



# GREAT PLACES WITH TRANSIT



DELAWARE VALLEY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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## In This Issue

Sponsors of TRID Legislation

About This Newsletter

Car Sharing Comes to Philadelphia

EPA's Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Program  
Complements Philly TOD Efforts

Arlington County, VA Wins Top  
Smart Growth Prize

DVRPC Targets Potential TOD Sites

Consider a Smart Commute<sup>SM</sup>  
Mortgage

### New TOD Web Site!

Want to learn more about TOD in southeastern Pennsylvania? As part of DVRPC's project to promote TOD in the region, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council has created a new web site that gives background information on TOD, provides many helpful links, and allows viewers to read this newsletter online. There are also case studies from the region and across the country. To visit, go to [www.pecpa.org](http://www.pecpa.org), click on "Links," and then click on "Transit-Oriented Development." ■

## Sponsors of TRID Legislation

In March 2003, State Representative Carole Rubley (R-Chester County; left) reintroduced House Bill 994, which would authorize Transit Revitalization Districts (TRIDs) to encourage TOD planning and implementation in communities across the Commonwealth. She is joined by two co-sponsors, Representative Rick Geist (R-Altoona; center), Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, and Representative Stephen Stetler (D-York; right), Democratic Policy Committee Chair. In June 2003, Rep. Rubley was slated to receive an award from the Greater Valley Forge Transportation



Management Association for her work on the TRID legislation.

If you have an interest in TOD, we encourage you to review HB 944 and contact your state representative to let him or her know that you support enactment of this legislation. The bill can be found on the Pennsylvania web site ([www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us)). To find contact information for your representative, visit [www.legis.state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us). ■

## About This Newsletter

Welcome to a special bonus issue of *Great Places With Transit*. We're still out there promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Philadelphia region, and there are lots of new programs, awards and projects to report on.

In this issue, you'll read about some exciting ways that you, the reader, can help promote transit and transit-friendly development, from joining a car-sharing service (page 2) to getting your business to participate in a transit incentive program (page 3) to buying a house near transit (page 5).

Additionally, you'll see a brief update on Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID)

legislation (page 1). We also bring you more information on an award-winning TOD project in the Washington, DC, suburbs (page 3), on which we reported in a previous issue. Finally, we present an article about the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) inventory of potential TOD sites (page 4).

As this is our **final** issue, I want to thank you for your attention and refer you to our TOD web site for future updates regarding transit-friendly development (see sidebar). If you would like to remain on our TOD e-mail distribution list, please send an e-mail to [adeleon@pecphila.org](mailto:adeleon@pecphila.org).

— Patrick Starr  
PEC Vice President,  
Southeast Region

# 2

## Car Sharing Comes to Philadelphia

Have you ever wanted to give up that expensive car you hardly use, but wonder how you'll do your grocery shopping or pick up Aunt Mabel from the airport? Maybe you already get around via transit or on foot, but just wish you had a car to go to the park on Saturdays or pick up that new gas grill? Well, now there's a service that meets your needs: PhillyCarShare.

PhillyCarShare is a Philadelphia-based non-profit dedicated to reducing automobile dependency in the region. Members put down a deposit, then pay a monthly fee and a small hourly and per-mile charge



PhillyCarShare's first two members, Laura Blau and Paul Thompson. This married pair of architects chose to car-share instead of purchase a new vehicle. Laura and Paul are renovating their new Center City home. Having access to PhillyCars — like this Matrix hatchback that can carry bulky items — was part of what made car sharing attractive to them.

when they use a Car Share vehicle. They can pick up and drop off energy-efficient gas-electric cars at locations in Center City near the EI, the trolleys, the Broad Street subways and many bus lines, or in West Philadelphia near a Green Line trolley stop.

PhillyCarShare is already proving that car sharing can work in the region, and it's having a positive impact. For example, a number of the Car Share's 300 members have sold a vehicle or avoided purchasing a new one.

In the fall of 2003, PhillyCarShare plans to launch a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, the program will soon branch out to neighborhoods such as Mount Airy, Manayunk and Frankford. In these locations, good transit access allows residents to get to work without driving, and the car share can get them to non-work destinations that normally would require a car. For some households, PhillyCarShare can fulfill all their car needs; for others, it will allow them to avoid purchasing a second vehicle.

The PhillyCarShare membership fee includes insurance, maintenance, cleaning and gas. As a result, car share members typically spend much less than car owners. And when people use a car share rather than own a vehicle, they have less incentive to "get their money's worth" by driving as much as possible. Overall, members are likely to reduce their vehicle

miles traveled and choose more often to walk, bike and take public transit.

PhillyCarShare also hopes to establish locations at major regional transit hubs, including Frankford, Upper Darby, Norristown, Jenkintown, Trenton and possibly Newark, Delaware, thereby providing a regional car-sharing system. The transit-oriented nature of the system has the potential to reduce car usage even further by allowing members to take a bus or train to a PhillyCarShare location.

Finally, PhillyCarShare plans to venture to relatively dense suburbs where transit access is still good — the Main Line, the R2 corridor to Delaware, the R3 corridor served by the Media regional rail line, Northeast Philadelphia, Cheltenham, Haddonfield, Collingswood and other densely populated suburbs. The organization has met with numerous planning departments and transit agencies in these suburban areas to begin developing the partnerships that will be necessary to make car sharing successful.

As if all this weren't good enough news, car sharing also has potential benefits to TOD: Based on figures from other cities, every PhillyCar could result in about 19 fewer private vehicles on the road, corresponding to seven people who sell a car plus 12 others who avoid purchasing one. The associated reduction in parking need frees land that can increase residential and commercial densities in suburban TODs. At \$4,000 per parking space, or \$25,000 per structured space (even for residential buildings!), developers stand to save a lot of money by incorporating car sharing into their projects.

City CarShare in San Francisco already is working with 10 local developers to incorporate the concept and has done so successfully with at least three already.

PhillyCarShare allows for the convenience of a car without all the hassles. The program saves members money while reducing the number of cars on the road, keeping the air cleaner, lessening our dependence on fossil fuels and supporting the local economy.

For more information, visit [www.phillycarshare.org](http://www.phillycarshare.org), email [info@phillycarshare.org](mailto:info@phillycarshare.org) or call 215-386-0988. ■

## EPA's Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Program Complements Philly TOD Efforts

### Talk to Your Human Resources Department Today About Commuter Choice!

The Greater Philadelphia region is fortunate to have a well-integrated public transit system, many vibrant and historic town centers and a vision to combine these elements to form great places with transit. Now there's a new voluntary business-government partnership that will build on the region's progress to date in encouraging TOD: The Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Leadership Initiative.

Launched by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> encourages employers to provide top-of-the-line commuter benefits, such as transit subsidies, incentives for living closer to work and establishing work sites closer to employees' homes.

Participating employers earn the designation of Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Employer and receive commendations from the EPA Administrator and the Secretary of Transportation, as well as free publicity.

"This is an excellent way for employers to help clean the air,

get the recognition they deserve and improve productivity," said Patty Klavon, EPA representative for the Philadelphia region. "Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Employers also stand out as leaders in improving their community's quality of life."

"We became a Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Employer to support our 'triple bottom line' – people, planet, profits," said Brian Taussig-Lux, general manager of a Media-based travel agency in a recent radio interview. "[The program] helps us care for the environment and allows us to be more competitive by attracting the best employees to our company as well. This, of course, contributes to our economic bottom line."

Every year, Philadelphians waste an average of 42 hours stuck in traffic, spending an extra \$800 in fuel because of congestion. Statewide, cars are the single greatest source of air pollution, accounting for as much as one third of Pennsylvania's air quality problem. What's more, the total miles driven in the Philadelphia region is expected to increase by more than 30 percent by 2025.

Employers offering commuter benefits can help reverse these trends. The average Commuter Choice<sup>SM</sup> Employer with 1,000 workers encourages approximately 175 workers to give up drive-alone commuting and take another mode to work. Each of those employees would save about \$75 in taxes and \$900 in gasoline, parking and vehicle costs each year. In addition, each employer could save thousands in federal taxes and lower annual parking expenses by more than \$70,000. All told, this would conserve 44,000 gallons of gasoline and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 420 tons annually.

To join the program, visit [www.commuterchoice.gov](http://www.commuterchoice.gov) and enroll online. Or call toll free at 1-888-856-3131 or e-mail [commuterchoice@epa.gov](mailto:commuterchoice@epa.gov) to receive more information. ■

## Arlington County, VA Wins Top Smart Growth Prize

In Issue 3 (Summer-Fall 2001) of Great Places, we reported on new transit-friendly development in Arlington County, Virginia, just outside of Washington, DC. In late 2002, that work won the Overall Excellence Award in the National Awards for Smart Growth Achievement, presented by Governor Christie Whitman, former Administrator of the EPA. Three



Stuart Park, located across the street from the Ballston Metro Station and flanked by offices and apartment buildings with street-level retail, is popular with area residents and employees.



Mixed-use development at downtown Washington, DC's Ballston Metro station along the Orange Line.

(Smart Growth Prize, continued from page 3)

other awards were given for Built Projects (the Planning Department of Breckenridge, Colorado), Policies and Regulations (the San Mateo City/County Association of Governments, California) and Community Outreach and Education (the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs).

Arlington County was honored for its work in the Rosslyn-Ballston Metro Corridor. The County adopted a General Land Use Plan that encourages compact, mixed-use development at the corridor's five transit stations, creating vibrant, walkable neighborhoods where people live, work, shop and raise families.

"The winners of these awards demonstrate that the interest in environmentally sound alternatives to sprawl is strong, widespread and growing," said Kaid Benfield, Director for the Smart Growth Program at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "We can all be proud of their successes and learn from their innovation. We also commend EPA for recognizing them and for its own good work on this set of issues."

"These award winners exemplify what smart growth is all about – encouraging development that improves the quality of life in our communities while providing greater opportunities for housing and economic growth," said Joseph Molinaro, Manager of Smart Growth Programs for the National



An aerial photo of Arlington County, demonstrating the effectiveness of the County's approach around the Rosslyn and Court House stations. It also shows that smart growth results in a wide range of housing types, from apartments and condos to townhouses and single-family detached homes.

Association of REALTORS®. "These smart growth stories will inspire other communities as they meet the challenges of growth."

Former Administrator Whitman created the awards program in January 2002 to recognize state, regional and local governments that have promoted and achieved smart growth through innovative projects, policies and programs. More than 100 governments applied for the awards, reflecting the quality and breadth of initiatives across the country.

For more information on the awards and the winners, go to [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm). ■

## DVRPC Targets Potential TOD Sites

With gas prices on the rise, highways clogged with cars and green space disappearing in the Greater Philadelphia area, regional environmental organizations and planning agencies are working to promote earth-friendly, community-friendly solutions. One way to fight these problems is with TOD, a concept that has taken off in many parts of the country.

DVRPC hopes to give TOD a much-needed boost by identifying opportunities to implement it in southeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. In phase one of a two-phase study, DVRPC is relying on feedback from a Study Advisory Committee composed of government, transit agencies, the DVRPC Regional Citizens Committee and nonprofit organizations including the

## Consider a Smart Commute<sup>SM</sup> Mortgage

In a prior issue of Great Places (Summer 2002), we told you about a new product called The Smart Commute<sup>SM</sup> Mortgage, which aims to promote those places in the Greater Philadelphia area considered to be "transit friendly."

Smart Commute<sup>SM</sup> is based on the notion that places near bus and rail lines generally offer greater lifestyle efficiencies than traditional suburban, auto-dependent locations, and that these efficiencies result in reduced transportation costs. Proximity to such everyday places allows residents to walk, bike or take public transportation rather than always driving.

In September 2002, The Reinvestment Fund (TRF; [www.TRFund.com](http://www.TRFund.com)), with Fannie Mae and Citizen's Bank, launched Smart Commute<sup>SM</sup> for customers considering the purchase of a home in selected, transit-friendly areas in the Philadelphia region. These customers qualify for the Smart Commute<sup>SM</sup> Mortgage, regardless of income. Qualifying borrowers would be permitted an increase of \$200 to be factored into their monthly income, allowing them to qualify for a larger mortgage loan.

For more information about Smart Commute, contact Ira Goldstein at TRF at 215-574-5827. ■

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### (DVRPC TOD Sites, continued from page 4)

Pennsylvania Environmental Council. The study is evaluating specific criteria such as proximity to transit, major roads and vacant land and buildings; development pressures; presence of a redevelopment or TOD plan; and sewer and water infrastructure. Out of the approximately 340 fixed rail stations in the region, 45 existing and planned transit stations were selected for evaluation. The 45 sites are being compiled into a TOD inventory slated for publication in the summer of 2003. A second list of 65 stations may be studied in the future.

The TOD inventory will contain a laundry list of data on each of the selected sites, including information on transit stations and systems, level of service, ridership, parking, access, patron amenities, current zoning and development or redevelopment potential. In addition, each site will include an aerial photo, land use map and master plan language for the station area.

According to DVRPC regional planner Karin Morris, "This inventory will be a great resource for developers and for municipal officials seeking to maximize development opportunities around transit."

In fiscal year 2004, DVRPC will work on phase two of the study, which involves creating more detailed station area TOD plans and implementation tools for four sites around the region. Local officials, realtors



Some of DVRPC's potential TOD sites. New housing at Berks and 8th Streets in North Philadelphia, near the Temple University Regional Rail Station (top). Renovation/construction of the Frankford Transportation Center (Bridge-Pratt) in Philadelphia (bottom).

and the development community will be interviewed to develop an anecdotal assessment of existing and future market conditions for new real estate development within and around the defined station areas. ■



Burlington City rail station along the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System, one of the 45 sites in DVRPC's TOD inventory.



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# 6

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DVRPC is an interstate, inter-county and inter-city agency that provides continuing, comprehensive and coordinated planning for the orderly growth and development of the Delaware Valley region. It serves the southeastern Pennsylvania counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia and the southern New Jersey counties of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer.

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