

MetroGIS: Performance Measures Case Study

City of Roseville

Organization: City of Roseville
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Organizational Profile: The City of Roseville is a first-ring suburban community of 33,690, situated just north of St. Paul and east of northern Minneapolis. Located on two major highway arterials (I-35W & State Hwy. 36), it is a short commute to either downtown area. Roseville is considered the retail and commercial hub of the northeast suburban area.

Uses of GIS: The City of Roseville has been using geographic information systems (GIS) since 1993 as the primary means for producing its maps as well as for the preparation of many reports and other data that assist the city in its day-to-day business and decision-making. A few examples of Roseville's use of GIS include:

- Generating monthly reports on crime data mapped by address.
- Analyzing the fiscal impact of various redevelopment scenarios.
- Creating up-to-date mailing lists.
- Mapping and analyzing land use on a subregional level.
- Providing an online mapping service that allows viewers to access mapped data on city zoning, land use, demographics, development opportunities, parks and trails, and property tax and value.

Success story: Roseville is home to more than 2,200 businesses that employ more than 39,000 people, many of whom live outside the city. City staff rely on GIS data that cross city and county boundaries to undertake economic development planning that helps the city attract new businesses and assist existing businesses to grow and flourish. GIS gives the city the ability to map, analyze and cross-reference employment, demographic, housing and travel behavior data. For example, the city can analyze its housing stock to ensure the mix is affordable to current and potential workers in the city, thus reducing commute time and demand on area roadways. It can also look at demographic data to plan for the right mix of housing over a period of time.

Impact of MetroGIS: City planning is incomplete if it takes into account only what is happening inside the borders of the city. Roseville's employment base and travelsheds go well beyond its borders, so access to data about property characteristics, land use, employment, travel behavior and demographics from other cities and counties is critical. The culture of data-sharing facilitated by MetroGIS, and its easy data access tool, DataFinder, make cross-jurisdictional analysis not only possible but quick and easy.

“It would have been an onerous task for us to try to gather data from several cities and two counties on our own,” explained David Windle, Roseville’s GIS Coordinator. “The analysis would not be politically or technically feasible -- especially without the MetroGIS future land use data, which provides a common language that allows apples-to-apples comparisons.

“Having an organization that coordinates the sharing of data is a much more efficient mechanism than having all the region’s cities, and other organizations, spending time to acquire the data individually,” said Dennis Welsch, Roseville’s community development director. “The bottom line is better service to the public – by enabling management and elected officials to make more informed decisions because of access to the wealth of information that can be processed and displayed using GIS.”

Roseville is a member of the Ramsey County GIS Users Group, an alliance of cities, neighborhood groups, the county, schools and other organizations that use GIS in carrying out their missions. MetroGIS has been a “tremendous resource” for the user group, Windle said. When the group or some of its members are trying something new, they look to MetroGIS for guidance. “Inevitably, someone in the region has tried something like it. Through MetroGIS, we are able to talk on a regular basis with our colleagues across the region.”

Another important role that MetroGIS plays, Windle said, is in developing data standards and best practices that serve as guidelines for local communities. “Using the standards and best practices gives us a lot more confidence in our locally produced data. It also ensures that data from different jurisdictions is more likely to be compatible.”

With communities using MetroGIS-endorsed datasets as a base for their planning, the accuracy of data is not questioned nearly as much, said Welsch. “Communities can focus their discussions with the Metropolitan Council, for example, during the comprehensive planning process, on substantive policy issues rather than on whether the data are good or not.”

The Memphis Chamber of Commerce made a visit to the Twin Cities and Roseville several years ago, Welsch said. “They were astounded that the region had figured out how to get cities, counties, school districts and other local governments to share data. Now they’re working in their metropolitan area to get something similar started. MetroGIS is an asset we just can’t take for granted.”