Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
Information Resource Exchange Group

Highlights from meeting of Wednesday, June 13, 2012

The 83rd meeting of the Information Resources Exchange Group (IREG) took place on Wednesday, June 13, 2012 at DVRPC. Thirty-five people were in attendance. Highlights from the March 7th meeting were available as a handout and on the internet.

Presentation

"DVRPC Community Investment Index (CI^2)"

Gregory R. Krykewycz, PP, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner presented an overview of the DVRPC Community Investment Index, a new web tool that maps the concentrations of place-based investments and on-the-ground characteristics that contribute to sustainable communities. The Community Investment Index is intended to assist planners and funding partners in southeastern Pennsylvania with their development of project proposals and grant applications, and with exploring the Connections between investments across planning disciplines. The tool is intended to reflect a places' ability to leverage new sustainable communities investments, which will typically (though not always) take the form of new facilities or infill development. SEPTA was the primary client on this project, explaining the Southeastern PA study area, which is being used to identify and pursue opportunities for collaboration and building upon existing and planned investments in the region.

This project combined mapping of prior public investments, supportive livable or sustainable community planning activities, as well as built community characteristics, such as land use, density, interconnectedness of the street network, volume of transit service, development potential, etc. in order to provides a good summary indicator of a community's ability to leverage new sustainable community investments.

Over 80 datasets were mapped with over 50,000 data records, many that have not been mapped before. Mapped datasets included: prior public investments, place-based investments, bottom-up community characteristics datasets, transit-oriented development (TOD), intersection density, walkability, transit service density, transit score, degrees of disadvantage (Environmental Justice), business improvement districts (BIDs), comprehensive plan "freshness", and green buildings. Community Investment Index scores range from 0 to 70.

Christopher Pollard, Senior GIS Specialist provided a live hands-on demonstration of the CI^2 web application, explaining each drop-down menu, link, and feature built into it. Since it was built on ArcGIS base, there were other existing map services that were able to be brought into this platform.

Technology Show & Tell

Noemi Mendez-Eliasen, Geographer at the Census Bureau, gave the group a brief demo of the newly updated TigerWEB, a web-based map viewer from the Census Bureau, which was recently updated with 2010 annual statistical areas, current boundaries, such as the American Indian areas, tracks, blocks, metro/micro areas, pop/housing counts from 2010.
http://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerwebmain/

Mark Wheeler from Strategic Planning and Policy at the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC), gave an overview of Textizen, which was developed by Code for America in collaboration with the City of Philadelphia. Textizen is a simple, yet powerful platform for collecting citizen feedback via text message. Now, all residents and community members need is a few spare moments and a cell phone that supports text messages (which is estimated at about 92 % of Philadelphia households vs. 42 % with home internet access), thereby increasing access to digital citizen participation. As part of the PCPC's ongoing Philadelphia2035 initiative, targeted ads and billboards surveyed residents about transportation, recreation, and quality of life. This innovative pilot project for public engagement will continue to be used in Philadelphia2035, and hopefully expanded for other efforts as a permanent public input and outreach tool. www.phila2035.org

Aaron Ogle, Software Developer at OpenPlans, gave an overview of their nonprofit's recent projects. They are a technology company that works to create better transportation systems and a more open civic sector, using open source and open standards to turn data into useful information. www.openplans.org

Joe Fazekas gave an overview of LevelUp, a new way to pay with your smartphone. Philadelphia is one of only 17 pilot program areas in the country. He also gave a live demo of the Freemake Video Converter utility, which he recently used to extract video clips from a recorded workshop. www.thelevelup.com, www.freemake.com

Member Updates

- The Region-wide GIS project has been meeting with the counties to decide on next steps, and training needs for web map applications and entry-level GIS.
- 2010 Land Use drafts were released and being finalized with the counties. Discussions are beginning on how to make it more useful next round.
- The DVRPC Data Navigator is being updated with the latest datasets, including ACS data, and better organization with grouping of data into subject areas. Also, a 9-county region summary will now be provided for all datasets, where possible.
- DVRPC reported on the new PayPal API that was recently used to setup online registration for an upcoming event. The new API alerts our webserver that a registrant has actually made their successful payment on the PayPal system.
- DVRPC reported that In-Plant Graphics magazine recently took a tour of the DVRPC publishing center.
- DVRPC announced current testing with geo-enabled project photos for field visits, and the possibility of developing an online mapping application to show project photo locations.
- A list of upcoming conferences and events was distributed at the meeting.
- The next IREG meeting is scheduled for September 9 at SEPTA's offices at 1234 Market Street, 11th Floor. The meeting will conclude with a tour of the Control Center.