

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

INFORMATION RESOURCES EXCHANGE GROUP

Minutes of March 10, 1999

Location: DVRPC, Bourse Building, 111 S. Independence Mall East, 8th Floor

Attendance:

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The meeting was called to order at 10 am.

1. **Minutes of the meeting of December 9, 1998**

a. The minutes of the meeting of December 9, 1998 were approved.

2. **Presentations**

James D. Fitzsimmons, Chief, Population Distribution Branch, Chair, Metropolitan Area Standards Review Committee, United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., “New Approaches to Defining Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas.”

Mr. Fitzsimmons presented an overview of the possible new Federal definitions of Metropolitan Areas; the current definition will either be kept as is or altered prior to Census Day (April 1, 2000). The possible new approaches use as building blocks counties, similar to the current definition, or census tracts, which would allow more precise definitions but require more intensive data collection. Weighting criteria in the possible new approaches range from bi-directional commuting flows to population density. Among the primary objectives to be met in the revised definition are both precision and accuracy, as well as ease of use for data users, and the ability to apply the standards across the entire country, such that every acre of land can be defined either as metropolitan or nonmetropolitan. Additional information on the process and on opportunities for public feedback will be available in the Federal Register.

John Lago, Community Service Officer, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Trenton, NJ, “Recent Trends in Municipal Reporting of Residential Building Permits.”

Mr. Lago presented the New Jersey Construction Reporter, the state’s standard report of building permit information and related data. Municipal reporting of building permits provides valuable information in intercensal years. However, the current reporting process for the Census does not count mixed use development, nor redevelopment and rehabilitation. Renovation is not usually counted as it does not truly represent the creation of a new unit. New Jersey has a different set of reporting standards that is able to track some of the information missed by the Census. Mixed use and rehab projects are particularly significant in older developed areas. New Jersey has an advantage over Pennsylvania and other states in that the same department that collects the building permit data also regulates the construction industry, so if reports fall behind the state can take action. Finally, the ability to report data electronically has been a win-win situation for both contractors and state, local, and federal government. Over 400 contractors currently report electronically.

3. **Census 2000 Update**

Census Bureau staff gave updates on several Census 2000 programs.

a. Statistical Areas Program-- status

- i. Completed maps for the Statistical Areas Update Program are past due to the Census Bureau's Philadelphia Regional Office for Pennsylvania Counties, and by the end of March 1999 for New Jersey counties. Maps reflecting the new boundaries will be completed in fall 1999. Local governments will have a 30-day review period during which they may recommend further changes to the new boundaries.

b. Sampling Litigation-- status

- i. In its decision of January 25, 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the Census Act prohibits the use of statistical sampling for purposes of reapportionment. The Court's decision will steer the Census Bureau away from its present two-pronged approach to the decennial count, and will shape the ongoing funding debate in Congress.

c. Funding for Census 2000-- status

- i. Funding for Census activities expires on June 30, 1999, after which a shutdown could occur if more funding is not approved. The battle in Congress is expected to be even more contentious in the aftermath of the Supreme Court decision.

d. LUCA Program-- status

- i. LUCA '98 is proving very successful; local governments have been locating many new addresses.
- ii. The maps have been sent out to LUCA '99 participants.

e. Complete Count Committees—status

- i. Several committees have been established, and early local outreach offices have started to operate. Outreach efforts are continuing, including the newly unveiled "Census in the Schools" program.

f. Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) 2000-- status

- i. Outreach for the TAZ update process continues.

4. **DVRPC Work Program Updates**

Mike Ontko, Joel Fontane, and Joe Fazekas gave updates on elements of the DVRPC Work Program.

a. Year 2000 Aerial Imagery Acquisition

- i. Staff are now preparing the RFP for this project; a release date at the end of March is expected.

b. Region-Wide Transportation GIS Development

- i. Staff completed meetings with member governments and operating agencies, who were all very receptive to the goals of the project, and provided valuable input for refining specific objectives. Development of an RFP for consultant services to design the system architecture will begin shortly.

c. Regional Information Network (RIN)

- i. Map layers for 1995 land use and detailed streets are now available through the DVRPC Interactive Mapping application. A bold new look will be coming to the DVRPC web site in the beginning of April.

d. DVRPC Year 2025 Interim Forecast Revisions

- i. Staff members have been meeting with member governments to review their revised forecasts. Board review of the forecasts is expected in May 1999.

e. 1997 Building Permit Data

- i. DVRPC Data Bulletin #60, New Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits: Counties and Municipalities in the 28-County DVRPC Data Service Area, 1990-1997, has been released and is available over the DVRPC web site as well as in hard copy.

f. Job Growth/Entry Level Jobs -- Establishment Survey

- i. The establishment surveys will be mailed on March 19. The results of this survey will be used to support an regional entry-level jobs study.

5. **Old Business**

a. (Committee Action Needed) Letter to Census Bureau re: Correcting 1990 Geography Errors

- i. This letter has been drafted in response to the issues raised by Montgomery County at the last IREG meeting. The letter was approved by the Committee and will be sent to the Census Philadelphia Office.

6. New Business

a. (Committee Action Needed) Letter to Municipal Officials RE: Delinquent Reporting of Residential Building Permits

- i. This letter was drafted in response to a Census Bureau request for local assistance with improving the collection of building permit data. Many of the delinquent municipalities in the region have completed their reporting requirements since the letter was drafted; however the letter will be sent to those who remain. The letter was approved by the Committee with the following change: the letter will only include the signature of the DVRPC staff coordinator of IREG.

b. Revised Description of IREG on DVRPC Website

- i. A revised description of IREG and its mission has been created for display on the DVRPC website. The text is being reviewed by staff and will be changed on the Internet when the site is updated to reflect the new IREG officers.

c. Year 2000 PSDC Annual Meeting to be held at UPenn

- i. Lauris Olson announced that the annual Pennsylvania State Data Center affiliate meeting will be held on May 16, 2000 at the University of Pennsylvania. This will be the first post-Census affiliate meeting, and should be extremely lively.

7. Next Meeting Date and Location

The next IREG meeting date has not yet been set but will either be June 9 or June 16 (both Wednesdays). NJDOT has offered meeting space in Trenton for a meeting away from DVRPC. The committee will be notified of the date, time, and location of the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.