



# METROGIS: SHARING DATA ACROSS BOUNDARIES

In the fall of 1995, the Metropolitan Council initiated the creation of a stakeholder-governed geographic information system (GIS) to serve the seven county, Twin Cities Metropolitan area. This project is referred to as the *MetroGIS*. It is a computer technology which combines mapping, modeling, and data base management. GIS is a tool which can help decision makers of any discipline in which work data is or can be geographically referenced. Use of GIS technology can improve data quality, analysis, management, and display for decision making.

The Metropolitan Council initiated the MetroGIS effort to promote a collaborative and cost-effective means to share data that is valuable across jurisdictions. The intended benefits of the MetroGIS project for all participants are to improve access, management and retrieval of data; decision making support; organizational efficiency; communication with the public; and research capabilities. The Council sought input regarding the concept of a regional GIS at the September 1995 GIS/LIS State Conference and at two GIS Forums held last October that were targeted at local government decision makers.

The MetroGIS effort has included many potential users ("stakeholders") of the system. More than 320 public organizations serving the metro area have been identified as being potential MetroGIS participants, including counties, cities/townships, school districts, watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, universities and colleges, metropolitan government organizations, and state and federal agencies. Additional stakeholders include non-profit organizations; utility companies; cable companies; private sector groups such as consultants,

chambers of commerce, transportation interests, business geographics, and the media; tribal councils; and the general public.

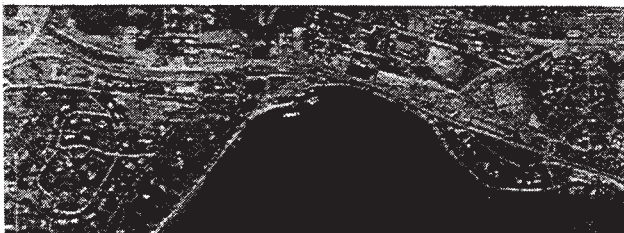
A December, 1995 Strategic Planning Retreat for the MetroGIS effort included 19 persons from varied professional and organizational backgrounds who were affiliated with the metro area GIS community. The group agreed upon several high order goals for a regional GIS and identified 15 strategic issues that must be addressed to successfully implement a regional GIS. Following the Retreat, the group expanded to 22 person for inclusion of representatives from all 7 metro area counties. This group, called the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee, met for four, half-day sessions between January and April, 1996 to refine the vision for the MetroGIS initiative.

## PHASE I OUTCOMES

The agreed upon MetroGIS Statement of Intent is "**To provide an ongoing, stakeholder-governed, metro-wide mechanism through which participants easily and equitably share geographically referenced graphic and associated attribute data that are accurate, current, of common benefit and readily usable.**" The MetroGIS structure will incorporate the GIS capability already existing in a number of jurisdictions, create it in others, and will provide for the exchange of data within the region. Standards for the type, accuracy, access, and documentation of data will be developed and control of the data will remain with the originating jurisdiction or source of the data.

The organizational scheme of MetroGIS will include four work teams: Data Content, Standards, Data Access, and Policy. The data content team will identify the data sets and their characteristics which provide the greatest utility for the Metro Area GIS data user community. The standards team will identify or develop standards that allow data sharing among the participant of the MetroGIS. The data access team will identify the mechanisms for indexing and accessing current, accurate and usable geographically referenced graphic and associated attribute data. The policy team will identify strategies to obtain stakeholder commitment and financial support for a sustainable MetroGIS. Each of these teams will recommend options and report to the Coordinating Committee. A Policy Board, consisting of officials representing the major stakeholders or groups of stakeholders, will receive recommendations from the Coordinating Committee and make final decisions.

**USE OF GIS TECHNOLOGY CAN  
IMPROVE DATA QUALITY,  
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DISPLAY FOR DECISION MAKING.**



*(continued inside)*

(continued from front)

## PHASE II EXPECTATIONS AND PROGRESS

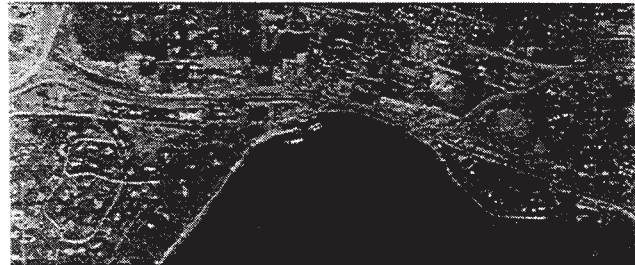
Phase II of the MetroGIS effort focuses on reaching agreement with the organizations critical to the creation and operation of the MetroGIS. The effort will set up legal guidelines for data sharing: cost sharing structure and appointment of an official representative to the Policy Board and Coordinating Committee.

During Phase II, the MetroGIS Teams have been working to fulfill their set purpose, starting with identification of regionally significant data sets. The Data Content Team is striving to understand the types of decisions facing participants currently and in the future. By understanding the decisions, the team will be able to better analyze the data sets which are both necessary and regionally significant. Similarly, the Data Standards, Data Access and Policy Teams are focusing their efforts on planning the best methods of successful implementation for MetroGIS.

The early successes of the MetroGIS effort are the result of the vision and countless hours of effort on the part of many organizations and individuals over the past 15-20 years. The combination of this leading edge work and drastic cost reductions in the technology has set the stage for the largest multi-county GIS consortium attempted to date. Although success will involve a long and involved process, the potential rewards and benefits of MetroGIS are rich and expansive.

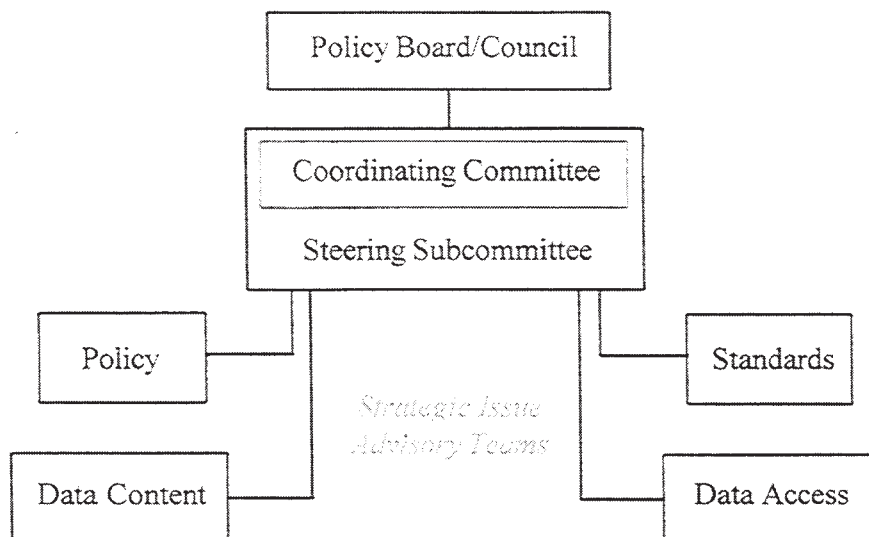
## METROGIS STATEMENT OF INTENT:

**“PROVIDE AN ONGOING,  
STAKEHOLDER GOVERNED,  
METRO-WIDE MECHANISM  
THROUGH WHICH PARTICIPANTS  
EASILY AND EQUITABLY SHARE  
GEOGRAPHICALLY REFERENCED  
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## METROGIS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

(Adopted 4/26/96)



# MetroGIS Organizational Structure

(Adopted 4/26/96)

Group	Purpose	Membership	Meets
<p><b>Policy Board</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews policy recommendations and establishes policies related to MetroGIS.</li> <li>• Represents core stakeholders, serving as liaison with their policy bodies.</li> <li>• Represents participants who are not core stakeholders, but who will benefit from MetroGIS.</li> <li>• Approves agreements, commitments, and budgets on behalf of MetroGIS.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 15 voting members who are policy makers from core stakeholder organizations and other stakeholder interests as determined by the Board. The essential participants are to constitute a majority.</li> <li>• One elected/appointed policy maker representative from each of the following core stakeholders, designated by official action as appropriate for each: seven metro counties, Metropolitan Council.</li> <li>• Other 7 seats to be held by representatives of classes of organizations/interests and not by individual interests. Membership for classes to be recommended by Coordinating Committee and approved by the Policy Board. Cities, watershed districts, and school districts to be represented on the initial board. Others possible: federal and state agencies, legislature, academia, private sector, citizens, etc.</li> <li>• Ex-officio status for Steering Subcommittee members.</li> </ul>	<p>Quarterly</p>
<p><b>Coordinating Committee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptualizes role and design of MetroGIS and coordinates related work activities.</li> <li>• Coordinates work of Strategic Issues teams.</li> <li>• Serves as interim decision making body until formal creation of MetroGIS Policy Board.</li> <li>• Forum for issues related to design, implementation, and operations of MetroGIS.</li> <li>• Forum for new trends and activities related to MetroGIS.</li> <li>• Liaison with Governor's Council on Geographic Information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership size, as needed, to include representatives of the Metropolitan Council, all metropolitan counties, and classes of major producers and users of geographic information.</li> <li>• Members determined by Coordinating Committee until formal commitments to MetroGIS are made by participant organizations through legislative or executive action.</li> <li>• As formal commitments to MetroGIS are made by participant organizations, they will name designated representatives.</li> <li>• Additional members with special expertise and knowledge invited by committee action.</li> <li>• Includes all members of Steering Committee.</li> <li>• No organization will receive more than one vote.</li> </ul>	<p>Bi-monthly</p>
<p><b>Steering Subcommittee</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subset of Coordinating Committee.</li> <li>• Liaison between Policy Board and Coordination Committee.</li> <li>• Oversees implementation of MetroGIS policy.</li> <li>• Guides Coordination Committee, with special attention to governance and policy issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 to 7 members endorsed by Policy Board once it is established.</li> <li>• Chair of Coordinating Committee and liaisons or chairs of Strategic Issues teams.</li> <li>• Ex-officio member: Met Council representative on Governor's Council for Geographic Information.</li> <li>• Diverse membership, limited to one member per organization.</li> </ul>	<p>Bi-monthly</p>
<p><b>Strategic Issue Teams</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address strategic issues as determined by Coordinating Committee.</li> <li>• Task oriented, dissolving when tasks are completed.</li> <li>• Reports results to Coordinating Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created and dissolved by Coordinating Committee.</li> <li>• Recommended size: 7 to 9.</li> <li>• Acknowledged expertise related to the team's issue.</li> <li>• Represent a variety of points of view.</li> <li>• Subgroups formed as needed.</li> <li>• Include 2 members of Coordinating Committee.</li> <li>• One vote per organization.</li> </ul>	<p>Monthly; more if needed</p>

# **METROGIS CONTACTS**

## ***COORDINATING COMMITTEE***

Chairperson: David Arbeit (LMIC)  
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## ***DATA CONTENT TEAM***

Chairperson: Rick Person (City of St. Paul)  
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## ***DATA ACCESS TEAM***

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## ***STANDARDS TEAM***

Chairperson: David Windle (City of Roseville)  
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## ***POLICY TEAM***

Chairperson: Margo LaBau (Anoka County)  
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Visit MetroGIS at its homepage:

***[HTTP://WWW.STATE.MN.US/INTERGOV/METROGIS/INTRO.HTM](http://www.state.mn.us/intergov/metrogis/intro.htm)***