

## **Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**

### **DVRPC Project Selection Process**

DVRPC started working with our regional stakeholders during the last few months of 2008 to develop potential transportation candidate projects in anticipation of a new “stimulus” package that was being discussed in Congress. Our New Jersey stakeholders included NJDOT, NJ Transit, DRPA/PATCO, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer county governments, and the City of Camden and City of Trenton who are all voting or non-voting participatory members of the DVRPC Board. The specific parameters of the program had not yet been determined, but it was clear that projects would need to be delivered quickly. DVRPC first reviewed and consulted with NJDOT to identify current projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that could potentially be accelerated. DVRPC also immediately solicited project requests from our local stakeholders to identify projects that were eligible to receive and use federal funding and could also be delivered quickly. Municipalities and other sponsors were encouraged to coordinate with county representatives on individual requests.

DVRPC and NJDOT initially utilized a guideline of 180 days to receive federal authorization to identify potential projects from within the TIP or from our stakeholders. Project status on the regional TIP, eligibility to use federal funds, and ability to be delivered within 180 days were the initial three screening criteria. As discussions in Congress advanced, the timelines for project advancement varied from as little as 75 days to as long as a year. Potential projects were then examined to affirm minimal permit and right of way requirements, as well as minimal air quality and community impacts, to assure quick delivery. Finally, the geographic distribution of projects within the region and consistency with regional planning policies were examined. These were ultimately the principals that guided project selection.

DVRPC initially identified over \$275 million of State projects and over \$55 million worth of local projects that might meet these criteria. When the federal legislation funding levels and project timelines became clear on February 17th, the project list was further constrained to meet the new requirements. DVRPC worked closely with a special working group comprised of various units at NJDOT, (including programming, project delivery, and environmental screening experts), FHWA, and the 3 MPO's to establish the allocation at the regional level and to develop the final list of projects. The final selection of projects to be funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was adopted by the DVRPC Board on February 26, 2009. Funding for the DVRPC region totaled more than \$30 million for almost 40 local projects, plus \$127 million for six state projects. These projects will make improvements to our transportation infrastructure including pavement resurfacing and reconstruction; pedestrian crosswalks, ADA ramps and countdown timers; guiderail and median safety upgrades; bridge maintenance; right-of-way acquisition; drainage improvements; and traffic signal improvements. These projects will enhance our transportation system and quickly inject funds into our local economy.