



December 13, 2002

-EXAMPLE-

(County Representatives to Policy Board)

Dear Commissioner:

As you know, MetroGIS is a voluntary collaborative of local and regional governments, with partners in state and federal government, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and businesses, that promotes and facilitates the sharing of geospatial data.

One of the most basic geospatial datasets is parcel data. Metro counties maintain parcel datasets that are useful to governmental organizations for their business needs. Counties also sell this data to interested businesses. Parcel data includes parcel boundaries, and may also include "attribute data" like address, property owner, land value, tax category, acreage, etc. Until now, there has been no attempt to coordinate between the counties to provide this data in a consistent format.

The counties, working through MetroGIS, have developed a design for a common parcel dataset with attributes assembled into a common coordinate system to respond to needs of public sector interests that require data from multiple counties or simply crossing county boundaries. Access to these datasets has been streamlined through the use of the MetroGIS Internet-based data distribution capability that allows users to customize their requests by selecting only the data they need.

The counties are now working through the MetroGIS Data Producer Workgroup to distribute this dataset to businesses. Making parcel datasets with attributes more readily available may provide benefits for each county, as well as for the region:

- Counties may experience increases in fee revenue from increased private sector demand for data.
- The region stands to gain from economic development that is supported through making better quality geodata available to businesses.

The Data Producer Workgroup includes staff representatives from the seven metro counties, and is presently focused on developing collaborative solutions for parcel data distribution. In the future, the Workgroup will be addressing other collaboration issues, including possible efficiencies that could be gained through distribution of other county geodata through MetroGIS.

In October 2002, the MetroGIS Policy Board adopted a policy statement regarding access to parcel data by private and non-profit interests (attached). Please provide any comments you may have related to this policy statement to your county's Workgroup member, or contact me directly. We need to receive comments by January 20, 2003.

As always, I appreciate your county's continued involvement in furthering the goals of MetroGIS.

Sincerely,

Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt
Chair, MetroGIS Policy Board

cc: County Data Producers Workgroup Members