

Meeting Summary

Phase II Workgroup Beyond Government Users: Future Directions for MetroGIS

September 12, 2006

(Metropolitan Counties Insurance Trust Building)

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Attending:

Will Craig, CURA (Coordinating Committee member)

Jason Johnson, Welsh Companies

John Carpenter, Excensus

Absent:

Sally Wakefield, 1000 Friends of Minnesota (Coordinating Committee member)

Support Staff:

Rich Cornell, Consultant, Metropolitan Council Learning and Development

Randall Johnson – MetroGIS Staff Coordinator

1) Results of Sharing August 29th Meeting Summary.

There was no discussion of the August 29th summary

2) Refine Workgroup's Draft Opportunities Recommendation

The group concurred that the following themes were should continue to be the focuses of its recommendation to MetroGIS leadership at the pending Strategic Directions Workshop:

- ***Expand Policy Board membership to include non-government interests***
- ***Foster an Open Source Data Model*** – (includes “develop a process to return improved data to the data stream”, “implement effective ways to integrate data from multiple sources”, and “develop a process to post suggested corrections for consideration by the custodian”)
- ***Foster a Marketplace for Geospatial Data Resources*** (includes “focus groups to identify potential connections”)
- ***Implement ApplicationFinder concept*** (pilot project proposed to be conducted by Mn Geographic and Demographic Analysis Fall 2006-Spring 2007)
- ***Foster statewide adoption of Principles that Underpin MetroGIS.***

The group then spent much of the remainder of the meeting talking about the desired characteristics of an Open Source Data Model, building on the characteristics defined at the August 29th meeting, a goal being implementation of a system that fosters continual improvement of the data which in turn drives application development that is of value to the entire community. Each agreed a range of users is making improvements to data obtained from others on an ongoing basis which would be value to others if there were a means to effectively share these enhancements.

The group concurred the system should be comprised of two major components – base spatial data which is stable (e.g., parcel geography and attribute data produced by the counties) and attributes which can be added by others). The data contributed by others would be maintained in a repository maintained by some entity other than the maintainer of the base data.

The members then discussed how the proposed system might work. The supplemental data would be offered in the spirit of improving/expanding the base data. The new data may or may not be provided for the entire seven county area. The metadata would define the particulars. The group concluded that if such a system were to caught hold that missing data would eventually be provided because the value of the resource would be realized. The example of the Regional Land Cover dataset was mentioned as an example of how use encouraged expanded data availability.

The group concurred that the providers of the supplemental data would need access to the parcel PINs/PIDs and that they concur this access would require negotiations with the Counties, demonstration of the public good that could be attained, and mostly some sort of licensing procedure to insure access is limited to agreed upon purposes. All agreed that a pilot project should be pursued with one or two willing counties to provide a proof of concept, serve a platform for deliberating the necessary policy changes, and sort out roles and responsibilities.

Ideas for the pilot were then talked about. The group concurred that it should pursue the formation of a federation of 4-5 private sector interests willing to contribute data to test the concept and develop a prototype of the web application to distribute the supplemental data in conjunction with the base data in a manner that is as transparent as possible to the data user.

It was agreed that the eventual recommendation to MetroGIS leadership must articulate why the private sector is interested in pursuing this proposal (its motivation). It was agreed that the proposal needs to demonstrate value (to the counties and the users in general) could be added which equals or exceeds the current fee for non-gov't access.

Carpenter offered the following components for the pilot:

- a) Formation of a non-government collaborative, the members of which would pay a fee that would go into a collective fund to the county data access fee as a group
- b) Secure a dedicated server from one of the collaborative partners
- c) Each must contribute data that has value to others
- d) Create a metric to track who is using these data (public and non-public sector alike)
- e) Document value to the users.

The following strategy is agreed upon concerning the Strategic Directions Workshop:

- a) Summarize the 5 opportunity themes (top of previous page). Consistency with criteria approved by the Policy Board, value added to current environment if pursued, known obstacles, who must be involved to achieve, and lost opportunities if not pursued.

With the exception of the statewide adoption of MetroGIS principles opportunity, Jason Johnson agreed to prepared a preliminary draft bringing with the summary provided in the summary of the last meeting (Attachment A to this document) and circulate it within the next 2-3 weeks for the other members to build on. Craig also agreed to draft a summary for the statewide opportunities recommendation tying in the Metropolitan Council's June 28, 2006 direction to its management to communicate the value it perceives from of MetroGIS's collaborative efforts to the leadership of state agencies

(Editor's note: See http://www.metrogis.org/about/affiliations/index.shtml#met_council for the resolution and the findings that lead to his resolution. Craig was also encouraged to mention the GCGI's current strategic planning initiative and references in the MSDI to the need to evaluate policies adopted by MetroGIS for their appropriateness beyond the Metro Area.

b) Pursue the pilot project, described herein, on its own schedule.

3) Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator

ATTACHMENT A

MODIFIED PARTNERING OPPORTUNITIES (As defined at the August 29th Workgroup Meeting)

Most Promising, Achievable Opportunities:

- *Expand Policy Board membership to include non-government interests*
- *Foster an Open Source Data Model*
- *Foster a Marketplace for Geospatial Data Resources*
- *Implement Application Finder concept*
- *Foster statewide adoption of Principles that Underpin MetroGIS.*

A brief explanation of each “most promising” opportunity follows:

Opportunity: *Expand Policy Board membership to include non- government interests*

(The group concurred that although it had not had an opportunity to discuss this concept, it should remain on the list of most promising opportunities for further investigation.)

Opportunity: *Foster an Open Source Data Model*

The best available data is not always provided by government. The concept of an *open source* data model holds promise as a means to create a reliable framework through which to encourage data contributions by non-government interests important to improving overall data quality, reliability, and completeness. Such a model could create a means to encourage reliable connection of housing, utility, real estate and school district records with parcel data to greatly enhance data quality and in doing so open up application development opportunities important to all sectors. Moving to an open source structure will also promote investment and partnering opportunities. Improvements in the functionality and reliability of existing applications, such as geocoding, are dependent to a large degree on improvement in data quality. For instance, geocoding based upon streets is “old technology” and an effort should be made to use more precise addresses associated with parcels and occupiable units. Non-profit and private sector interests should be looked to as potential sources of address data to add value to the existing government supported data resources.

MetroGIS’s role should be to foster creation of the data platform needed to support a wide range of applications that, in turn, provide the information needed to support day-to-day operations. ***Implementing effective ways to integrate data from multiple sources*** should be recognized as a higher priority than building additional regional data solutions, though it was acknowledged that additional solutions to common needs would be useful.

Opportunity: *Foster a Marketplace for Geospatial Resources*

Expanded access to the geospatial data resources would facilitate application development which would create opportunity for the public and non-public sectors to leverage for their particular needs. A *marketplace* concept, which provides geospatial data and application access options, could range from bartering to subscriptions. Maintaining trust in data accuracy, completeness, and availability will be critical to achieving a marketplace capable of minimizing duplication of effort and broad leveraging of existing resources. The marketplace should also support outsourcing of application needs as well as the preferences of some users who will want to bring an application in-house to experiment with the code and functionality themselves. The focus

should be on applications and web services that are not part of the standard desktop suite (e.g., commercial GIS software).

To achieve the open source model, the various sectors/interests need to better understand the geospatial resources of others and what might be valuable to their needs. A series of *focus groups* among the various interests is suggested to identify potential connections. All interests should be invited to participate, regardless of their current capabilities as their ability to contribute may not be readily identifiable at this time. Topics that should be explored include data produced and used as well as capabilities to use and produce geospatial products.

The goal should be to expand the user community (market), not close it down when budget constraints exist or are pending. A distributed system of producers of property related data is suggested that creates a one stop access point for parcel-related data produced by government and non-government interests alike. Expansion of the user base expands potential partnerships to pursue collaboratively other next-generation enhancements valuable to all.

Opportunity: *Implement ApplicationFinder concept*

The 2006 Regional GIS Project referred to as the “Service Broker” project under the direction of the Mn Department of Geographic and Demographic Analysis (GDA) builds on the ApplicationFinder concept initially debuted by MetroGIS in December 2004. Achieving the geospatial resources marketplace concept requires a reliable means to search for and access existing applications and services, whether or not they are freely available, and achieve a set of standard principles for design to encourage interoperability. These specifications should be tested and refined in the current pilot project.

Opportunity: *Foster statewide adoption of Principles that Underpin MetroGIS*

(To be defined. See the November 15, 2005 Forum summary for baseline information.)

ATTACHMENT B

DETAILED COMMENTS
(Captured by Rich Cornell on Flip Charts)

Metro GIS Public/Private Partnerships August 29, 2006

“There has got to be a way to capture data produced by others for the public good.”

Recommend that MetroGIS sponsor a private/non-profit/government work group to lead a transactional process that results in returning improved data to the data stream.

This effort will result in expanding resources toward a vision of absolutely accurate parcel data and housing codes.

Draft design components

- No filter
- Six month review
- Web based
- Trust worthy attributes
- Source identification
- Built on standardized, accurate, quality factors
- Equal exchange of value

Work group design and participation

Open process

Other proposals

- Increased private/non-profit membership on Policy Board
- ApplicationFinder