

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Information Resource Exchange Group

Highlights from meeting of Wednesday, June 5, 2013

The 91st meeting of the Information Resources Exchange Group (IREG) was called to order at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's office by Chris Pollard, Senior GIS Analyst, DVRPC, and IREG Coordinator. Thirty-three people were in attendance. Highlights from the March 5th meeting were available as a handout and on the internet.

Presentations

Steve Cline, GIS Analyst, McCormick Taylor, demonstrated a free product called TileMill to create image tiles for online mapping applications. Using image tile layers for online mapping is the best way to ensure that all devices can use online mapping. Simple images are placed together to create a whole map and when the user zooms or pans the map, new tiles are loaded and put into place. With most mapping software, this experience is seamless and only the visual data that the users require is downloaded, saving bandwidth and time. TileMill uses a standard known as CartoCSS to define the visual properties of the map features. Much like CSS for HTML web development, CartoCSS is flexible and cascading; meaning that more advanced processing can easily be implemented. Layering of processing instructions allows multi-symbol control to create beautiful, distinct thematic maps. Bivariate comparison can also be accomplished by blending two semi-transparent colors according to data point properties. Using a specific stylesheet, along with the given dataset, TileMill will generate all the image tiles required to produce a tiled map layer. These images can then be uploaded to a server or a SaaS solution such as MapBox or Amazon AWS to rendering in web maps. Because these images are basic PNGs, they can be used by any popular web mapping framework. Popular examples include Leaflet, MapBox, Google Maps, and ArcGIS Online. When producing image tiles, it is important to define the bounding box of the map and the desired zoom range. If these properties are left unset, the number of images could grow to be unmanageable. TileMill accepts a wide variety of data file types, including Shapefiles, CSV, Microsoft Excel, and databases such as PostGIS. More information can be found at www.mapbox.com/tilemill.

Aaron Ritz, Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs Planner, City of Philadelphia Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities, presented the development and process of bringing a bike share program to Philadelphia. The goal of the program is to provide affordable, convenient, healthy, and fun transportation to residents, workers, and visitors of Center City Philadelphia. Bike share programs have been implemented at a rapid pace in the US in the last few years, with over 40 cities adopting new programs. Determining locations for bike share stations required advanced geospatial analysis of factors including population density, housing, office space, retail, parks, transit stops and stations, and bicycle friendly streets. These factors contributed to developing a Bike Score for the entire city and focused areas of consideration were large contiguous areas of high scores. Two phases will be implemented, with Phase I focusing in Center City, University City, and North Philadelphia corridors, and Phase II allowing for an expansion of those boundaries. To ensure success of the program, a strategic business plan was developed

outlining revenue sources and projecting operating expenses. Separate operating contracts were awarded for the installation and maintenance of equipment and for the management of corporate sponsorship. The selected bicycle stations will be the first of their kind in the country, featuring an expandable design that can curve to the contours of the location and provide between 19 – 50 bicycles parking spots and smart kiosks that allow reservation using credit card or contactless pass. Estimates of use range between 10,000 – 15,000 bicycle trips per day with price tiers for one-ride, day, week, or yearly passes. Short trips under thirty minutes will be free. The bicycles have been proven around the nation to be safe, reliable, theft resistant, and easy to use. As with other transit expansion options, bike share is not expected to cannibalize other modes of transportation. As more transportation options present themselves, citizens tend to use increasingly diverse modes of transit to fill last-mile gaps in the transportation network. An analysis of environmental justice determined that with full implementation of the system, as many as 53% of Philadelphia residents living below the poverty line will have access to the bike share. Outreach and grants are being developed to provide low-cost or no-cost access to potentially disadvantaged populations. Residents are the primary target of the system as they participate in the most short-distance trips within the system area than any other population group. In addition, commuters, employees, and tourists within Center City will find the bike share system convenient and accessible. More information can be found at www.phila.gov/bikeshare.

Other Business

- Noemi Mendez Eliassen, Census Bureau, announced a focus group for local municipalities to participate in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) for the 2020 Census on June 20th at the Philadelphia Marriot Downtown.
- Merrilee Torres, Burlington County, announced Evesham Township is seeking an intern.
- MAC URISA is providing a workshop on June 11th providing an introduction to Python and common uses of programming in GIS.
- MAC URISA 2014 will be held October 22-24, 2014 in Atlantic City, NJ. More information can be found at www.macurisa.org/2014
- Andrew Thompson, Azavea announced a series of events called EcoCamp designed to bring together environmentalists and technologists on June 20-22. More information can be found at www.phillyecocamp.org
- Burlington County GIS Day is planned for November and will provide an opportunity for students to experience real-world GIS.