



TO: MetroGIS Policy Board

FROM: MetroGIS Support Staff
Contact: Randall Johnson (651-602-1638)

SUBJECT: Information Sharing

DATE: June 28, 2001
(For the July 11 Meeting)

A) National GeoData Alliance – MetroGIS’ Connection

- (1) Chairperson Reinhardt has accepted an invitation to participate on a “collaboration panel” at the National GeoData Forum on November 2, 2001 in Denver, Colorado. She has been asked to comment on geodata collaboration from the perspective of an elected official. The other panelists will include Elias Cortez, Chief Information Officer for the State of California, and David Schell, President, OpenGIS Consortium.
- (2) The MetroGIS Staff Coordinator has accepted, after consulting with the Policy Advisory Team, an invitation to work full time from July 17 to September 7 on a project for the GDA in Reston, Virginia. The project consists of documenting, through a series of case studies, the stories of successful (and possibly not so successful) geodata collaboratives to share with individuals interested in forming or expanding geodata collaboratives. He will be teaming up Prof. Zorica Budic of the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, whose academic specialty is geodata collaboratives.

B) New Coordinating Committee Members

On May 22nd, the Coordinating Committee unanimously appointed Brad Henry (URS/BRW) and Mark Vandershaaf, (City of St. Paul) to its membership, representing “special expertise” and “large cities”, respectively. The current members of the Committee are provided in the attached table.

C) MetroGIS Internet Site Statistics

- (1) **DataFinder** (www.datafinder.org)

(See attachment)

- (2) **General Site** (www.metrogis.org) **June 2001**

Total Individual Clients	Total Sessions
764	5493

Top Client Sessions-(local)	Top Pages (sessions)
2190 - state/reg. agencies –cob-delphi.r.state.mn.us	80 – Endorsed datasets
398 – gatekeeper.co.hennepin.mn.us	69 – What’s New
260 – internet.dot.state.mn.us	63 - Regional Parcel Dataset – Non-profit/For Profit
113 – ci.stpaul.mn.us	58 – Business Information Need Workgroups

D) Major Project Updates:

- (1) **Regional Parcel Dataset – Non-Profit/For-Profit Version**

On June 6th, the Metropolitan Council, acting behalf of the seven counties, published a news release stating this dataset is available and directed prospective purchasers to visit MetroGIS’ Web site for ordering information. This news release was sent to several business publications, including on-line commercial news services. Staff is aware that at least one on-line service published the release. All

individuals on MetroGIS' mailing list private sector/non-profit organizations also received direct notice.

As of June 28th, 34 entities had visited MetroGIS' Web page (www.metrogis.org/data/parcels/parcel_forms.htm) that contains the order form, instructions, data description. Staff also received 4 email/telephone inquires for follow-up information. No orders have been placed. Comments received in the four email/telephone conversations included: a) do not need data for the entire seven counties – only need portions of three counties, and b) an annual renewal fee of \$48,000+ is too expensive, and c) it is not practical to pay for the parcel boundaries one place and then still need to go back to the individual counties for the majority of attributes necessary to effectively use the parcel boundary data.

(2) Next Generation Data Sharing Agreement Negotiations

The Policy Advisory Team has spent time at its last three meetings defining the objectives for the next generation data sharing agreement. The current agreements expire December 31, 2001. The Team concluded that the agreements should be limited to data that require licensing and/or fees. (The Team agreed to rely upon the current MetroGIS process to resolve access policy and custodian roles for all other regional data solutions.) In this case, the seven counties, as producers of parcel data, and the Council, as distributor of the regional parcel dataset on behalf of the MetroGIS community, would be the primary parties to the next generation agreement. The goal is to secure an agreement-in-principle among the parties, yet this summer. This agreement is required to begin distributing the regional parcel dataset to government and academic interests because authority to distribute the pilot parcel dataset expired June 30, 2001. The objectives identified by the Policy Advisory Team on June 14 were as follows:

- (a) Rely upon the May 22 recommendations of the Coordinating Committee, and subsequent Board action, to establish acceptable roles and responsibilities concerning the primary producers and regional custodian (for parcels).
- (b) An indefinite agreement term would be acceptable, provided there are clearly stated procedures that allow the parties to cease participation.
- (c) A policy of annual review of the procedures, fees, etc is desirable. The county representatives suggested that the procedures for the public sector version of the dataset should be reviewed at the same time as the provisions for the private sector version are reviewed.
- (d) MetroGIS participants should assume that the counties will not agree to continue to waive their fees for recovery of data development expenses for public and academic access, unless the counties continue to receive the current \$75,000 cash payment or a demonstrated dollar-for-dollar tangible benefit from a service(s) provided by MetroGIS.
- (e) A goal of the next generation license should be to require the data recipient to obtain a single license that provides access to all licensable data (data subject to cost recovery fees) with an unlimited term, provided all conditions of licensure continue to be satisfied. It was also agreed to rely upon a “disclaimer” that does not require any signatures by the recipient or the producer to convey the liability related statements and not to require any licensure for data that does not qualify for to recovery of data development costs.
- (f) “Best Practices” should be promoted but compliance should remain voluntary. The underlying philosophy continues to be that no organization will be asked to perform a function for MetroGIS that they do not have an internal business need to perform.
- (g) The concept of a user fee to access data on a transaction basis was raised for discussion. Some felt that, depending upon the complexity of the data delivery mechanism, such a fee may not be consistent with State Law, which requires an “enhanced Web site” to qualify for charging a fee. Staff agreed to investigate this law before pursuing this concept any further. The group also

generally thought that requiring a transaction fee for access by government and academic users would deter from the goal to facilitate wide spread data sharing.

(3) Data Solutions for Priority Business Information Needs

(a) Regional Parcel Dataset – Academic and Government Unit Version

See Agenda Item 5a for a summary of the Regional Parcel Data Users Forum held on April 19 and recommended next steps. The license that permits access to the pilot regional dataset expires on June 30. All recipients are required to return the data by that time. MetroGIS staff sent a letter (attached) to remind the 56 licensees of this requirement and to inform them of recommended next steps to be considered on July 11 by the Policy Board. See Item (2) above for an update on next generation data sharing agreement negotiations. This agreement will include access requirements for the regional parcel dataset. Finally, in April, all seven counties completed the approval process to treat academic interests the same as government units with respect to access to the regional parcel dataset.

(b) Minor Civil Division/County Administrative Boundaries: In April, all seven counties completed the approval process to authorize the Metropolitan Council, serving in its role as regional custodian, to distribute this dataset without fee or licensure to anyone (government and non-government interests) who request access. The metadata is available on DataFinder at http://www.datafinder.org/metadata/county_mcd.htm.

(c) 2000 Census Data: The Metropolitan Council expects to hire a contractor by September 1st and anticipates the regional dataset will be available by April 2002. The contract involves aligning the census geography produced by the US Census Bureau with the more accurate parcel and street centerline data used by the MetroGIS community.

(d) Planned (Future) Land Use: MetroGIS hosted a technical peer review forum for the regional planned land use database on May 15, 2001. The Metropolitan Council and the I-35W Coalition presented jointly their independent findings from testing the MetroGIS prototype planned land use coding scheme. Recommendations by Forum participants include modifications to the prototype land use coding scheme and regional database custodial roles and responsibilities. The Forum participants felt that although individual communities are the primary producers of the land use information, the custodian of the regional database ought to be the Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council has a business need for a regional database and currently has the resources to monitor local changes through the Comprehensive Plan Review process. The coding scheme modifications and custodian recommendation will be presented to the Technical Advisor Team on Aug. 22nd. Recommendations to endorse the regional coding scheme, establish custodian responsibilities, and appoint a regional custodian organization are tentatively planned for Policy Board action at the Board's October meeting.

(e) Hydrology:

There has been no work in this Information Need since Theresa Foster, former MetroGIS Technical Coordinator, left MetroGIS in May. Theresa and Governor's Council Hydrographic Committee members had previously pledged to conduct a inventory of existing data resources that can be used to satisfy desired specifications for a regional/state hydrographic dataset(s). These specifications were identified by participants at the October 29, 1999 Information Needs Workshop. (Refer to the Information Final Workshop Documents posted on the MetroGIS webpage (www.metrogis.org) under the "Supported Projects \ Business Information Needs \ Lakes, Wetlands..." for more information). The next steps, once support resources are identified, will comprise of completing the data inventory project and secure technical advisory team recommendations for dataset(s) that meet regional needs.

(4) Enhancements to MetroGIS' DataFinder Internet Site (www.datafinder.org)

Last January, MetroGIS surveyed the MetroGIS community to identify desired improvements to the DataFinder Web site. Subsequently, Alison Slaats, DataFinder Project Manager, modified the site under general direction of the Technical Advisory Team, to address the community's desired improvements. The improvements include:

- Improving the mechanism to search metadata; which was registered with the FGDC and brought the site into compliance with the FDGC's Clearinghouse standards in January. DataFinder is now a node of the FGDC's National GeoData Clearinghouse system and can be searched from across the system.
- Utilizing the same search interface as LMIC's GeoGateway; maintaining continuity between the two organizations' interfaces will make it easier for users to navigate the sites.
- Reducing redundancy of metadata with other agencies.
- Improving the theme catalog for browsing of metadata records (which is generated nightly so changes in metadata and/or data are promptly updated).
- Adding tag lines in the theme catalogue to indicate which metadata sets are new or recently updated and MetroGIS endorsed.
- Moving MetroGIS-related data that had been located on LMIC's FTP server to the Council system eliminating the need to provide the data sets to LMIC and to permit nightly updating of the data.
- Adding a section on reference maps and changing from providing static maps to helping users orient themselves and allow them to browse the data and its contents.
- Adding resource section to clearly provide links to other agencies in Minnesota that provide GIS data and links to online mapping resources available.
- Simplifying the help section to provide a single contact with a generic email that is forwarded to several people so that someone can provide information more readily and the editing the frequently asked questions (FAQ's) underwent editing to make the content easier to understand.

(5) "The National Map" Proposal Comments

In February, the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator participated in one of several interviews that lead to the United States Geological Survey's "The National Map" proposal. On June 14th, the Policy Advisory Team authorized staff to submit a 12-page letter of comment to the USGS (*copies are available upon request*). The comments are generally complimentary. The members concurred that if the proposal implemented, it would not only result in more cooperation between federal and local and regional government interests but it would result in substantially more cooperation between USGS and the BLM, which they believe would be in everyone's best interests.

MetroGIS' comments also include suggested implementation proposals which ask the USGS to consider partnering (investing) in high-resolution orthoimagery needed by the counties in exchange for the counties eliminating fees and licensing for their parcel data. The Team (including representatives from six of the seven counties) unanimously supported this suggestion or at least entering into negotiations to determine if USGS is interested in a pursuing such a partnership.

(6) Registration of "MetroGIS" and "MetroGIS DataFinder" names

Both names have been successfully register with the State of Minnesota, effective March 29, 2001. An initial response was received federal authorities in May requesting additional information. Robert Gutenkauf, with Gray, Plant and Mooty, has been retained to "shepard" the application through the approval process.

Attachment for Item C(1)

DataFinder Web Activity Report

<i>General statistics on DataFinder site</i>												
	January	February	March	April	May	June*	July	August	September	October	November	December
<i>Average Hits Per Day</i>	N/A	345	290	308	252	408						
<i>Average Page views Per Day</i>	N/A	141	115	144	136	203						
<i>Average Visitors Per Day (average for weekdays)</i>	N/A	46 (57)	44 (54)	53 (65)	56 (66)	65 (77)						
<i>Average Visitors Session Length (minutes)</i>	N/A	7:29	5:22	6:10	7:26	7:51						
<i>Unique visitors per month – Total for the month</i>	N/A	627	716	978	1,022	-						
<i>Visitors Who Visited Once – Total for the month</i>	N/A	429	505	770	819	-						
<i>Visitors Who Visited More Than Once – Total for the month</i>	N/A	198	211	208	203	-						
* as of June 28, 2001												
<p>Total number of hits shows you all successful hits including HTML pages, pictures, forms, scripts and files downloaded each day on average.</p> <p>Average Page Views (Impressions) tells you how many pages were by all visitors combined each day on average.</p> <p>Average Visitor Sessions Per Day tells you how many visitor sessions your site had each day on average.</p> <p>Average Visitor Session Length tells you how long the average visitor session was (in minutes).</p> <p>Unique visitors are a count of unique IPs for the period of the report.</p> <p>Number of Unique Users tells you how many visitors your site had by counting their.</p> <p>Number of Users Who Visited Once tells you how many visitors came to your site one time by counting single occurrences of visitor sessions.</p> <p>Number of Users Who Visited More Than Once tells you how many visitors came back to your site by counting repeated visitor sessions.</p>												

GIS data Downloads

<i>DataFinder FTP site</i>		
Month	Downloads	top 3 downloads
February	> 140	County MCD (14) Prime Ag. Lands (13) 1997 Land Use (12)
March	> 108	1997 Land Use (17) County MCD (11) Historical Land Use (11)
April	> 159	Zip codes (17) Hypsography (17) 1997 Land Use (11)
May	> 128	Hypsography (16) Zip codes (15) County MCD (9)
June (as of June 28 th)	> 117	County MCD (15)

		Highways (10) Hennepin Co. Soils (9)
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