

Excerpt from the March 30, 2005 MetroGIS Coordinating Committee Meeting Summary:

(3) Addresses – Occupiable Units Points Dataset

Chinander introduced the Occupiable Units Workgroup's recommendation and then introduced Mark Kotz, the workgroup's lead staff, to summarize the Workgroup's purpose, scope, proposed definitions, results of its survey of address authorities, gap analysis efforts, recommended vision, and its justification.

Kotz commented that that the address components which exist for centerlines and parcels are not sufficient, and that that there is currently no means to track addresses at the unit level for buildings/units on a single site – a need that has been defined by the MetroGIS community, in particular the E911 community. Henry asked how the vision would deal with the room in which the Committee is currently meeting as a component of the larger building. Kotz responded by noting that the business rules to be more clearly defined before all of the specifics are worked out.

VanderSchaaf asked a question about enforcement that led to a broader discussion about MetroGIS's role to support the forum through which organizations with the most need would work through the details. The Staff Coordinator emphasized that whatever solution(s) is arrived at in terms of both organizational structure and data specifics, participation would be on a voluntary basis with an emphasis on demonstrating benefits to candidates for participation.

Harper affirmed the value of pursuing a regional solution county-by-county, given the multiple related relationships that already exist among the counties and local governments that interact daily. She was also supportive of personalizing the incentives, as necessary, to address policy and procedure variations from county to county.

Knippel asked for clarification about how the proposed vision would be integrated with the many vendor systems that are already in place related to street centerline data. Chinander responded that he is confident that solid relationships with the vendor community will continue, given how the vendor community has responded thus far. Harper surmised that if MetroGIS, in collaboration with the Metropolitan 911 Board, is able to agree on best practices, promotion of these agreed upon practices could help communities in their efforts to work with the vendor community.

Cockriel asked to what degree the occupiable unit and street centerline workgroups are coordinating their respective efforts. The Staff Coordinator commented that, by design, there are common members and that the lead staff frequently confer with one another, as is evidenced by their presentation at this meeting and the bringing of the topics to the Committee at the same time. Cockriel stated that he was encouraged to hear that the two efforts are so closely coupled and, as such, suggested that the addresses for occupiable units effort might be in a better position for funding and local support from the Public Safety community down the road if outreach efforts continue to closely couple these initiatives. Members of the Coordinating Committee not currently involved in these groups who are interested in participating were encouraged join one or both groups.

Motion:

Henry moved and Cockriel seconded to accept the vision, as presented in the agenda materials, and direct the Address Workgroup to begin work on development of a proposal for the technical and organization components necessary to achieve the subject vision.

Chairperson Read asked for permission to extend the meeting 15-20 minutes. Permission was so granted.



TO: Coordinating Committee
FROM: Address Workgroup
Staff Contacts: Mark Kotz and Randall Johnson (651-602-1638)
SUBJECT: Vision - Regional Occupiable Units Data Solution
DATE: March 17, 2005
(For Mar 30th Meeting)

INTRODUCTION

The Address Workgroup respectfully requests direction from the Coordinating Committee on its proposed vision for a regional point dataset comprising all occupiable units (residential and non-residential) within the seven-county Metropolitan Area.

The group concluded that it should seek Committee acceptance of its proposed vision outlined herein before commencing work to develop the technical and organizational components necessary to achieve the vision. The Metropolitan 911 Board is acknowledged in this vision as the organization with the most need for a regional solution to this information need. As such, the proposed vision is also being vetted at this time with the 911 Board to ensure it is satisfied with the general proposal before moving forward.

Assuming the Metropolitan 911 Board and the Committee conclude that the proposed vision warrants further consideration, it is anticipated that a formal recommendation, accompanied by a white paper to explain the specifics, will be presented to the Committee for its consideration at the June meeting. Refer to the Reference Section for more information about the Workgroup and its efforts to date.

JUSTIFICATION

The Workgroup has concluded that a regional occupiable units dataset for the seven-county Metropolitan Area is warranted and that it should be collaboratively created and maintained, on the basis that:

1. Nearly all government organizations need addresses for occupiable units to carry out their business functions,
2. Multiple uncoordinated address-related procedures and authorities are resulting in costly duplication of effort and perpetuation of data discrepancies, and
3. A collaborative effort is warranted to achieved desired efficiency and accuracy improvements:

OBJECTIVE

The current project scope involves defining and agreeing on a regional strategy to capture and maintain “situs” (rather than mailing) addresses for all occupiable units (both residential and non-residential) and any other officially designated addresses, whereby the data can readily be shared among government interests that serve the seven-county, Minneapolis-St. Paul region. The ultimate goal of the subject solution is to minimize duplication of effort and maximize consistency of address data needed by metro area stakeholders. A special effort has been made to collaborate with those responsible for supporting the address needs of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), which dispatch emergency responders.

COMPONENTS OF PROPOSED VISION – FOR A REGIONAL OCCUPIABLE UNITS DATA SOLUTION

The workgroup has concluded that the following concepts and decision rules should guide next steps to define technical and organizational components necessary to achieve the vision (*not intended to be listed in any order of priority. The numbering is provided only to facilitate comment*):

1. The concept of a “single official” authority for address data for any given jurisdiction is desirable to all government entities. Its existence would reduce the creation of inaccurate or inconsistent addresses. It would also streamline the process of mitigating anomalies, as they arise.
2. Local procedures and rules pertaining to naming of streets and assignment of address numbers must be recognized as they exist and are not within the scope of the proposed regional solution. The regional solution would begin with the data created by those many and varied processes. (*Note: This acknowledgement does not apply to the format in which the data are maintained (database) but to the decisions about actual naming of names and assigning of address numbers via established local processes.*)

3. The preliminary conceptual regional database design would include (but is not limited to) the following entities for each occupiable unit within the seven county area:
 - ✓ The unit address components
 - ✓ The point geography
 - ✓ Some mechanism to relate the point to parcel data
 - ✓ Some categorization of the point type to indicate how it relates to the parcel (e.g. single structure on one parcel, one of many buildings on a parcel, an apartment unit or office suite, etc.)
4. “Occupiable unit” has been preliminarily defined by the Workgroup as any residential or non-residential occupiable space for which a government entity issues a permit to create. Office spaces that have movable walls and which do not require a permit to reconfigure will not be included in this recommendation. Such matters can be considered in the future if practical. As the project design evolves, this working definition is expected to become more specific.
5. The proposed vision for the initial regional solution assumes multiple avenues for creating, maintaining and storing address point data, and providing it to a regional dataset. For example, some individual cities would maintain the data locally in their custom database and provide updates to the regional dataset periodically. Other larger government units (PSAPs, or Counties) might also maintain data for multiple cities and townships and provide periodic updates to the regional dataset.
6. A standardized address data transfer format will be needed to implement this solution. Such a standard may have implications for local address database formats. A pilot study(ies) is recommended to frame any compatibility issues and identify viable solutions. Related work currently in progress by the Ramsey County GIS User Group should be supported and closely tracked.
7. Once desired custodial roles and responsibilities are defined, organizational candidates with matching internal business needs and abilities will be contacted to determine their interest in participating in the management of the proposed occupiable units point dataset. An agreement-in-principle on broad custodial responsibilities must be reached by key entities before a final recommendation can be considered by the Policy Board.
8. The vision includes the potential for an Internet-based application that would allow cities, which do not have their own GIS capability, to maintain such a dataset (geographic features and related address data) via this application. The data itself could reside with one or more aggregators of data. (The workgroup believes the technology, such as Web Feature Services, is stable enough to consider this as a serious option.)
9. The final proposal must include a process, acceptable to affected parties, to make sure that the address ranges of the Master Street Addressing Guide (MSAG) database remain consistent with the individual addresses of the proposed address point dataset.
10. It is desirable to be able to relate the subject point address data to street centerline data.
11. Privacy and access issues must be appropriately resolved.
12. The final proposal needs to recommend accuracy guidelines and procedures as regional best practices. A variety of positional accuracies may be acceptable if they are clearly documented.
13. The proposed solution needs to have an outreach component to inform all affected and relevant interests about the benefits of the solution and grow participation. This effort should also describe how to report anomalies as they are identified.

RECOMMENDATION

That Coordinating Committee:

- 1) Comment on the components of the proposed vision for a regional occupiable units data solution.
- 2) Suggest desired modifications for the Workgroup’s consideration
- 3) Direct the Address Workgroup to develop a proposal for the technical and organization components necessary to achieve the subject vision.

REFERENCE SECTION

BACKGROUND ON WORKGROUP

1. The need for addresses of all occupiable units was established in 1996 as a priority common information need, a need that was corroborated by the Phase I Socioeconomic and the Existing Land Use Workgroups. Creation of a Phase II Socioeconomic Workgroup is on hold until a regional solution to the occupiable unit need has been satisfactorily met.
2. This occupiable units information need was also recognized to be a formidable task in its own right, so the Committee created the Address Workgroup in March 2004. The recommendation set forth in this report was unanimously agreed upon by the Workgroup on March 16, 2005. The members also agreed that they would prefer to continue to serve as the proposed next-phase Workgroup to determine necessary organization roles and responsibilities and identify candidate organizations to carry out those roles.
3. The workgroup's purpose, membership, workplan, meeting agendas and summaries, findings of investigations, etc. can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/street_addresses/add_wkgrp.shtml.
4. Mark Kotz of the MetroGIS support team is providing lead staff support to this workgroup.

WORKGROUP METHODOLOGY

1. Definitions/Scope: The workgroup concluded, after substantial consideration, that the scope of its efforts should be limited to the primary situs address, for each occupiable unit, not including the mailing address. Occupiable unit was defined to include all residential and non-residential units created or modified via an official government permit/authorization. The Workgroup is expected to add more specificity to the scope of the address dataset in the next phase of the project (e.g. should things like barns and outbuildings be included?)
2. Process and Data Flow Models: Key to the workgroup's recommendation was its investigation of how and by whom addresses are created, changed and used at different levels within the jurisdictions of each of the seven counties. This investigation involved numerous interviews with county and city personnel who are responsible for processes involved in the capture and maintenance of address data records. The following major conclusions were reached from this exercise:
 - Most addresses are created at the local (city) level.
 - This results in many, many address authorities with many different processes.
 - Address authorities seem to update their address records (digital or paper) right away.
 - Address data flow is fairly complicated and is different in every location.
 - Address data do not flow consistently from different sources (e.g. cities to a school district)
 - There is a desire at the county level (and beyond) for a single source for address data.
 - Many authorities mentioned wanting a standard process.
 - A single best source for address data would benefit many people.
3. Identify Process and Data Gaps: The workgroup compared the existing data processes and structures with the data needs identified by the MetroGIS community, to identify gaps between existing data and needs.