

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

BOARD COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting October 28, 2021

Location: *This meeting was held via remote webinar*

Membership Present

Representative

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
New Jersey Department of Transportation
New Jersey Governor's Appointee
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

Sean Thompson
Andrew Swords
Noreen Giblin
Larry Shifflet
Jim Mosca

Pennsylvania Governor's Appointee
Pennsylvania Governor's Policy & Planning Office
Bucks County

Gina Burritt
(not represented)
Robert Harvie
Rich Brahler

Chester County

Marian Moskowitz

Delaware County

Brian O'Leary

Montgomery County

Christine Reuther

Burlington County

Thomas Shaffer

Camden County

Val Arkoosh

Gloucester County

Scott France

Mercer County

Matthew Edmond

City of Chester

Tom Stanuikynas

City of Philadelphia

Carol Thomas

City of Camden

Lou Cappelli

City of Trenton

Andrew Levecchia

Jackie Huston

Leslie Floyd

Peter Rykard

Mark Squilla

Chris Puchalsky

Eleanor Sharpe

Edward Williams

Michael Kolber

Non-Voting Members

Federal Highway Administration

New Jersey Division

Pennsylvania Division

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,
Region III

Brian Goodson

Gene Porochniak

(not represented)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region II

(not represented)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III

(not represented)

Federal Transit Administration, Region III	(not represented)
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority	Jody Holton
New Jersey Transit Corporation	Lou Millan
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection	(not represented)
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection	(not represented)
Delaware River Port Authority	(not represented)
Port Authority Transit Corporation	Rohan Hepkins
New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy	Donna Rendeiro
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development	Aliyah Stanger
DVRPC Co-Counsel	
Pennsylvania Co-Counsel	Jonathan Bloom
New Jersey Co-Counsel	Tom Coleman

DVRPC Staff

Barry Seymour, Patty Elkis, Karin Morris, Greg Krykewycz, Mike Boyer, Will Stevens, Karen Cilurso, Katie Nash, Jesse Buerk, Brett Fusco, Maridarlyn Gonzalez, Alison Hastings, Rick Murphy, Kwan Hui, Najah Jackson, Andrew Svekla, Ben Gruswitz, Amani Bey, Elise Turner, Derek Lombardi, Betsy Mastaglio, Chris King, Mike Ruane, Amy Verbofsky, Shoshana Akins, Spencer Gober, Sarah Moran, Kendra Nelson, Beth Wichser, Aaron Frint, Shawn Megill Legendre, Van Doan, Tom Keenan, and Renee Wise.

Guests

Montgomery County	Matthew Popek
City of Philadelphia	Martine Decamp
PennDOT District 6	Jonathan Korus
City of Philadelphia Planning Commission	David Kanthor
Public Participation Task Force	Lee Wolfe
Public Participation Task Force	Mary Sandone
Residents for Regional Traffic Solutions	Susan Herman
Resident of Yardley	Judith Hoechner
Mott MacDonald	Richard Hammer

Call to Order - Chair's Comments

Board Chair, Lou Cappelli, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Chair Cappelli asked if there was any press in the meeting and noted that DVRPC would be recording the meeting.

Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

No public comments were stated.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Minutes of Meeting of September 23, 2021

The Board adopted the following motion:

MOTION by *Mr. Squilla*, seconded by *Ms. Reuther*, to approve the minutes of September 23, 2021.

Motion passed. All votes were cast in favor of the motion.

PRESENTATION ITEMS

2. What's In Store: Exploring the Future of Shopping Malls in Greater Philadelphia

Andrew Svekla, DVRPC Manager, Office of Smart Growth, explained that increased online competition, evolving consumer preferences, and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the decline of enclosed shopping malls. Although many of these properties may no longer support a traditional mall, they are often strong candidates for redevelopment. This report summarizes research designed to help communities throughout Greater Philadelphia better understand the challenges and opportunities created by struggling or vacant mall properties.

Michael Kolber, City of Trenton, asked if this may provide us with opportunities to shift commerce away from malls and towards downtown urban centers or if the same forces that are pushing malls towards their decline are going to affect us the same way.

Mr. Svekla responded that it is ironic, in some ways that malls were the force threatening our downtown's for many years, or people thought so and that when they were opening malls our downtown shopping districts had to adapt and redefine their role and they have become very competitive and economically vibrant. Much of the research suggests that there will be a place for downtown urban centers because they provide incentives for people to be there, in terms of the atmosphere, the outdoor structure of it, the combination of restaurants, and other things. It looks like the future appears brighter for our downtown shopping districts than enclosed shopping malls, but these trends are often difficult to predict.

Mr. Svekla noted that there might be reuse opportunities for the mall parking lots for park and ride. There can be interesting uses that make sense and thinking about how the role that these sites can play in mobility going forward. There are opportunities to think more efficiently about how transit is currently using these sites or how commuters can share resources.

Mark Squilla, City of Philadelphia, commented that there has been an interest in some of the city areas where there are malls in residential uses or adding residential to that area. Mr. Squilla asked if Mr. Svekla is seeing that as part of the study.

Mr. Svekla responded that it is one of the dominant themes and that people are trying to diversify these properties by adding residential uses. The purpose is twofold in many communities and there is strong demand for rental apartments. These are sites that are

relatively well served by transportation amenities and are somewhat insulated from existing single family unit neighborhoods so there might be a little bit less resistance to building more densely there. That is a real trend that we are seeing in the report.

3. 2020 Decennial Census Highlights

Ben Gruswitz, DVRPC Manager, Socioeconomic and Land Use Analytics, explained the key takeaways from the initial data release of the 2020 Decennial Census. The analysis will be featured in a soon-to-be-published data bulletin summarizing regional, county, and municipal level change relative to prior decades.

Scott France, Montgomery County, asked if due to the challenges of collecting Census data during the pandemic there a sense that there will be an asterisk around this Census because of the issues at this time.

Mr. Gruswitz responded that it is hard to say and that more reports on the impacts of the pandemic and the differential privacy policy will be coming out soon so we will get some indication there. There was a higher growth than even the Census Bureau estimates prior to this and what people did for Luca program, which adds to the database of addresses that the Census Bureau uses. This was pretty significant in just being able to count people that we weren't counting before. So just in logging all these email addresses really makes a difference.

4. Water Table

Patty Elkis, DVRPC Deputy Executive Director, explained that the Water Table initiative was funded by the William Penn Foundation with the goal to bring nonprofit conservation organizations, the water-user community, and government agencies together to build relationships and collaborative initiatives for better alignment of efforts, new projects, and possibly new sources of funding. Ms. Elkis reported on this 15 month project.

5. Camden Health Element

Dr. Edward Williams, City of Camden, welcomed Board members and introduced the Camden Health Element, noting that the City Planning Board approved the Health Element in April 2021. The Health Element tackles the issues of what constitutes a healthy community through seven policy areas, in particular; access to parks, school activity, and how to deal with the prolonging health conditions of the city. As part of the engagement process, road shows were done, community events, as well as focus groups, and involvement from neighborhood based organizations. Amy Verbofsky, DVRPC Manager, Healthy and Resilient Communities, explained that as an Element of the City's Master Plan, the Camden Health Element provides a high-level vision and concrete strategies to promote health as a priority for Camden's future growth and development. This project convened stakeholders and engaged the community to

collaboratively develop a vision for a healthy Camden, identify areas of concern, and generate recommendations for improving public health through policy and planning-based tools.

Andrew Swords, New Jersey Department of Transportation, commented that this was a very well done presentation.

INFORMATION ITEMS

6. FY23 Work Program Development

Mr. Seymour reported that DVRPC met with Board members and their staff two weeks ago to discuss ideas and we have matched those up with our capacity. We are now working hard on putting together the draft program and we will be coming back at the next Board meeting on December 8 with the draft work program. We will address comments and edits and come back at the January Board meeting with a final version to adopt.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. One Minute Reports

Leslie Floyd, Mercer County, reported that the county just released the Return on Environment study and that the Mercer County Park Commission adopted a Master Plan to turn the Moores Station Quarry into a park.

Brian O'Leary, Chester County, reported that the Commissioners adopted a climate action plan and we are working with our energy and advisory boards on that now.

Christine Reuther, Delaware County, reported that Delaware County Council awarded \$7.7 million in greenspace and greenway awards. These awards broadened the eligible participants by removing the matching condition which was great.

Val Arkoosh, Montgomery County, reported that the county has their final two Planning Smarter events and one is this afternoon in Lansdale. This event will discuss TOD and introduce the new TOD ordinance guidebook. The second event is on November 17 and is the Montgomery Awards Celebration and will be held in person. This event will celebrate the best of planning and projects in the county.

Mark Squilla, City of Philadelphia, reported that OTIS has released a Connect Philadelphia strategic transportation plan progress update for 2021. This was released on October 15 and the intention is to update the values, goals, and strategic deliverables for transportation decisions for the period of 2018 to 2025. This update measures the city's progress towards delivering on these goals and evaluates the

progress. There are over 100 deliverables in the plan, along with highlights, challenges, and successes.

Jody Holton, SEPTA, reported that SEPTA released its Transit Supportive Community Development Program and there will be a webinar on this on November 3. This webinar will address TOD and multimodal access to stations.

Lou Millan, NJ Transit, reported that President Biden and Governor Phil Murphy visited NJ Transit's rail maintenance facility where the President participated in a groundbreaking for the Portal Bridge and talked about the infrastructure bill and the Gateway program. Last week our Board of Directors approved a contract award for \$4.3 million for the Walter Rand Transportation Center for conceptual design engineering and construction assistance services. In terms of ridership for our bus, light rail, and access link modes, they are all either at or approaching about 70 percent of our pre-pandemic levels. On the rail system, the ridership is at 39 percent which is inching up and that is as of the week of October 11.

Rohan Hepkins, PATCO, reported that bridge traffic is at 90 percent of pre-pandemic levels. PATCO ridership is now over 43 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

Brian Goodson, FHWA NJ, reported that FHWA is looking to Washington on the infrastructure bill.

Gene Porochniak, FHWA PA, reported that similar to FHWA NJ the PA side is looking to see what happens with the infrastructure bill.

Donna Rendeiro, NJ Office of Planning Advocacy, reported that she recently participated in a conference that was sponsored by the German Government to talk about what climate actions are being taken and how we can improve things. We shared information with our partners in Germany and it was really an interesting collaboration to see how folks in Germany are doing things.

7. Executive Director's Report

a. Federal Infrastructure proposal

Mr. Seymour noted that President Biden was scheduled to meet with the Democratic caucus this morning to talk about the infrastructure bill and though the headline says he is within inches of getting a deal done we will see what happens. Either way the FAST Act expires at the end of the month, so they are pushing to try to get an action prior to November 1.

b. DVRPC Board Retreat

Mr. Seymour called the Board's attention to the fact that DVRPC is holding the Board Retreat on December 8 and that based on our discussion last month we are organizing a broader talk about the new infrastructure bill which we are remaining confident that we will have in hand by December 8. We have Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs from the USDOT, Charles Small to give us an overview of the bill and we will then hear from Commissioner Scaccetti from New Jersey about priorities for New Jersey. Larry Shifflet, Deputy Secretary for Planning, will talk about priorities in Pennsylvania, and then Erich Zimmerman from the National Association of Regional Councils will focus on opportunities for MPO's. Following that we will have breakout sessions whereby board members will be able to discuss four different topics. One topic is the increase in new opportunities and programs for the TIP, second is new planning activities that are within the plan, third is new competitive grant programs for capital projects specifically, and fourth is new competitive programs for other kinds of planning or other activities. Board members will have a chance to choose which of those you are most interested in, and a survey will go out later today to ask you both to identify which of those topics you might be interested in, as well as whether or not you would want this to be a hybrid meeting or to keep this all online. We are working out the technology and figuring out how to do this on a hybrid basis, but if there are enough folks who would like to come in and meet in person, we can do that and host it in our office and if not, we will do that all hybrid. We are still following the City's Health Department rules which would require masking in our office. The program runs from nine to 11 a.m. and then the Board meeting will run from 11 to 12.

c. Title VI Review

Mr. Seymour reported that DVRPC had a meeting with PennDOT and their Title VI environmental justice staff who gave us a comprehensive audit of our programs as that relates to some of the federal guidance. They appreciated everything we had, but also gave us some specifics around the guidance that we will need to address. For example, we have a separate Title VI Plan, Public Participation Plan, Limited English Proficiency Plan, and Environmental Justice Demographic Analysis and those are each individual documents. They are asking that we combine them all into a single document. We will take care of that but, overall, they appreciate our programs and what we are doing.

d. TIP Administrative Packet

Mr. Seymour noted that the TIP administrative packet is available at the link provided online.

e. New Releases

Mr. Seymour reported that DVRPC has some new releases including: The Camden Health Element, What's In Store: The Future of Shopping Malls in Greater Philadelphia, additional Long-Range Plan material, and a new crowdsourcing freight tool for Chester County.

f. Calendar Year 2022 Board Meeting Dates

Mr. Seymour called the Board's attention to the fact that the Calendar Year 2022 Board meeting dates can be found at the link provided online and with the Board materials. Mr. Seymour noted that as we move into hybrid meetings in 2022, there will still be a select number of meetings where all Board members are encouraged to attend in person.

The following committee reports were provided for the Board's review:

- (1) Regional Technical Committee
- (2) Transportation Operations Task Force
- (3) Regional Safety Task Force
- (4) Public Participation Task Force
- (5) Information Resources Exchange Group

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was stated.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was stated.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m. on a

MOTION by *Mr. Squilla*, seconded by *Mr. Stanuikynas*, to adjourn the Board meeting and move into the Executive Committee meeting.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. DVRPC's website, www.dvrpc.org, may be

translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. DVRPC public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities and in transit-accessible locations when possible. Auxiliary services can be provided to individuals who submit a request at least seven days prior to a meeting. Requests made within seven days will be accommodated to the greatest extent possible. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by DVRPC under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint may be in writing and filed with DVRPC's Title VI Compliance Manager and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information on DVRPC's Title VI program, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please call (215) 592-1800 or email public_affairs@dvrpc.org.

I certify that this is a true and correct copy.

Renee Wise, Recording Secretary