

ABJ30 (1)
Subcommittee on Census Data and Transportation Planning
January 14, 2004
Wednesday, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m.
Hilton Hotel, Washington DC
Chair: Bob Sicko, Mirai Associates (bob@miraiassociates.com)
MEETING NOTES

(Attendees; Bob Sicko has the list)

1. Introduction with discussion of census related activities

Bob Sicko, Subcommittee Chair, opened the meeting at 2:30 PM. This was followed by attendees introducing themselves, and mentioning their recent involvement with census data.

2. American Community Survey (ACS)

a.) Overview of ACS and Census 2010 activities.

Jay Waite, Associate Director for Decennial Census and American Community Survey, said that the data world is about to change dramatically. Census 2000 is the last one that will use a long form questionnaire. It will be replaced by the ACS, which while similar to the long form, will be conducted every month, with data released every year. Rhetorically, Jay asked if we would you rather have five-year moving average data every year, or a large crosssectional sample once every ten years. Rather than the decennial census nonresponse follow up by non-professionals, ACS will use a professional interviewing staff.

The nationwide ACS will start in July 2004. Thus, the earliest that small geographic reporting, e.g. block group, would be available would be an accumulation of 2005 through 2009 data, with data release toward the end of 2010. Jay noted that his focus is to make sure that the ACS is accepted as a replacement of the long form. There will be a process for modifying the questionnaire content with any changes taking place with the 2008 collection year. However, the Census Bureau will be very slow to modify questions until they know that ACS is working. There is a need to pretest any new questions, and a methods panel will be set up. Topics need to go to Congress in 2005; by 2006 there will be a pretty good version of the questions; and by 2007, a close to final version of the questionnaire. There will be dialogue with users, including each of 21 Federal agencies, with DOT in early to mid-March. Jay assumes that the transportation data community's focus is on small-area data. He doesn't know how frequently post-2010 TAZ data will be published, but the capability to do it at frequent intervals will exist. Census staff are currently working on workplace coding options. The five-year accumulated data will be published in the geography of the last year, so that 2010 data would reflect annexations up to that year. Regarding Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), ACS will look to the 2010 Census as the source of PUMA definition. Mid-decade PUMA changes are possible, but the question is who would pay for them. Jay concluded by saying that ACS is part of the 2010 Census and the future of the long form, and that we are very fortunate to be involved in something so innovative.

Thabet Zakaria, DVRPC said that he has written a memorandum to the Census Bureau concerning his doubts that the ACS will provide data with the quality of the decennial census . Even with the larger sample size of Census 2000, he found problems in approximately ten percent of his municipalities. In addition, ACS will not have the benefit of the advertising and publicity, nor the questionnaires in as many languages that a decennial Census has. He recommended that USDOT do research on the data from the 3,000,000 households (and later the 15,000,000) at TAZ level. [Note: In a subsequent review of Mr. Zakaria's analysis it was learned that direct comparisons between the decennial census data and ACS should not be made. The ACS test sites did not include group quarters information with the decennial data did.]

b.) Using ACS Data for Transportation: NCHRP 08-48.

Kevin Tierney, Cambridge Systematics, discussed the NCHRP project. The purpose of the project is to develop a guidebook for transportation planners about how to use ACS, adjust for the loss of the long form, and to identify new uses for the data. Information will be collected on how people have used CTPP data, how they plan to use CTPP 2000, and the changes entailed in using ACS data where the decennial census data have traditionally been used. The next steps include a detailed outline followed by analysis of workplace and worker flow data. A draft of the guidebook is to be available for the Spring 2005 TRB Census data conference in Irvine, CA.

c.) Report on FHWA-sponsored research.

Elaine Murakami stated that to augment the NCHRP project DOT has contracted with the Census Bureau for a special tabulation of the 3-year test ACS data. The tabulation is designed as a "mini CTPP" with a Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 set. Although the data tabulation was developed to support the research associated with the NCHRP project, the data will also be made available to interested researchers

Other research underway consists of two projects, one with Emily Parkany and another with Deb Neimeier. These two projects were conducted at a Census Bureau Research Data Center, one in Boston and the other in Berkeley, CA. They are nearing completion.

d.) ACS analysis in San Francisco and Broward County, FL.

Wende Mix, consultant, reported on an evaluation of 1991-2001 ACS data, using three-year averages compared to Census 2000 data. At the county level, trip characteristics showed no differences, except for average time to work. At the tract level, calculating a three-year average for place of work and worker flow data presented problems, especially when certain origin-destination pairs have data in fewer than three years. Wende used a second approach to calculate three-year averages by imputation of the missing data. In addition, Wende suggested that using LED data could enhance ACS. Jay White commented that ACS data reflecting job concentrations will be better than Census 2000, but data for sparse job areas will not be as good. ACS will provide much higher quality answers, but there will be fewer of them.

3. Committee Business. Besides the approval of last year's meeting minutes, the following events were mentioned:

- a) Planning Applications Conference in Baton Rouge (April, 2003)
- b) Mid-year meeting, Portland, OR (July, 2003)

- c) Mid-year meeting in conjunction with NATMEC, San Diego (June 27-30,2004)
- d) Poster Session, (Jan. 2003, Jan. 2004)
- e) TRB Census data conference, (Spring 2005)
- f) Transportation Applications Meeting , Portland, OR (Spring 2005)

4. CTPP 2000

a.) Data Release and Use.

Phil Salopek, Census Bureau, reported that CTPP Part 1 data were sent out last year during July and August. The final Part 1 files will be made after the preliminary Part 2 CDs are distributed. BTS will handle the distribution of Part 1 CDs. Part 2 place of work data distribution is just starting. The distribution of Part 2 CDs with software should start by next week. Phil asked that recipients please look at both data and software, and get back to him with any problems. Part 3 worker flow requires more work on the software, that could take another six weeks. Part 3 distribution is expected to start in late March.

b.) MPO use of Census products (CTPP, PUMS) for transportation modeling updates.

Larry Blain, Puget Sound Regional Council, described his use of PUMS data for cross tabulation, and use of both PUMS and SF3 for urban simulation. Ken Cervenka, NCTCOG, will do reasonableness checks on the worker flow data, and use PUMS to analyze vehicle availability. Chuck Purvis, MTC, distributed a one-page handout describing four travel demand modeling applications using PUMS, five examples of exploratory research with PUMS as a key data source, and four other research efforts related to transit marketing, environmental justice, and household income by age of householder.

5. Other.

Ed Christopher stated that the CTPP list serve has new software which allows for easier member sign up, a digest function and better spam blocking. The listserv currently has 747 subscribers.

6. Adjournment.

Chair Bob Sicko adjourned the meeting at 4:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Limoges, Secretary