

REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AREAS PRIORITY INFORMATION NEED POLICY SUMMARY

Regional Data Specifications

DESIRED SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AREAS DATA SPECIFICATIONS

The solution to MetroGIS Socioeconomic Characteristics of Areas Information Need focuses on the priority socioeconomic information needs¹ of the MetroGIS community that can be satisfied with existing published data. These data are published by a number of organizations including federal, state, metropolitan, county, non-profit authorities, and commercial entities. To help the user community more easily locate data with specifications consistent with identified desired characteristics, MetroGIS facilitated the development and long-term maintenance of the Web-based Socioeconomic Resources Page at (www.datafinder.org/mg/socioeconomic_resources/index.asp).

The subject data have simply been cited and summarized in the Resources Page, along with information about how to obtain them. The producers have not been contacted, other than to clarify descriptions of their respective data holdings.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. PRIMARY CUSTODIAN

Numerous entities including federal, state, metropolitan, county, non-profit authorities and commercial entities.

B. PRIMARY CUSTODIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

No agreement has been sought by MetroGIS with any of the many cited primary producers. Each of the cited data sources is a long-time, trusted publisher of data that is a product of their respective internal business needs.

C. REGIONAL CUSTODIANS

The University of Minnesota's Minnesota Population Center has accepted custodian responsibility to maintain the content of the MetroGIS Socioeconomic Web Resources Page (www.datafinder.org/mg/socioeconomic_resources/index.asp) and the Metropolitan Council has accepted custodial responsibility for the hardware, software and related support necessary to provide access to the Socioeconomic Resources Page via the Internet.

D. REGIONAL CUSTODIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Content of Resources Page:

The University of Minnesota's Minnesota Population Center has accepted the following custodial responsibilities:

- a) **Maintain Technical Integrity:** Periodically check the URL links to data sources cited in the Resources Page to make certain they are still live. If a link is broken, they will research and

replace the link. This activity will occur comprehensively at least one time per year (*December*) according to a schedule approved by the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee, and as notified by users. All changes will be conveyed to the Metropolitan Council GIS Department in a format, acceptable to both parties, that clearly communicates the changes proposed.

- b) **Monitor Currency of Site Content:** Inform MetroGIS, via the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator, of any new socioeconomic data sources that provide sub-state and/or sub-regional information, which MetroGIS should consider adding to the Resources Page (for example, the American Community Survey (ACS) when it begins delivering more complete data coverage.) In this case, the regional custodian will draft text for a *Data Source* page on ACS along with new entries for the *Data Resource Page*. The Custodian will spend 2 hours per month on discovery of new data sources.
- c) **Monitor User Satisfaction:** Participate in forums/discussions sponsored by MetroGIS that pertain to the Socioeconomic Data Resources Page and participate in subsequent discussions about which recommended enhancements to implement. Answer user questions related to data content whenever possible.

2. Maintenance of the Web server

The Metropolitan Council has accepted the following custodial responsibilities:

- a) **Provide Server Support:** Provide and maintain all hardware, software and related support necessary to host the Socioeconomic Data Resources Page in an Internet environment, including but not limited to data archive, backup, retrieval and disaster recovery. Check for broken links and report problems to the content team.
- b) **Implement Resource Page Changes:** Upon notification from the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator of approved changes to the Resources Page, modify the site to implement these changes.
- c) **Manage Feedback Link:** Comments obtained via the feedback link from the Resources Page will be consolidated not less than quarterly.
- d) **Communicate Feedback to MetroGIS:** Feedback received via the Resources Page link will be transmitted periodically to the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator who will share it with the Coordinating Committee for direction.

E. METROGIS RESPONSIBILITIES

Monitor Satisfaction and Oversee Implementation of Desired Improvements: As requests and/or opportunities become known through user feedback and following major data release events, such as the decennial Census, the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee will provide direction to the Minnesota Population Center as to MetroGIS's preferences to address such matters. MetroGIS will also host a Data Users Forum every 3-5 years, or as otherwise determined by the Coordinating Committee, to obtain feedback from the MetroGIS community as to desired enhancements to the Resources Page and any associated data access, content, documentation and/or distribution policy(ies). The review of available and desired data resources conducted for the TIAP project in 2006 served as the first user satisfaction forum.

Record of Adoptions:

V1 - October 27, 2004

V2 – January 27, 2010 (See Attachment A for an explanation of the changes)

ATTACHMENT A

Transitway Data Management Project **Transitway Impacts Research Program**

CTS Project #2009072

June 2009 Draft Report

(Submitted by Will Craig, Associate Director, CURA)

Introduction

This project is intended to provide data to research studies measuring the impacts of new Transitways in the Twin Cities region. It also is intended to archive data from existing studies so they can be used again in future studies.

The project is funded by the *Transitway Impacts Research Program*. TIRP intends to measure the economic, travel, and community impacts of new transitway corridors. Several studies have already been funded related to the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (LRT) corridor. TIRP is an initiative of the Hennepin County-University of Minnesota Partnership. It is supported by the University's Center for Transportation Studies and the State and Local Policy Program (SLPP) at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Funding is being provided by Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington counties; Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council; and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Additional partners include the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

TIRP has a need to address three kinds of data issues in order to facilitate future research. First, it needs to document (and archive) data that has been collected and used as part of current research. Second, it needs to identify key data sources that should be used in transit research and will be available when needed, e.g., US Census. Third, it needs to identify more ephemeral data that needs to be collected, documented, and archived now, so that it is available to provide a "before" picture within the corridors.

DataFinder and Metadata¹

The suggested tool for achieving these outcomes is DataFinder, a website developed by MetroGIS. DataFindersm is a one-stop-shop for discovering geospatial data pertaining to the seven-county, Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. Its primary function is to facilitate sharing of GIS (Geographic Information System) data. DataFinder is essentially an online catalog of datasets that supports data sharing. More than 200 datasets are available, all fully documented. These datasets are indexed in a catalog using 19 standard categories, but can be found using keyword searches and geographic extent tools. Those tools will make it easy for future TIRP researchers to identify and find they need to support their projects. DataFinder often allows direct access to the data for download or as a Web Mapping Service. It always provides key contact information about the data custodian. See www.datafinder.org.

DataFinder is maintained by the GIS staff at the Metropolitan Council as part of its support for the MetroGIS data sharing collaborative. The Council has significant need for data developed by others, so this also helps meet their own business needs. Most of the data listed in DataFinder is also stored on their computers, but other regional custodians host data too.

Each dataset is documented with formal Metadata. A metadata record is a file of information, usually presented as an XML document, which captures the basic characteristics of a data or information resource. It represents the who, what, when, where, why and how of the resource. Geospatial metadata are used to document geographic digital resources such as Geographic Information System (GIS) files, geospatial databases, and earth imagery. A geospatial metadata record includes core library catalog elements such as Title, Abstract, and Publication Data;

geographic elements such as Geographic Extent and Projection Information; and database elements such as Attribute Label Definitions and Attribute Domain Values.

In Minnesota, people use the *Minnesota Geographic Metadata Guidelines* as documented at <http://www.gis.state.mn.us/stds/metadata.htm>. This guideline was adapted from the standard developed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee by the Standards Committee of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information in order to provide a streamlined implementation of that standard while retaining the essence of its original content. The Guidelines are an official state guideline adopted by the state Office of Enterprise Technology.

Socioeconomic Resources Guide

The Socioeconomic Resources section of DataFinder is an exception to the above rules. This page directs people to Census and other data that is well documented using other approaches. It also directs people to organizations and offices that can provide useful socioeconomic data, but have not considered themselves GIS practitioners; an example is the County Sherriff offices that maintain records about housing foreclosures. To be complete, this section also directs people to well-documented datasets within MetroGIS and other data resource websites. See http://www.datafinder.org/mg/socioeconomic_resources/.

The Socioeconomics Resource section matches well with the needs of this TIRP project. It will form the base for archiving and documenting data resources useful to transit impact studies. It already contains much useful information. Data is organized into 7 types of categories. Some 25 data providers are identified. In each instance data is either provided directly or contact information is provided so users can request data and get answers to questions about the data.

Data Categories

- Crime
- Demographics (place of residence)
- Employment locations
- Housing
- K-12 school data
- Location of services
- Transportation issues

Data Sources

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">•County Community Services•County Sheriff•Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA)•Hunger Solutions Minnesota•Independent School Districts•MetroGIS•Metropolitan Council•MN Child Care & Referral Network•Mn Dept. of Education•Mn DEED•Mn Dept of Health•Mn Dept of Human Services•Mn Dept of Public Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Land Management Information Center•State Demographic Center•National Center for Education Statistics•Twin Cities Realtors•US Bureau of Economic Analysis•US Internal Revenue Service•US Census Products<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Census Transportation Planning Package○ County Business Patterns○ County-to-County Worker Flows○ Current Population Survey○ Economic Census○ US Census of Population & Housing |
|---|---|

A sample query on the data category *location of services* will retrieve the following answer.

Location of services			
Information Need	Data Source(s)	Minimum Mapping Resolution	Time Frequency
Child Care Providers	MN Child Care Resource and Referral Network	Address	Continuous
Food Shelves	Hunger Solutions Minnesota	Address	N/A
Licensed Human Service Providers	MN Department of Human Services	Address	Monthly
Schools	MetroGIS	Block	Quarterly
	MN Land Management Information Center	Address	Annually
Workforce Centers	MN Department of Employment and Economic Development	Address	Continuous

If child care providers were the issue, the user would click on that data source and get the response shown below. The Child Care Network site provides direct access to individual child care centers, but the Network may be willing to provide a database of all centers for a given area. The Socioeconomic data page for the MN Child Care Resource and Referral Network data source is shown below. This is one of the less complex data sources, chosen to keep this narrative relatively brief.

MN Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Comments about this data source:

The online statewide database contains over 10,000 providers. It is updated regularly by local child care resource and referral agencies.

Time Series:

Current data on line.

How to access data:

- Click on "Search for Child Care" at <http://www.mnchildcare.org/>

What Data Does TIRP need?

This question has two parts. One part is to identify the kind of data that could be useful in a transit impact study. Much of that work has already been done by the Humphrey Institute. The other part is to identify ephemeral data that must be captured now if it is going to be available when needed for a transit study. That work will be done in the fall of 2009 in consultation with the TIRP.

The 2006 report Inventory of Data and Research on the Economic and Community Impacts of the Hiawatha LRT identified 17 different categories. Those categories are listed here, but the report provides more detail. See Appendix D of http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/pdf/reports_papers/data_research_hiawatha_lrt.pdf

- Business (e.g. number of employees, retail sales)
- Commercial (e.g., square footage, rental rates, vacancies)
- Construction-Demolitions-Improvements
- Crime and Safety
- Demographics
- Industrial (same as Commercial)
- Land Use & Zoning

- Live-Work (e.g., tenure, quality of life, commute)
- Method of Payment (e.g., type of transit ticket, where purchased)
- Operations & Maintenance (e.g., train schedule delays, total miles, car usage)
- Parking (e.g., availability around stations)
- Property Values (e.g., valuations and sales prices)
- Quality of Transit Services
- Residential (e.g., vacancies, rents, owner occupied)
- Taxes
- Traffic Count
- Travel Behavior

What Data Should Be Added to DataFinder?

Much of the data detailed in the Humphrey Institute paper is already available in DataFinder and its Socioeconomic Resources pages. A few new data sources and categories have been identified and are being added. Community surveys, parking surveys, and similar unique data collection efforts are not listed here because there is no organization with an ongoing to commitment to collect and provide such data. We know that Xcel Energy could provide data on housing vacancy and turnover, but they are reluctant to do this both because of privacy concerns and because of lack of economic returns for producing such data.

Specifically, the new data sources that will be added to DataFinder's Socioeconomic Resources page are:

- Minnesota Commercial Association of Realtors (for commercial and industrial properties)
- Local Employment Dynamics (for current information on place of work, place of residence, and interrelationship between the two)
- MetroMSP (for data on current property listings, local businesses, and employment)
- MetroTransit (for data on ridership, rider surveys, and crime on transit)
- Mn Department of Revenue (for new Block Group level data on income, income taxes, and sales taxes)
- Mn Department of Transportation (for data on traffic counts on major roads, but reference to contact individual cities for counts on minor roads)
- US Postal Service (for vacancy rates)
- Building Permits (for improvements, new construction, and demolitions)
- Housing Link (for affordable housing)

Two new data categories will be added

- Building Permits
- Taxes (including income, sales, and property taxes)

¹ The research conducted by MetroGIS to identify the community's priority socioeconomic information needs is summarized at http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/socioeconomic_characteristics/index.shtml#data.