

AMERICANS IN MOTION

Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association

Winter 2007

Transportation Funding and Reform



Allen Biehler, Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation, keynotes the September 27 conference.

On Wednesday, September 27, GVF Transportation hosted a conference on transportation funding and reform. The event kicked off with a welcome from TMA Board President Stephen Lester of Urban Engineers. The first speaker of the morning was DVRPC Executive Director Barry Seymour, who focused on regional transportation reform. Barry presented DVRPC's 2030 plan, which projects reforms that will need to be funded for our transportation system to meet tomorrow's needs. The five key phrases Barry focused on were:

- Regional Policy Framework
- Corridor Planning
- Multi-Modal
- Context Sensitive Planning
- Community Development

The second speaker was Pennsylvania Turnpike CEO Joseph Brimmeier, who discussed Pennsylvania Turnpike tolling as well as improvements being made to prepare the Turnpike for 21st Century travel demands.

Next on the agenda was Joseph Casey, CFO of SEPTA.

Joe's topic was transit funding. Joe focused on the economic impact SEPTA has on the region and then played a short video highlighting their services.

Kenneth Orski, Editor and Publisher of Innovation Briefs, focused on trends influencing the future of surface transportation.

Ken explained that tolls and variable road pricing are continuing to grow — and even accelerate — as tools of augmenting revenue and managing travel demand. He also noted that private investment capital is assuming a more prominent role in the construction, financing, and operation of new and existing transportation facilities. These trends may profoundly influence the federal role in surface transportation.

Paul Levy, Executive Director of the Center City District, gave a presentation on Accomplishing Transportation Reform. Paul's presentation focused on the following economic impact data:

- Philadelphia businesses generate \$13.9 billion in regional salaries.
- SEPTA carries 273,000 riders each day into Center City.
- 70% of Center City office workers commute by public transit.
- Suburban residents earn over \$7 billion downtown.



Attendees focus on transportation funding and reform issues.

As Paul noted, Philadelphia has dedicated right-of-way and substantial infrastructure already in place — an advantage over many other regions. By using a unified regional approach, Philadelphia can compete globally.

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Transportation Funding and Reform *(Continued)*

Jason Pavluchuk of Government Relations, Inc., spoke on public/private partnerships in the U.S. Jason focused on SAFETEA-LU, which is the latest federal transportation bill. He focused on all of the “pork” projects in the bill and stated that the next plan will have less pork. Jason also spoke on how the U.S. Department of Transportation is encouraging states to look at privatizing either existing toll roads or creating new toll roads.

Congressman Curt Weldon and Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz both spoke on the initiatives they are working on in Congress. Congressman Weldon focused on the River Crossing project in Valley Forge, while Congresswoman Schwartz discussed the construction projects she has helped attain funding for in her district.

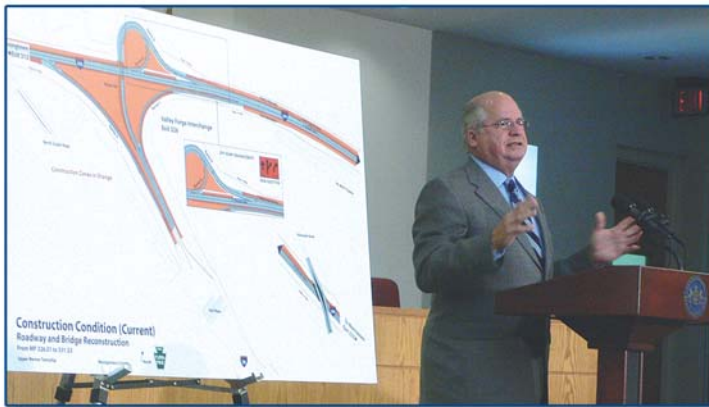
The conference was keynoted with a special appearance by Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation **Allen Biehler**. Secretary Biehler focused on some of the findings for the soon-to-be-released Transportation Funding and Reform Commission report. He stressed that doing nothing is not an option and that we need to move forward to solve this funding crisis.



From left to right: Ronald Wagenmann, Upper Merion Twp; Stephen Lester, Urban Engineers; Secretary of Transportation Allen Biehler; Peter Quinn, GVF Transportation; Kenneth Orski, Innovation Briefs; Donald Shanis, DVRPC.

GVF Transportation would like to thank its major sponsors, PennDOT, SEPTA, and DVRPC, as well as its marquee sponsors: Gannett Fleming, URS, Michael Baker, McMahon Associates, Buchart Horn, Urban Engineers, Pennoni Associates, Verizon, Traffic Planning & Design, Edwards & Kelcey, the King of Prussia Mall, and 28 co-sponsors. **AIM**

New Turnpike Measure Reduces Valley Forge Backups



Joseph Brimmeier announces changes to Valley Forge traffic.

What do you do when the needs of tomorrow bump up against the needs of today?

When a portion of the Pennsylvania Turnpike widening project started causing unforeseen traffic backups in October, the answer for Turnpike CEO Joe Brimmeier was simple: Devise a new traffic pattern that met the needs of all parties.

The backups in question began occurring in mid-October when the Turnpike’s busy Valley Forge Interchange was reduced from two westbound off-ramps to one. This change —

along with other lane restrictions — was intended to expedite the widening of a 5.3-mile section of the Turnpike from Valley Forge east to the Schuylkill River Bridge.

Unfortunately, what wasn’t intended was what happened as a result: Traffic backed up for miles each morning as commuters adjusted to using a single off-ramp.

GVF Transportation recognized the urgency of the situation, as well as the delicate balancing act it would take to resolve it. On the one hand, Valley Forge is already one of the Turnpike’s busiest interchanges, and a widened, six-lane Turnpike is critical to the region’s future. On the other hand, with 20,000 motorists already using the exit every day — and 33,000 using this westbound stretch of road, total — congestion caused by Turnpike improvements could threaten the region the Turnpike was trying to improve.

GVF brought the concerns of local businesses and other organizations to the Turnpike Commission, and the Commission quickly responded. By installing a temporary deceleration lane adjacent to the exiting one, project engineers were able to create a three-lane solution to the mounting traffic backups. Now one lane would exit, one would serve through traffic, and a third lane in between them would do both. **AIM**

Partners in the Spotlight

Limerick Township

Limerick Township, located in western Montgomery County, is one of the oldest townships in Pennsylvania. Incorporated in 1726, Limerick is Montgomery County's second largest township and one of its fastest growing municipalities. Since the 2000 Census, Limerick's population has grown from 13,534 to 16,540 — making it one of the 20 fastest growing municipalities in DVRPC's nine-county region.



A long-time GVF Transportation partner and an active participant in the US 422 Corridor Coalition, Limerick's location in relation to US 422 makes it an attractive area for development. The township is accessible from three interchanges along the highway, while SEPTA's Route 93 bus route serves the township along Ridge Pike, taking residents to and from the Pottstown and Norristown areas.

Limerick is home to Exelon's Nuclear Generating Station. Situated on a 600-acre site, Limerick Station is very active in

the township and sponsors several community events.

Limerick is also home to the Pottstown-Limerick Airport. The airport contributes to jobs, payroll, and spending in the area economy. Its many health, welfare, and safety-related activities help to support and improve the quality

of life for township residents.

Chelsea Property Group is currently in the process of constructing the Philadelphia Premium Outlets center in the township. The 550,000-square-foot center will be located right off the US 422 Sanatoga Interchange. This latest development will increase the attractiveness of Limerick Township as a place to live, work, and play.

GVF Transportation looks forward to a continued relationship with Limerick Township, whose leadership and dedication to transportation planning continues to make Limerick a great place to live. **AIM**

Pennsylvania Institutes "Steer Clear" Law

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has passed a new law requiring motorists to move over or slow down when approaching certain kinds of roadside activity. Known as the "Steer Clear" law, this new legislation took effect statewide in September.

"Steer Clear" requires drivers to move to the furthest possible lane when passing emergency vehicles, police stops, and other incidents where emergency lights are flashing or flares have been placed in the road. The law also requires drivers to change lanes when passing construction crews or tow trucks picking up disabled vehicles.

The idea behind "Steer Clear" is to ensure a safe distance between moving vehicles and those on the side of the road.

In the event that motorists cannot change lanes (due to traffic or other conditions), "Steer Clear" mandates a reduction in speed.

Failure to obey this law can result in fines of \$250, while fines for other violations will be doubled in "Steer Clear" areas. Motorists

also face a 90-day license suspension if personnel are injured.

Motorists should know that road crews and emergency workers may report violations when law enforcement is not present at the scene.

"The new 'Steer Clear' law simply takes what should be common sense and makes it a requirement for safe driving in Pennsylvania," Transportation Secretary Allen D. Biehler says. "Police officers, emergency crews, and those working to assist stranded motorists must be given a wider margin for safety — and we are counting on all drivers to help us achieve this goal."

Two More Laws Take Effect

Two more laws are taking effect in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Starting in January, motorists who fail to turn on their headlights while using their windshield wipers will face fines up to \$100. Motorists who fail to clear ice or snow off their vehicles will be fined up to \$1,000 in the event that the snow or ice injures or kills other drivers. **AIM**

Annual TMA Workshop



From left to right: Darren Fava, Center City TMA; Bill Rickett, TMA Bucks; Peggy Schmidt, Partnership TMA; Larry King, PennDOT; Mavis Rainey, Oakland TMA; Lynn Manion, ACTA; Peter Quinn, GVFTMA; Lucinda Beattie, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership; Mike Herron, TMACC.

Every year, Pennsylvania's nine TMAs meet with PennDOT, Federal Highway, EPA, DEP, and the FTA in Harrisburg to discuss their yearly accomplishments. This year, the TMAs were asked to discuss both the high points of 2006 as well as the challenges heading into 2007.

GVF Transportation used this time to discuss two fine achievements — the 422 Coalition and the 2006 Transportation Conference. For the challenges part of the program, GVF discussed how crucial additional funding will be to making an impact on sprawl and congestion in the fast-growing Greater Valley Forge region.

In addition to the annual meeting, the TMAs of Pennsylvania presented PennDOT's outgoing Deputy Secretary, Larry King, with a Career Leadership Award. GVF Transportation would like to thank Larry for his support throughout the years. Working with Larry has been a true pleasure, and GVF wishes him the best of luck in his retirement. **AIM**

Honoring Wendell Rich

GVF Transportation would like to thank Wendell Rich for his years of service and leadership on the TMA board. GVF wishes Wendell continued success in his retirement and future endeavors. **AIM**



TMA Board President Stephen Lester presents Wendell Rich with a Founder's Award.

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