

Detailed Listing of Significant MetroGIS Accomplishments - 2003 -

I. Regional Information Need/Data Solutions:

a. Emergency Preparedness

An Emergency Preparedness Workgroup was established. The group organized into three subgroups and made notable progress establishing contacts with the emergency management community, identifying critical data resources, as well as specifications for a prototype web-based information dissemination tool. The group has established a liaison channel with a similar committee of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI). The chair of the GCGI committee is a member of the MetroGIS workgroup and its steering committee. Outreach efforts have included making presentations to at the State GIS/LIS Conference, Public Health Strategic Stockpile (SNS) Planning Committee, and State Office of Emergency Management, and Metro Emergency Managers Association (MEMA).

b. Existing Land Use:

A Peer Review Forum was held on April 17th to initiate work on this information need. The characteristics of the desired data content requirements for a regional solution were identified. The technical workgroup made substantial progress on a recommended strategy and will attempt to complete its work by March 2004.

c. Highways and Roads:

A strategic partnership between MetroGIS and MnDOT was entered into in July. Through this partnership, MetroGIS will play a substantial role in defining components of a scheme (Linear Reference Model – or LRM) that will make it possible to interrelate data collected by many different organizations pertaining to road and highway networks.

d. Hydrology

Metropolitan Mosquito Control District's data evaluated for component of regional solution. No substantive progress made on establishing content guidelines or custodian matters. Awaiting the affected state agencies to agree on statewide policies since the metro area solution needs to be integrated with data produced by the state.

e. Jurisdictional Boundaries

- Municipal and County Boundaries: The custodial responsibilities were modified to stipulate quarterly updates, at the time of the regional parcel data updates. The former policy vaguely called for annual updating of this regional dataset.
- Watershed District Boundaries. Washington County made substantial progress to complete a pilot study that will be used to shape regional policy related to data content and custodian responsibilities. The final recommendations are expected to be submitted to the Coordinating Committee in early 2004.

f. Land Cover

Several more producers have contributed to the regional dataset, demonstrating that establishing standards and promoting them can work in a voluntary, multiple-participant environment.

g. Parcels:

- Government and Academic Interests: Over 50 desired enhancements to the regional parcel dataset were identified at the Data Users Forum hosted by MetroGIS on September 25th. Of these 50 suggestions, 15 received were identified as the most significant from a regional perspective. A technical workgroup expects to submit a recommendation early in 2004 regarding specifications and options to accomplish the desired enhancements. To address a previously cited need, a link was added to the metadata to encourage data users to inform the data producers of any anomalies they identify in the data.
- Non-Profit and For-Profit Version. The County Data Producers Workgroup reached agreement on a strategy to collectively modify their respective fees to include a discount for volume purchases, a web site was developed to implement a single point of access to order parcel data,

agreement was reached to pursue a “shrink-wrap” licensing concept and significant progress was made to reach agreement on a single license document. Launch of the proposed mechanism to collaboratively distribute parcel data to non-government is expected to occur early 2004.

h. Planned Land Use

The regional coding scheme for Planned Land Use was modified to address a transit need and the procedures for updating alignment with parcel data were modified.

i. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Areas

- Business Information Needs Workgroup – Phase I of a regional solution was completed. Existing data sources that satisfy priority socioeconomic information needs were identified and gaps between desired and existing data were identified. Phase II was authorized and is proposed to begin in 2004.
- Accessibility Workgroup: - US Census Tract data were formatted for distribution via DataFinder. These data comprised the 11th most often downloaded datasets, even though available for only a portion of the year.

II. Special Studies/Projects –Leveraging Investments

a. Next Generation Data Sharing Agreement

Agreement with the Chair was reached. The counties will hopefully approve by year-end. If so, issues that have been lingering for two rounds of negotiations will be resolved.

b. Integration of DataFinder Café and State GeoIntegrator

An agreement-in-principle was reached with the MN Land Management Information Center (LMIC) to expand the functionality of DataFinder Café and integrate it with the state’s system (GeoIntegrator). The project will result in a Version 2 of the Café program, which is expected to be operational by mid-2004.

c. Metro 911 Board Project

MetroGIS was invited to assist the Metro 911 Board in developing a Request for Information to assess options regarding integration of GIS technology into the day-to-day operation of the 27 PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points) that serve the seven county area. MetroGIS also participated in the workgroup that developed subsequent recommendations to launch the initiative to be considered by the full Board in December 2003.

d. Regional Mailing Label Application Initiative

A mailing label application, that runs on top of the regional parcel dataset, was prototyped based upon an application that had been developed by Carver County. Issues regarding possible impact on existing revenue streams delayed the launch, which is proposed to occur by early January.

e. Regional Parcel Dataset– Non-Government Version

See item I(f).

f. PolicyLink – Improving Access to Geospatial Data by Community Groups

On May 20, Will Craig presented information about MetroGIS's activities and policies to a summit on ways to improve access to geospatial data by community groups. PolicyLink conducted a series of interviews with key organizations over the summer and presented their findings at a follow-up forum on November 14th. MetroGIS was cited as a critical player to accomplish the desired ends. Talks are expected to continue in 2004.

g. Investigate Exchanging Parcel for Utility Infrastructure Data

Representatives from Xcel Energy, Centerpoint Energy Minnegasco, the Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative and Dave Drealan, representing the seven counties, agreed to investigate the concept of sharing parcel and utility infrastructure location data. Parcel data for a portion of Carver and Scott Counties were provided to the three utilities in October. If the utilities believe access to the regional parcel dataset would be of value in exchange for utility location data, further discussions will be held to evaluate interest in modifying the utility locations to align with parcel data and interest, in general, by local government in having access to utility location data for emergency preparedness, rights-of-way management, etc.

h. The National Map Pilot

MetroGIS DataFinder was designated as the “go-to” source of data for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for The National Map.

III. Data Discovery and Acquisition

a. Enhance MetroGIS DataFinder

- *DataFinder Café*: ...See 2(a) above
- *User Information*: The databases that support performance measure reporting for DataFinder and DataFinder Café were modified to permit MetroGIS to better measure usage and characteristics of use. An agreement with Quova was reached to provide information about who is downloading data from DataFinder and where they are located. The finding was that nearly 70 percent of the downloading activity is with the seven county metro area and adjoining counties.

b. Promotion of DataFinder As A Common Tool – Leveraging the Investment:

- 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 is using the web server that supports Café to provide external Internet access to the county's parcel query application. Use of the Café server is saving the county approximately \$10,000 annually plus the cost of hardware and software and related licensing expenses.

IV. Outreach

a. Annual Report:

The 2002 Annual Report was distributed to over 1500 persons and handed out at several conferences and forums. The format was modified to comprise a brochure style with a single page insert specific to the reporting year. The brochure addresses the broad goals and benefits and the one-page insert summarizes the accomplishments that year. The change was made to reduce costs in response to the budget reductions that occurred in 2003. A copy can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/about/annual_reports/index.shtml.

b. Newsletter Articles:

Articles about MetroGIS's activities and accomplishments were submitted for publication in the three issues of the statewide GIS/LIS newsletter.

c. www.metrogis.org:

This website serves as MetroGIS's institutional memory and main vehicle for keeping participants informed. This site is receiving in excess of 5,000 visits per month.

d. County User Groups:

Quarterly updates of MetroGIS's activities are sent to each users group. Staff tries to regularly attend user several meetings to encourage use of adopted best practices and answer questions about MetroGIS's activities. In August MetroGIS provided \$500 to the Hennepin County User Group to assist it with its organizational expenses.

e. Coordination with State (Beyond Metro) Geospatial Activities/Information Requests:

- MetroGIS's Emergency Preparedness Workgroup established a relationship with the MN Office of Emergency Management in January. The leadership of the two Regional Review Committees (RRCs) that cover the Twin Cities have been integrated into MetroGIS's efforts to implement regional solutions to common Emergency Preparedness Information Needs.
- The Staff Coordinator participated on a Governor's Council workgroup with David Arbeit, member of the Coordinating Committee, that produced a guide for organizations interested in sharing geospatial data. Through a decision tree format it leads the reader through the many requirements set forth in the Data Practices Act and offers proven options to address each. The final document can be viewed at <http://www.gis.state.mn.us/pdf/GeoDataExchange.pdf>
- The Staff Coordinator and David Arbeit served on the Governor's Council Data Committee workgroup charged with overseeing I-Planning for the state. Many of the lessons learned through MetroGIS's efforts and its fundamental philosophies have embedded into the state's I-Planning efforts.
- Staff and committee members also served as liaisons to Council committees and workgroups: Emergency Preparedness, Hydrographic, Land Records Modernization Committee, and Data Sharing Guidelines Workgroups.

- 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.
 - Influenced the Minnesota Statewide Parcel Map Inventory project, a survey of digital parcel data development throughout Minnesota, which was initiated and funded by Mn/DOT. More information and the final project report can be found at <http://rocky.dot.state.mn.us/SPMI/>.
 - 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.
- f. Coordination with **National/International** Geospatial Activities/Information Requests:
- January: Policy Board approved adding MetroGIS’s signature to NSGIC’s Resolution of Interdependence – Homeland Security
 - January: DirectionsMag.com published an article about MetroGIS.
 - March: GeoWorld Magazine published an article about MetroGIS as its cover story. - <http://www.geoplace.com/gw/> plus a printed article.
 - March: The St. Paul Board of Realtors published an article about MetroGIS in their newsletter.
 - March: The Coordinator of the State of Montana GIS Office interviewed MetroGIS staff regarding MetroGIS’s efforts to streamline licensing and matters concerning intellectual property rights.
 - April: The OGC published an article about MetroGIS in their newsletter.
 - March: Interviewed by Rochester-Olmsted County GIS consortium concerning policies for distribution of regional parcel data.
 - Apr. 28: Interviewed by Sarah Hawks, a graduate student from U of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, who is developing a thesis on the organizational aspects of regional GIS.
 - May 1: Interviewed by Brian Berandier, with REGIS, a multi-county Geospatial Data Collaborative in NW Michigan, about a funding model for MetroGIS. Also interested in Area Integrator SIG.
 - May 1: Invitation to participate in Open Data Consortium study funding by FGDC.
 - May 20: Staff Coordinator was a panelist for URISA’s Summit in Washington D.C., titled “*National Programs...Local Implementation*”, to facilitate dialogue between federal program managers and local officials.
 - May 29: Interviewed by Gardner Group regarding MetroGIS effort to facilitate data sharing via use of technology. This interview was a follow-up to a conversation that occurred at an April Summit sponsored by the Pawlenty Administration.
 - September: Interviewed by Dee Ann Davis, MIT, regarding data privacy issues that have been dealt with by MetroGIS.
- g. Presentations:
- Feb. 19: Transportation Advisory Board of the Metropolitan Council, St. Paul
 - Feb 9 and October 20, the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator shared MetroGIS’s objectives, accomplishments, and lessons learned at two U of M Graduate GIS Seminars.
 - May 20: Will Craig presented at the PolicyLink Summit. (See II(e), Minneapolis)
 - Sept 24: The Staff Coordinator summarized MetroGIS’s objectives, accomplishments, participants and lessons learned at a meeting of the Scott County GIS Users Group, Belle Plaine.
 - Oct 21: At least two members of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee made presentations at the Conference on Policy Analysis that cited MetroGIS’s efforts, Minneapolis
 - Oct 30: Staff met with MnDOT senior managers to summarize MetroGIS’s objectives, accomplishments, and participants prior to discussing the new partnership to collaborate on Linear Reference Model (LRM) project. (See I(c), St. Paul)
 - See I(a) - Emergency Preparedness outreach efforts.

V. Project Management/Administration

- a. Administered Performance Measures Plan – quarterly reports to the Coordinating Committee. The Policy Board requested an annual presentation that includes recommendations to address any issues or concerns that are identified. Following a several month effort to define a quantitative method to document producer benefit as called for by the adopted Plan, the Coordinating Committee accepted a staff recommendation to modify this policy to utilize a qualitative approach.
- b. Obtained Metropolitan Council approval of a 2004 budget for MetroGIS at a level consistent with the proposed workplan.
- c. 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 over 5000 visitor sessions/month, up from about 1500/month in 2001.
- d. 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 2001.
- e. Maintained licensing records for access to parcel (45) and street centerline data (140).
- f. Significant documents produced:
 - 2002 Annual Report (www.metrogis.org/about/annual_reports/index.shtml)
 - Summary of the April Regional Existing Land Use Peer Review/Launch Forum (http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/existing_land_use/turnaround.pdf)
 - Summary of the September Regional Parcel Data Users Forum (<http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/index.shtml#enhance>)
 - The sixth testimonial to the benefits of MetroGIS’s efforts to stakeholders was documented. SRF Consulting was the subject. It can be viewed at <http://www.metrogis.org/benefits/testimonials/srf.pdf>.
- g. Meetings supported by MetroGIS staff team:
 - Policy Board (4)
 - Coordinating Committee (4)
 - Technical Advisory Team (2)
 - Business Information Needs - Workgroups, Data User Forums, Training, etc.:
 - ✓Emergency Preparedness Workgroup (3 workgroup meeting, plus misc. projects)
 - ✓Parcel Workgroup (Sept. Forum and 1 workgroup meeting)
 - ✓Socioeconomic Characteristics Workgroup (6)
 - ✓Regional Existing Land Use Workgroup (April Forum and 3 workgroup meetings)
 - ✓Highway and Roads Workgroup (4)
 - ✓County Data Producers Workgroup (5)
 - Special Events: none