

TIP

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Responses to Comments on the DVRPC Draft FY2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Pennsylvania

Received as of July 1

Summary of Agency Responses On the DVRPC Draft FY2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Pennsylvania

MPMS# 50633 - PA 263/Old York Road Concrete Rehab and Overlay

Reponse to Item#: A.5

Agency Reponse by DVRPC:

The AQ Code included in TIP descriptions refers to the project's status as it relates to Air Quality Conformity. The Clean Air Act and Transportation Conformity Final Rule identify a number of project types that are exempt from regional air quality emissions analysis (exempt projects). DVRPC has assigned alphanumeric codes to these project types so that exempt projects may be easily identified when reviewing a TIP description of the project.

The AQ Code S10 identifies this project as a project that is exempt from regional air quality analysis. The S10 is assigned to pavement resurfacing and rehabilitation projects.

The complete list of exempt codes and their descriptions can be found on page 47 of the current Draft TIP.

MPMS# 84642 - Jenkintown Platform and Garage Project

R8 Newtown Rail Line Re-activation

Reponse to Items#: A.9, A.13, A.34, A.35, A.36, A.37, A.38, A.39, A.40, A.41, A.42, A.43, A.44, A.45, A.46, A.47, A.48, A.49, A.50, A.51, A.52, A.53, A.54, A.55, A.56, A.57, A.58, A.59, A.60, A.61, A.62, A.63, A.64, A.65, A.66, A.67, A.68, A.69, A.70, A.71, A.72, A.73, A.74, A.75, A.76, A.77, A.78, A.79, A.80, A.81, A.82, A.83, A.84, A.85, A.129, A.130, A.131, A.132, A.134, A.135

Agency Reponse by DVRPC:

At this time, DVRPC is not planning to undertake another feasibility study for the viability of reinstating the R8/Newtown Rail corridor. DVRPC previously conducted a study which concluded that ridership would be limited, would compete with existing services, and would require extensive parking expansions: the service restoration would require a high capital investment for a low projected ridership. Viable ridership could only be achieved through significantly higher levels of development and density in the community through which the lines run, which has not been supported by those communities. A second study completed in 2006 also indicated a low projected ridership, and SEPTA has confirmed that the project would require a significant level of capital investment to bring the inactive line up to an acceptable condition for operating a modern passenger rail service. Given the limited financial resources available for regional transit expansion, there is a need to establish a strong benefit ratio before proceeding with an expansion project. Further, neither Bucks nor Montgomery counties have identified this project as a high priority (both counties have other higher priority transit projects which they are actively pursuing), and DVRPC would not undertake yet another feasibility study on this corridor as part of the DVRPC Work Program without both of their support.

The construction of the Jenkintown parking garage is a completely separate issue and is in no way linked to the R8/Newtown expansion; this is not an either/or situation.

While the Jenkintown Parking Garage has been planned for many years and has appeared in the public TIP document since 2007 as a component of the Rail Stations and Parking Program (MPMS #60540), construction funding is not currently available in the four year TIP. A small amount of funding (\$1.411 million) is shown merely to account for funds received for the project as part of a congressional earmark, and by law these funds cannot be used on any other project other than what it was earmarked for. SEPTA is working to advance the design of the project working with local stakeholders throughout the process.

DVRPC's long range plan supports policies that first ensure that the existing transit system be in a state of good repair, to provide more options for commuters such as the improved coverage and operation of transit, rail station rehabilitation/expansion, and that large station parking facilities be context sensitive. Further, investments should serve areas that are already developed or designated for future growth. DVRPC's long range plan recognizes parking as a key ingredient to a successful transit system. The Jenkintown Station is a key station and a hub that connects to several lines. The proposed garage is an efficient and minimally land-consuming way to accommodate more parking space with less impact than the equivalent surface parking would cause. Also, SEPTA has historically had fewer parking spaces on its Regional Rail lines which were inherited from predecessor railroads and which were developed before the automobile became dominant. Some commuters even have to "reverse commute" to an outlying station that is not near their residence to find a parking space. SEPTA has been playing catch-up to expand parking where opportunities exist or can be created, even with enhanced regional, county and local efforts to promote TOD and multi-modal transportation options (like bicycling and walking) to access stations.

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Regarding pollution from automobiles, a land-use such as a parking garage would tend to produce less emissions than a convenience store or other commercial use since cars are likely to make one trip in and one trip out and remain in place most of the day, with no engines running and little turnover of the cars using the lot. Also, it is a far better situation for cars to drive to a parking lot and park, than give up in frustration and commute all the way to Center City by auto. The area/roads benefit from vehicles that are already removed from the roads due to the presence of the station. An additional 300 spaces in a garage would not have a regional impact on air quality.

DVRPC supports SEPTA's efforts to develop a project and select a parking garage location that addresses both regional and community needs.

Improving the TIP document and process

Reponse to Item#: A.122

Agency Reponse by DVRPC:

Thank you for the suggestion to improve the TIP document. We will consider ways to include icons or project categories within project descriptions of the printed document. Please note that when one uses the DVRPC TIP Search/Mapping function on the website that projects appear with a color coded "pushpin" that indicate project categories for each project, and that holding your cursor over the "View Legend" box on the upper right corner of the mapping page shows all of the categories and allows you to select and de-select which project categories will display on the screen by simply checking or un-checking the box next to each category.

General transit improvements and concerns in Various Counties

Reponse to Item#: A.121, A.123

Agency Reponse by DVRPC:

DVRPC is committed to a region where bicycling and walking are safe, attractive, and accessible travel options for everyone. DVRPC long range plan bike/ped priorities are to 1) ensure that current facilities are maintained and up to date; 2) enhance local mobility 3) Establish an Integrated network of relevant facilities that connect communities and access important regional destinations, and 4) expand the regional off-road trail network. We are pleased to report that the DVRPC FY2011-2014 TIP for PA has approximately 10% of the highway financial resources going towards bike and pedestrian projects.

MPMS# 17813 - North Broad St./Avenue of the Arts and MPMS# 87937 - Avenue of the Arts Revitalization Stscape (TCSP)

Reponse to Item#: A.98

Agency Reponse by DVRPC:

If members so choose, this proposal could be discussed within the Regional Citizens Committee(RCC), which could then opt to submit this proposal for consideration in the FY 2012 DVRPC Work Program. At that point it would be considered by the Board as part of the competitive process for studies to be undertaken in the region. The RCC would need to get the City of Philadelphia's support for this effort, and the DVRPC Board would need to vote for inclusion in the Work Program in order for it to be funded. The DVRPC Office of Corridor Planning reviewed the request and suggested that the issue is more of an Economic Development Study rather than a traditional DVRPC Corridor Study. DVRPC Corridor Studies try to address congestion and mobility issues and primarily focus on Transportation, Land Use and Environmental issues and their impact over an area of several miles. The locations for Corridor Studies are selected based on the level of congestion as defined in the Congestion Mitigation Process (CMP) and the Long Range Plan rather than on neighborhood economic development issues. The comment has been passed to the Philadelphia Planning Commission for their information and consideration.

There are also several plans that have been done in recent years that include North Broad, the two most relevant being:

North Broad Transportation and Access Study 2007 by PCPC <http://www.philaplanning.org/plans/nbta.pdf>

Extending the Vision for North Broad Street 2005 by PCPC <http://philaplanning.org/plans/nbplan.pdf>