

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Information Resource Exchange Group

Highlights from meeting of Wednesday, June 5, 2013

The 87th meeting of the Information Resources Exchange Group (IREG) was called to order at the U.S. Census Bureau's Philadelphia Regional Office by Noemi Mendez, Information Services Specialist at the U.S. Census Bureau, and IREG Chair. Thirty-five people were in attendance. Highlights from the March 6 meeting were available as a handout and on the internet.

Presentations

Fernando Armstrong, Regional Director of the Philadelphia Regional Office of the U.S. Census Bureau introduced Mario Matthews and Rosa Estrada, Assistant Regional Directors, welcomed everyone, and gave an overview of the Philadelphia Regional Office, and the recent restructuring of the U.S. Census Bureau. Six regional offices were eliminated, with the New York office supporting Puerto Rico, New Jersey and everything north, and the Philadelphia office (comprising of 52 central staff and about 1,100 field surveyors) supporting Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic states, adding the following four additional states: Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and Ohio. He also mentioned that the bureau was actively working on the 2020 Census. ACS work using the internet is very successful, and they are hoping to use internet to collect responses for the next decennial census. About 10,000 households in Washington, DC and Montgomery County, MD (both in the Census Bureau's Philadelphia Region) will be part of the testing for the 2020 Census.

Noemi Mendez, Information Services Specialist, Philadelphia Regional Office reviewed many of the Census Bureau's programs. The Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (MAF/TIGER) database (MTDB) was initially developed in the 1980's to support the 1990 Census using digitized information from USGS quadrangle maps. The MAF address database is refreshed quarterly from the US Postal Service (USPS), along with some field checks (address canvassing) of addresses by Census Bureau staff, which is a targeted update in the field, requiring visual and GPS confirmation of the address. One issue with the address data received from USPS is that mail delivery locations (such as post office boxes) do not match up with the physical address of a residence. Funding issues at USPS is also a concern moving forward, since the Census Bureau is depending on this quarterly update of address data from them. The "TI" in TIGER is a national coverage of all linear features that helps prevent tabulation gaps, but continues to pose conflation (or 'rubbersheeting') challenges.

To support the 2010 Census, the MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project ran for six years through 2008, with targeting address canvassing starting in Spring 2009. Other geographic partnership programs supporting 2010 Census include LUCA, New Construction (NC), Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP), Redistricting Data Program (RDP) and Boundary & Annexation Survey (BAS). DVRPC and its member counties were involved with both the LUCA and PSAP programs during this time.

The 2020 Census will be supported by the Geographic Support System Initiative (GSS-I), which was the result of the Census Address Summit in 2011, where federal, state, local and commercial users of address data convened to discuss the challenges of keeping their address lists up-to-date. Since the American Community Survey (ACS) continues to improve addresses through intercensal surveys, and the GSS-I utilizes partnerships for improved address data, only targeted address canvassing may be needed in 2019, which will minimize costs associated with having the most up-to-date MAF. 56 government partners were initially identified to participate in Phase I of the GSS-I program, and the goal is to acquire all partner data for a production test in 2013. No partners were selected in the DVRPC region, with the closest being Sussex County DE, Crawford County the only one in PA, and no participants in NJ.

Noemi continued to discuss in detail about minimum requirements for address matching, additional challenges, and how the address data is matched and verified. Based on preliminary processing results from two states

and 45 counties, there is a 90% match confidence in the addresses in their files. GSS-I Phase II will include up to 500 partners, and will include Center & Cumberland Counties in PA.

For 2020 Census, the LUCA program is federally mandated, with plans to continue the New Construction and PSAP programs. Because the Census Bureau is partnering with Esri, instead of using separate software (as was done previously in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program), local government partners will be able to simply install a toolbar to their existing ArcGIS software. The BAS program (where local governments get to look at their legal boundaries in the Census Bureau's system) will not take place in 2013/14 due to automatic sequestration cuts to Census Bureau funding that took effect on March 1, with hopes to have funding restored for the program in 2015.

Noemi showed screen captures of address data migration using commercially off the shelf (COTS) solutions, such as ArcGIS and the Community TIGER software developed through partnership with Esri, which presents users with a nice dashboard-style interface to your data. She also reminded attendees that she sends out monthly email blasts on Census Bureau updates on geography and data. Please contact her directly (noemi.mendez@census.gov) if you wish to receive these updates.

Other Business

- Azavea launched their Summer of Maps (a Code for America style publishing program), where fellows are performing GIS analysis with nonprofits at no cost to them.
- Lauren Gilchrist distributed copies of the Center City District's annual report "*State of Center City Philadelphia*", which was released in April, and includes many tables, charts, and graphs of census-related data.
- The Census Bureau's free Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Conference in Washington, DC June 12-13th was announced, along with discussion on the use of this data and the possibility of hosting a LED workshop at DVRPC.
- Aaron Ogle announced that his company OpenPlans was a finalist for a \$620k grant in the Knight Foundation's Open Government News Challenge, which is providing over \$3.2 million in funding for eight startups helping citizens interact better with the government. "*Plan in a Box*" will allow tools and projects developed for large cities be scaled down for small and mid-sized municipalities to have access to the same kind of tools at a much lower cost. www.openplans.org/2013/04/plan-in-a-box/
- Scott France unveiled the Planning Data Portal for simple data access to 32 datasets for Montgomery County data. <http://webapp.montcopa.org/planning/dataportal/>
- For up-to-date information from the local census office, follow the Philadelphia Regional Office on Twitter. http://twitter.com/uscb_philly
- Will Stevens announced that DVRPC's 2015 Aerial project is being discussed this summer, with decisions needed this fall for budgeting in next year's Work Program. Also, DVRPC has been working with the DOTs and counties in updating the 2010 Urban Areas, including modifications to the road classifications, where needed. DVRPC is also collecting road and bridge data for PennDOT. DVRPC is also upgrading to ArcGIS 10.1 for Server with interest in collaboration with various counties, and possibly some training this year.
- Joe Fazekas announced that DVRPC is updating their Microsoft Server licenses, as well as their desktop Adobe licenses. Also discussed is how DVRPC is developing more online applications as final products for the work program, and the challenges faced with cataloging and publicizing them. He also suggested that DVRPC's Household Travel Survey would be a good presentation to the group, due to the need for statistically accurate data collection.
- Noemi Mendez discussed the Philly Tech Breakfast she recently attended, and encouraged everyone to explore the Sitegeist mobile application that helps you learn more about your surroundings by drawing on publically-available data presented in a simple to use phone application. <http://sitegeist.sunlightfoundation.com/>
- A list of upcoming conferences and workshops was presented, and is available from the DVRPC Website. <http://www.dvrpc.org/asp/cal/Conferences.asp>
- The September 11 and December 11 meetings will take place at DVRPC, with a Geospatial/Open Source Workshop in December. To help organize the workshop, please contact Chris Pollard.