

**Meeting Notes**  
**County Data Producer Work Group**  
**Thursday, May 8, 2003**  
**Roseville City Hall**

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

Staff Present: Randall Johnson (MetroGIS) and Mark Kotz (MetroGIS/Metropolitan Council)

Summary of March 31 meeting:

The document was circulated before the meeting and is posted at

<http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/index.shtml#private2>. No changes were suggested.

1. Data Maintenance Payments for 2003

Chairperson Drealan noted that Gary Swenson had requested that this topic be added to the agenda. Swenson explained the Anoka County GIS Unit is preparing for a five percent funding cut which will result in the loss of staff support. He noted that the \$9,900 data maintenance payment from the Council could alleviate this problem, but he is concerned about using these funds to support internal needs when the group has agreed-in-principle to pool their payments to fund a project(s) of significance to all. He explained that if he does not request these funds that his only other option is for county management to seek cuts in other county activities to make up the five percent cut in the GIS unit. Swenson also commented that Commissioner Kordiak is committed to fully cooperating and participating in MetroGIS but is also concerned about the impact of this budget cut on other county activities. Consequently, Swenson asked for this topic to be added to the workgroup's agenda to explore his options with the other county representatives.

The other representatives stated that they, too, are expected to implement funding cuts, but that the supplemental funds for MetroGIS related activities are not a component of their operating budgets. Some treat these funds the same as revenues for which they do not budget; if they receive them they have additional funds, but if they don't, there is no impact. Others place the MetroGIS-related funds into an enterprise fund dedicated to data maintenance to be used with other funds raised through sale of data and GIS services. Others commented that the amount for MetroGIS is quite small in relationship to large department budgets and, although appreciated, do not have a significant impact one way or another. Swenson conceded that showing these funds as a line item source of revenue in his budget is the source of this dilemma and that this situation would not occur in subsequent years if the maintenance payment is part of the next generation agreement. Finally, it was acknowledged that internal funding priorities are a given, but if a program has value, somebody has to champion it with the Board to garner sufficient support to balance priorities, accordingly.

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that the language in the current contract is purposefully vague to provide as much flexibility as possible to the counties, but that use of these funds is expected to support maintenance and/or improvements to data that are of significance to the broad MetroGIS community or improvements to the distribution system to streamline access to these data. In response to a comment from Knippel, Johnson explained that the Council's initial investment of over \$730,000 through the first generation GIS data sharing agreements with the counties was an acknowledgement of the Council's respect for the counties' major investments in their GIS operations, the efficiencies and improved decision support that use of the Counties' parcel data brings to the Council's operations, and the importance to the Council to facilitate widespread sharing of commonly needed data; in this case, parcel data. Johnson also explained that the \$75,000/year supplemental data maintenance payment that has also been in effect since 1997 was purposely proposed and has been maintained as a separate line item in the Council's budget to convey the need to continually pursue improvements to the quality and access to commonly needed data. Knippel commented that the amount of this payment is less important than the gesture of good faith it represents to leverage the counties' existing investments in GIS data and technology.

Swenson thanked the group for their comments.

## 2. Data Maintenance Payments and Next Version of GIS Data Sharing Agreements

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that work with the counties to reach agreement on general expectations for the next generation agreements is planned to begin as soon as Kathie Doty returns from vacation the third week in May, assuming a contract with Richardson, Richter & Associates is executed by that time.

Johnson commented that during recent negotiations with new Council administration to finalize a 2003 budget for MetroGIS, he had learned of the regional administrator's discomfort with the past practice of making direct payments to the counties, but at the same time is understanding of the value of working with the counties to continually improve the quality of parcel data and streamline access procedures. In other words, the hang up appears to be the method, not the desired outcome. Staff noted that more information is needed from Council management about why they are concerned with the previous practice of direct payments. He also commented that a possible middle ground is the concept of a central project funding pool that the Workgroup accepted last fall, in which this group collectively has a say in how the funds will be used. Staff also acknowledged that MetroGIS Policy Board Chair Reinhardt is opposed to discontinuing the direct payments and that an meeting with Council management and policy makers will be scheduled in the near future.

## 3. Common Shrink-Wrap License

Gary Swenson passed out a draft of a proposed streamlined license document. Three changes were suggested following less than five minutes of review: 1) add a copyright declaration, 2) broaden the document's applicability to all data, not just regional datasets endorsed by MetroGIS, and 3) broaden the document's applicability to any data producer, not just counties. It was agreed that the third change may not be fully implemented until after the new parcel dataset distribution mechanism is operational.

Swenson agreed to make the changes and send the revised document by email to the other six county representatives to share with their county attorneys.

## 4. Web-based Data Order Form and Instructions

Mark Kotz handed out a paper copy of the web-order form and each of the documents linked to from the forum and instructions that have been developed to support distribution to the private sector. A week earlier, he had emailed the URL ([http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/private/parcel\\_web\\_form.shtml](http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/private/parcel_web_form.shtml)) to each member and asked each of them to test the site prior to the meeting.

No changes were requested. Staff commented that once the workgroup has resolved all matters associated with the fees and licensure, the prototype site could be quickly converted to fully operational.

## 5. Parcel Fee Proposal for Subscriptions and Volume Discounts

Randy Knippel summarized the objectives he suggested for a new fee plan: 1) generate more revenue through a higher volume of sales and 2) minimize processing time and effort for the counties. He proposed to accomplish these objectives through a program of subscriptions and volume discounts, implemented through a sliding scale of fees with the following major components:

- \$.05/parcel for small orders of up to 2000 parcels plus a setup fee to complete the extraction with additional cumulative reductions \$.02 and \$.01/parcel for more than 5000 and more than 50,000 parcels, respectively.
- \$.01/parcel for pre-built datasets, such as for individual cities or an entire county,
- \$.005/parcel or about \$4,500 (900,000 parcels), plus an update charge of around \$1000 to \$1500/year (assumes 10 percent of the parcel data changes from quarter to quarter) for access to the parcel data for entire Metro Area anytime during the annual subscription period via DataFinder.

The proposal was very well received. Knippel agreed to finalize a written summary and send it to each member to share with prospective purchasers for comment and reaction. If initial reaction is positive, it was suggested that a one-year pilot might make the idea more acceptable to any resistant county to evaluate the revenue potential and to determine if the purchasers are new customers for county-produced parcel data. Some concern was raised that if current customers were interested in the regional dataset, as

opposed to numerous attributes without the parcel boundaries, the proposed sliding scale could have a negative impact on current revenue received from the sale of parcel attribute data.

The members also concurred that sharing of their parcel data with utility companies who, in return, agree to share their data (e.g., infrastructure locations and, to the extent possible, customer information, such as, when residential connections are turned on and off) might be workable. Staff noted that this policy might be included in the next generation data and cost sharing agreements along with the previously agreed upon changes to grant free access to government and academics interests anywhere in the country.

6. Regional Mailing Label Application

Mark Kotz shared the results of Alison Slaats' preliminary investigation of the feasibility of extending the mailing label application developed by Carver County to a regional application running on the regional dataset. The group provided feedback on several questions posed by Slaats, including the need to have the user identify the city in addition to the address, investigate the option of adding a disclaimer to the metadata to encourage counties who have not done so to date, to populate the owner name data field, and investigate use of a "hidden URL" to accomplish the desired security as opposed to a password-based method.

Slaats and Kotz will develop an operational prototype and demonstrate it at the next meeting for review and comment.

7. One-Time Programming to Populate Units/Parcel Field in Regional parcel Dataset

No discussion due to lack of time.

8. Data Distribution Proposal from Barclay Mapping

The members concurred that they did not have a compelling need to give further consideration to this proposal at this time, given their significant effort over the past six months to develop and implement a new fee schedule and associated procedures. Staff agreed to inform Barclay Maps of this decision and to pass along the comment that if such an arrangement were to be considered in the future it would have to be with the understanding that Barclay Maps can not be granted exclusive distribution rights, an arrangement that some felt Barclay Maps might seek.

9. Next Meeting

It was agreed to try to meet the first week in June. Staff was asked to query the members for availability.

Candidate topics for the next meeting are:

- License for access to parcel data
- Objectives for the next version of GIS Data Sharing Agreements
- Strategy to test receptiveness of proposed parcel data fees with prospective buyers
- Strategy to advertise new parcel data program to non-government interests
- Effort required to populate units/parcel field in regional parcel dataset
- Objectives for a program to share parcel data with utilities in return for access to utility infrastructure and customer (when connected and disconnected) data
- Others listed on the agenda

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Randall Johnson, AICP  
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator