

Year End Detailed Status Report MetroGIS Activities and Accomplishments - 2006 -

I. Regional Information Need/Data Solutions – Data Component:

a. Addresses

Consensus was reached on a proposed next-generation address standard that is consistent with the emerging national address standard. Nine county and city stakeholders tested the proposed standard and concluded that although some issues will need to be addressed, the next-generation standard is in fact reasonable and doable. \$21,000 in Regional GIS Project funding was authorized to conduct a viability assessment for a proposed “web editing application” targeted at smaller city entities, whose participation is believed to be central to achieving the vision for a regional occupiable units dataset. This assessment is expected to be completed by mid-2007, at which time a decision will be made whether or not to pursue actual development of the web-based application.

b. Census Geography

No effort in 2006

c. Emergency Preparedness

The Emergency Preparedness workgroup concluded that implementation of the vision endorsed October 2005 was limited by the need for increased leadership and involvement at the state level. Therefore, the workgroup has directly aligned its efforts with those of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI) Emergency Preparedness Committee. This will allow workgroup members to focus on reinforcing the statewide efforts, eliminate duplication of effort between MetroGIS and GCGI committees, and maximize Metro efforts expended to this point. The workgroup will continue to discuss the effectiveness of this strategy to determine when it should refocus on a metro context and will report updates to the Coordinating Committee.

d. Existing Land Use:

No effort in 2006

e. Highways and Roads:

The Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB) operationalized specialized software to ensure Master Street Address Guide (MSAG) data records can be fully synchronized with associated street centerline data managed in a GIS environment. Desired standards for a next-generation street centerline dataset were developed with an objective to eventually transition from 100 percent reliance upon The Lawrence Group's (TLG) street centerline data to solution produced by public entities. This transition is expected to take some time to materialize and, as such, extension of the agreement with TLG was pursued. At the time of this writing, the new agreement was proceeding through legal review. Once in place, it will provide up to three one-year extensions to the current agreement. The new agreement also authorizes licensed users to incorporate the TLG street centerline dataset into web-based applications their host provided access by non-licensed users is restricted to view-only. This “view-only” access provision is the first of its kind and represents a major step forward toward policy innovations which balance of intellectual property rights with the desire to utilize licensed data in web-based applications.

No substantive progress was made on a second collaborative initiative for which MnDOT is the lead organization. The project involves operationalizing an anchor/segment database model under development by MnDOT with consultant assistance. The goal is to create a sustainable means to integrate, as needed, data associated with street centerlines but maintained in disparate source data files with differing standards by way of a technology solution. MnDOT extended an invitation to MetroGIS in 2004 to collaborate, through a pilot project, on refining the prototype software, accompanying policies and procedures, and associated tools/applications, as needed, to achieve common objectives.

f. Hydrology

No substantive progress made.

g. Jurisdictional Boundaries

- Watershed District Boundaries. The results of Washington County pilot project were conveyed in October 2006 to representatives of the Mn Board on Soil and Water Resources BSWR. A

recommendation of the Washington County pilot was that BWSR is the most logical entity to serve in the roles of Regional Custodian. As of this writing, BWSR had not yet responded to the proposal.

- School District Boundaries. No work was initiated to identify an appropriate regional custodian due to budget cuts and reorganization of LMIC. LMIC had been identified as the most logical custodial option given their as contractor relationship with the Department of Education.

h. Land Cover

The extent of coverage is nearing 90 percent. A map of the coverage status can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/land_cover/mlccs_metro_progress_planned.pdf. Two data user workshops, attended by 36 users, were held in 2006 and connections were made with the NPS to enhance the dataset:

- **MLCCS mini-workshop**, December 16, 2005 (22 attendees). Reviewed the MLCCS standards and data creation methodology. The workshop was designed to ensure the creation of standardized, quality data from those already conducting MLCCS inventories. A full MLCCS workshop for those new to the MLCCS was promised at a later date, but never took place.
- **MLCCS /LCMR project.** The LCMR is funding a project to help complete MLCCS coverage in Scott, Carver, Hennepin and Washington counties. A data standards training session was held on September 26, 2006, with representatives of all the counties (14 attendees). MLCCS data quality standards and data creation procedures for the project were reviewed.
- **MLCCS / NPS.** The National Park Service is funding a project to update MLCCS data in the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, and create data in the St. Croix Wild and Scenic Riverway. The DNR and the U of M have been contracted by the NPS to complete the work.

i. Parcels:

- Government and Academic Interests

No changes made to the data standards or custodial roles and responsibilities

- Non-Profit and For-Profit Access

Agreement was reached via the County Data Producers Workgroup to:

- 1) Permit licensed users of parcel data (spatial and attribute) may authorize Internet access by non-licensed users, provided the application does not permit the user to gain access to the source database (view-only access). The counties' position is that no written modification of current regional policy or the data sharing agreement itself is needed to achieve this capability (e.g., view-only access does constitute redistribution of the source data).
- 2) Fostered discussion among county officials to investigate the possibility of permitting licensed access to parcel data, without fee, by specified non-profit interests on a county-by-county basis.

A third initiative by the Metropolitan Council, targeted at clarifying the definition of "derivative product", was withdrawn. The proposal was pursued to clarify policy concerning summarization of data to larger geographies than the parcel base from which the data originated. The proposal sought to establish the level of summarization required to constitute a derivative product for which the intellectual property rights would run with the user, not the producer of the original data. Concerns were raised that greatly complicated the deliberations and, as such, the proposal was withdrawn.

j. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Areas

The custodian, University of Minnesota Population Center, added several new data sources to MetroGIS Socioeconomic Resources Page (http://www.datafinder.org/mg/socioeconomic_resources/index.asp).

The new data sources include: HMDA data (data about home mortgages), DataPlace (<http://www.dataplace.org/>) and foreclosure data.

II. Regional Information Need/Data Solutions –Application Component:

- a) **Mailing Label Application:** This application became fully operational in May 2005. No changes were made in 2006.
- b) **Emergency Preparedness:** A prototype application was launched in April 2005 for testing and refinement. No changes made in 2006. This application is password protected and has been used exclusively as a training and outreach tool to educate the emergency services community on resources available from the GIS community.

III. Special Studies/Projects –Leveraging Investments

- a. MetroGIS Strategic Directions Workshop. Efforts to prepare for this workshop were reinitiated in June, following conclusion of the Metropolitan Council's evaluation of MetroGIS. The Workshop is scheduled for February 8, 2007. Preparations have included securing Professor John Bryson to facilitate the event, reaching agreement on the program, focus of the facilitation exercises, program support materials, mailing invitations and various logical requirements considerations.
- b. Beyond Government Users: Future Directions for MetroGIS. As with the MetroGIS Strategic Directions Workshop, work on this initiative had been suspended until June 2006. In June, a workgroup was created to develop "opportunity statements" to share with MetroGIS leadership during the proposed Business Planning Update process. Six opportunity statements were developed (http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/beyond_govt/beyond_govt.shtml)
- c) ApplicationFinder Concept: In July, a \$20,000 project, proposed by Mn LMIC (Land Management Information Center) and Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), was approved for funding via MetroGIS's Regional GIS Project program. This proposal builds upon the ApplicationFinder preliminary concept endorsed by the Coordinating Committee at its December 2004 meeting. The goal is to aid stakeholders discover existing applications that would be helpful to achieving various business needs. This project is expected to be complete by mid-2007.
- d) M3D Project. The M3D project is important to MetroGIS because in addition to assisting with a resolution to the access policy for non-profit interests this project also involves development of a web-based geospatial application that will address common information needs of the broader MetroGIS community. The Staff Coordinator and several individuals active in MetroGIS initiatives serve on the M3D Steering Committee. In October 2006, the "beta" version of the M3D application (<http://map.deed.state.mn.us/chameleon/m3d.phtml>) was demonstrated to the MetroGIS Policy Board and was well received.
- e) National Street Address Data Standard. The address standards developed by the MetroGIS's Address Workgroup, which worked closely with the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board staff, were used to populate the initial proposed national standard in late 2004. The draft national standard is currently in its second round of national vetting prior to submittal to the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) for approval. In 2006, the MetroGIS's Address Workgroup oversaw an evaluation to document the effort required to use the standard locally and concluded that although some procedure changes will be needed, the proposed standard is definitively doable. This standard is expected to become effective by mid-2007, at which time, the MetroGIS's Address Workgroup is expected to propose formal adoption for the addressing authorities that serve the Metropolitan Area. Supporting organizations are NENA and the U.S. Census Bureau.

IV. Data Discovery and Acquisition – Other than Topical Applications

- a. Support MetroGIS DataFinder
 - DataFinder Café: The most significant accomplishment of 2006 was the upgrading of DataFinder Café. This tool is once again a state of the art tool running on an upgraded hardware platform that offers users an effective way to discover and obtain data produced by others they need to carry out their responsibilities.
 - Data User Information. At the time of this writing, a contract was being pursued with Quova, Inc to produce a report for the 2006 Annual Performance Measurement Report to document the geographic location of the entities that download data from DataFinder. This service has been used for the last two years but this is the first year that a formal agreement has been required. The proposed agreement involves the allocation intellectual property rights and resolution of confidentiality concerns to enable MetroGIS to take advantage of this technology.
- b. Promote of DataFinder As A Common Tool – Leveraging the Investment:
 - Washington County continued its use of the web server that supports Café to provide external Internet access to the county's parcel query application activity. Use of the Café server is saving the county approximately \$10,000 annually in Application Service Provider (ASP) fees plus the cost of hardware and software and related licensing expenses.
 - In addition to the Metropolitan Council, 9 organizations are utilizing MetroGIS to distribute geospatial data they maintain and 17 are using DataFinder as a search tool for discovery of their data.

IV. Outreach

a. Annual Report:

The 2005 Annual Report was distributed to over 1,900 persons and handed out at several conferences and forums. 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 each of the quarterly issues of the statewide GIS/LIS newsletter.

c. General Information Web site - www.metrogis.org:

This website serves as MetroGIS's institutional memory and main vehicle for keeping participants informed. This site is averaged over 6,900 visits per month.

d. County GIS User Groups:

Quarterly updates of MetroGIS's activities are provided to each user group. Staff attended as many user group meetings as possible to encourage use of adopted best practices and answer questions about MetroGIS's activities.

e. Special Events:

On June 1st hosted a forum entitled "**Imagining Possibilities: The Next Frontier for Geographic Information Technology**". (See

<http://www.metrogis.org/specialevents/techpossibilities/index.shtml>.) 228 individuals participated. Four keynote speakers offered an amazing array of possibilities which will be considered as the MetroGIS leadership decide MetroGIS's next-generation priorities.

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

- Staff and Coordinating Committee members served as liaisons to Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI) committees and workgroups: Emergency Preparedness, Hydrographic Data and Standards, Geospatial Infrastructure Workgroups and served on the Council itself. In addition, Rick Gelbmann, a Coordinating Committee member, was appointed to his second term as GCGI Chair.

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

- March: Bastiaan van Loenen published his doctoral dissertation in titled Developing Geographic Information Infrastructures. MetroGIS is one of several geospatial collaborative organizations cited as a case study in this work which looks at successful programs around the globe in an attempt to discern the various stages of SDI maturity.
- July: Kate Lance, who was a PhD candidate at the International Institute for Geo-Information Sciences and Earth Observation (ITC) and Wageningen University in the Netherlands, recognized MetroGIS's Performance Measurement Plan in research she conducted as an "exemplar" example among the an international field of Spatial Data Infrastructure programs. Staff has extended an invitation to Ms. Lance to participate in the process and she has expressed interest in doing so.
- September: An article co-authored by Ian Masser and Randall Johnson was published in the September issue of GEOInformatics magazine (<http://www.geoinformatics.com/asp/default.asp?language=1>). Quote from Ian Masser to the editor of the GeoInformatics Magazine after returning from the June 1 Forum – "...I found the MetroGIS collaborative SDI (Spatial Data Infrastructure) set up quite fascinating and think that it deserves more exposure to a European audience. During my visit I was fortunate in having the opportunity to talk at some length to the politicians who have backed this project for its last ten years and also to other participants in this initiative which has won several awards in the US." Masser was particularly interested in learning about the leadership role elected officials on the Policy Board have played in providing a political reality check and establishing political legitimacy for MetroGIS's efforts.

h. Formal Presentations:

- January: Hennepin County GIS Users Group
- April: National Geospatial Integration in Public Safety Conference
- October: MN GIS/LIS Consortium Conference
- November: Ramsey County GIS Users Group

V. Project Management/Administration

- a. Staff provided a variety of information about MetroGIS to the Metropolitan Council's team for the second phase of the Council's evaluation of MetroGIS's value to the Council. This effort consumed a significant portion of MetroGIS's staff resources from January to April 2006. Several Coordinating Committee members and Policy Board members Reinhardt and Pistilli made significant contributions to this evaluation process. In the end, the process corroborated the benefits of MetroGIS's efforts to the not only the Council but the regional as well.
- b. Administered Performance Measures Plan. Quarterly reports to the Coordinating Committee were not possible in 2006, as made in past years due lack of staff resources. These resources were reinstated in September. The 2006 Annual Report is scheduled to be presented to the Policy Board in January 2007.
- c. Maintained currency of content on MetroGIS's general information website (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.
- d. Maintained currency of metadata and postings of data accessible via www.datafinder.org - MetroGIS's primary data distribution mechanism.
- e. Maintained licensing records for access to street centerline data (184) and parcel data (88).
- f. Oversaw the bid proposal process for the two successful 2006 Regional GIS Projects which received authorizations totaling \$41,000.
- g. Significant documents produced:
 - 2005 Annual Report (www.metrogis.org/about/annual_reports/index.shtml)
 - 2006 Performance Measurement Report (http://www.metrogis.org/benefits/perf_measure/index.shtml)
 - A testimonial from Professor Shekhar, University of Minnesota, to the benefits of MetroGIS's efforts to the development of evacuation routing software that his team has developed. (It can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/benefits/testimonials/UMN_Shekhar.pdf)
 - Summary report for the June 1 forum entitled "Imagining Possibilities: The Next Frontier for Geographic Information Technology". (It can be viewed at <http://www.metrogis.org/specialevents/techpossibilities/index.shtml>.)
 - Performance Measurement Annual Report. (It can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/benefits/perf_measure/index.shtml.)
- h. Meetings supported by MetroGIS staff support team:
 - Policy Board (4)
 - Coordinating Committee (4)
 - Technical Advisory Team (3)
 - Business Information Needs - Workgroups, Data User Forums, Training, etc.:
 - ✓ Address Workgroup (2)
 - ✓ Beyond Government Users Workgroup (3)
 - ✓ County Data Producers Workgroup (1)
 - ✓ E911-Compliant Street Centerline Workgroup (4)
 - ✓ Emergency Preparedness Workgroup (?)
 - ✓ Strategic Directions Workshop Planning Team (6)
 - Special Events: (1)
 - ✓ June 1, Imagining Possibilities Forum (*see above*) (1)