

D R A F T
Meeting Minutes
Delaware Population Consortium
March 23, 2006
10:00 a.m.
Haslet Armory
Dover, DE

In Attendance:

Kelly Crumpley – Kent Co.	Dan Blevins – WILMAPCO
Derrick Lightfoot, AICP – City of Wilmington	Burt Samuelson – WILMAPCO
Jennifer Leister – New Castle Co.	Janelle Cornwell – City of Dover
Mike Mahaffie – State Planning Coordination	Ed Simon – Dept. of Labor
Ric Kautz – Sussex Co.	Javier Arce – DSHA
Ed Ratledge – University of Delaware	Barbara Gladders – Public Health
Don Berry – Dept. of Education	

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

Review of Draft Update of 2005 Projections

The meeting was called to review potential changes to the 2005 Projections Series, based on new data inputs.

Ed Ratledge had provided a spreadsheet for review, based on the new 2005 county estimates from the Census Bureau. The meeting was spent in a review of the changes suggested by those estimates.

According to Ed, Kent County has had a concern about the need for schools to meet growing population. The DPC numbers had not shown as much growth in the school-age population as is suggested by other new data inputs. The Census Bureau estimates show strong growth in Kent County in the last several years, though the trend appears to be slowing.

Ed noted that noticed that school enrollment for the county shows a larger African American component than had been expected, about 30% of the total population. He noted that that means that the migration component for African Americans should be raised in the model. That would change the racial distribution. Ed asked members to review the new distribution to see for review to see if it fits what members are observing.

Ed has also been looking at data on the elder population in Kent County. He said that he is not seeing as high a ratio in the Medicare data as would be expected. There may be some other health services for area retirees, a military benefit, for example, that may be masking the expected population information from Medicare. Ed noted that he will look at several other sources to fine-tune the model.

Ed explained that when all of the new data inputs are added, the migration numbers look unusually high in the short term, given the long term totals we have been using. He noted that it is not certain that the trend of growth can continue as strongly as it has, but that the last several years suggest a somewhat higher growth rate in the out years than have been used in the model.

Ed suggested that the Consortium use this data as a starting point for the 2006 Projections series, rather than as an update to the 2005 series, since there are a number of issues that the new data have raised that will need to be explored by the Consortium. There was general agreement among the Consortium members to follow this approach.

There was general discussion about the newest data. Subjects included the race breakdown and the fact that Hispanic Origin is a factor separate from race. There was discussion of the likelihood that the very strong growth seen in Kent County in recent years can continue at the same pace or if it will have to decrease. Ed noted that you usually don't see a surge like that continue unabated.

There was also a wide-ranging discussion of whether or not the counties and businesses are capable of building and serving the number of new housing units suggested by the possibly higher projections. Possible limiting factors discussed included infrastructure (roads, water, and sewer), government services, education and employment.

As an example, Ed noted that Kent County would have to build 20,000 new units by 2030 to meet existing population projections.

The Consortium members also discussed the potential for the need to increase infrastructure and facilities to meet this growth adding too much to the cost of housing in the area, further complicating the issue.

There was also a discussion of the role that politics will play in how the local governments can respond to the challenges of the potential growth.

It was generally agreed that the Consortium members should work in the short term to further define potential limiting factors and report back on the likelihood of any of those factors causing a slowing of growth in any of the different jurisdictions. The County representatives were also asked to indicate how much of future growth will likely occur in their different county subdivisions.

Members will report back at the next meeting, which was tentatively set for May 3.

Meanwhile, Ed Ratledge agreed to further refine the draft projections, based on new data, for further review.

It was suggested that after completing the 2006 Projections series, the Consortium look into measuring and publishing a report on the various impacts and implications of the growth trends suggested by the projections.

The meeting adjourned at approximately noon.