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## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT WORKS TO MAKE REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK A REALITY**

*June 23 Conference Will Bring Together the Community, Local Business Leaders, and City, State and National Representatives to Plan Completion of Trail Development in the Region*

**PHILADELPHIA, June 20, 2011** – The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) will host the *Active Transportation Summit: Building Our Regional Trail Network*, with the goal of challenging the region to complete the Regional Trail Network. National and local transportation planners, health care professionals, and economic and trail developers will educate the regional business community, elected officials and non-profit organizations on the benefits of trails, raise awareness of current trail developments, and inspire the completion of the trail network system.

“This summer, trail development in Philadelphia and Camden will boom as ten trail segments funded by the \$23 million TIGER FHWA grant break ground,” said Patrick Starr, Senior Vice President of PEC’s Southeast Region. “The Summit will capitalize on this achievement and underscore the considerable economic and human health benefits that a complete trail network will bring to the region. Our focus will be on what needs to be done to implement a connected and fully operational system.”

The goal is to continue to expand upon the trail development taking place in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southwestern New Jersey and eliminate all trail network gaps and connect and integrate all main spines of the network – Schuylkill River Trail, a new Delaware River Trail (part of the national East Coast Greenway), Camden Greenway and the Delaware & Lehigh Canal Heritage Trail.

“Completing the Regional Trail Network is a complex task,” said DVRPC Executive Director Barry Seymour. “DVRPC and the William Penn Foundation are hoping to spur the completion with the creation of the new \$10 million Regional Trails Fund; and of a new forum to foster regional collaboration, the DVRPC Regional Trail Council.”

Mayor Michael A. Nutter has committed the City to support the efforts of PEC and DVRPC stating that, “Regional collaboration is key for completing the Regional Trail Network. The City of Philadelphia is investing millions of dollars into the network already, helping create more livable neighborhoods and riverfronts that will help transform Philadelphia into the greenest city in America. Now we are seeking opportunities to support other counties and other stakeholders in the region in their efforts to make trail connections happen, and have this be the greenest region in America.”

The Summit will feature interactive, results-driven panels and small group sessions that will focus on topics such as new trail projects and the barriers they have to overcome, the healthier lifestyles that active transportation helps promote, the beneficial economic impact of building an extensive trail and bicycle network, and the positive environmental impact of cycling and walking rather than driving.

The keynote will be delivered by Mia Birk, President of Alta Design + Planning, an architect of Portland, Oregon’s transformation into the United States’ premier bikable city in the 1990s, and author of *Joyride: Pedaling Toward a Healthier Planet*. Birk will discuss her many accomplishments in pedestrian, bicycle, trail and greenway planning. Other notable speakers include Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter; Michael DiBerardinis, Philadelphia Deputy Mayor for Environmental and Community Resources; Tom Morr, CEO of Select Greater Philadelphia; Lisa Gordon, COO of the Atlanta Beltline; Peter Sortino, Executive Director of the Danforth Foundation; Joe Hoeffel, Montgomery County Commissioner and former US Congressman; and Barry Seymour, Executive Director, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

The Summit will conclude with an exclusive tour of the Manayunk Bridge, the future site of a breathtaking multi-use trail ten stories above the Schuylkill River that will serve to connect Manayunk in Philadelphia County to Lower Merion in Montgomery County.

The Summit's mission is supported by recent studies which demonstrate the need for a regional trail network, as well as its benefits - environmental, economic and health. Findings from the studies include the following:

- *Philadelphia has the highest rate of bicycle commuters of the ten largest cities in America, nearly double the rate of the second place city, Chicago.* (American Community Survey (ACS), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau)
- *Bicycle traffic has increased 361% in Center City Philadelphia since 1990.* (2011 State of Center City Report, Center City District)
- *Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects can create nearly twice as many jobs per dollar spent than typical road projects.* (“Estimating the Employment Impacts of Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Road Infrastructure” - data provided by the City of Baltimore and compiled by the Political Economy Research Institute)
- *Over 800,000 people use the Schuylkill River Trail per year, an activity that directly contributes \$3.6 million to the local economy annually.* (Schuylkill River Trail 2009 User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis)
- *A \$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in healthcare savings.* (The U.S. Centers for Disease Control)

“Over the next two years more than \$50 million worth of new trail construction is already scheduled to take place, which will help the Delaware Valley have the best regional trail network in the nation,” said Starr.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission will host the Active Transportation Summit on Thursday, June 23 at The Hub at the Cira Centre, located at 2929 Arch Street, Philadelphia. Registration for the Summit is \$45 for Pennsylvania Environmental Council members and \$50 for non-members. For more information

about the Summit or to register online, please visit <http://www.pecpa.org/event/active-transportation-summit>.

### **About Pennsylvania Environmental Council**

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council promotes the protection and restoration of the natural and built environments through innovation, collaboration, education and advocacy with the private sector, government, individuals and communities as partners to improve the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians.

### **About the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission**

DVRPC is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals and the public with the common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work and play, DVRPC builds consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy. We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the official metropolitan planning organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region - leading the way to a better future. DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, visit [www.dvrpc.org](http://www.dvrpc.org).

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