

Summary Major 2002 MetroGIS Awards and Accomplishments

1) Awards

- Recipient of URISA's 2002 Exemplary Systems in Government ([ESIG Award](#)) – Enterprise Systems
- Recipient of MnAPA's [Planning Merit Award](#) for an Outstanding Planning Tool

2) Endorsed Regional Data Solutions:

- a) [Parcel Data: Public and Academic Sector Users](#): Expanded the dataset by adding 6 more attributes and clarified roles and responsibilities – Versions 1.1 (Jan. 9) and Version 1.2 (Oct. 22).
- b) [Parcel Data: Non-Profit and Private Sector Users](#): Version 1, which was limited to 2 attributes, was abandoned in May. Version 2 guidelines (endorsed by Policy Board Oct. 22) call for distribution of the same data as available to the Public Sector and use of a single licensing document for access to all seven counties' data.
- c) [Planned Land Use](#): Version 1 endorsed in April. Awarded a Planning Merit Award for an Outstanding Planning Tool by MnAPA.
- d) [2000 Census Geography](#): Completed in July.
- e) [Census Accessibility](#): Tutorials and templates developed to improve usability of US Census data.
- f) [Highways and Roads](#): Peer Review Forum hosted October 24.

3) DataFinder Café

Implemented state-of-the-art data distribution tool (MetroGIS DataFinder Café - www.datafinder.org) permitting users to download data for their specified themes and attributes for their defined areas of geographic interest, in multiple formats. A robust security mechanism and leading edge Web Map Services (WMS) were also incorporated. Negotiations were initiated with LMIC to expand the Café's functionality statewide and add several enhancements desired by the MetroGIS community. A pilot project with the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (Region 6W) - Appleton, MN was initiated, whereby Region 6W and its affiliated counties will evaluate the Café's functionality for their respective data distribution needs.

4) Business Plan

2003-2005 Business Plan adopted Oct 22. Eight challenge areas identified. Seven previously identified core functions retained but expanded to include collaboration on commonly needed geodata applications that rely upon endorsed regional data solutions. The [2003 workplan](#) proposes several ambitious activities in response to the Plan.

5) Measuring Performance and Benefits of MetroGIS

Performance Measures Plan adopted in April. Several measures are based upon statistics obtained for DataFinder/DataFinder Café and testimonials from benefiting organizations. Five [testimonials](#) were completed. The first quarterly measurement [report](#), prepared in December and presented to the Policy Board in January 2003, demonstrates that MetroGIS's efforts are improving efficiency and decision.

6) Inaugural Participant Appreciation Event

Hosted an event on November 19 to recognize 14 participants who have provided exemplary leadership and the Metropolitan Council for sponsoring MetroGIS. Nancy Tosta, recipient of URISA's 2002 Leadership Award, was the keynote speaker. Attended by over 70 individuals including several Board members.

7) Impact on Related Geodata Initiatives Beyond The Metro Area

MetroGIS's core philosophy has been incorporated into the Cadastre (Parcels) I-Plan for the State of Minnesota, an initiative that is representative of all interests in Minnesota, public and private, that utilize geodata technology. MetroGIS's practices concerning other data of state significance – street centerlines, jurisdictional boundaries, hydrology, etc. will also likely have an influence on state policy. Several Greater Minnesota geodata collaboratives have inquired about MetroGIS's practices as opposed to “reinventing the wheel”.

Major MetroGIS

Detailed Listing of Significant Accomplishments

2002

I. Awards/Recognition

- a. Oct.: URISA's Exemplary Systems in Government Award (ESIG) – Enterprise Systems Category
- b. Sep.: MnAPA Planning Merit Award for an Outstanding Planning Tool (MetroGIS's Regional Planned Land Use Dataset)
- c. Aug.: Recognized as an I-Team in conjunction for the national initiative

II. Regional Information Need/Data Solutions:

a. Census Geography

- 2000 Census Geography: Completed in July
- Accessibility Workgroup: Tutorials and templates developed and posted on websites to improve usability of US Census data

b. Highways and Roads:

- Peer Review Forum hosted October 24
- Workgroup to refine the data specifications identified at the peer Review Forum created in November

c. Parcels:

- Government and Academic Interests: Expanded the dataset by adding 6 attributes for a total of 25 and clarified roles and responsibilities – Versions 1.1 (Jan 9) and Version 1.2 (Oct 22) adopted and implemented. The regional Parcel Dataset distributed via the Internet (DataFinder Café) for first time in July. The first update was available October 1. Update schedule set: Jan. 1, Apr. 1, Jul. 1 and Oct. 1.
- Non-Profit and For-Profit Version. Version 1, which was limited to 2 attributes, was abandoned in May. A study was undertaken to evaluate why no there was interest. Version 2 guidelines were endorsed by the Policy Board Oct. 22 to address lessons learned with Version 1 by permitting subsetting and access to the same regional dataset available to the public sector. In addition the Board directed an investigation of a collaborative means for counties to provide access to portions of the regional dataset and use of a single licensing document for access to all seven counties' data.

d. Planned Future Land Use: Completed in April. Awarded a Planning Merit Award from the MnAPA.

e. Street Centerline Dataset:

Oct.- The Lawrence Group (TLG) authorized this dataset to be distributed via DataFinder Café in addition to FTP as has been the practice since 1997. Updates provided quarterly – Mar. 1, Jun. 1, Sep.1, and Dec.1.

III. Special Studies/Projects

a. Business Plan

A 2003-2005 MetroGIS Business Plan was developed with the assistance of a representative workgroup and adopted by the Policy Board on October 22. Eight challenge areas were identified. Core functions cited in the 2000-2003 Plan remained unchanged but were expanded to include collaboration on commonly needed applications that rely upon endorsed regional data solutions.

b. Performance Measures Plan

A Performance Measures Plan was adopted on April 10. Several measures were put in place based upon DataFinder/DataFinder Café statistics and testimonials from benefiting organizations. Five testimonials were prepared. Test run of reporting of the adopted measure indices undertaken in December.

c. Trademark Registration for "MetroGIS" and "MetroGIS DataFinder" Terms

The Metropolitan Council received service mark (SM) approval was received from the State of Minnesota for the terms "MetroGIS" and "MetroGIS DataFinder" with the motto "Sharing

Information Across Boundaries”. Federal service mark (SM) approval was received for “MetroGIS DataFinder” and is being processed for “MetroGIS”.

IV. Data Discovery and Acquisition

a. Enhance MetroGIS DataFinder

- DataFinder Café: DataFinder was expanded to include a state-of-the-art data distribution tool (DataFinder Café) permitting downloading of user-specified data themes and attributes for user-defined areas of geographic interest, in multiple formats. The new tool also includes a robust security mechanism and leading edge Web Map Services (WMS) technology. Syncline, Inc., a software development firm located in Boston, MA was retained to assist MetroGIS with this project.
- ISO Data Theme Standard: DataFinder’s data theme categories were modified jointly with those used for state’s Clearinghouse to correspond with the International Standards Organization (ISO) standard. To our knowledge we are the first to do so.
- User Information: The databases that support DataFinder and DataFinder Café were modified to permit MetroGIS to better measure usage and characteristics of use.

b. Collaboration with State’s GeoGateway Expansion

The MN Land Management Information Center (LMIC) elected to retain Syncline, developer of MetroGIS DataFinder Café, to expand the Café’s functionality statewide and in so doing partner with the MetroGIS community to develop additional functionality that was beyond the scope of MetroGIS’s Version 1 project.

b. One-time software/application programming funding assistance

Each of the seven Counties was offered supplemental funding of around \$1,500 to \$1,800 to accomplish programming to improve their efficiency to extract and reformat parcel attribute data associated with the endorsed regional parcel dataset. Several accepted the funding and others accomplished the programming in-house. All but Anoka County made improvements to their data extraction procedures. Anoka County postponed their work until their new property records application is fully functional, proposed for sometime in 2003.

c. Promotion of DataFinder as a common tool

- A successful test was conducted from August to September by the City of St. Paul to investigate the possibility of using MetroGIS’s DataFinder Café to support the City’s internal and external geodata distribution needs. St. Paul is currently using Café in this capacity.
- Washington County was granted permission in Sept. to use the web server which supports Café to provide external Internet access to the county’s parcel query application and is currently doing so.

V. Outreach

- a. Annual Report: The 2001 Annual Report was mailed to over 1500 persons in March and handed out at several conferences and forums. The format was expanded from previous versions. A copy is available for viewing at http://www.metrogis.org/about/annual_reports/index.shtml.
- b. Newsletter Articles: Articles about MetroGIS’s activities and accomplishments were submitted for the three issues of the statewide GIS/LIS newsletter.
- c. www.metrogis.org: This website serves as MetroGIS’s institutional memory. See Section VI(b).
- d. The Coordinating Committee was expanded to include representatives from the Metropolitan 911 Board, Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), and the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District.
- e. Participant Appreciation Event: A special event was hosted the evening of November 19 to thank the over 470 participants in MetroGIS’s activities and to present Certificates of Appreciation to 14 participants who have provided exemplary leadership and to the Metropolitan Council for sponsoring MetroGIS. Nancy Tosta was the keynote speaker. It was attended by over 70 individuals, including eight Policy Board members.
- f. LIDAR Information Forum: The Ramsey County Surveyor’s Office organized and hosted this forum. MetroGIS’s participant contact information was used to quickly and efficiently notify a broad audience of prospective attendees of this opportunity.

g. Coordination with **State** Geospatial Activities/Information Requests:

- The MetroGIS Staff Coordinator served on the visioning workgroup for a statewide parcel data solution as a component of the State's Spatial Data Infrastructure and I-Planning effort (Land Records Modernization Committee of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information.) The resulting vision statement and Cadastre I-Plan have embedded in them MetroGIS's fundamental philosophies.
- Staff and committee members also served as liaisons to Council committees and workgroups: Hydrographic, Data Standards, Land Records Modernization Committee, and Data Sharing Guidelines Workgroup.
- On April 9 and October 21, the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator shared MetroGIS's objectives, accomplishments, and lessons learned at two U of M Graduate GIS Seminars.
- In May, Alison Slaats, MetroGIS DataFinder Manager, teamed up with LMIC and Scott County to help Goodhue County provide an online query capability, which supports automated distribution of parcel information via the Internet.
- In June and July, staff spent the equivalent of 2-3 days with staff from the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) explaining the capabilities of DataFinder Café, which the ARDC has an interest in deploying in their area, and MetroGIS's data sharing practices.
- From October to December, staff assisted Dr. Francis Harvey, U of M Geography Department, with applications for two National Science Foundation grants to: 1) develop a geodata semantics protocol that would simplify the process of searching for needed and relevant data via the Internet and 2) investigate the underpinnings of successful informal data sharing relationships.
- Via the Land Records Modernization Committee of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information, staff established a networking relationship with representatives from Chisago, Goodhue, and Wright Counties in accordance with MetroGIS's Outreach Plan, relating to the collar counties, and to share knowledge about common GIS needs and opportunities.
- Several members of MetroGIS's Coordinating Committee and the Staff Coordinator participated on the GIS curriculum committee for Anoka-Ramsey Community College, which meets 2-3 times per year.

h. Coordination with **National/International** Geospatial Activities/Information Requests:

- Policy Board Chair Victoria Reinhardt served as a charter member of the GeoData Alliance (GDA) National Board of Trustees from January 1 through October 25 (www.geoall.net). She did not seek reelection to the Board.
- Feb. 20: A three-person delegation from Japan spent the day interviewing staff and Coordinating Committee and Policy Board members to learn more about MetroGIS's organizational structure, philosophies, functions, accomplishments, and benefits.
- Mar. - Apr.: Staff responded to several phone and email inquiries from a Victoria, British Columbia collaborative that wanted to better understand MetroGIS's organizational structure, philosophies, functions, and lessons learned.
- Mar.: The Staff Coordinator was interviewed by phone and email on a couple of occasions by David Dubauskas, a MSc UniGIS candidate at a school in England, for his thesis entitled "A Conceptual Business Model for a Regional Multi-Participant Local Government GIS", which was submitted in May. A copy of the paper was submitted to MetroGIS staff.
- Nov. 12: The DataFinder Manager submitted written comments to the USGS/FGDC concerning its proposed national GeoSpatial One Stop project. (These comments are available upon request.)
- Sep. 18: Rick Gelbmann, Metropolitan Council GIS Manager, attended an HSIP Leadership Summit in Washington D.C.
- Aug. 26 and Oct. 9: Tom Grimm of WorldQuest, a non-profit that specializes in promoting geospatial technology nationally and internationally, interviewed staff about MetroGIS. He was seeking to locate a branch office in the Twin Cities.
- Oct. 10: Staff responded to a survey regarding parcel data collection conducted by David Stage with the University of Florida on behalf of the FGDC.
- Oct. 30: The Staff Coordinator proposed the formation of a Special Interest Group (SIG) to promote networking among area integrators across the country. Seven organizations thus far have expressed interest. Denver COG; King County, Washington; Eastern Florida Planning

Commission; San Francisco Bay Area COG; Nashville, Tennessee; Sacramento COG; and OGETA in Metro Atlanta. A website hosted in Boston is being investigated as the conduit to grow the SIG and serve as the base for exchange of information/networking.

- Oct. 30: GeoWorld Magazine invited MetroGIS to submit an article for publication that focuses on MetroGIS's unconventional organizational structure, objectives, benefits that have been realized from MetroGIS's existence, and lessons learned. Jeanne Landkamer has been retained to write the article. The article was submitted January 13 for publication in March 2003.
 - Nov. 18: Staff was interviewed by a consultant team working with the Sacramento, California COG about MetroGIS's organizational structure, objectives, lessons learned, financing, and challenges ahead. The COG is seeking recognition as one of 17 Regional GIS Councils to serve the State of California.
 - Nov 22: Staff participated in a lengthy interview by Joe Francia, managing editor for DirectionsMag, an online publication that focuses on the geospatial community. An article is tentatively scheduled to be published in January or February 2003.
 - Staff submitted comments throughout the year and discussions were held with coordinators of The National Map, I-Team, and U.S. Census Bureau's TIGER initiatives to share MetroGIS's philosophy and to encourage partnering with MetroGIS to test and refine these national initiatives relative to needs in this area.
- i. Presentations about MetroGIS:
- Jul. 15: Excellence in Government Conference in Washington D.C. The Staff Coordinator's presentation focused on why MetroGIS was formed, its objectives, benefits, and lesson learned.
 - Sep. 12: Minnesota APA Annual Conference in Minneapolis. Staff made a presentation about MetroGIS's endorsed Regional Planned Land Use Dataset.
 - Sep. 19: National Capital Planning Commission in Washington D.C. Staff made a presentation focused on why MetroGIS was formed, its unconventional organizational structure, objectives, benefits, challenges ahead, and lesson learned.
 - Sep. 20: Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Conference in Budapest, Hungary. Dr. Francis Harvey presented MetroGIS's paper, which was written by the Staff Coordinator and David Arbeit (LMIC).
 - Oct. 2-4: Annual Minnesota GIS/LIS Conference in Duluth: Staff participated in three panel sessions – MetroGIS DataFinder Café's capabilities and lessons learned, MetroGIS's I-Team experience, and MetroGIS's data practices.
 - Oct. 21: Graduate GIS Seminar, Univ. of MN. The MetroGIS Staff Coordinator shared MetroGIS's objectives and accomplishments.
 - Oct 28-30: National URISA Conference in Chicago. MetroGIS was presented with URISA's 2002 ESIG Award and staff participated in two panel sessions – story of the development of DataFinder Café and organizational aspects of data sharing.
- j. GIS User Groups: MetroGIS staff attended county GIS user group meetings to learn about matters of interest to each group and to apprise them of MetroGIS activities. Contact was also made with the Edulog Users Group (school transportation management).

VI. Project Management/Administration

- a. Obtained Metropolitan Council approval the Policy Board's budget request for 2002.
- b. Maintained currency of information on www.metrogis.org – the primary source of a wide variety of information about MetroGIS's mission, accomplishments, benefits, participants, meeting schedules, projects and lessons learned, and endorsed policies. Currently this site is experiencing about 3000 sessions/month, up from about 1500/month last year.
- c. Maintained currency of metadata and data accessible via www.datafinder.org - MetroGIS's primary data distribution mechanism. Currently this site is experiencing about 1700 sessions/month, up from about 800/month last year.
- d. Maintained licensing records for access to parcel and street centerline data.
- e. Major documents produced:
 - 2001 Annual Report (www.metrogis.org/about/annual_reports/index.shtml)

- Performance Measurement Plan (www.metrogis.org/benefits/perf_measure/index.shtml.)
 - 2003-2005 MetroGIS Business Plan (www.metrogis.org/documents/reports/index.shtml)
 - White Paper documenting the development of MetroGIS DataFinder Café (www.metrogis.org/documents/reports/index.shtml)
 - Summary of the May Regional Planned Land Use Dataset Launch Forum (www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/planned_land_use/index.shtml#history)
 - Paper submitted for the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Conference (GSDI) in Budapest co-authored by Randall Johnson and David Arbeit (www.metrogis.org/about/awards/index.shtml)
 - Paper submitted in application for URISA's ESIG Award (www.metrogis.org/about/awards/index.shtml)
 - Five testimonials were prepared documenting benefits of MetroGIS's existence to stakeholders. (<http://www.metrogis.org/benefits/testimonials/index.shtml>)
 - Summary of October 24 Regional Highways and Roads Peer Review Forum (http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/highway_roads/peer_forum_summary.pdf)
- f. Meetings supported by MetroGIS staff team:
- Policy Board (4)
 - Coordinating Committee (4)
 - Technical Advisory Team (4)
 - Business Information Needs - Workgroups, Data User Forums, Training, Etc.:
 - ✓ Performance Measures Workgroup (2 – Jan. to Mar.)
 - ✓ Census Accessibility Workgroup (2 - Apr. and Jun.)
 - ✓ 2003-2005 Business Planning Workgroup (3 – Apr. to Jun.)
 - ✓ Regional Planned Land Use Dataset Launch Forum (5/23)
 - ✓ Highway and Roads Peer Review Forum (10/24)
 - ✓ County Data Producers Workgroup (5 – monthly, Aug. to Dec.)
 (*Created in August. and has been meeting monthly to foster collaboration among the seven metro area counties on geodata opportunities and needs common to all. The group championed Policy Board endorsement of commonly accepted guidelines for distribution of parcel data to non-government entities.*)
 - Special Events:
 - ✓ MetroGIS Participant Appreciation Event (11/19)