

**Meeting Notes**  
**MetroGIS Producer Work Group**  
**Monday, September 9, 2002**

Members Present: Dave Drealan – Chair (Carver County), Jim Hentges (Scott County), Gary Swenson (Anoka County), Jane Harper (Washington County), Randy Knippel (Dakota County) , Bill Brown (Hennepin County) and ,

MetroGIS Support Staff Team: Randall Johnson (MetroGIS) and Kathie Doty (Richardson, Richter & Assoc.)

1. **Minutes August 27, 2002**

Dave Drealan convened the meeting and asked for comments on the minutes from the August 27th meeting. Jim Hentges indicated that the word “tiles” on page 2 should be “ties”. No other changes to the minutes were suggested.

2. **Review of Draft Business Plan Excerpt Regarding Distribution of Parcel Data**

Dave indicated that the Policy Board had reviewed and given direction on strategies to address distribution of parcel data to the private sector at the July Policy Board meeting. He asked the group to consider the first issue, which is whether there is a market for parcel data sales. After discussion of this matter the general consensus was formed that it is difficult to estimate what sales might take place if parcel data was made more readily available via the Internet and with a subsetting capability. Jane Harper emphasized that the need for e-commerce to charge for distribution of data to the private sector should not be limited to parcels, since producers are interested in distributing other data sets as well.

A number of other issues arose as follows:

- Regarding demand for parcels, Randall Johnson asked counties, approximately the number of licenses that exist for parcel data now.
- Randy Knippel asked about funding and time frame limitations related to developing an e-commerce option, and Randall Johnson responded that the MetroGIS proposed budget has funds to support this for 2003. However, the Metropolitan Council Management has asked questions about whether a demand exists for parcel data and whether it is worthwhile to use these funds for e-commerce.
- Jane raised the issue that the justification for developing e-commerce should not be limited to distribution of parcel data sets, which may have an uncertain demand, but should also consider producer's interest in distributing other data sets. Bill Brown asked whether the e-commerce software and the data finder café software would be able to be used to distribute spatial data. Randall Johnson responded that it would be more expensive than has been estimated to distribute spatial data, but it is doable according to a representative of Syncline, the firm that prepared the scoping study for MetroGIS. Bill also asked if other data would be marketable if parcel data is not. Jim pointed out that spatial data is sold more frequently than parcel data, so it does not seem that there is a connection. Bill asked though if the lack of sales of parcel data has more to do with access being difficult, and Gary added that many people do not know about the availability of parcel data. At the end of this discussion Jane indicated that in her mind a first task to undertake is to begin discussions of what the counties are presently selling and get a better handle on that. The discussion then touched on sales of data, versus sales of end products such as maps. The group agreed to look at all sales initially and then to focus in after there is a better understanding of what is presently happening.

- Regarding whether the group can focus on just distribution of parcels initially. Dave Drealan indicated that we may need to be flexible and look beyond just parcels, as the work group proceeds. Bill Brown reminded the group that we are not only considering the benefit of saving staff time, but also potentially increasing revenues through expansion of sales. In discussion of markets, Jane also pointed out that the lack of clarity about demand is somewhat a result of the complexity of the marketplace. For example, plat books are not produced for people who hunt and fish, but they are the biggest purchasers of these products. Gary added that the majority of his sales are maps. Anoka County sells almost no data but lots of maps. The group agreed that it appears that there is a middleman market between data and end products, and would like to explore the possibility of getting the counties out of the middleman role in order to reduce staff time, and also possibly capture additional revenue. Kathie reminded the group that in interviews with private sector about demand for parcel data, we learned more about the businesses that might be in the middle taking data and generating marketable products with that data. However, she also cautioned that it is not at all apparent that making parcel and other data available would immediately kick in increased sales. It may take some time for this type of business opportunity to come to fruition.

Randy Knippel emphasized the need to use these discussions as leverage to straighten out internal issues within his county regarding distribution of and charging for data. Jim Hentges suggested that the counties consider a trial period for distribution of parcel data to work out some of the details. After further discussion it was generally agreed that a trial period might be useful and provide information regarding demand and how this could work. This would allow us to gather the information we need prior to embarking upon the development of an e-commerce function. Randall Johnson suggested the development of a "Regional Policy Statement" that would include provisions such as a uniform license, 24 attributes, and standardized data specifications. This "Standardized Parcel Data Set" could be made available with each county charging in their own way.

A suggestion that was raised at the last meeting was raised again regarding outreach to other county departments that are not as aware of MetroGIS as this group is. The idea of making a presentation to county auditors was discussed and Randall Johnson suggested that he might contact Lucy Botzek to see if this makes sense.

Dave Drealan brought the meeting to a close and indicated that the next meeting that will be held on September 25<sup>th</sup> from noon to 1:45 at (TBD) should include the following items:

1. A round robin discussion of counties present activities regarding sales of data and GO data products (include number of sales, revenues, fee schedules and costs to the extent that information is available).
2. Review of a draft regional policy regarding distribution of parcel and other data sets.
3. Further discussion of providing a forum to increase the level of knowledge and understanding about GIS within a range of county departments.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson  
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator