

Notes from August 27, 2002 Meeting of Producer County Staff

Attendees:

Dave Drealan, Carver, Workgroup Chair
Jim Hentges, Scott
Jane Harper, Washington
Randy Knippel, Dakota
Gary Swenson, Anoka
Bill Brown, Hennepin

Randy Johnson, MetroGIS
Kathie Doty, RRA

Dave Drealan opened the meeting, indicating that this group has been formed to follow up on direction provided at the July MetroGIS Board meeting to look at distribution of parcel datasets, and also consider common tools and applications. Dave asked Randy and Kathie to summarize the recent history of actions taken by MetroGIS and counties to distribute parcel data to non-public entities. Recent actions were summarized in the last MetroGIS Board meeting packet, and include the formation of a committee of the MetroGIS Board to work with private sector interests to learn more about the market for parcel data, the creation of an agreement for counties and MetroGIS which allowed for sale of parcel datasets through MetroGIS on CDs, and the subsequent expiration of this agreement, in part due to lack of sales of parcel data.

Dave asked each county representative to discuss their county's vision for joint work on parcel data distribution, as well as other opportunities for collaboration. Comments included:

- Most county data producers would like to automate, to the extent possible, the distribution of their GIS data, including parcel and other datasets. Initiatives that could reduce "counter time" are welcome.
- Interest in cost recovery varies from county to county. Some counties consider cost recovery a low priority, since the data was developed to serve internal purposes. Other counties support the principle that it is fair to recover costs from entities that profit from use of data created with public dollars.
- Some counties are very interested in collaboration as a way to expedite automated data distribution via the web, rather than pursuing this individually.
- Most counties do not presently generate a significant amount of revenue from the sale of parcel data, but generate revenue from sales of planimetrics, attributes,---. Also, revenue from sales of parcel data can be uneven, with significant sales in one year to large purchasers such as utilities, then a drop off in overall sales as these large purchasers build their own GIS.

In addition to the discussion of data distribution, county representatives compared their organization structures, and several agreed that organizational complexities can result in GIS not having a clear place in their organizations. GIS can reside in different departments, depending upon each county's org structure (County representatives at this meeting included staff from: county surveyor office, county administration, planning & zoning. GIS is also closely linked to IT functions in some counties, and attribute data can reside with county assessors.) The unclear position of GIS can result in difficulty in getting attention required to support investment in GIS, and to get adequate policy review for issues arising in this changing area. The existence of the MetroGIS Policy Board can inadvertently add to miscommunication. Policy discussions that

occur through MetroGIS are not necessarily well communicated to the various parts of each organization that are affected by policy changes. Meeting participants agreed that opportunities exist for them to remedy some of these concerns by making efforts to improve communications within their own organizations.

At the end of the meeting, Dave summarized what appeared to be common perspectives as individual counties articulated their individual visions:

- 1) In general, finding better ways to distribute good quality data is a commonly held value. This includes not only parcel data, but also attribute data.
- 2) Standardization of data and processes is important, and collaboration will help move us towards standardization more efficiently and effectively,
- 3) The use of the Internet to distribute data is a good idea, and collaboration on how to accomplish this could yield savings and better processes.
- 4) Counties represent not only data producers, but also some of the most significant data users. Finding better ways to distribute good data will benefit county government as well as outside organizations.

The approach of convening county data generators with facilitation support from MetroGIS was welcomed. There was hope that this approach will not only yield a good solution regarding data distribution, but also a better understanding of other county GIS activities and methods. The opportunity to share information about each other's organizations and processes has the potential to help counties advance their GIS goals.

County representatives felt that another meeting should be convened soon to continue the momentum established at this first meeting, and to focus on the specific issue of distribution of parcel data. The next meeting was set for September 9, 2002 at 1:30 PM in Roseville.

Other:

- *Contour maps, half sections, corner tiles, aerials – summarize comments related to these.*
- *Possible future workshop with staff from various departments (producers and users)*