements. This planning method helps drivers realize the context of the location through which they are passing through, and looks beyond the pavement to the role roads can play in enhancing a community.

CSS promotes the idea of streets as transportation routes that serve multiple modes of travel, including walking and bicycling, not just driving. Physical and psychological improvements and place-making elements, such as banners, signs, and crosswalks are often used to make a corridor safer.

Each year, DVRPC studies two locations that could benefit from CSS and traffic calming techniques, and then offers recommendations to improve those corridors. The most recent report examined Bethlehem Pike in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and East Atlantic Avenue in Camden County, New Jersey.

BEFORE: EXISTING CONDITIONS ON ATLANTIC AVENUE NEAR HADDON HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



AFTER: SIDEWALKS, RESTRIPING OF THE ROADWAY, SPEED LIMIT PAVEMENT MARKINGS, RUMBLE STRIPS, AND MORE SIGNAGE WOULD SLOW TRAFFIC AND INCREASE SAFETY FOR PEDESTRIANS



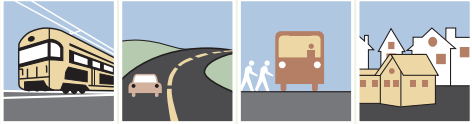
Pennsylvania Transportation Safety Legislative Symposium

Following the success of last year's New Jersey Transportation Safety Legislative Symposium, DVRPC is considering a similar event for Pennsylvania, tentatively scheduled for summer, 2009.

The symposium will engage legislators in a safety discussion by highlighting current data trends, new and pending safety legislation, and the need for additional legislation.

The broader goal is to reduce the number of transportation-related deaths and injuries. The symposium promotes the importance of safety legislation and its role in reducing the frequency and severity of automobile crashes.

More information about this event and about DVRPC's Safety and Congestion Management initiatives, visit: www.dvrpc.org/transportation/safety.htm



US 422 CORRIDOR MULTI-MODAL MASTER PLAN



Tuesday, June 23

Pottstown Middle School

Cafeteria

600 N. Franklin Street

Pottstown, PA 19464

Wednesday, June 24

Spring Ford Senior

High School

Cafeteria

350 S. Lewis Road

Royersford, PA 19468

Public Open Houses Draw Hundreds; June Meetings Scheduled

Work is underway on the US 422 Master Plan – an integrated and comprehensive approach to planning for the future mobility needs of this growing corridor. In February 2009, two open-house meetings were held to allow the public to talk with planners and voice their opinions of the study to date. Both meetings were well attended by over 200 elected officials, stakeholders, business owners, and citizens. DVRPC is now seeking public input on preliminary recommendations for the Master Plan. A second round of public open houses has been set for the dates and locations listed to the left. Interested citizens are welcome to arrive anytime between 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. Recommendations will be on display and there will be a presentation at 7:30 p.m.

For more project information, visit: www.422coalition.com/422plan.htm

PennDOT & DVRPC Host National Freight Conference



More than 150 federal, state, and MPO officials and planners gathered for the Freight Partnership III Meeting in Philadelphia from March 1-3, 2009. This biennial event is conducted by FHWA and AASHTO to foster greater awareness within the planning community about the importance of freight. Welcoming attendees and setting the stage for the meeting were Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, PennDOT Secretary Allen Biehler, DVRPC Executive Director Barry Seymour, and FHWA Associate Administrator Jeff Lindley.

Topics covered at the Freight Partnership III Meeting included multi-jurisdictional corridors, funding, engaging the private sector, performance measures, training resources, and reauthorization. The program also featured mobile tours of local freight facilities organized by members of DVRPC's freight advisory committee, the Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force.



Save the Date:
Urban Land Institute's
Urban Marketplace

Mark the date now on your calendar for June 25, 2009, when ULI Philadelphia will present its first Urban Marketplace – a dynamic day-long conference that will convene the private, public, and community development sectors of our region's real estate industry to promote investment opportunities and development strategies for revitalizing urban and suburban neighborhoods. The event will be held at the Union League in Philadelphia.

For more event information, visit: www.uli.org

Air Quality Partnership Kicks Off *the* Ozone Season

*Warm summer weather =
unhealthy levels of ground-level ozone*

As warmer weather approaches, so does the onset of ground-level ozone. High levels of ozone pose health risks for everyone, and over half of the population is considered especially sensitive to ground-level ozone. Fortunately, ozone levels are being monitored and the public is alerted when levels become dangerous. A program of DVRPC, the Air Quality Partnership (AQP) educates residents about the dangerous effects of ground-level ozone and provides air quality forecasts to the public.

The Air Quality Partnership officially “kicked off” this ozone season at the Clean Air Council’s 5K Run and Earth Day Celebration on April 18. Over 3,000 people joined together to celebrate efforts to improve air quality, educate the public about what they can do to help the environment, and promote sustainable living in the Delaware Valley.

Also at the kick-off event, the Air Quality Partnership recognized two organizations and one individual for their exemplary efforts to improve air quality in the Philadelphia Region:

- Upper Dublin Township, for their efforts to improve air quality by promoting the use of clean energy and recycling in their community;
- Al DIA Newspaper, for their efforts to protect community health by spreading the air quality action message to the Spanish speaking community of the Philadelphia region; and
- Richard Kerr, formerly of NJ Transit, for his long standing dedication to the Air Quality Partnership program. Mr. Kerr served as long term vice-chair of the Partnership and coordinated New Jersey’s Ozone Action program. He helped the program get started in 1997 and has been a faithful supporter until his retirement in 2008.



The AQP’s ozone season runs through September. Currently, the Delaware Valley does not meet the federal air quality standards for ground-level ozone. In the summer, sunlight and high temperatures “bake” pollutants emitted by motor vehicles, power plants and other sources to form high levels of ground-level ozone, commonly known as smog. The AQP provides summertime ground-level ozone forecasts and encourages voluntary actions to reduce air pollution, such as taking transit and not topping off your gas tank.

PHOTO CREDIT: LYNDIA REBARCHAK, PA DEP

Daily Air Quality Forecasts
and Tips to Reduce Air Pollution:
www.airqualitypartnership.org





PICTURED HERE ARE ALL OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AWARD WINNERS AND PRESENTERS. DVRPC WAS A CORE PARTNER OF THE EVENT, AND DVRPC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BARRY SEYMOUR, PRESENTED AN AWARD TO THE SCHUYLKILL BANKS GREENWAY.

Congratulations Sustainability Award Winners!

DVRPC congratulates the five winners of the 2009 Philadelphia Sustainability Awards.

- Bob Pierson for Farm to City
- Energy Coordinating Agency
- Philadelphia Eagles Go Green
- Schuylkill Banks Greenway
- Thin Flats (Onion Flats)

This year, there were almost 70 nominations and jurors selected the 12 finalists.

For more information, visit: www.philadelphia.sustainabilityawards.org

FY 2009 Board Officers

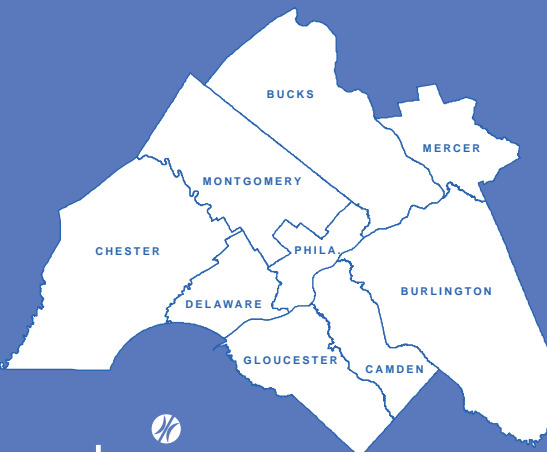
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- Donald S. Shanis, Ph.D. Deputy Executive Director

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- Office of Communications & Public Affairs
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190 N. INDEPENDENCE MALL WEST
8TH FLOOR / PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106-1520
PHONE 215.592.1800 / FAX 215.592.9125
WEBSITE WWW.DVRPC.ORG

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