

**Meeting Minutes**  
**MetroGIS Socioeconomic Information Need Workgroup**  
**Tuesday, October 28, 2003**  
**MN Counties Insurance Trust Building**  
**(2:00 to 4:00 p.m.)**

**1. Call to Order/Attendance**

**Members Present:** Paul Buschmann (Hennepin County), Heather Britt (Urban Coalition), Dick Carlstrom (TIES), John Carpenter (Excensus LLC), Will Craig (CURA-U of M), Amy Fisher (MN Dept. of Economic Security), Michael Munson for Kathy Johnson (Metropolitan Council), Sandra Paddock (Wilder Research Center), Mark VanderSchaaf (City of St. Paul), and Heidi Welsch (Dakota County),

**Members Absent:** Mary Karcz (Ramsey County), Barbara Ronningen (State Demographic Center), Tim Zimmerman (Hennepin County).

**Staff Present:** Randall Johnson (MetroGIS) and Tanya Mayer (MetroGIS/Metropolitan Council)

Chairperson Craig began the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

**2. Accept Agenda**

The agenda was accepted as proposed.

**3. Approve minutes from September 23, 2003**

The September 23, 2003 meeting summary was accepted, as submitted.

**4. Accuracy of Existing Data Sources**

Chairperson Craig summarized the changes to the gap analysis matrix that had been made since the prior meeting, resulting in the October 22<sup>nd</sup> version that was distributed with the agenda materials. Craig noted that Member Zimmerman is pursuing better data for births and deaths but has suggested that the sources shown in the current matrix are the best available at this time. It may be some time before policy questions can be resolved to provide access to the source he is pursuing, which better suits the identified needs.

Buschmann and Welsch noted they are still pursuing a coordinated effort among the seven counties for data related to family assistance programs managed by the counties. They hope to make substantial progress before the group submits its recommendations to the Coordinating Committee in early December.

Craig reported that he had spoken with Fisher regarding the possibility of the State supporting improved mapping resolution for data in Section E of the matrix. This is not an option at this time due to lack of adequate geocoded data. This finding led to a discussion about the possible use of graduate students to provide the expertise and resources to enhance agency data.

Two additional areas were considered for expansion. The location of school buildings is critical and will be pursued by Carlstrom. The United Way's *First Call for Help* could provide a significant range of service locations; Buschmann will pursue the potential interest of the United Way in mapping those locations.

**Conclusion:** The group concluded that with the noted exceptions, the matrix reflects the best existing data sources known to the workgroup members. Welsch, Carlstrom and Buschmann agreed to continue to pursue better sources for the exceptions prior to the group's recommendation to the Coordinating Committee.

**5. Critique of Matrix**

Craig reiterated that the charge of this workgroup is to identify gaps between existing data sources and priority socioeconomic needs, and to recommend a mechanism for users to easily find and use existing

sources that meet desired specifications. Defining a means to address information needs that require data other than that which currently exists will be dealt with in Phase II by another group(s).

Craig then commented that the question before the group is how to go about making sure the workgroup's efforts reflect the perspective of the broader community. In response to a question from Craig, staff noted that if the group believes it is generally representative of the broader community it could elect implement for a trial period and then hold a forum to confirm responsiveness to the community's needs, as opposed to holding a forum to valid the committee's work thus far.

The group was comfortable that its members are generally representative of the perspectives of the broader user community. Carpenter also pointed out that the members of the workgroup all seemed to have in common a desire to find ways to improve the resolution and quality of the data they use and not settle for the status quo.

**Conclusion:** The group concluded that Version 1 of the matrix (December 2003) should be implemented and monitored for one year. At that time, the workgroup should reconvene to review comments from the user community as to: 1) data needs not met, 2) previously unidentified sources of "best available" data, and 3) easy of use accessing and using the data.

## **6. Final Products**

Welsch commented that sources in the final product that refer the user to "best available" data sources should be detailed as possible. The group briefly discussed some thoughts about the functionality that should be supported by the web-based interface. Craig and staff agreed to meet prior to the next meeting to define a user interface concept for the workgroup's consideration, which would include, if possible, a comment field to give the user the opportunity to communicate prior to the forum whether a need is not met and any previously unidentified "best sources".

These comments led to a discussion about how MetroGIS can promote support for Congressional funding of the American Community Survey and the LEHD projects, if that would be useful. Participating organizations could include such support in their legislative agenda. Craig will mention this potential recommendation at the 10/29 meeting of the Policy Board.

**Conclusion:** Since much of the critical data is hosted at other websites, informative references will need to be made from the DataFinder resource page. The group's recommendation to the Coordinating Committee should include a Policy Board action that finds the American Community Survey and the LEHD data sources important to addressing local priority information needs and may encourage MetroGIS's constituent organizations to include support for federal funding in their legislative agendas.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for November 18, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

The following reports will be received:

- Carlstrom - potential for TIES to provide school building locations for the seven county area.
- Welsch/Buschmann - results of talks with counties for collaborative family assistance data reporting
- Buschmann - potential for First Call for Help services in map form
- Mayer - updated matrix (yellow cells updated)
- Craig - results of meeting with staff to identify options for efficiently enabling the information contained in the matrix

## **8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Randall Johnson, AICP