

Collaborative Solution Options

Distribution of Parcel Data to Private Sector Interests

(Base document agreed upon at the December 16 meeting. Subsequent staff modifications highlighted.)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Evaluate the manual effort needed to collaboratively distribute parcel data.
2. Test the private sector market for this data and document demand.
3. Market parcel datasets.

COMMON ELEMENTS (These statements apply to all of the Options)

1. Common License

Counties implement a common license document preferably a “shrink wrap” format that permits an electronic “signature”. If not a shrink wrap acceptance process, then downloadable (protected .pdf format) via the MetroGIS information website (www.metrogis.org). Remove the annual renewal and cancellation without cause provision included in the 2001-02 version. A “copyrighted material” declaration needs to be added to the language agreed upon in 2001.

2. Definition of core regional parcel data

Counties agree to same definition of core regional parcel data– same as for public sector regional parcel dataset – that was endorsed in principle by the Policy Board October 22, 2002.

3. Metadata

Metadata for the core parcel data would be posted on MetroGIS DataFinder (description of both the spatial and attribute data).

4. Instructions:

The “Ordering Instructions” in the metadata record on DataFinder would send the user to a webpage, which would provide the user with step-by-step instructions for:

a) Obtaining an order form

b) Obtaining, signing, and submitting a license for initial requests.

Assumption: As long as the counties wish to cost recover for parcel data, there will need to be a way to distinguish between government and non-government interests. Options for licensure

➤ “Shrink Wrap” process- *preferred*: The user would be informed of the licensure requirements/data restrictions in the instructions but no action would be required on their part at this point. Actual delivery of the data by the affected counties would be contingent upon executing the shrink wrap license– methods to be defined by the counties. An option might be to include the licensure language on the invoice with a statement that payment means acceptance.

➤ Conventional paper license process: The user would download a copy of the common license (see #1 above) from a link in the instructions. They would then email/fax/mail the license to MetroGIS’s DataFinder license manager along with their order form. Once a license number is assigned, it would be added to the order form and the user informed of the license number. For any subsequent orders, the user could simply fill in their license number on the order form.

c) Describing their geographic area of interest - written description and/or a map.

d) Submitting the data request to the respective county(ies). Not including Option C, the user would click on a link, which will bring up an email template, pre-formatted to submit their request – the destination of the will vary, as outlined in each option, but from the user’s perspective the procedure is a single action on their part. The user would attach to the email message: a completed order form and description of the area of geographic interest. The signed license would be faxed and/or mailed.

5. Electronic Data Distribution

Data delivery via electronic means – email/FTP is encouraged in order to maintain as much consistency as possible with the current delivery mechanism in place for public sector interests via DataFinder Café. However, it will be left up to each county to decide whether or not to support distribution via CD or other non-electronic delivery.

6. Fees

Fees will start at the \$.05 per parcel with a minimum amount per transaction to cover the time to respond to requests. Further discussion needed to decide if and how to apply the concept of subscriptions and volume discounts. For the time being the user would be charged for each distribution – no free updates.

7. Marketing/Promotion

MetroGIS would promote the project via news releases and outreach activities. Counties would also promote the availability of the parcel datasets as appropriate. A link to each county's website will be provided to promote awareness of other data that is available through the counties.

PROCESSING OPTIONS:

On Dec 16, 2002 the workgroup defined preferences for procedures that have been outlined in what is now referred to as Option A2. The principal change is to provide a mechanism to avoid sending requests to unaffected counties. Option A1 is assumed to no longer be under consideration.

Option A1: Individual County Processing

1. Metadata on DataFinder would include a contact person at each County.
2. See 4b above. If a conventional license, each county would independently ensure licensure.
3. The user's emailed order, which would be forwarded to each county by the user simultaneously, would include a written description and/or a map provided by the user to describe the area of geographic interest.
(The user could scan a map and attach the file to the request, use DataFinder Café to create a screen dump that could be a map from non-parcel data, such as city boundaries and roads attached to the email, or they could attach the "clipped" data file created by Café. The user could also submit a map in an accompanying fax, hand deliver, or mail it to each county. The fax numbers and addresses for each county would be provided in the instructions.)
4. Each county would independently: a) clip from the regional dataset, b) ship their respective portion of the user's request, and c) collect payment from the user.
5. It would be up to the user to "assemble" data received from multiple counties. (Basic directions would be provided on the web page.)
6. Each county would track the inquiries with a standardized format, in particular interest in multiple county data, and share with the other producers on a regular basis.

Pros:

- Producers would not have any out-of-pocket expenses.
- Users would have access to a central Internet-based entry point and a common license to access data from each of the seven counties.

Cons:

- This option would not test the "one-stop-shop" capability of DataFinder Café for parcel data currently available for public sector users. Distribution would be somewhat complex for both users and producers. Users would need to interact with counties separately for payment and receipt of the data.
- The method required to describe the area of interest may not be sufficient, or too complex, for some users resulting in the need for personal contact to insure clear understanding.

Option A2: Individual County Processing – Intermediate Processing

Comparison to Option A1 Procedures:

1. Provide the county contacts but only for questions about the data.
- 2 & 3. These procedures would be accomplished through the MetroGIS DataFinder licensing coordinator (Steve Fester) as opposed to separately by each county. The user would submit their request to this person who would determine which counties are involved and redirect the data request only to the county(ies) affected. If a conventional license is involved, he would see to that an executed licensure is in place before the request is forwarded to the affected county(ies). This person would manage a database that tracks the received and forwarded requests.
4. Same
5. Same
6. Same

Pros:

- Producers would not have any out-of-pocket expenses.
- Users would have access to a central Internet-based entry point and a common license to access data from each of the seven counties. Submittal of requests to a central redistribution entity would ensure that the counties receive only requests that affect them and would provide an efficient

mechanism to track submitted requests which will serve as basis to decide if an automated system is warranted.

Cons:

- This option would not test the “one-stop-shop” capability of DataFinder Café for parcel data currently available for public sector users. Users would need to interact with counties separately for payment and receipt of the data.
- The method required to describe the area of interest may not be sufficient, or too complex, for some users resulting in the need for personal contact to insure clear understanding.

Option B: Collaborative Manual Processing

Comparison to Option A2 Procedures:

1. Same
2. –4 : One entity would volunteer to be responsible for processing the entire request (ensure licensure, invoice the user, collect the fees, deliver the data for the area of interest, and distribute the fees collected to the appropriate counties).
5. Same
6. Instead of each tracking distributions separately the entity in charge of receiving the requests would track all information concerning requests in an approved format.

Pros:

- This option would better address stated objectives - the user’s interest in access to the parcel data and the concept of one-stop-shop distribution.
- The counties could best evaluate the effort needed to manually to emulate the Café functions and decide if an automated process would be more efficient.

Cons:

- Expenses for processing would need to be determined and shared in some agreed-upon manner.
- The method required to describe the area of interest may not be sufficient or too complex for some users resulting in the need for continued personal contact to ensure clear understanding.

Comment: Washington County is proposing consideration of adding a surcharge that would go to the entity handling the distribution to encourage someone to step forward and take on this responsibility. Before considering staff suggests that this fee not be called a surcharge but simply recovery of the costs of reproduction to avoid issues with the Data Practices Act.

Option C: Automated Centralized Process with eCommerce

(Not presently under consideration – provided for illustration only and assumed to be premature until market interest established)

1. The user would conduct their entire transaction via the Internet.
 - A method would be need to be developed and added to DataFinder Café to permit the prospective user to readily identify their area of geographic interest, without using parcel boundary data. *(Assumes the producers will not want to allow parcel boundary data to be viewed by the users to define their geographic area of interest. An analysis of the issues and a suggestion to investigate a “surrogate” method of defining geographic interest are summarized in Appendix A.)*
 - An electronic license acceptance capability would also need to be added to Café’s capabilities if A “shrink wrapping procedure is desired. Another capability enhancement might also be to expedite “licensed users” ability to “see” the parcel data once they have agreed to the license conditions. (e.g., some form of a password that once assigned, the qualifying interest would be able to “see” the data on Café and download it without having to relicense. This electronic acceptance capability does not currently exist in Café.)
 - If no “shrink wrapping”, Café would then investigate the user’s organizational affiliation unless they have previously logged in with a password. Licensing would be handle the same way it is currently handled for public sector users (user downloads the license document form MetroGIS’s

- website, mail or hand carry an executed copy to the MetroGIS data licensing manager, the manager updates the Café security database and notifies the user of their password).
- If the user will be required to pay a fee it will be calculate and shown to the user but a message will also be provided to direct the user to the MetroGIS web site for licensing instructions before the transaction can be finalized.
 - Once the user's licensing requirements are satisfied, the wizard would walk them through the payment procedures and once the payment transaction is complete, walk the user through the data delivery options.
2. The Metropolitan Council/MetroGIS would provide monthly activity reports and cut checks to the counties on a quarterly, possibly monthly basis, at no charge to counties provided the audit trail provides all information needed to simply cut the checks.

Pros

- The user would be able to download parcel data as part of a bundle of fully integrated regional parcel datasets via a one-stop-shop for the entire process.
- No county staff support would be involved the distribution process, other than to provide MetroGIS with an update parcel dataset on the schedule agreed upon by MetroGIS.

Cons:

- Undetermined whether a “surrogate” method of defining the user's desired geographic extent is possible and, if so, whether it would be a cost effective option to integrate into DataFinder Cafe. (*A request has been submitted to Syncline to determine whether this capability is technologically feasible and, if so, for a ball park estimate of the approximate cost. Staff expects a response before the County Producer Workgroup's next meeting.*)
- A significant out-of-pocket cost would be involved to expand the functionality of DataFinder in link it with an automated eCommerce capability (estimated at \$25,000 to \$40,000, plus \$3,000 to \$5,000 for annual application maintenance).

Collaborative Solution Options
Distribution of Other Data for Which a Fee is Charged

Contour/elevation and planimetric data:

1. The counties could add metadata to DataFinder for their respective individual holdings of these data and distribution could be pursued under the Options set forth for parcels, assuming the “surrogate” method of defining geographic area of interest is cost-effective to develop.
2. The fact that these data are not currently designated as “regional dataset” priorities might not matter since the counties appear to be using similar data capture methods.
3. The prominence of these data to Homeland Security matters will likely result in their eventual designation as a common regional information need and the need to distribute them more effectively.

APPENDIX A

Surrogate Method of Defining Geographic Area of Interest

The option of providing the user with the ability to view parcel boundaries, without any attributes, was thought through following conversations with six of the seven county representatives following the November 4th County Producer Workgroup meeting but rejected for three reasons.

The concept involved allowing the user to view parcel boundary data on-line, without any attributes, as a means to: a) expedite identification of their geographic area of interest and b) research market interest in digital parcel data. Licensing and cost recovery would continue to apply for access to attribute data.

However, the negatives were found to outweigh the positives:

- 1) Parcel boundaries could not be protected: Notwithstanding the consensus that little revenue is currently being realized from parcel boundary data, with the current DataFinder Café technology there would be no way to protect this data from being downloaded by users with ESRI software once the data are available for viewing on DataFinder Café. Licensure would not resolve the concern because licensed non-government users could gain access without paying a fee.
- 2) Possible negative affect on cover recovery options: Cost recovery revenue potential for development of parcel data could be negatively affected. Randy Knippel's opinion is that cost recovery for data development expenses applies only to the parcel boundaries and that cost recovery for attributes is limited to the costs of reproduction. If the data are distributed electronically via an automated system, an argument could be made that there are few, if any, expenses to distribute. This situation is assumed not to be in the counties' best interests.
- 3) Distribution of contour and planimetric data raise the same issues. With parcels, the option existed to separate the spatial (boundary data) from the assumed more valuable attribute data to allow the user to view the data online. This technique might also apply to contour data but probably not for planimetric data. As a result, staff believes that a surrogate method of identifying parcel, contour, and planimetric data would be most prudent approach for any data for which cost recovery is an objective, assuming it is technologically feasible.

A "surrogate method" of defining a user's geographic area of interest for parcel or any other cost-recovery oriented geodata does not exist. Development of this capability would entail modification of the DataFinder Café application in addition to development of an eCommerce capability. The surrogate method would permit the user to define their geographic area of interest using open access data, such as the Mn/DOT street and/or regional city boundaries data to provide the user with reference points for the parcel data they want to obtain.