The first question ... can you tell me how the idea of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission arose? And who were the people who brought it into existence?

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission was the product of a series of activities generated both at the local level and at the federal level. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission had a predecessor agency, which was known as the Penn Jersey Transportation Study. It was a pilot study of transportation and an effort to undertake a prototype regional planning program for transportation. It was initiated by the Congress; in fact, congressional interest in undertaking a planning program to plan for the interstate highway system, in fact. That was during the Eisenhower administration.

And there had been considerable interest at the local level in transportation, and transportation planning. There was during the '50's, a transportation board organized among the cities' agencies, representing the cities' agencies.

(WMP: During the Clark administration, I believe.)

That was during the Clark administration, and one of the principals in that organization establishing the transportation board was Robert Mitchell.

(WMP: Yes. Did he conceive of it?)

I'm not sure that he conceived of it, but he was deeply involved in it. I'm sure that Ed Bacon must have been deeply involved in it.

The idea, then, was to better co-ordinate what was then a whole series of transportation operations serving the various transportation needs in the metropolitan area.

Well, the transportation board discussions really led to two things. First the organization of the Penn Jersey Transportation Study, and secondly the organization of SEPTA...one dealing with planning for transportation, and the other dealing with transportation operations.
The Penn Jersey Transportation Study was formally organized in the summer of 1959. And at that time, a contract was entered into between the state of Pennsylvania and the state of New Jersey to fund and to establish the Penn Jersey Transportation Study.

It was viewed initially as a three-year effort and it had as its goal the formulation of a transportation plan for the region, which would make heavy use of data and simulation models for transportation movements.

There was a massive data collection effort undertaken with several hundred interviewers intercepting traffic and people moving in public transportation and that data was reduced to a form that made it usable; first cards and then computer tapes. But the plan was not completed in the scheduled three years.

(WMP: Was it financed by the federal government entirely, or were there local funds?)

There were local funds. There were...the counties and city were asked to make modest contributions to the funding of it. And I'm sure that the states contributed in part to the funding of it too. But it was essentially federal highway money that was used to finance the bulk. And contributions made by the local governments and probably the state too, were not annual contributions; they were one-time contributions. The effort was directed by Henry Fagan, who was hired from New York. His previous experience had been with Westchester County Planning and with the Regional Planning Association in New York. And he was here for approximately three years. He was succeeded by Dave Longmaid. Dave Longmaid was his assistant and Dave Longmaid had earlier directed what had by then become the defunct Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Planning Organization. Whether it was called Commission, or Association, I can't just remember.

So Dave Longmaid succeeded and picked up the technical work where Henry Fagan left off, and proceeded to try to control the massive amount of data and to develop the simulation models that would enable the staff to make use of that data.

They experienced great difficulty in that undertaking. And he had the help of Fred Harris from the University of Pennsylvania, and yet was never able to quite bring it into effective use.

Meanwhile at the federal level in 1962, based in part on Philadelphia's experience, the federal Congress had enacted legislation that required regional planning for transportation in all metropolitan areas of the country. And shortly thereafter, it was in 1964, I believe, Congress enacted another piece of
legislation that applied the same principles to planning for public transportation. And they declared that in order to qualify for future funding for highway projects and for transit projects, metropolitan areas would have to undertake comprehensive transportation planning.

It was after 1964 that Congress enacted a whole series of pieces of legislation that required regional planning be undertaken in metropolitan areas for a variety of purposes...open space planning...planning for water facilities,...planning for sewer facilities...and as a consequence, it was seen that rather than a single purpose planning agency, what was needed in this region was a multi-functional planning agency that would deal with, in effect, all physical development activities. Anything that involved land acquisition, or construction, using federal money, should be the responsibility of the Regional Planning Agency.

(WMP: As to planning.)

As to planning. Right. By that time, Henry Harral was the secretary of highways of Pennsylvania. And Dwight Palmer, I believe at that time, was the secretary of transportation or commissioner of transportation in New Jersey. Irving Hand was the head of the state planning office in Pennsylvania. And these people, along with others in state government in New Jersey, and a number of local people, including David Smallwood, who was the streets commissioner of Philadelphia, Ed Bacon, who was planning director in Philadelphia, and a number of county planners, including...and county commissioners, including Mr. Wetherill from Montgomery County, and Art Logan, Montgomery County planner, Frank Wood, the county planner from Bucks County, and a variety of other county planners and city planners from the region, engaged in a long dialogue on the nature, the function, and the organization of what was to become the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

And in 1965, the states of New Jersey and Pennsylvania saw that it was time to terminate their agreement on the organization of the PennJersey Transportation Study, and enter into a new agreement that would establish an agency that would have a broader mission. And a contract was entered into in 1965 to establish the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, as an autonomous agency, separate agency....with its own staff, its own house-keeping functions. Up to that time....

(WMP: What funding?)
Well, the funding would continue to be transportation funding, although the Department of Housing and Urban Development had also encouraged them to believe that it would provide what was called Section 701 Planning monies.

The contract was entered into to establish the new agency and offices were established in what were the quarters of the City Planning Commission, before the Philadelphia Planning Commission moved into the City Hall Annex. That was in what was known as the old Bulletin Building or the Penn Square Building.

The operation was then directed by Dave Longmaid, and he continued to direct the new one, but in 1966, he left the agency and the Board looked for a new director, and it was late in 1966 that I first talked with them. My background had been in the mid-west, where I had been associated with the staff of the Detroit City Planning Commission for five years, and had been the city planning director for Madison, Wisconsin, for fourteen years, and state planning director for Wisconsin for seven years.

The organization of the Board, as envisioned in that 1965 agreement was an interesting one, the DVRPC Board, that is, in that there were clearly three blocks of votes...three major interest groups represented. It was viewed as including the central cities, the suburban counties, and the states. And the Board at that time was looking for someone who could deal with these three interests, and they solicited my interest in applying for the position, and I accepted it in early 1967 and arrived on the scene here in April 1967, April first. And I've been here since.

So I think I've answered the second question. How did you become involved with the commission and were you its first executive director.

Well, let me just add a few words here. I was its first executive director as an official interstate agency; I was not the first director of its predecessor agencies which included the Penn Jersey Transportation Study and the Regional Planning Commission, as established under contract. But July, 1967, the legislatures of the state of Pennsylvania...commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the state of New Jersey, enacted an interstate compact which established us as an official agency with official responsibility for planning for the nine county area. And I was the first director of that official agency. Up until that time it was created as an inter-type of operation.
Now, how is our agency organized and staffed?

(WMP: And what are its powers?)

Yes. Let me cover its powers first because that relates to the compact as it was entered into and established a group.

The powers of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission are advisory. The compact specifies that the responsibility for carrying out the plans are left with the general purpose governments and the operating agencies of the region... the townships, the boroughs, the counties, cities and states, as well as the authorities. My experience, however, has been that if there is an effective planning job undertaken, plans are virtually self-implemented.

(WMP: Just so they're reasonable.)

Well, they're reasonable and they are prepared with a full participation with all those involved or all those affected involved. So, whether we have power to implement or final say on any particular project is certainly not a major issue.

Now, how is the agency organized and staffed? Because we are an independent agency, we have to provide for ourselves a variety of services that are normally associated with general purpose governments. For example, accounting, bookkeeping, purchasing, personnel, communications. We have at times experienced some difficulty in dealing with some of our local governments particularly, because they compare our costs with their costs, but a county planning commission, or a city planning commission is provided with all of these services. They don't have to do their own accounting or their own personnel or purchasing. As a consequence, our costs cannot be compared with the costs of comparable operations at the state, county or city levels of government. So we do have an administrative division which handles all the housekeeping functions for us. And we have three functional divisions...the transportation division, the environment division, and the comprehensive planning division. Each of these is directed by a division head. The division heads are appointed by the director, but subject to the approval of the executive committee.

I might note, parenthetically, that we have two decision-making bodies. The executive committee and the board. The executive committee is responsible for approval of contracts and such items as personnel matters, really dealing only with division heads and the hiring of the executive...budgets, they approve budgets, and fiscal...major fiscal items, generally...
the allocations to the member governments for contributions each year.

And the executive committee consists of three representatives from each of the states, a representative from the city of Philadelphia, a representative from the city of Camden, and a representative of the counties in New Jersey, another representative from the counties of Pennsylvania. So it makes a total of ten on the executive committee.

The Board, which is the policy body, includes the three representatives from each of the states, a representative from Philadelphia, one from the city of Camden, one from the city of Chester, and one from the city of Trenton, as well as representatives from the four suburban counties on each side of the river...the counties being Gloucester, Camden, Burlington and Mercer counties in New Jersey, and Bucks, Montgomery, Chester and Delaware counties in Pennsylvania. The Board, therefore, consists of eighteen people and deals with the substance of plans that we prepare, acts on those plans and makes them official.

Now we have in each of our divisions....

(WMP: Excuse me....you have no executive committee then, that acts in interim situations.)

No. No, well, the executive committee's functions are clearly spelled out...primarily budget and fiscal. The Board's responsibilities are policy and the staff is responsible for administering the agency. And that has really worked pretty well. There's an absolute minimum of political interference on the part of any of our member governments.

(WMP: Are most of the members members of the local governments, or are they primarily citizens?)

We have both. At any given time, about half of our members are commissioners or, on the New Jersey side, free-holders, or mayors of our member governments. And the other half consists of ex-officio state representatives and citizens appointed to represent county commissioners. We do have alternates...the provision for alternates, in the absence of a free-holder or commissioner. What often happens is that they ask their planning director to sit in for them. And the alternates can function in place of a principal, except with reference to taking office. They may not hold office.

I did want to mention that the composition of our board and executive committee is such that half of the members come from each of the states and that was a provision that New
Jersey insisted upon...and was probably the reason why Trenton and Mercer county were included in our jurisdiction, in order to justify having a board that was half New Jersey and half Pennsylvania...even though, at the time, only 20% of the region's population was on the New Jersey side.

(WMP: What about the state of Delaware?)

It also probably explains why the state of Delaware...one of the reasons why the state of Delaware, did not participate. There had been continuing discussions with Delaware people on the subject. But officially the reason that New Jersey gave for demanding half the board was that anything less than that would impair their sovereignty. It would be a threat to their sovereignty. Well, if Delaware joined, it would be clear that they couldn't demand equal treatment, you see. And I don't know whether they expressed it in those terms, but it's certainly clear that the sovereignty issue could be a major problem with them.

The stronger feeling I got from Delaware, however, was that both in the private and public sector, there was considerable reluctance to become in any way entangled with the larger metropolitan area, where there would be the possibility of decisions being made in Philadelphia that could conceivably adversely affect Delaware.

(WMP: I imagine that the DuPont interests were paramount to that situation.)

Yes, I didn't mention that, but I think that that was very much the case. Of course, they are a very sophisticated operation, and they wanted to be...likely wanted to be completely independent of whatever happened in Philadelphia.

(WMP: Wilmington did, I imagine, co-operate with you when Paul Wilhelm was down there.)

When Paul Wilhelm was down there? Pete Larsen. Pete Larsen was the city planner when I was down there.

(WMP: Oh yes. Was that Roy Larsen's son?)

I don't really know. But he's a longtime Wilmington person. His family goes way back in Delaware. So it could well be.

But Pete Larsen was co-operative with us. He's a competent professional person; he's still working with development organization down in the Wilmington area. And we had a good working relationship, but it was clear all along that they preferred to maintain their independence from the larger metropolitan area.
The Mercer County people and the Trenton people, however, didn't feel that way. They evidently felt a greater kinship with the Philadelphia area than the New York area.

(WMP: That's interesting.)

It's ... it was the policy then of Mayor Arthur Holland.

(WMP: He was a pretty good mayor, wasn't he.)

He was and he is a good mayor. He's still there. He was out one term, but then returned. And he's been a ... he's more of a public administrator... a professional, than a politician... and rather an exceptional sort of person to be mayor of a major New Jersey city. But we've immensely enjoyed our relationship with him.

He had been active in the organization known as The Regional Council of Elected Officials. RCEO, which was sort of a knife and fork club for local government officials, organized in, I guess, the early '60's.

(WMP: Steve Sweeney, I guess.)

Sweeney was very active in that, yes, and Don Wagner, of course.

(WMP: Don Wagner, yeah.)

All of them very civic-minded people. The RCEO continued into the late '60's and finally met its demise.

(WMP: Was that because of Sweeney getting older and getting out of such activities?)

Well, I think, more than anything, DVRPC filled the vacuum.

(WMP: I see.)

And in terms of a future as a planning organization, or even as a communication device, there wasn't much room left, because we, with our federal funding, and lines of communication with the... formal lines of communication with both federal and state agencies, as well as counties and cities, there wasn't that much left for them to do. I think that they were ... that they functioned effectively as sort of a watchdog over regionalism in... I guess the late '50s and through the '60s. They were a fine group and I think served a very useful purpose. But as DVRCP pre-empted more and more of the plan making functions, there was little for them to do.
Well, let's see now. I guess I've described how we're staffed. So, what were the subjects that were the most pressing when the agency began functioning? How did we deal with them?

Well, obviously, since we were organized to... initially, to prepare a transportation plan, which was initially highway oriented, but became quickly involved with other forms of transportation, namely public transportation... those were the pressing issues. The Penn Jersey Transportation Study experienced great difficulty in formulating a plan... in fact, didn't succeed in formulating a plan. After the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission was organized, and our mission was expanded, we did establish a plan... we created... we completed the 1985 plan and formally adopted it in 1969. That plan is now being updated, with a new horizon year of 2000. That plan had a number of elements to it... a land use element, which was sort of the framework on which all of the others hung, because land use determines where the need for public services will exist. And attached to the land use plan, then, was transportation plan with a highway element, and a public transportation element.

But we also had a sewer facilities plan, a water facilities plan, and an open space plan. Those were the components of the plan adopted in 1969.

(WMP: You must have had to work closely with the Delaware River Commission.)

Basin Commission?

(WMP: Basin Commission, yeah.)

Oh yes, we did. And the Basin Commission was sort of a sister agency of DVRPC... had of course, been organized about the same time... maybe a little earlier. Of course, it served, not the metropolitan area, but the water basin, the Delaware watershed. So their board was organized a little differently than ours; it did not have local government representation or county representation at all. It had a presidentially designated representative of the federal Department of Interior and a representative... well, really, in fact the governor of each of the effected states. And those were New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Now under that sort of board structure, the sovereignty of the states again, were not threatened. And of course the Basin Commission was an operating agency in the water area. It was viewed as an operating agency. It would monitor water quality; it had authority to police the water quality, which has been its main function. It also had authority under its compact
to build water structures, water-related structures. But it has never utilized that authority...never been permitted to.

(WMP: Why was it not permitted to, do you know?)

Well, mostly because the counties objected. The states...first, the states were rather cautious about permitting the Basin Commission to be too aggressive in the area of water quality and endorsement of water quality standards. Therefore what they undertook in that regard, had to be done in close cooperation with the state water agencies that also had management responsibilities. With regard to the construction side of the responsibilities, they mostly ran into trouble at the county level. The counties viewed themselves as the logical units to develop water quality facilities, major sewage treatment plants is what it amounted to, and interceptors.

(WMP: What about water supply?)

Similarly with water supply, although water supply never became the kind of issue that water quality and, I suppose, ...

(WMP: Waste disposal.)

that waste disposal was the principal issue, since waste disposal affected the quality of the streams. And if there were to be construction contracts let for these very expensive facilities, running easily to 50 or $100,000 apiece, the county elected officials thought that they had better manage that.

(WMP: Well, that's interesting.)

So that was essentially the local political decision which was reflected at the state level...the state representatives on the Basin Commission board undoubtedly agreed, and prevented the Basin Commission from ever exercising the authority that it had to engage in construction.

(WMP: Has there not been an issue too, on the idea of small dams rather than large dams like Tocks Island?)

Well, that has been discussed at length, I understand, within the Basin Commission. We have not been involved in the Tocks Island issue, primarily because the project itself is outside of our region. Although it would serve our region. And my guess is that if we were involved in it, that our governments would favor it.

(WMP: Would prefer Tocks Island Dam.)
Yes. Although it didn't come before our board when it was that controversial. I think early, it was acted on by our board, but after it became controversial, it never came back for further action. And such approval as we gave it, probably still stands.

Shall we move on to the next question?

(BF: How about skipping down to question 7?)

All right. What in your opinion have been the most significant subjects dealt with by the Commission? What have been the contributions which the Commission has made for the welfare of the region?

As I noted, we adopted an official plan for the region in 1969. Added to that plan in the early seventies was a housing element. And I think that housing has been one of our more interesting endeavors. At the time that we prepared the housing plan...and the housing plan...the substance of it was to allocate housing to our various member governments. How many units of housing should be built by the year 1990, we set as a housing date for that.

(WMP: Are you speaking of public and private housing?)

Yes. Both. But of course, the thrust is really subsidized housing. We don't call it public housing, we call it subsidized.

(WMP: Okay.)

How many units should be built in various of our governmental jurisdictions? And in a sense, we were on the horns of a dilemma, because there were strong interests in the region favoring a dispersal of low-income housing, feeling that it's important that the cities do not become economic or racial ghettos. But there were interest groups within the cities which felt that it was important that the city neighborhoods be maintained and improved, and investments be made in the cities to salvage the cities. And we couldn't go both ways. Among the arguments for the latter position was that voiced by a number of black groups that the effort to move low-income people to the suburbs was a conspiracy to destroy the political effectiveness of the blacks in the center cities.

Well, in the final analysis, we opted for opening up housing opportunities in the suburbs. That's the position we took.
We took a very firm position on it. We therefore allocated a minimum of low-income housing to the old central cities, and a maximum to the suburban jurisdictions. But interestingly enough, the suburbs bought it. In view of what's happened since, it's rather surprising. But when you go back a few years, we seem to have had a different type of leadership in the suburban counties than we do now. Joe Catana in Bucks County was very forthright in this area and took a firm position. And it happened that he was chairman of our Board at that time.

(WMP: He was ready to accept some housing for the low-income.)

Indeed. Oh yes! Very forthright about it. And the other counties, with his leadership, accepted this role...not only accepted the idea of more low-income housing in the counties, but they proceeded within their own planning organizations and with their housing authorities...county housing authorities, to implement this.

(WMP: In Bristol, and what other communities?)

Oh, there are a whole variety over there. There's a highrise out in Telford...of course, there's that whole Warminster issue...that's had its ups and downs....and a number of other places in the counties where they have moved ahead with public housing...and the other counties have to. But public housing has become a major issue now, and we seem to have a different kind of political leadership in the jurisdictions. As a consequence, as we revise that plan and extend its horizon a year to the year 2000, we expect considerable discussion over how those allocations will fall out. Are we going to continue the policy? The city at the time that we adopted that plan, was willing to see more subsidized housing in the suburbs and less in the cities, which in a way, isn't surprising. Speaking as a city government...now there were many, many interest groups in the city that didn't see it that way at all. Many communities. But the city government did, and that was the beginning of Frank Rizzo's term as mayor.

Now however, the city is more disposed towards wanting its share of housing subsidies, in spite of the rhetoric, so to speak, and the Whitman project, and the difficulties with the high-rises. Oh, my guess is that city views this as a source of federal money, and federal money is important to a city for all programs, including housing.

(WMP: Well, redevelopment is quite important to the city. How about in the suburbs?)

In some of the suburban jurisdictions, it is. Of course, it is in some of our other cities, too....the city of Chester, the city of Camden, and the city of Trenton. They all have
had active re-newal programs.

(WMP: Do you play a part in plans for those communities in regard to housing?)

Yes, we do. We participate in the formulation of their plans. And their plans, of course, are advanced in light of our plans. And as a good illustration of what I mean by our plans being self-implemented, there comes a time when the county and city plans are really virtually inseparable from our own. So, yes, we have....I might mention here that we have structured our plan-making in such a way that when we prepare housing plans, for example, we bring in the representatives...the people who deal with housing issues in each of our member governments. And we call that a technical advisory committee. A technical advisory committee is deeply involved in the co-operation of our regional housing planning. We do the same with highways; we do the same with transit; we do the same with water and sewer facilities.

(WMP: Do you consummate those plans into agreements, compacts or whatever?)

No, only in that they are formally adopted by our Board, after public hearings.

(WMP: But they're not binding, are they?)

They are not binding. No. But, they tend to become more so, in some areas, as we attach to the plans what we call capital programs...capital financing programs.

(WMP: That would involve federal funds and state funds?)

What we do there is identify the source of funding for each project...federal, state, local, and the time period for the construction of the project. What is to be built, when, at what cost, to be financed by what units of government. That constitutes the capital program. And we have capital programs now with reference to highways, with references to public transportation, and with reference to street facilities.

(WMP: These plans have become self-implementing, have they? They have the force, almost, of that.)

That does make them, for all practical purposes, more than advisory, because neither of the states, nor the federal government will fund a project that isn't on our plans and isn't included in our capital program.
(WMP: That's very important, isn't it?)

Terribly important. Yes. So, they do come with...our plans do come with that authority behind them. Therefore whether our plans have the power of mandate behind them or direction behind them, is really unimportant. I've also always felt that the plan that is both technically competent and adequately communicated with the effective interest groups is almost bound to have a life of its own. And I understand technical competence, because I have felt, and I've constantly advised the staff here, that the plans that we prepare must be technically competent, because if they aren't technically competent, we haven't done our job. The hard-core of our responsibility is technically competent plans. And I've noticed that we have done best in those areas where we have the most competence.

(WMP: Well now, what can you do to assure competence in the local jurisdictions as to their planning?)

We have, among other things, provided funding for the local jurisdictions to complement their planning operations.

(WMP: Do you ever withhold funds because of their plans being inadequate?)

Because local plans are inadequate?

(WMP: That's what I mean.)

No. Not really. But we do make funds available. For example, each of our counties obtain 701 federal planning money through us. And each of our counties gets state and federal highway planning money through us....and transit planning.

(WMP: That includes the city, too?)

Yes. Including the city. So, whereas the local governments make contributions to us, they get back more, most of them considerably more, than they pay us, because we subcontracted work to them, so that they could augment their planning operations.

(WMP: In your budget, the money for that comes from where?)

State and federal money.

(WMP: It goes directly to you, rather than to the smaller jurisdictions...)

Rather than directly to the smaller jurisdictions.
That's true with the city, as well, yes. We get about, as I recall, $160,000 a year from the city now. But the city gets back, through us, considerably more than that, to undertake its planning programs or to support its planning programs. So what we have is a very intertwining planning operation... it's hard to separate ours from the counties and cities.

Did I ask you what the magnitude is of your budget?

Our budget in recent years has varied considerably, but it's running three and a half to $4,000,000 a year.

What's the city spend on planning these days, do you know?

I don't really know, but I think it's substantially less than that. Ours has been one of the larger...well, it is the largest planning operation in the region.

Really?

It is the largest planning staffed...planning operation in the region.

Just one more observation on the matter of staffing. The staff of DVRPC has increased over the years. When I came here it had a staff of about sixty, and a year ago we were up to about two hundred and fifteen or two hundred twenty.

Oh really?

Yes.

I'm amazed.

A significant part of that staff, however, was employed in connection with our water...special water planning project, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington. We've now finished that program, so we're down now to about a hundred and forty on our staff. We have been, off and on, the largest regional planning operation in the country, even though we're in the fourth largest metropolitan area. We have more functions that we plan for than most metropolitan planning agencies. Tri-state in New York, for example, has no significant responsibility for planning for water facilities. And that's been an important part of our program in recent years.

I don't understand about the relationship with the Delaware River Basin Commission. I thought they planned water, but apparently you're very much in it too.
They do operational planning for that...just as SEPTA does operational planning for transit. But we do...what we do is the kind of planning that relates what their plans are to all of the other plans...for example, land use and housing. And we have an understanding with the Basin Commission that we will be primarily responsible for land use planning that determines where the water needs are going to be and the scale of those water needs.

(WMP: I guess the Basin's organization is just to work on the supply side...that is, to make sure that there's water available to be planned.)

Supply and quality.

(WMP: And quality.)

A big part of their responsibility is to police the quality.

(WMP: That's a big river.....of the river itself.)

Yes, of the river itself.

So tri-state in New York area, doesn't have responsibility for water. In the Chicago area, the Northeast Illinois Planning Agency doesn't have responsibility...significant responsibility for transportation. Similarly in Los Angeles, the state does transportation planning for the Los Angeles area, for the most part.

(WMP: Is there any agency in Philadelphia now, since the Citizens' Council on City Planning went kaput, which corresponds to the Regional Plan Association of New York?)

No, and we've engaged in discussions on that subject over the years, and as a matter of fact, in recent months. We view that as a very important need in this area. We do have a citizens structure. We established citizen committees in each of our major areas...transportation, environment, and land use and housing. And we've had, we think, very effective participation in these groups. At the regional level, the thrust of that structure is to have represented on each of our regional committees the organizations...all of the environmental-related organizations in the environment committee...all the transportation interest groups in the transportation committee...the housing and land use interests and planning interests....overall planning interests in the land use and housing committee. But in addition, we also have what we call county forums. These are open meetings, anyone invited, to come and discuss regional planning and county planning issues. That structure's worked well, but we don't feel that it is a grass roots organization in the sense that
the old City Planning Consort was. And we are still hope­
ful that we can see such an organization created in this
area. We currently have a proposal on my desk: to hire some­
body to give some help on that...find some help on that.
What do you feel? Do you feel that there's potential for
such an organization in this region?

(WMP: I don't know. It's hard to keep them funded. That's
why Citizens' Council went out, I think...partly funding and
partly leadership. If you don't have a good executive dir­
ector, some of the best citizen sponsors drop out.)

Well, it seemed to lose its thrust after Aaron Levine left.

(WMP: That's right. There was a fellow who came in...I've
forgotten his name...)

I remember...who succeeded him.

(WMP: Yea...finally moved up to Bucks County, I think.)

Shall we go on to question 10? What do you project into
the future for the Delaware Valley region towards transpor­
tation, economic growth, population movement, and other
areas that your agency is concerned with?

Well, what we project has been discussed at length by our
Board. And our counties continue to want some growth. The
central cities do not see their future as one of decline,
and our Board has adopted a set of what we call population
goals. And these reflect the ambitions of the counties in
terms of population growth and where that growth will occur.
Now what it amounts to is that the growth that we have pro­
jected will be largely by way of infill of areas that devel­
opment has gone beyond...and, some expansion on the periphery
of already developed areas.

(WMP: What do you do about open space in the....you're talk­
ing about growth, but while you're doing that, you must have
to think in terms of density all the time.)

Yes. And we work very closely with our counties and the
states in the formulation of open space programs. And open
space comes in the form of, of course, areas acquired for
park purposes or water resource purposes or any other pub­
lic purpose, but, also in terms of efforts to salvage agricul­
tural areas, primarily through tax abatement. Those pro­
grams are still in their infancy, but we feel strongly that
they've got to be made to work .... that we can't afford to
permit agricultural resources to be dissipated.
(WMP: Do all the counties now of the region have the law for open space where you can get a tax break if you agree not to develop your land for a certain length of time?)

No, I think that Bucks County is the only one to date; there's been some discussion in Montgomery County, and they will likely enact such a provision. But, no, there's a....we have a long ways to go there...a very long ways to go.

The incentives for financial incentives...for selling off and permitting lands to be developed are still so great and probably even going to be greater in the future. And this is in a region that isn't growing that rapidly. You can imagine what it must be in some of the other metropolitan areas where they're experiencing rapid growth. We do not project much growth for this region.

(WMP: I think that's just as well.)

Probably...realistic.

(WMP: What about the economy of the region. Do you get into that?)

Economy is something that we have always been very much interested in, and monitor to some extent. But when it comes to any in-depth involvement in the economy of the region, we've encountered difficulties....because there are too many interests out there to deal with that don't want anybody else involved.

(WMP: I thought maybe in terms of spacial arrangements, you know...like the water pump along the Delaware...sort of thing.)

Well, we are involved in water front planning, in connection with shoreline development. This comes under the federal program for shoreline planning, and it includes the wetlands, industrial developments, all the shipping areas along the shores. But that program is comparatively small, and we have really great difficulty in eliciting the interest of our member governments in it.

(WMP: Yeah. Probably you have no powers in relation to the...)

That's right, we don't.

(WMP: ....or no agency that you're working with that has power...
In terms of economic growth...well, yes, there are...the minor civil divisions...the townships and boroughs and cities that border the Delaware are very much concerned, and do exercise considerable authority through their zoning over what happens along the waterfront, and they intend that it's going to remain that way.

There are a variety of interests in this region in economic planning. Of course there's the University of Pennsylvania-related Econometric Planning Operation. The Federal Reserve Bank has been deeply involved in researching economic growth in this area. The banks...each of them has someone whose responsibility is monitoring the economic growth of the region. And we've had dialogues,...we've carried on dialogues over the years with various of these interests and we have, from time to time, proposed to our Board that DVRPC should undertake some sort of economic planning program. As far as our states and counties are concerned, their primary interest has been promotion of economic development....of course, that's true for the city too. We have been singularly unsuccessful in getting any sort of co-operative, regionwide, region-focused development...economic development, program underway here. And I'm really very disappointed in that.

(WMP: Is that because they compete against each other, these local communities?)

They view their responsibility as primarily to get as much as possible for themselves. Some of the Camden County people used to say quite openly,......well, we view Philadelphia as sort of an inventory of industries on which we can draw.

(WMP: Hah hah. Get 'em to come across the river, you mean.)

Right. And in recent months, Camden County has a series of really blatant advertisements with that very theme! In June and July of this year, I talked with our Board about the need for getting some sort of planning underway with reference to the economic development of the region....with a regional focus. And one of the federal agencies...the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration had suggested that they would help us fund it...and only a very modest amount of money would be required from our member governments. Our member governments wouldn't provide it. They would not participate. And I was very disappointed in that.

Now, how far are we. Does that deal with what we discussed under item 10? I guess it does.

Eleven? Shall we tackle airports?

(BF: Is that part of your....)

Yes, it is. Airports, because they are space-consuming and
cost considerable in the way of money and other resources, and because they have many impacts on other transportation facilities, are important to our planning. We plan them, however, from a land use standpoint...not as transportation facilities, because they are land-consuming.

We have been deeply involved in discussions at the state and county level over...which relate to the need for airport facilities, and the prospects of developing a new international scale airport facility for this region.

(WMP: Is there room for one in this region?)

Well, the feeling now is that there isn't, and it's been dropped. Now, whether that's realistic or not, I'm not sure. You see, the thing that happened is this. We were about to embark...oh, I would estimate six or seven years ago, on an effort to plan for a new international airport facility...

(WMP: Is that when Peter Schauffler was around?)

Yes, about the time that he left, as a matter of fact, and the time that he was involved in the discussion of the CORD proposal...Committee on Regional Development proposed the organization of a multi-functional transportation agency, which would include airports. Well, what happened is that, at the time there had been some discussions of possibility of developing an airport in New Jersey, that would be located where it would serve both Philadelphia and New York....possibly both Philadelphia and New York needs. All that meant, probably in the Pine Barrens.

(WMP: But pretty well north of Atlantic City. It'd be more like up near Bay Head or somewhere.)

And the New Jersey people...New Jersey government people, who looked at the proposal that Pete Schauffler developed, commented to us that, well, if there is going to be another airport in New Jersey, the state of New Jersey is perfectly capable of making the decision, and if there's going to be one, managing it, owning it, building it, and managing it. We don't need help from Philadelphia.

(WMP: That's the way New Jersey felt.)

That's the way the state of New Jersey felt. Meanwhile, over in Philadelphia, Bill Burns, who was the director...associate director of commerce for airports, had prepared plans for a major expansion with the new runway, a very elaborate and very expensive new terminal facility, and they were just going on the market with a bond issue ....bond issues...that could total into hundreds of millions of dollars, and they said....in
no way can we talk about another airport succeeding this one, when we're going on the market with bonds! We couldn't sell our bonds!

Between the position the state of New Jersey and the position of the city of Philadelphia, any discussion of an alternative airport...another major airport...just frozen out!

(WMP: Who couldn't sell the bonds?..I'm not quite clear.)

The city of Philadelphia couldn't sell its revenue bonds.

Now within the last two years, we've been working with the state of New Jersey transportation department and PennDot in the development of state-wide airport plans for each of those states. And those state plans have been completed. Neither of the plans provide for a major new facility for Philadelphia, although they do contemplate more passenger service at North Philadelphia, an expansion of the Mercer County Airport, and an expansion of general aviation facilities in some of the smaller communities in the counties. But nothing major.

Our current feeling is that the general aviation issue is perhaps a more important issue to the region than serving the passenger needs...that the passenger needs can probably be taken care of at Philadelphia International, North Philadelphia, and Mercer County, and, if necessary, Wilmington. But general aviation airports are fast disappearing.

(WMP: That's for the guy who owns his own plane.)

Business planes, primarily.

(WMP: North Philadelphia's been taking care of a lot of that.)

Oh yes, yes, it has. And it's a good facility. But it's too far away from people...most of Montgomery and Chester County and Delaware County....those counties are losing their general aviation airports. And it's a threat to industrial development if those are not....if those services are not provided. So that's pretty much the story on airports. As a matter of fact, within recent months, we discussed with our Board the question of whether something should be done over and above what the states have done, in terms of airport planning. And our board decided that for the time being, at least, they would rest with what the states had done. And the states are primarily responsible now, for planning airport facilities.

(WMP: Are they working on it?)

Yes, they're continuing to work on it.
They're developing capital programs, so I think they're doing a competent job.

(WMP: Where would the state put such a facility? West of Philadelphia, of course...)

Well, they're talking about...one of the big issues is the naval air station up off 611...Willow Grove...what should be done with that...whether it could become a joint use airport, military and civilian.

(WMP: There's enough open space there to put a major airport, is there?)

Oh yes.

(WMP: Well, golly, that ought to be done.)

And uh...

(WMP: With the turnpike, you can get up there.)

Oh, it's a good accessible location.

(WMP: Yeah.)

But it is unfortunate that there's been considerable development that's moved in pretty close to it....too close to it...and the township, which has permitted the development, is opposed to any expansion in use of that airport. And it's become a rather hot political issue up there. Many of the local legislators...

(WMP: You're talking now about......)

Willow Run?

(WMP: Yeah. That's building up not very fast, is it, that area...)

Well, it has been developing rather fast, yes.

(WMP: I wonder if action doesn't come pretty soon, that one could....)

It could be lost...or at least, its future use could be impaired. The Navy has been acquiring air rights, or development rights on some of the properties, and has been expanding where it could.

(WMP: Do you think the Navy would be willing to get out?)
Well, the Navy has not indicated it's ready to get out, and it has not indicated that it would favor a joint-use facility.

(WMP: So that isn't too hopeful.)

But, we feel, or at least it's my impression, that that situation could change, and the Navy might, in fact, abandon that facility.

(WMP: Well, there're really two facilities, aren't there, at Willow Grove and the.....what do they call the other one?)

Well, the other is the Navy Air Station.

(WMP: The Navy Air Space, yeah...that takes up a lot of.....)

That's further up.

(WMP: Well it's not too far up.)

No.

(WMP: Is it a big enough airport...could it be made into a major airport?)

Probably not an international scale airport, but it could be made into a first-class general aviation airport. And that's what it's needed for:

(WMP: And North Philadelphia's not big enough to have the major airport?)

Oh, it is. Yes. North Philadelphia is a fine facility, but it serves a different area.

So that's the story on air travel. Shall we go on to...does your agency make plans regarding waste management, sludge, air quality, garbage disposal, sewage treatment? All right.

Waste management only in the sense that we deal with waste water.

Disposal of sludge...we have minimal involvement there. The city of Philadelphia...its primary problem...and they're dealing directly with the federal agency.

Air quality...we have in recent months acquired responsibility for planning for air quality as it relates to transportation. Primarily how to control highway transportation in the interest of air quality.
Well, we're working closely with PennDot in determining what kinds of controls might be imposed on the use of motor vehicles in the developed areas of the region, and under what kinds of control would be achieved the federally mandated level of air quality.

(WMP: Is there the technology to provide reasonably cheap controls of automobiles?)

We think that much of what is going to be accomplished will have to be accomplished through the technology on the vehicles themselves...the application of new emission controls.

(WMP: Due to automobile manufacturing.)

Yes, it'll happen mostly at the manufacturing end.

(WMP: That's a national question, then.)

That's right. But, it's likely that they're going to have to be controls imposed at the local level too...in terms of auto-free zones, or auto-restricted zones, at least. And it's that that we are looking at closely. We do not deal with what are called "fixed pollution sources", such as smoke stacks.

Garbage disposal...solid waste planning...in this region is undertaken at the county level...the city-county level. And we have had ad hoc meetings on the subject from time to time. But the feeling of our member governments has been that the counties are organized to...in such a way as to manage the disposal of rubbish. And whether they separate it and recycle it or whether they burn it or whatever, is primarily their decision. Normally the job of collection is the job of the local government or private operators. The counties manage the disposal operation...whether it's landfill, whether it's burning, or whether it's re-cycling. And the counties have not been willing to see DVRPC involved. And primarily because.....except the city of Philadelphia....the city of Philadelphia has the major problem, and the city of Philadelphia has always wanted us involved. But the counties feel that they have nothing to gain through regional involvement. They don't want the city's rubbish in their areas, and they know that the thrust of any regional effort is going to be co-operation across county lines. And they can't officially endorse that. That's the way they feel about it.

(WMP: What was it? Political?)
It's solely political.

(WMP: It's not the cost or anything like that?)

No, it's not the cost; it's solely political. The idea of Philadelphia trash moving into any of our suburban counties is something that no local politicians...

(WMP: Yeah. They've all got enough disposal places in their own counties so they don't need anything.)

Yes. So they don't need Philadelphia.

(WMP: Yeah. Right.)

Philadelphia may need them, but that's not their problem. So, we have been singularly unsuccessful there.

Now as far as sewage treatment is concerned, we are deeply involved there...we have capital programs for construction of hundreds of millions of dollars for sewage treatment facilities. As a matter of fact, there are hundreds of millions .....four hundred million dollars worth of construction underway right now.

(WMP: Ye gods.)

So it's a huge operation. These are major plants, or major expansion treatment plants.

(WMP: Who is funding that?)

That's EPA money. Federal money.

(WMP: Oh, federal money. 100%?)

No, 80%. And the balance is raised locally with local bonds to be paid off through collection of fees and service charges. So we are deeply involved in that.

In regard to water supply, that's been a problem to us, in that there is no money around to plan for water supply. Now, we have used some 701.....had 701 planning money for that in the past. But the demands on that resource have been so great in recent years, that we have not been able to continue that work. The states do undertake water supply money.

(WMP: Well, is there going to be a crisis sometime?)
Our analysis of the water supply situation in the region is that we're in pretty good shape...except for a few areas in Chester and Montgomery County. Other than that, we're in pretty good shape. For most of the region, there's an abundance of ground water.

(WMP: I don't know whether we talked about it earlier, but do you have different regions...some for one function and another for another activity?)

No. No. By and large, when we undertake planning, we undertake it for all nine of our counties...city of Philadelphia and eight suburban counties. And it's the exception where we plan for less than the full region. And it's the exception where we plan for more of the full region, but we have done that. We planned for Schuylkill County and Lehigh County north of us, because they're...with regard to some of our sewage treatment planning, because they're part of the Schuylkill Watershed. And the state asked us to; actually the state contracted with us to do the technical work for them because they didn't have the capacity to do it themselves. But because we had, what I view as an extraordinarily competent water planning operation, both states felt that the best way to get the job done was to have DVRPC do it. And we did do it. We did complete it. It was just completed this year. So we're in good shape on that score.

Has your planning work been well received by governmental jurisdictions within your territory?

Well, I guess I've pretty much described what the situation is there. For the most part, yes, but there are areas where they didn't want us to plan, too. And they let us know about that...which is fine. We're here not to tell them what they have to do; we're here to be of service to the region and to the governments of the region. And we tell them that. We aren't going to force anything on them that they don't want.

(WMP: So they come in, do they, when they want help?)

Yes.

And does our agency mediate conflicts between local governments? Yes, we do. In a sense, each plan that we prepare involves problems across the county lines. And then, of course, there are not only those conflicts, but there are state-local conflicts that we're monitoring all the time. And we also have to be sensitive to what the local governments down below the county level...the townships and boroughs...how they react to plans. While generally our county planning offices deal with those strictly local problems, we have to be aware of what's going on, because if there's enough local opposition to a project, it's going to soon be-
come county policy to oppose it. So, we sort of monitor what happens at the local level.

(WMP: Things must go awfully slowly because there're so many interests involved.)

They do. Things do go very slowly. Yes. And it's very difficult to change a course of action that's mostly settled.

(WMP: Once it's started, yeah.)

...Because there're so many interests involved in seeing it move ahead once a decision's been made....again, making the plans sort of self-implemented.

But, yes. We call all of the meetings that we conduct here forums. And almost any day of the week our board room is involved with one meeting or another. At the moment, we have a transportation technical advisory committee meeting there. Tomorrow, I think it's a housing group. Wednesday it's a planning co-ordinating committee, which consists of all of the planners of the region, the state and the county and city planners of the region. And these meetings are going on all the time; their agendas are very full. Very often they start here at ten o'clock in the morning; they're still going at two or three o'clock in the afternoon. And then, in addition, we have the citizen committees regularly....sometimes together, sometimes separately. And then, of course, our Board meets monthly. And all of these meetings constitute what we call "the regional forum". Decisions are processed through this combination of representatives of citizen groups, technical groups, technicians from our member governments, planners from our member governments, and finally up to the policy level.

(WMP: Walter, do you have a booklet that tells about your functions so you can give it to these local jurisdictions to guide them?)

Yes. We have this small fact sheet which we distribute generously around the region. It describes succinctly what we're about.

(WMP: It gives them an idea of how to get help.)

Yes, and what kind of help they can get here.

(BF: We've finished our questions. Is there anything else that you'd like to bring up that we haven't thought of?)

Well, I think I've covered, one way or another, one time or another, everything.

(WMP: You've done a very good job.)