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October 3, 2011

In 2010 the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) began a study – in partnership with PennDOT, SEPTA, and Berks, Chester and Montgomery counties – to address two important questions:

- What are the transportation improvements needed to support residents and businesses in the U.S. Route 422 corridor now and into the future? and;
- How do we pay for them?

At that time, available funding for transportation improvements was decreasing, due primarily to the federal government's denial of Pennsylvania's proposal to place tolls on Interstate 80. Tolling I-80 would have generated up to \$1 billion in additional funds for Pennsylvania each year, with significant new funding to support transportation needs in our region.

The study looked at current traffic and congestion levels on Route 422 and forecast future conditions based on projected growth. The results were disturbing. Without significant improvements in the corridor, including a new bridge crossing over the Schuylkill River at Valley Forge and widening along the highway, Route 422 would be in gridlock, impacting thousands of daily commuters and threatening the viability of businesses along the corridor.

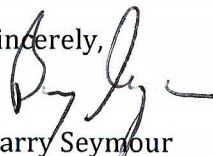
Building a new bridge, widening the highway, and rebuilding the roadway and other bridges along 422 would cost \$750 million. Over the next 8 years, just \$243 million of that is available in PennDOT funding. In addition, we considered what could be done to reinstitute transit service in the area. Restoring train service from Norristown to Reading could be done for \$370 million, creating travel options and a one-seat ride into Center City Philadelphia. However, with PennDOT and SEPTA's budgets squeezed by the loss of the I-80 toll revenue, there was no clear path to fund either the transit or remaining highway improvements.

With no other funding source in sight, the study considering whether establishing a toll on Route 422 might be one way to pay for the improvements, and have them in place far faster than waiting for available funds from Harrisburg or Washington. While the study showed that a modest toll - managed by a local authority - could pay for these improvements, public and political sentiment told us they would rather see a comprehensive statewide solution than a local toll.

Fortunately, such a solution may now be in hand. Governor Corbett's Transportation Funding and Advisory Commission (see [www.tfac.pa.gov](http://www.tfac.pa.gov)) has proposed a comprehensive package to increase funding for transportation infrastructure across Pennsylvania. Support and passage of this package will enable these critical transportation improvements to proceed, without a toll.

I encourage you to review the findings of this report, as well as the Governor's Commission, and let us know your thoughts on how best to proceed in the 422 corridor.

Sincerely,



Barry Seymour  
DVRPC Executive Director