Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

Information Resource Exchange Group
Highlights from meeting of Wednesday, March 5, 2013

The 90th meeting of the Information Resources Exchange Group (IREG) was called to order at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's office by Jason Miller, GIS Specialist, Burlington County Bridge Commission, and IREG Chair. Thirty-eight people were in attendance. Highlights from the December 11 meeting were available as a handout and on the internet.

Presentations

Grant Ervin, Public Safety GIS Program Manager, City of Philadelphia, and Kevin Thompson, Director of Research and Analysis, Philadelphia Police Department, presented on the implementation of the city-wide public safety GIS system used by various agencies including the city police and fire departments, emergency services, and the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center. With no annual budget and limited staff, they were tasked with designing an enterprise-level GIS system that would be utilized in office and in the field. Alongside a smart policing initiative providing training to officers and detectives, the GIS system presents a single source of information for rapid response, information dissemination, and detailed recording that allows proactive police work at the district level, where crime is occurring. An active strategy of problem observation, data aggregation, fact checking, pattern identification, mitigation strategy development, and strategy implementation is aided in every step by improving access to relative information. In addition to comprehensive crime mapping, the system contains data on arrest warrants, utility infrastructure, security cameras, emergency and public services, and other relevant layers that contribute to the mission of all public safety initiatives. By centralizing data between agencies, access and communication is increased to aid in proper response and agency coordination. Safety and security in Philadelphia is directly impacted by the GIS provided to public safety agencies. In the future, incorporation of more data layers and direct access to proprietary security and public systems will allow better inter-departmental communication and response in emergency situations.

Elise Turner, Communications Manager, DVRPC, shared insights on DVRPC's recently approved social media plan and information needed for public agencies to develop social media policies and strategies. The recent launch of Facebook and LinkedIn follows after a successful Twitter strategy. In developing a plan for social media, it is important to identify the goal of a social media campaign. For DVRPC in particular, the goal of all social media strategies is to increase web traffic on DVRPC's website, www.dvrpc .org, and to best communicate DVRPC's work to the citizens of its nine counties. Social media should support the mission of the organization as well as meet communication goals. Organizational policies are required to define personnel responsible for managing social media sites, developing content, interacting with users, and dealing with legal issues that may arise. Generating information may be tasked to a committee of department representations or gathered in another way such as email or directly from department managers. However, it is suggested all posting be limited to experienced public affairs staff. When implementing a social media strategy, proper metrics

should be established to evaluate the success of a campaign. With proper measurement, time and resources can be best utilized to make a positive impact on the community.

Gregory Krykewycz, Manager, Office of Transit, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Planning, DVRPC demonstrated a new public survey tool using a mobile application to track bicycle trips in Philadelphia and the region. Bicycling is the fastest growing mode of transportation in Philadelphia and such growth requires proper planning of facilities. In order to help develop bicycle transportation planning and best focus resources where they are needed, data on trip locations, length, time of day, and frequency are required. Historically, it has been difficult to gather such data, but the goal of this application is to make it simple for the public to provide detailed information on their travel habits for this mode of transportation. Analysis will help provide insight into the desirability of certain facilities, such as dedicated bike trails, separated bike lanes, shared travel lanes, and other options. Finding what works best and which existing facilities are underutilized will help shape planning for the future of bicycle activity in Philadelphia.

Mike Ruane, Transportation Planner, DVRPC presented a new online application designed to inventory and categorize freight facilities within the region. Philly Freight Finder provides an easy to search interface to find various facilities and infrastructure related to freight transportation. By combining a simple overview dashboard containing specific reporting metrics with a more detailed web map, the application allows users to quickly gather the information they need about each county and find more detailed information for individual locations and routes. This application provides valuable information that is not otherwise available and standardizes data fields across all facility types. This information can then be analyzed for freight planning, economic development, transportation planning, and land use purposes.

Other Business

- Joe Fazekas recognized Bob Walker, Chester County, for his long-time commitment to IREG and Chester County and wished him well in his upcoming retirement.
- Noemi Mendez Eliasen, Census Bureau, announced the release of new ACS data and provided handouts. Region-wide data can be found on DVRPC's website at www.dvrpc.org/census and at www.census.gov
- Cynthia McCoy, FEMA Region III, announced new FEMA Hazus software and accompanying training courses. More information is available at www.fema.gov/hazus-training
- MAC URISA 2014 will be held October 22-24, 2014 in Atlantic City, NJ. The conference is currently seeking presenters. More information can be found at www.macurisa.org/2014
- Burlington County has developed an economic development strategy, called Shop Burlington County First, to help local businesses. More information on participation is available at www.shopburlingtoncounty.com