



Information Resource Exchange Group Highlights

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

The 96th meeting of the Information Resource Exchange Group (IREG) was called to order at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's office by Christopher Pollard, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Forty two people were in attendance. Highlights from the June 10th meeting were available as a handout and on the internet.

Key Points

- Open Data from multiple agencies and resources can be vital to the successful development of new web and mobile application projects.
- Early collaboration and partnership building on a project can really help avoid problems and issues that usually delay projects from getting up and running.
- Accurate and update safety and crash data is an important resource for regional transportation safety planning.

Presentations

Be Super: Transform Philly Through Technology and Collaboration

Dawn McDougall, Executive Director, CodeforPhilly, discussed how regional agencies can tap into and work with Code for Philly's network of volunteer technologists and collaborate with them to build solutions to regional problems. CodeForPhilly is volunteer-driven and passionate about making Philadelphia better for its residents. Weekly workshops are supplemented by quarterly hackathons where any developer is free to join in existing projects, start new ideas, or brainstorm with colleagues. AppsForPhilly are intended to be collaborative and open source so that other regions can adapt projects to meet their own needs. When planning and developing new apps, it is important to be clear about expectations, set goals for performance and functionality, be flexible to handle unexpected developments, and be super to produce the greatest product possible. Information about CodeforPhilly's weekly meet-ups and Apps for Philly projects can be found at: <https://codeforphilly.org>.

Corey Aciri, Director of Collaborations, CodeforPhilly, talked about the successful partnership between CodeforPhilly and DVRPC to build the CyclePhilly smartphone app for tracking bicycle trips throughout the Philadelphia region. CyclePhilly was developed to give bicycle planning insights into travel patterns within Philadelphia and the region. Philadelphia has good bicycle infrastructure, but inefficient routes across the city. Current bicycle counts are focused on locations rather than routes. This app uses GPS on a smartphone to track the routes that bicyclists choose. Data collected includes type of trip, route, and speed. 17,000 trips were recorded and downloaded last year by DVRPC for analysis from 380 users. Analysis on whether bicyclists are willing to travel out of their way to use bicycle facilities can assist in planning future facilities and making connections within the bicycle network. Details about CyclePhilly can be found here: <http://www.cyclephilly.org>.

Open Data, Open Source Trip Planning - Building GoPhillyGo

The GoPhillyGo application was built using OpenTripPlanner and a host of open data sources from the Philadelphia region. John Branigan, GIS Project Manager, Azavea, described how these decisions increase the project's long-term sustainability, and detailed some of the processes required to maintain up-to-date transit schedule information from both SEPTA and PATCO. GoPhillyGo is a mobile app developed to identify cultural sites in Philadelphia and provide travel directions to select locations. These directions emphasize multimodal transportation including bus and subway transit, walking, and biking. Users can choose their preferences for routing based on fastest, flattest, or safest (use dedicated bicycle facilities). Users can also view 20-minute travel sheds based on their location and desired mode of transportation. OpenTripPlanner is used to provide routing direction for the app, while transit data is downloaded from transit agencies using the GTFS format. The basemap data was provided by OpenStreetMap, which was downloaded from <http://www.geofabrik.de/index.html>. The map can also display The Circuit trails, upcoming events from VisitPhilly.com and IndeGo bikeshare locations.

DVRPC Safety Programs

Kevin Murphy, Office of Safety and Congestion Management, DVRPC, presented on the DVRPC Safety Programs and their development and impact on the region. In general, road fatalities have been declining since 2007; however, more progress should be made to eliminate fatalities. The goal is to influence traffic safety capital improvement programs using accurate data and to effectively allocate federal funding to identified problem locations and overall system improvements. Planning and collaboration is accomplished through meetings of the Regional Safety Task Force, traffic and safety studies on corridors such as US 130, and technical assistance for member governments. Regional safety data can be obtained from the Pennsylvania Crash Data Analysis Retrieval Tool, and the New Jersey Plan4Safety online system. DVRPC uses additional qualitative data from police crash reports such as narratives and diagrams to provide additional analysis. For further information on these reports and products visit: <http://www.dvrpc.org/Transportation/Safety/>.

Information Items

- DVRPC recently released "Data Snapshots 2 – Regional Economics, No. 3: Life Science and Health Care."
- LiDAR and aerial imagery should be completed by the end of 2015.
- DVRPC is continuing to work on a refresh of our website, to coincide with our 50th Anniversary.
- GovConNEXT is October.

The next scheduled meeting of the IREG is Wednesday, December 9th, 2015.

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