

**DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**INFORMATION RESOURCE EXCHANGE GROUP**  
*Minutes of June 13, 2007*

**Location:** DVRPC Offices, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, 190 N. Independence Mall West, Philadelphia, PA 19106

**Attendance:**

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## **1. Call to Order and Introductions**

The 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the IREG was called to order at 10:10 a.m. at DVRPC. About 40 members were in attendance.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2007**

The minutes were approved without correction.

## **3. Presentations**

### **A. Testing and Implementation of the UPlan Land Use Planning Model** *(Thomas Walker Ph.D., Manager, Office of Systems Planning, DVRPC and Brad Gudzinis, Transportation Planner, DVRPC)*

UPlan, developed by staff at UC Berkeley, is a land use planning, analysis, and forecasting GIS application that runs inside of GIS software created by ESRI. It uses demographic, employment, land use, and transportation datasets to create zoning build-out analyses and environmental impact analyses, and also provides transportation/land use feedback. UPlan identifies portions of the study area that are served by transportation, and then assigns weights (values) to areas that are either suitable or unsuitable for future development. Factors like parcel size, presence of wetlands or farmland, and environmental conservation areas, among others, are taken into consideration to determine the suitability for development. After running the model, it was found that UPlan had a low allocation error when producing population and employment forecasts. The UPlan model at DVRPC has been calibrated and member government involvement in the process has begun. This application has been used for two pilot studies: US 322 Build-Out Analysis and the NJ 55/LRT Impact Analysis.

UPlan was used to estimate 2030 population and employment build-out along US 322 corridor, involving four municipalities in Gloucester County, NJ. Planners asked the question, what is the maximum population and employment possible with certain constraints? Three alternatives were offered: (1) only build in existing sewerred areas; (2) only build in designated growth areas and (3) unconstrained development in corridor MCDs. After running UPlan, it was found that the build-out estimates varied significantly between alternatives and unconstrained development (maximum build-out) resulted in much higher growth in study MCDs. From the 322 study, it was concluded that UPlan can be utilized for relative comparison of growth scenarios in long-range planning and provide inputs for travel forecasting, and simulated congestion levels are useful in evaluating required transportation improvements.

Using NJ Rt. 55 (Gloucester County, NJ) and its proposed light rail line as a study area, DVRPC also used UPlan to answer the questions: What land use changes occur as a result of a new highway or transit line? Can UPlan show these changes in its allocation? In this analysis, UPlan produced 2030 land use allocation from 1990 base year and compared it with census numbers and DVRPC forecasts. Also, 1990 and (preliminary) 2005 DVRPC land use datasets were used for comparison with the UPlan output. The application was run with NJ 55, without NJ 55 (to simulate land use change without it – a no-build scenario), and with proposed rail stations. It was found that the UPlan allocation was generally consistent with actual land use changes from 1990-2005, development clustered near freeway interchanges (where land was available), and there was little new development near rail stations because these areas are largely built out.

### **B. Landscapes2: Survey Process and Results or "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love 3rd Party Software"**

*(Brian Sweeney, User Liaison, Chester County Planning Commission)*

Landscapes2 is the update of Chester County's comprehensive policy. In an effort to obtain public perception of planning issues and to address the concerns and issues facing individuals, business, and institutions in Chester County, a public opinion web-based survey was conducted. The survey ran from January 22 through March 31, 2007 and took about six minutes to complete. Initially, the County tried to use their own content management system to create the survey, but they encountered various problems. After researching several alternatives, [Zoomerang](#), an online survey tool, was chosen as the survey provider due to its analysis tools, availability, and cost. Zoomerang was already successfully being used by another department within the county, and the Landscapes2 application was able to piggy-back on their current contract.

Seven questions were asked on the survey. Some examples are: What do you like most about Chester County? What do you like least about Chester County? What issues do you believe are the most important facing Chester County today? Where in the County should future development be encouraged? Over 8,000 people filled out the survey, with the average age range of respondents falling between 50 and 64 years old. A majority of people said that they'd like to see more farmland preservation and downtown revitalization throughout the county. A full report of the survey's results are available at [landscapes2.org](#).

#### **4. Potential FY 2009 DVRPC Work Program Projects**

Several staff members at DVRPC collaborated to come up with the following potential work program projects for FY 2009.

- Annual Orthoimagery
  - Dating back to 1959 and continuing from 1965 through 2005, DVRPC has been acquiring aerial photographs, and more recently, orthoimagery for the entire DVRPC region on a five-year cycle. DVRPC, its member governments, and the public, use the images as a data development and planning tool. This continuing project would fund annual digital imagery for the region between the existing five-year cycle. Current and accurate information would enable better-informed decision-making at the local, county, and regional levels.
  - *Requirements:* Investigate alternative solutions to traditional orthoimagery solution to reduce costs. These could include lower resolution, reuse of existing digital elevation model, satellite imagery, lease arrangements, etc.
- Member Governments GIS Information Network
  - Through the success of the Region-wide Transportation GIS project, much of the groundwork is in place to extend the inter-agency cooperation and data sharing to include all GIS data. This project would utilize the recent advances in software technology to provide seamless access to data stored at each location through ESRI's new release of ArcGIS Server software. GIS users at each member government location would be able to connect to data stored and managed at another member government's location through traditional desktop GIS software or a web-interface.
  - *Requirements:* ArcGIS Server software installed at each member government, data sharing agreements executed between all parties, investigation and establishment of data standards, metadata development.
- Demonstration Project using the FEMA HAZUS-MH Software
  - HAZUS-MH is a free, powerful risk assessment software program for analyzing potential losses from floods, hurricane winds and earthquakes. In HAZUS-MH, current scientific and engineering knowledge is coupled with the latest geographic information systems (GIS) technology to produce estimates of hazard-related damage before, or after a disaster occurs. Flood-prone communities in the region would be considered for this pilot project.
  - *Requirements:* HAZUS-MH Version 1.2 software installed on a workstation, FEMA training for staff using the software, budget for staff to perform analysis and develop recommendations for member governments.

At the March 2007 IREG meeting, members were asked to send potential work program ideas to Joe Fazekas, but no additional ideas were received.

## **5. Census Update**

Noemi Mendez, a Geographer from the Philadelphia Regional Office of the U.S. Census Bureau, gave an update on the following recent activities:

- Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA):
  - Program will run from Summer of 2007 to April 2008
  - The address list generated from this project will be used for 2010 mailings
  - Invitation will be going out to participating governments in August 2007
  - The last day to sign up with the guarantee of the 120 day review period is November 17, 2007
- Participants Statistical Areas Program (2008):
  - Criteria for this program was released in the Federal Register and is available online
  - Bureau is looking for public comment on proposed boundary changes by July 7, 2007
- Census Complete Count Committee Program:
  - Local community leaders appoint to promote census on the local level
- Employment:
  - Local census offices will be opening in early 2008
  - Bureau will begin employment search in Fall 2007

## **6. DVRPC Work Program Update**

### **A. New DVRPC Data Bulletins**

Joe Fazekas announced that there are no new bulletins at this time. Upcoming bulletins will be for 2006 Building Permit data and DVRPC population estimates.

### **B. New DVRPC Publications**

Mr. Fazekas reported that DVRPC has recently launched a publications search engine on their website (<http://www.dvrpc.org/asp/pubs/search.asp>). Over 500 publications have been catalogued and can be queried by year, author, and subject matter. In addition to this, on the Commission intranet, obsolete reports have been catalogued. Approximately five publications have been released, but more will be produced shortly, as the Fiscal Year ends in July. Also, reports that were previously only available for a fee will be available for free download from DVRPC's website this summer.

### **C. Regional Online Information Network**

Mr. Fazekas announced the following:

- DVRPC has launched their new web server in February and is working out well
- A web-based application for electronic timesheets will begin July 1<sup>st</sup>
- A backup strategy for the Commission has been agreed upon
- Applications in progress
  - Internet airport directory
  - AJAX and RSS feed integration

- Data navigator, with a geographic search component in the future
- All Windows NT PC's have been removed from the floor
- Regional Open Space Priorities ([www.regionalgreenplan.org](http://www.regionalgreenplan.org)) and Air Quality Partnership ([www.airqualitypartnership.org](http://www.airqualitypartnership.org)) marketing websites have been launched/re-launched
- Preliminary research is being conducted for DVRPC website redesign and Mr. Fazekas is looking for ideas/suggestions/examples from IREG members

#### **D. Year 2005 Aerial Imagery**

William Stevens reported that additional areas re-flown in Spring, 2007 should be approved by June 15, 2007. Metadata for imagery has not yet been received, and vendor will be giving DVRPC a plotting application that will be used in the Map Sales division.

#### **E. Region-Wide Transportation GIS Development**

Mr. Stevens reported that proposals from Michael Baker Corporation/geographIT, L. Robert Kimball & Associates, and Geodecisions, were received in April. After the three vendors were brought in for further questions, it was decided that Geodecisions best met the scope of the project. They will be under contract (for one year) beginning July 1, 2007 and will provide many products including, but not limited to, a region-wide linear-referenced road network with address ranges, scripts for internal updates of data, and a possible traffic counting application.

Nathan Miller of SEPTA reported that he has been working on ortho-rectifying the freight and SEPTA rail-lines for the region. This network will have mile posts of all lines and will contain ownership and rights information as well. Expected completion date – July 18, 2007.

### **7. Member Roundtable**

- Kevin McCullough from the Pennsylvania State Data Center reported that the 2007 County Data Book series has been released. Mr. McCullough also announced their 2007 Users Conference will be held in Hershey, PA on September 13, 2007.
- Doug Schliefer of NJ Office of GIS reported to the committee that a feasibility study is underway to merge TeleAtlas data with NJDOT data in order to create one master road network for the state. They are also reviewing their 2007 orthophotographs (which may be available on the web by late fall) and are completing MCD boundary updates with help from the state's counties. In an effort to put NJ on the National Map, several ArcIMS services are being developed.
- Merrilee Torres, from Burlington County, announced that they are in the process of creating a new official county map and would like feedback from the county MCD's in order to create the most accurate map possible. Vacancies have been filled in their GIS department, and parcel and storm water infrastructure updates are in the works.
- Will Stevens from DVRPC reported that he recently attended a PA MAP workshop in Harrisburg. Pennsylvania has launched its PA MAP program, and, like NJ, is working on gaining a presence on the National Map.
- Tom Denton from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia announced that they will be upgrading from ArcMap 8.2 to ArcMap 9.2 shortly. In the future, the Diocese may be expanding their GIS-user base.

### **8. Information Items**

#### **A. Committee Reports**

##### **a. Online GIS Subcommittee Meeting**

Chris Pollard reported that, at the March meeting, staff from the Mayors Office of Information,

Burlington County, and Gloucester County discussed the current and future status of their online mapping services. The next meeting will be held immediately after the IREG adjourns.

**b. Webmasters Subcommittee Meeting**

Joe Fazekas invited interested parties to attend the next meeting after lunch, following the Online GIS Subcommittee Meeting.

**B. Recent Event Reports**

- a. Towson University 20th Annual GIS Conference – Doug Schleifer from NJOIT - OGIS presented
- b. 99th Annual American Planning Association National Conference – DVRPC was part of the host committee and had a table at the conference. A number of DVRPC staff members held walking tours, displayed their work at poster sessions, and presented at the conference. There were over 6,000 people in attendance. The 100<sup>th</sup> APA conference will be held in Las Vegas at the end of April 2008

**C. Upcoming Events**

- a. PA Digital Government Summit will take place from June 19 – 20
- b. National Association of Government Webmasters Conference is being held in Valley Forge from September 19 – 21. This conference is offering a many training sessions and is a great way to learn more about web programming at a very low cost.
- c. Added Item: MAC-URISA Fall meeting will be held at the Rutgers Eco-Complex in Bordentown, NJ; date and subject TBD
- d. Added Item: MAC-URISA 2008 conference, previously held at Rutgers University, will be held at a new venue and will also be changing to a 2-day conference, 1-day workshop format.

**9. Old Business**

No old business was presented at this time.

**10. New Business**

No new business was presented at this time.

**11. Adjournment**

The IREG meeting was adjourned at 11:55 pm

**Materials Available at the Meeting**

- Potential FY 2009 Work Program Recommendations
- Handout of DVRPC's Special Program Websites
- US Census Bureau: *"Complete Count Committee Program: On the Road to the 2010 Census"* Issued May 2007
- APA: "InfoTEXT" Winter/Spring 2007
- DVRPC: "DVRPC News" Spring 2007

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