

Cross Roads

Spring 2004 No. 7 Newsletter of Safety, Agriculture, Villages and Environment (S.A.V.E.), Inc.

Straight Talk on a Roundabout Solution

Area residents deserve benefits of safe, friendly, free-flowing intersections

In November 2002, S.A.V.E. presented a two-lane alternative plan for Route 41 to PennDOT. The report was prepared for S.A.V.E. by the engineering firm Smart Mobility, Inc. and argued that a two-lane alternative is superior to the four-lane proposals for the roadway. A series of public meetings were held within the Route 41 corridor to introduce the plan to residents and elected officials. For many, this was their first exposure to modern roundabouts, one-way, circular intersections without traffic signal equipment in which traffic flows around a center island.

Roundabouts have been road tested in Europe for decades and are rapidly gaining popularity in the U.S. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration promotes the benefits of roundabouts because they result in less congestion, delay, pollution, expense, maintenance, traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities. By improving traffic flow without adding excessive capacity, roundabouts improve congestion without accelerating development and loss of open space. Studies in the U.S. have shown that roundabouts reduce overall accident rates by up to two-thirds, and reduce serious injury- and fatality-producing accidents by up to 90 percent.

In February 2003, S.A.V.E. presented the two-lane alternative to Governor Rendell and members of his administration. The plan utilizes a series of modern roundabouts and traffic calming measures, and matches up well with the Governor's commitment to economic development, smart growth principals and fiscal responsibility. That meeting resulted in a commitment by PennDOT to delay release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement while it worked to bring the two-lane alternative from a conceptual plan to the next level of design and analysis. That analysis is nearing completion.

To insure that the detailed engineering analysis produces the best possible design, S.A.V.E. has asked an international transportation expert, Mr. Barry Crown, to extend the analysis of the two-lane alternative initiated by PennDOT. Mr. Crown, arguably the world's leading designer and builder of modern roundabouts, was provided with the parameters and traffic data by PennDOT and is communicating with PennDOT engineers about the design. Crown is a British transportation consultant and he is analyzing the performance of the two-lane alternative under traffic volumes predicted for the year 2027. He will present these findings to the community in April. A

specialist in intersection evaluation and design, Mr. Crown's expertise is in great demand internationally and he will address the general principles and benefits of modern roundabouts, their role in sustainable land use planning, and their specific applicability to the needs of Route 41. S.A.V.E. is pleased to invite the public to this exciting, free presentation on Tuesday, April 6th at 7:30 p.m. at the Avon Grove High School auditorium, 257 East State Road, West Grove.

Mr. Crown has experience in designing signalized intersections and roundabouts over the past three decades. He has been involved in the evaluation, design, modification, audit and redesign of more than 1,000 roundabout layouts, ranging from mini roundabouts to major intersections in both rural and highly congested urban areas. Mr. Crown developed Rodel, the empirical computer model used to design and evaluate roundabouts throughout the world. This model is used extensively throughout the US and is the design tool of choice by design engineers in the United Kingdom. He was a contributor to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration's publication, Roundabouts: An Informational Guide. He retired in 1997 from the Staffordshire County Council Highways Department in the United Kingdom and now serves as an independent consultant. A selection of his U.S. clients in recent years includes State Departments of Transportation from Michigan, Colorado, Washington, and New York, and the Cities of Clearwater and Tampa (FL). ♦

Learn the Facts – Make Informed Decisions

S.A.V.E. PRESENTS BARRY CROWN

A leading international expert on the design and construction of roundabouts will present his analysis of the
Route 41 Transportation Project

Tuesday, April 6th, 7:30 p.m.

**Avon Grove High School Auditorium,
257 East State Road, West Grove, Free of charge.**

Directions: From Route 1, take the West Grove/PA 841 Exit. From the north, turn left off the exit ramp toward West Grove on 841. Stay on 841, turning right on Old Baltimore Pike/East Evergreen Street. Turn left on Oakland Avenue. Turn slight left onto Rose Hill Road. Turn right onto State Road. The Avon Grove High School is 0.2 miles on the right.

Will Historic Bridges Span the Test of Time?

S.A.V.E. advises residents concerned about the future of two bridges

By Paula Coyne

East Fallowfield resident

S.A.V.E. Executive Director Dee Durham has provided expert guidance to local residents concerned with PennDOT's proposed plans for two historic bridges. These include the Mortonville Bridge carrying Strasburg Road over the West Branch of the Brandywine Creek and the Speakman No. 1 Burr Truss Covered Bridge over Buck Run between East Fallowfield and West Marlborough Townships.

Last November, the Mortonville Bridge Task Force and interested citizens met with PennDOT representatives to continue discussions on the fate of this historic stone arch bridge. Built in 1826, the bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It retains high integrity of design, materials and workmanship as an early example of the masonry arch bridge technique in Chester County. It is also one of the county's oldest stone arch bridges in continuous use.

In 1970's PennDOT responded to the deterioration of Pennsylvania's bridges by mandating a wholesale replacement and improvement program. The Brandywine Conservancy was in its infancy and its great work of preserving open space along the Strasburg Road corridor had not yet begun. PennDOT first presented its plans to replace the bridge in the early 1980's and again in the 1990's, but was rejected by the township following an overwhelming outcry by the residents of East Fallowfield. Meanwhile, bridge maintenance was largely deferred.

In the meantime conservation easements south of Strasburg Road made a big impact on township land use planning. Because of the heavy truck traffic using the bridges to access the Strasburg Landfill, the county petitioned for and received a 15 ton weight restriction for both Mortonville and Copes bridges thus limiting truck use on the old road with its twists and turns and winding, hilly nature.

Since PennDOT's original plans were proposed for the bridge in the 1980's, Federal Highway Administration standards and policies have changed with the times. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) "Green Book," the transportation planning "bible," allows design flexibility and



Speakman Bridge over Buck Run between East Fallowfield and West Marlborough Townships.

lower design speeds to avoid negative impacts on historic or cultural resources. The AASHTO Green Book allows existing bridges that meet geometric criteria to be retained, and endorses rehabilitation of bridges of historic value. The traffic calming quality of the bridge has become almost as prized as its historic value and is in keeping with the rural character of the area. By replacing the old bridge with a heavy-duty modern one and widening the road to allow greater speeds and weights, the traffic constraints would be removed from the road contrary to the Chester County Planning Commission's comprehensive plan, Landscapes, and the comprehensive plans of the local municipalities.

The tax savings to Pennsylvania residents between the rehabilitation of the present bridge compared to the construction of a new bridge are considerable. Additionally, the environmental impacts of new construction would, at a minimum, include cutting into the steep hillside above the intersection of Strasburg, Creek and Fairview Roads.

PennDOT now will consider rehabilitation of the bridge, but only if the township agrees to assume ownership of the bridge and a stretch of roadway on either side.

Apparently, this policy is derived from PennDOT's overriding concern over liability if it approves roads and bridges where design standards are not maximized. Some municipalities have chosen to accept ownership of roadways and bridges in order to preserve important cultural resources, but such policies serve to create a situation where cultural resources are jeopardized under a flawed notion of "safety improvements" and concern over tort liability. PennDOT and the state attorney general's office should rethink this policy and work with municipalities to preserve what remains of the commonwealth's irreplaceable history. ♦



Mortonville Bridge over Strasburg Road is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Citizens Task Force on the Restriction of Through Trucks

On southwestern Chester County, Pennsylvania roads

A task force of citizens representing 13 area municipalities convened in May 2003 over concern for improving safety on Route 41 and met through the summer. A draft report on their conclusions and recommendations was prepared and can be seen at www.save41.org. The task force, initiated by the Supervisors in London Grove Township, believes that safety on area roadways is of paramount concern and that a through-bound truck restriction could significantly increase safety, be implemented quickly at very low cost, and begin to save lives immediately. The task force examined the legality of such restrictions, existing precedent from around the country and in the state, and confirmed that there would be little or no negative economic impact to the municipalities.

According to data from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, 16 percent of the daily traffic volume on Route 41 is comprised of heavy trucks (three or more axles) and two-thirds of these trucks are through-bound without destination or origin in the local region. PennDOT reports that heavy trucks are involved in 36 percent of the accidents on PA 41 and during one study, large trucks were involved in 100% of the fatal accidents. Task force members do not blame truck drivers for most fatal accidents on Route 41, but recognize that severe damage to cars and their drivers from collisions with trucks results because of the tremendous differences in the masses of cars and trucks. PA 41 is ranked as one of only five "High Truck Crash Corridors" in the state. Between 1993 and 2002, more than 30 people died in accidents on PA 41, and its fatality rate is more than four times that of the statewide average.

The task force looked beyond PA 41 because if only PA 41 were restricted, through trucks might use other regional roads in southwestern Chester County, including state Routes 372, 10, 841, 896, 796, 926, 82, 52, 842 and Strasburg Road. The proposed restrictions encompass all of these roads. The restrictions would

apply solely to through-bound trucks and not to those with either an origin and/or destination within the designated region. In fact, it could actually bolster local trucking companies by making them more competitive and it would serve to give an advantage to the Ports of Philadelphia and Chester over the Port of Wilmington.

Increased enforcement by the state police should be encouraged, and/or municipalities can contract to heighten enforcement with portable weigh stations. The restricted roads would be listed in PennDOT Publication 411 along with the other Pennsylvania state roads that already have restrictions in place, and where applicable, the designated roads would be removed from listing as part of the "national highway system."

Federal law requires the existence of a reasonable alternative route prior to enacting restrictions, and the task force has identified I-95, the Blue Route, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike as that alternative. Increased tolls for the Turnpike have been proposed, which will only serve to increase the volume of trucks seeking alternate routes to avoid higher fees.

Since late 2003, members of the task force and other concerned citizens have been reporting back to their municipalities and building support for the proposed restrictions. By early February 2004, seven municipalities had passed resolutions of support including London Grove, Highland, West Marlborough, Pennsbury, East Fallowfield, Londonderry, and East Bradford. The truck restrictions are not a part of the two-lane alternative concept for PA 41, nor are they necessary for that plan to meet the traffic needs of the region. However, if the political will were there to enact the truck restrictions, lives could be saved at very low cost and it would enhance the two-lane alternative. In weighing all the issues, is there really much to lose, except more lives? ♦

Intimate Link Between Development & Conservation

Highlights from Governor Ed Rendell's budget address

On February 3, 2004, Gov. Ed Rendell addressed the state General Assembly and "fellow Pennsylvanians," outlining his budget plan for fiscal 2004-2005. While emphasizing the need for economic stimulus, the governor recognized that "modern roads, airports and transit systems are a precondition for growth. But we must also ensure that our transportation spending helps revitalize our core communities, rather than accelerating both sprawl and blight. This will require a new way of thinking about our transportation priorities and how we fund them."

Deeply committed to improving Pennsylvania's economy, Gov. Rendell said that companies and industries make decisions about where to locate based "not just on traditional measures – tax rates, access to markets, the quality of the workforce – but also based on the ability to offer a community with a clean, safe environment;

vibrant towns and neighborhoods; opportunities for outdoor recreation and entertainment; and abundant open space." Rendell stressed that investing in quality of life factors will help attract business, but also is the basis for the tourism and recreation industries themselves, so "we must make natural resources one of the engines of our economic growth." Activities in the Growing Greener program, including farmland preservation and stream cleanup, "make environmental and business sense. In the contest for new jobs and tourist dollars, states that offer the highest quality of life will have the advantage in the 21st century."

Gov. Rendell's budget address sought to build support for the Growing Greener Bond Act which would help invest in rebuilding and revitalizing Pennsylvania's older communities, making \$170 million avail-

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Two-lane Plan Benefits Business & Industry

The two-lane alternative proposed for the Route 41 corridor is pro-community and that includes sustainable local businesses and vibrant town centers. Here is why:

Two keys to commercial real estate are access and visibility. If Avondale were bypassed, businesses in town would lose both. A recent example in nearby Delaware exemplifies the scenario. Within a month of the Route 1 bypass being opened around Townsend and Smyrna, long-existing businesses on old Route 13 cried out as business plummeted. Roundabouts and traffic calming fit with a sound traffic pattern for businesses and town centers. Roundabouts improve vehicular and pedestrian access to businesses as barriers limiting access and turning movements are avoided and wide swaths of asphalt with turning lanes become unnecessary. Through standardized design features, roundabouts create a far safer environment for all users, including motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists

A safe roadway with the capacity to carry traffic volumes project for the year 2027 is consistent with promoting agriculture and tourism, both vital to the economy of this region. Through commitments to preservation by area landowners, extensive efforts of land trusts such as the Brandywine Conservancy and the Natural Lands Trust, and agricultural preservation programs by the County, more than 40,000 acres have been permanently protected in this region. This is the largest contiguous area of permanently protected open space on the mid-Atlantic seaboard. These efforts help protect the viability of agriculture, one of the top industries in this region of Chester County.

Tourism is another major industry in this region, thanks to a plethora of scenic, historic and cultural resources throughout the area. Route 41 provides a critical link between the tourist attractions of Chester County, Lancaster County and New Castle County. Protection of the corridor as a rural and scenic highway would serve to benefit tourism in this tri-county region, and all of the businesses that directly or indirectly serve this industry.

Excess capacity for Route 41 contained in 4-lanes with 4-lane bypasses will foster continued growth of the Port of Wilmington. Pennsylvanians will suffer, both because the Port of Philadelphia will suffer, but also because the roadway with increased through truck traffic will ruin our communities.

The two-lane alternative with roundabouts and traffic calming is cutting edge, and it is consistent with community goals: revitalized towns, strong neighborhoods, and agricultural preservation. With a two-lane alternative, we can have safety and adequate capacity, plus with a cost roughly one-fifth that of a four-lane alternative with 4-lane bypasses, this is a fiscally responsible solution. ♦

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able for this purpose, and providing funds to clear brownfields and blighted areas for business development, public space, housing and community uses. The economic stimulus package provides funding for Main Street managers and Elm Street planners. “Too many of our cities and towns have seen better days, and modest public investments can catalyze the new private investment that will revive these communities. Some places are pressured by rapid growth, and good land use planning tools – such as Acts 67 and 68 – can help them cope with the demands of development. In this budget, we provide new funding for better planning, and we will work with local governments, citizen groups, developers and others to determine if additional incentives or tools can promote smarter growth.”

While Gov. Rendell noted that the Main Street Program has done an outstanding job assisting economic development on historic Main Streets, Main Street itself may be falling apart. One proposal for a new program under Growing Greener could serve to assist towns like Avondale and Atglen, by providing support and funding

through a new Home Town Streets Program under PennDOT to prioritize the repair, redesign and reconstruction of main streets, commercial corridors and major boulevards in older communities in support of local revitalization plans. The governor again made a connection between improving quality of life and the economy through innovative use of transportation funds.

Further recognizing the link between economic stimulus and downtown revitalization, Rendell expressed his support for the establishment of state Historic Preservation Tax Credits for commercial and some residential buildings. This tool could help small businesses, homeowners and developers rebuild the fabric of hundreds of older communities across the state, thereby serving to protect the demise of some “greenfields” from development. For more information on these proposed tax credits, see www.pataxcredit.com.

♦ *Details on the budget address are available at: <http://www.governor.state.pa.us/governor>. The quotes in this article were taken from the governor’s web site.*

Time to Make Pennsylvania Ports Competitive

Local newspaper calls on state and federal representatives to act

By **Tony Cadwalader**

The Kennett Paper, February 12, 2004

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Indeed, proponents of a long-haul truck ban on local roads in our region of Pennsylvania would do well to also consider the impact the successful Port of Wilmington has had on our roads. Specifically, an abundance of commercial traffic to and from the Port of Wilmington increases the number of tractor-trailers on Route 41. The increase in through trucking along this corridor, some critics contend, has also made Route 41 a safety risk. That has in turn led to the formation of one citizens group, S.A.V.E., an acronym for safety, agriculture, villages and environment, and another separate ad-hoc group of township citizens called the Through-Truck Ban Task Force. That task force has been trying to get area townships to sign off on a long-haul through-truck ban. And while these long-haul trucks are not the only vehicles on Route 41, they do make up potentially 30 percent of average daily traffic, according to a 1994 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Final Needs Study for Route 41.

Reaction to the ad-hoc committee's request has been mixed, but seems to be gaining steam. Many are for it, many question it. As of December 9, 2003, seven municipalities have passed resolutions supporting the through-truck ban, including London Grove, West Marlborough, East Fallowfield, Highland, Pennsbury and Londonderry townships. But resolve to improve conditions on Route 41 by forcing Philadelphia and Chester to be more competitive with the Port of Wilmington is missing.

The Port of Wilmington is strong. It is a full-service deep-water port and marine terminal handling over 400 vessels per year with an annual import/export cargo tonnage of 5 million tons, according to the port's web site. It seems as though it is always pouring money into its infrastructure. With what it claims is the largest dockside cold storage facility, trucks from the Port of Wilmington have easy access to I-95 where goods

can be delivered. Some of the numbers are impressive: over 1.2 million tons of bananas and tropical fruit from Central and South America; 190,100 tons of deciduous fruit from Chile and New Zealand; 12,300 tons of Moroccan clementines; 144,000 tons of juice concentrate from Argentina, Brazil and Central America; 157,200 tons of frozen meat and seafood from New Zealand and Australia; 85,855 units of Volkswagon and Audi imports from Germany/Mexico or 137,300 tons; 41,205 units of GM and Ford exports to the Middle East, or 74,500 tons.

The list goes on, but you get the picture. It is a busy port. By contrast try to figure out if the ports of Chester and Philadelphia are operating as I have (they are, but it appears just barely) and you will be able to consider the full might of Delaware's operation over Pennsylvania's efforts.

Many of these items make their way right up that old Indian trail, Route 41, to Lancaster. Why? Because they are allowed to, though the truck lobby says that it would only take truckers an extra 12 minutes per trip to go on highways unrestricted to large-truck traffic, like I-95, Route 202, Route 1 or the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Using those roads would relieve congestion, slow downs and some of the dangers on rural state roads like Route 41 or Route 82.

It is time to consider asking our senators and congressmen to do a better job of making Pennsylvania ports more competitive. Our state Sen. Dominic Pileggi, R-9, would be an excellent place to start. As the former mayor of Chester, he should have an idea or two about how to jumpstart that once viable port city. Write also to Gov. Ed Rendell and ask him to help make Pennsylvania more competitive, not more restrictive. Consider it an opportunity to change the fortunes of Pennsylvania residents and even their roads.

◆ *Tony Cadwalader is an award-winning columnist, reporter and photographer for the Kennett Paper. He lives in East Marlborough Township.*



“ *The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.* ”

... **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

Policy Expert Comments on Route 41 and Pennsylvania Transportation Policy

The following excerpts are from a July 2003 report prepared and submitted to Governor Rendell by area resident, Robert B. McKinstry, Jr., Maurice K. Goddard Chair in Forestry and Environmental Resources Conservation at Pennsylvania State University.

Transportation policy has repeatedly encouraged sprawl and operated at cross purposes with policies encouraging revitalization of cities and towns, environmental protection, and prevention of sprawl. This includes not only policies for building new roads such as I-99 or the Mon Expressway in the central and western portions of the Commonwealth. Proposed expansion projects, such as the Route 41 expansion project in eastern Pennsylvania, and local improvement projects, such as those for improving surfaces and widening small bridges on secondary roads, also have encouraged sprawl. Transportation policy should therefore be reformed by incorporating at least the following:

- ◆ Transportation planning should expressly consider sprawl and environmental issues. Where capacity expansion and new highways are proposed, approval and funding should be given only to the extent consistent with the designations of growth and non-growth areas shown in county plans, regional plans or statewide plans such as a revised State Environmental Master Plan or a Statewide Biodiversity Plan.

- ◆ PennDOT should increase the priority and funding commitment for public transportation and provide highest priority to fixed rail projects that tend to lead to more concentrated patterns of development.
- ◆ PennDOT should require access for non-motorized transportation by requirements for pedestrian access and bicycle lanes.
- ◆ The Administration should support use of the liquid fuels fund to fund non-highway projects which promote highway safety through traffic reduction.
- ◆ The Administration should support a Constitutional Amendment to eliminate any restriction on the use of gasoline taxes and license fees.

YOU CAN HELP – EASILY !

To keep you informed of events of interest in a timely manner, we need to know your e-mail address and your municipality. It will only take a moment to zip us an e-mail with that information. Better yet, use the form below and send it along with financial support for S.A.V.E.

We've collected more than 1,300 signatures for our petition, but we want more! Do your part, quick and easy, by going to <http://www.save41.org/takeaction.htm#petition> and "signing" your name online. You can also help by obtaining a form from S.A.V.E. and circulating it for additional signatures – contact the office!

SAVE a Life, SAVE Open Space!

SAVE history, SAVE Farmland!

I/we would like to join or renew membership in S.A.V.E. and support the effort to devise and promote a safe and sustainable plan for the Route 41 corridor at the following level:

- \$20 Individual \$40 Household \$100 \$200 \$500 \$1,000 \$5,000/above Other

I/we have:

- enclosed a check made payable to S.A.V.E., Inc.
 authorized S.A.V.E. to charge my VISA, Mastercard, AmEx or Discover as follows:

...../...../..... Expires/.....

Signature

Name Municipality

Company/Organization

Address

Telephone E-mail

Include your company or organizational web site address if you would like a link on our web site in our Business Partners section

- I/we prefer to be acknowledged as "Anonymous."
 Please contact me/us – we'd like to get more involved!
 I/we have enclosed a matching gift form.

Membership contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by the law.



ENDORSEMENTS

Organizations which have formally endorsed the vision for a two-lane, traffic-calmed Route 41 corridor include:

Chester County Commissioners
East Marlborough Township
Highland Township
London Grove Township
Londonderry Township
West Marlborough Township
American Farmland Trust
Clean Air Council
Clean Water Action
Environmental Defense Fund
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Sierra Club
Pennsylvania Environmental Council
Brandywine Conservancy
Chester County Green Party
Elk Creek Watershed Association
Greater Hockessin Area Development Association
GreenSpace Alliance
Ox-Grove Democratic Committee
Piedmont Environmental Council
White Clay Fly Fisherman Club



TWO CONFERENCES TO FEATURE S.A.V.E.

S.A.V.E. has been asked to participate in a statewide conference being hosted March 27th by PA Historical & Museum Commission and Bucks County Community College entitled "Historic Preservation: Good Medicine for Tough Times." Dee Durham, S.A.V.E.'s Executive Director, brought her experience in historic preservation and working with DelDOT to S.A.V.E. and the issues surrounding Route 41, making her a perfect fit for the focus of this conference.

This PHMC workshop will address issues and consequences of sprawl and effective approaches taken by local government officials, historic preservationists, and environmental activists. Pennsylvania communities have been losing industry, jobs, and population while agricultural and rural municipal neighbors have siphoned off many of these assets and transformed the landscape into residential subdivisions, commercial strip developments, and expansive shopping malls. Crisscrossing this landscape are roads, interstates and highway interchanges. Historic structures are demolished and cornfields turned into

asphalt lakes, scenic roads into four lane highways, and the public is either indifferent or desperate to reverse a trend that all are complicit in creating.

The following month, Durham and Smart Mobility engineer, Lucy Gibson, P.E., will travel to Portland, Oregon to participate in a panel at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's bi-annual historic roads conference. This year's conference, "Preserving the Historic Road in America," is April 22-25. They will join other professionals and concerned citizens for educational sessions, dialogue and debate addressing the identification, preservation and management of historic roads. This conference will provide the latest information on roadway liability, developing preservation plans, and how to utilize the latest engineering techniques to advance the preservation of historic road resources. Durham and Gibson will present Route 41 as a case study in how corridor improvements can be integrated with land use planning objectives and protection of community character.

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