

DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION INFORMATION RESOURCE EXCHANGE GROUP

Minutes of March 9, 2005

Location: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Bourse Building, 111 S. Independence Mall East, 8th Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Attendance:

| Name: | Title: | Organization: | E-mail Address: |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
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| Bob Walker | Planner | Chester Co. Planning Comm. | walker@chesco.org |
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| Will Stevens | Manager, GIS | DVRPC | wstevens@dvrpc.org |
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| Jametta Johnson | City Planner | PCPC | jametta.johnson@phila.gov |
| Rob Graff | Sr. Project Manager | PEL East | rgraff@peleast.org |
| Philip Lutz | Coordinator | US Census Bureau | philip.m.lutz@census.gov |
| Wansoo Im | Principal | Vertices | wim@vertices.com |

The IREG Meeting began at 10:10 am. Ken Sipos, Vice Chairman of the Committee, asked attendees to introduce themselves.

1. Minutes of the meeting of December 8, 2004

The minutes were approved without corrections.

2. Presentations

Wansoo Im, Ph.D., Vertices, LLC, presented *Opportunities In Online Mapping Opportunities*. Dr. Im gave an overview of his approach and philosophy to online mapping and demonstrated many online GIS projects that he has worked on, including projects with the airline industry, nursing homes, North Carolina Water Resources, a township in New York, organizations throughout New Jersey, and Chester County, Pennsylvania. For many small organizations, obstacles to online GIS usage include the fact that many standard offerings on the market are not user-friendly; are not usable for non-GIS professionals; require a great deal of training and complicated programming; require a great deal of capital for startup costs, including software, training, servers and hosting; and are costly to update and maintain, often requiring a full-time GIS professional. Given the amount of money currently being spent to develop GIS that is not easy to share with other professionals, there is a costly duplication of efforts. Using open source software and a lightweight GIS engine of his own creation, Dr. Im demonstrated the power and functionality of his applications, while making the cost of entry into the online GIS market relatively low. Dr. Im stressed the need to develop user-friendly, relevant applications, which enable planners and researchers with little or no training to use GIS for analysis.

Dr. Thabet Zakaria, Associate Director of Transportation Planning, DVRPC, next presented a summary of his recent paper entitled *Comparisons of Decennial Census and American Community Survey data*. Dr. Zakaria's work was initially presented at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Conference in Washington DC this past January and will be distributed at the upcoming Census Data for Transportation Planning Conference in Irvine, California. This paper states the Commission's need for long-form decennial census data, particularly the Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP). Critical transportation data is currently collected with each decennial census, but is not currently planned for inclusion in the 2010 Census, as the Bureau instead focuses on the annual American Community Survey. The significantly smaller sample size of the ACS will make it all but impossible to obtain accurate Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) level data, the basis of the Commission's transportation models for the past 30 years and the foundation of DVRPC's travel simulation and forecasting models. Dr. Zakaria also noted that the ACS will be conducted over a five-year period in order to obtain a statistically significant sample, rather than the point-in-time approach currently employed in the Decennial Census. Significant land use changes either before or immediately after the ACS is conducted will introduce large errors into the ACS estimates. Rob Graff from the Pennsylvania Economy League noted that, although the ACS may hold little value in terms of transportation planning, interim information will be valuable to economists and other policy planners interested in larger scale, regional comparisons as opposed to specific, local level data.

3. Election of CY 2005 IREG Chair and Vice-Chair

The nomination and election of 2005 Officers took place. Ken Sipos, Real Estate Specialist with the City of Philadelphia, was elected Chair and Seth Hackman, GIS Specialist with New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection, was elected Vice-Chair.

4. Census Update

The Census Bureau began nationwide collection of American Community Survey data in December 2004. The Bureau is currently working with the media as well as state, county, and local elected officials to "spread the word" about the ACS. Marketing information and materials for use by interested officials can be found on their website under "ACS Media Toolkit", at <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2004/NewsMediaKit.html>. Follow-up telephone calls will

be made to ACS survey recipients who do not respond to the survey by mail, followed by in-person visits by a Census Bureau field representative. A workforce of permanent part-time field representatives is currently being hired to continue data collection efforts nationwide. Recent Census news releases were available to meeting attendees at the sign-in table.

5. DVRPC Work Program Updates

- a. **Regional On-Line Information Network:** New additions to the Commission's database include updated and revised 2030 population and employment forecasts as well as 2004 traffic count data.
- b. **Year 2005 Aerial Imagery Acquisition:** Pre-flight planning is complete, and at meeting time the contractor was waiting for suitable flying conditions, with no snow cover, minimal tree foliage, and a forecasted week of fair weather. Final product delivery is scheduled for January 2006. Staff announced that an informal presentation on the Commission's ortho-photography project would be held in the Commission's offices on Friday, March 11, at 1:00 p.m.
- c. **Region-Wide Transportation GIS Development:** Staff announced that a meeting of the Region-wide Transportation GIS Development Committee to discuss data distribution and sharing policies would be held on Thursday, March 10, 2005.

6. Information Items

- a. Effective Monday, May 8, 2005, the DVRPC offices will be relocated to the American College of Physicians (ACP) Building, located at 190 N. Independence Mall West (at the corner of 6th and Race Streets). The Commission anticipates no down-time for the website, and telephone and fax numbers will remain the same.
- b. The next IREG Meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 8, 2005, at a location to be determined and announced at a later date. Due to DVRPC's upcoming move, the June meeting will take place offsite and the September meeting will take place in the Commission's new offices. Remaining CY 2005 IREG meetings are scheduled for June 8th, September 7th, and December 7th.

7. Old Business

No old business was presented at this time.

8. New Business

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced its upcoming mapping contest, open to the general public and students and held on April 14, 2005. Winning maps will be sent to the ESRI Conference, to be held in California later this year. Additional information is available on the NJDEP website (<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/index.html>). Additionally, an announcement of the April MAC/URISA conference was made.

9. Adjournment

The IREG meeting was adjourned at 11:50 pm. The Webmasters Subcommittee convened at 12:45 p.m.