



**TO:** Coordinating Committee

**FROM:** MetroGIS Staff  
Contact: Steve Fester (651-602-1363)

**SUBJECT:** Project Updates

**DATE:** December 7, 2004  
(For the Dec 15<sup>th</sup> meeting)

### A) NEXT GENERATION DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

At the time of this writing, five signed agreements had been submitted to staff, and to staff's knowledge, the other counties are in the process of approval. On November 15<sup>th</sup> the Council's Community Development Committee also unanimously recommended full Council approval, which is scheduled to occur on December 15<sup>th</sup>. As soon as the agreement is executed, notice will be sent to the 50+ formerly licensed entities to begin the process of relicensure to access the regional parcel dataset. Distribution via MetroGIS DataFinder will be reinstated immediately following execution of the agreement.

### B) PRIORITY BUSINESS INFORMATION NEEDS (See <http://www.metrogis.org/data/index.shtml> for complete information about the status of solutions for each of MetroGIS's common information needs.)

#### (1) Address Workgroup

The group has set a goal to submit its recommendation to the Coordinating Committee for consideration at its March 2005 meeting. The project scope involves defining 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 project goal is to minimize duplication of effort and maximize consistency of address data needed by metro stakeholders. A special effort is being made to connect with those responsible for supporting the address needs of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), which dispatch emergency responders.

To better understand how addresses are created, changed and used at different levels, the workgroup is nearing completion of a project that began in August which is documenting, through interviews, the processes currently used in each county to capture and maintain address data records. In January and February, the group plans to compare existing data processes and structures with the data needs of the MetroGIS community, and develop its recommendations for filling gaps between existing data and needs. The group is staffed by Mark Kotz with Metropolitan Council GIS staff assigned to support MetroGIS activities.

#### (2) Emergency Preparedness Workgroup

The Workgroup is progressing simultaneously in three focus areas: data development and deployment, building relationships with the emergency management community, and organizing GIS resources. The group is also working closely with the Governor's Council Emergency Preparedness Committee to develop shared web resources for communicating with both the GIS and Emergency Management communities.

The group's goal is to submit a recommendation for the Coordinating Committee's consideration at its March 2005 meeting to:

- a) Set forth a collaborative schema by which the seven Metro Area counties would jointly collect and manage data critical to the counties' emergency preparedness business operations.

- b) Obtain approval by each county of this schema and have them dedicate sufficient resources to implementing it within each of the their respective organizations.
- c) Provide access to these critical data via the web-based, Emergency Preparedness Resources Application to both inform emergency managers of these data and identify anomalies.
- d) Obtain approval from each county to allow emergency managers to view parcel data, without prior licensure, via the Emergency Preparedness Resources Application. *(Note: On July 28<sup>th</sup>, the MetroGIS Policy Board endorsed a regional policy of view-only access to parcel data, via this application, without prior licensure by government emergency preparedness officials, subject to formal approval of the proposal from each county.)*

If you are a GIS professional with a passion for expanding the use of GIS for homeland security issues in the metro area, the workgroup invites you to join this effort. Please contact Randy Knippel ([randy.knippel@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:randy.knippel@co.dakota.mn.us)) for further information.

**(3) Existing Land Use Workgroup**

*See Agenda Item 5f.*

**(4) Highway and Road Networks**

The Technical Advisory Team identified a need at their November meeting to address the street centerline data needs of the 911 community in the context of a regional solution. Several desired modifications to The Lawrence Group (TLG) Street Centerline dataset were identified for further consideration. Jim Maxwell, of TLG, noted that TLG is open to supporting many, if not all, of the modifications identified in recent talks with the Metro 911 Board.

A focus group was also hosted by MetroGIS staff on December 2 to better understand street centerline data needs of the E-911 community. MetroGIS staff were aware of several local governments efforts that were moving forward independently to address information needs that the regional TLG Street Centerline dataset cannot, in its present form, meet. Further consideration of the merits of pursuing a collaborative regional solution is proposed as a 2005 workplan initiative.

The MetroGIS technical group, established last year, that has been working with Mn/DOT to implement a Location Data Manager (LDM) [anchor/segment data management system], met in September and November to discuss implementing a pilot project comparing Mn/DOT's data with other local data sources.

Information about agreed upon goals, expectations, and participant roles can be viewed at [http://www.metrogis.org/data/info\\_needs/highway\\_roads/index.shtml](http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/highway_roads/index.shtml). This workgroup is being staffed by Mike Dolbow with Metropolitan Council GIS staff assigned to support MetroGIS activities.

**(5) Lakes, Wetlands, etc.**

The pilot project agreed upon in September and proposed for completion by year-end has not started due to a delay in obtaining the needed imagery. The pilot was proposed to work through partnerships and organizational roles needed to help facilitate the updating of the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) for the Twin Cities metropolitan area. This pilot is viewed as a component of a anticipated broader Metro Area hydrologic solution that is anticipated, once the statewide strategic planning effort is complete. The pilot components can be viewed at <http://www.metrogis.org/teams/workgroups/index.shtml> under the Lakes & Wetlands Workgroup. The pilot project partners include Metropolitan Council, the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Ramsey Co. Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The proposed pilot study area would be the East St. Paul quad using sample imagery flown in May 2004.

**(6) Land Cover Dataset Enhancements**

The extent of coverage is now up to 67 percent of the seven county region. Work is currently in progress to extend the coverage another 9 percent. An LCMR funded project is also planned to extend the coverage another 12 percent for a total of 88 percent coverage. In addition, major revisions to the system have been implemented; changing how attributes are stored, re-working the manual, and improved the ArcView tool in response to feedback received from the users. In late 2005 or early 2006 another major revision of the system is anticipated once the DNR's new natural community classifications system is complete. A user forum to identify other desired improvement is tentatively proposed for the first half of 2005.

**(7) Regional Parcel Dataset Enhancements**

On July 28<sup>th</sup> the Policy Board approved enhancements to the Regional Parcel Dataset as recommended by the Committee at its June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting that included increasing the number of attributes from 25 to 55 and adding a parcel point dataset. These enhancements are anticipated to be included in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2005 release. More information can be viewed at [http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/policy\\_sumv2.1.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/policy_sumv2.1.pdf).

**(8) Socioeconomic Characteristics of Areas**

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, the Policy Board completed the Phase I solution by accepting the University of Minnesota's Population Center as the regional custodian of MetroGIS's Socioeconomic Resources Page, running at [www.datafinder.org/mg/socioeconomic\\_resources/index.asp](http://www.datafinder.org/mg/socioeconomic_resources/index.asp). This marked the first time a non-government entity has accepted custodianship of a regional solution endorsed by MetroGIS.

The Phase II workgroup (solutions to Socioeconomic information needs that can not be achieved with existing published data) is expected to launch sometime in mid 2005. The Phase II effort would be coordinated with the Address Workgroup's efforts and not launch until more is known about how the Address Workgroup will proceed and possibly not until related solutions are defined by the Address Workgroup. (Refer to Item B1, above.)

**C) COUNTY DATA PRODUCER WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES**

**(1) Regional Mailing Label Application**

*See agenda Item 5e.* This application is ready to go live, but cannot be launched until the Next-Generation Data Sharing Agreement is in place (Item A, above). Only those entities which have licensed access to the regional parcel dataset are proposed to be able to use the application.

**(2) Regional Parcel Dataset Policy: Access by Non-Profit Interests**

At its August meeting, the group concluded that a pilot with Hennepin County would be the most effective way to move forward on crafting the policies and responsibilities needed to enable sharing parcel data with community groups. Discussions with Hennepin County management have been initiated. The Workgroup agreed that that concept proposed by Will Craig, which relied upon a nonprofit being a member of an umbrella organization with validated/endorsed community development objectives and a board of directors comprised of local residents, was generally acceptable.

The manner and timing in which this data access policy request is resolved will have ramifications for the desired outcomes of a project proposed by a Metro Area consortium that has been awarded a \$560,000 Technology Opportunity Project (TOP) grant. The consortium partners include neighborhood and community organizations, city and suburban municipalities, and county, regional and state government entities. An excerpt from the Executive Summary for grant application's follows:

"Building on the existing GIS infrastructure, Minnesota 3-D is an Internet-accessible and integrated system of employment, housing and development information and analysis tools for neighborhoods, community development corporations, employment trainers, businesses, central cities, suburbs, counties of the Twin Cities metropolitan region, and the State of Minnesota.....By

combining new statewide data on employment and demographics through an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Social Security Administration, and the Census Bureau with the existing region-wide parcel-level housing data, Minnesota 3-D will be a 'first-of-its-kind' system....Minnesota 3-D is a scalable, standards-based system that can accommodate expanded data layers and geographic coverage.

“The centerpiece of this approach is the creation of an online mapping application. With emerging Internet-based mapping technologies, this is the most cost-effective way to maximize access, analytical capacity, and user-to-user information sharing.”

**(3) Collaborative Parcel Data Distribution Strategy – Non-Government Access**

Work on this topic is anticipated to resume in 2005 once the next generation parcel data sharing agreement and license is in place.

**(4) Investigation of Data Sharing with Utilities**

The Workgroup is waiting for a response for the three utilities that were invited to participate in the initial discussions. At the Coordinating Committee's June 2004 meeting, Al Laumeier commented that CenterPoint Energy/Minnegasco remains interested but has not had an opportunity to give the proposal sufficient consideration. Earlier, staff had been informed by the Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative that the proposal had merit and they were interested in further discussions. No response has yet been received from Xcel Energy.

**D) STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT PREPARATION POSTPONED TO SPRING 2005**

The adopted 2004 MetroGIS workplan called for the Coordinating Committee to host a retreat this fall. However, due to the unanticipated complexity and length of time involved in the negotiations concerning the next generation data sharing agreement, the funds available for the proposed workshop were exhausted in July. As of this writing, it is staff's understanding that all seven counties will execute the proposed agreement. However, staff wants to be certain of this before beginning retreat preparations, since an agreement without all seven counties would alter the focus of the retreat.

If all seven counties execute the agreement, the primary objectives of the proposed retreat would be to contemplate technology and organizational changes that have occurred since MetroGIS was established in 1996, discuss how these changes are impacting MetroGIS's current objectives and philosophies, and identify candidate next steps for further discussion in preparation for the Business Plan Update proposed for 2005.

The current thinking is that the Coordinating Committee members would participate in a SWOT (Strengthens, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) exercise prior to the proposed retreat. The SWOT exercise would most likely be held in Spring 2005. The SWOT exercise would then be followed by: 1) a distillation of the results into a form suitable for more structured policy deliberation, 2) interviews with key leadership and a survey of the broader stakeholder community for feedback and refinement of issues and options, and 3) the proposed retreat of the Committee and other key leadership to identify (and possibly reach agreement on) key strategies and objectives for the next 3-5+ years.



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a) **MetroGIS Applies for Award from Harvard Innovations in Government Program**

An application was submitted in September to put MetroGIS in contention for the Innovations in American Government Awards Program sponsored by Harvard University. Notification is expected any time as to which applicants will be invited to submit a substantially more detailed accounting of their programs.

The application process involves five cycles; the pending notification is for the Phase 2 invitation. The top 50 Phase 2 applications then go through another round of reviews to narrow the field to 15. The top 5 are selected after onsite 2-day interviews are conducted. The final decision will be made in July 2005. The top 50 applications will receive extensive press coverage and the top five are eligible for \$100,000 grants.

The three essays (30, 500, and 250 words, respectively) that were submitted by for first round consideration can be viewed at <http://www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu/index.cfm>. The user name is RLJohnson and the password is MetroGIS1. Information about the grant program is also available via links from the login page.

Every year, since 1986, the Innovations Program has recognized five government initiatives, and awarded each of them with a \$100,000 grant. Their philosophy is that by offering the recognition and grants, the Innovations Program will serve as a catalyst for transforming creative and effective ideas into best practices throughout the nation and around the world.

b) **MetroGIS Recognized as Regional Example in New OGC Publication**

A report, expected to be released in January from the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), Inc., identifies the server architecture of MetroGIS DataFinder as a local/regional government model of data sharing and distribution for the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). The authors expect the document to be widely referenced.

This report analyzes the current, disparate server architecture associated with the NSDI and the Geospatial One Stop (GOS) Portal. It addresses the issues associated with varying architectures as communities develop and enhance their systems architecture to support local needs and broader NSDI objectives. Three large scale models – centralized, distributed, combination – are explained. In addition, they categorized MetroGIS’s data discovery/distribution architecture as “centralized local-regional”.

The GOS Portal is a common facility for publishing, discovering and potentially accessing information across federal, state and local governments in the United States that have a requirement for geospatial data and services. The vision of the GOS Portal is to enable users to discover, view and obtain desired data for a particular part of the country, without needing to know the details of how the data are stored and maintained by independent organizations. The portal is able to access

information and services from a variety of providers distributed across the network, such as MetroGIS.

*“MetroGIS has already resolved many of the problems that most communities are yet to realize even need to be addressed,”* said Sam Bacharach, Executive Director for Outreach and Community Adoption at OGC. “These include questions such as ‘What data do we share? How do we include partners who do not have the assets to fully participate? How do we convince anyone to participate?’ “These issues may sound trivial, but the reality is that the people-based, management issues are now more difficult to handle than the purely technical issues of data-sharing,” Bacharach said. *“MetroGIS has done a remarkable job.”*

c) **MetroGIS’s Experience Recognized in Australian/New Zealand Data Sharing Handbook**

The experience of MetroGIS is being shared widely “down under” as part of the Australia and New Zealand Land Information Council’s and Australian Local Government Association’s newly published Local Government Spatial Information Management Toolkit.

The aim of the Toolkit is to enhance the capacity of Australian local governments in the use of spatial information. The Toolkit includes a major section on data sharing and collaboration that discusses the core services and benefits of MetroGIS. This section (10) also features the MetroGIS DataFinder homepage and covers the principles that guide the collaborative. Much of the material was excerpted from the 2001 publication “Lessons from Practice: A Guidebook to Organizing and Sustaining Geodata Collaboratives”, which was compiled by the MetroGIS Staff Coordinator.

To view the Toolkit go to <http://www.lgconnect.gov.au/index.php?nIdNode=586>. Section 10 contains the MetroGIS experience. For more information about the document, contact Robert Kay, Partner, Kay Consulting, PO BOX 191, Mosman Park, Australia, <http://www.kayconsulting.com.au>.

d) **Presentations / Outreach / Studies** *(not mentioned elsewhere)*

1. **Articles Published in Fall 2004 Issue of GIS/LIS Newsletter**

Two articles summarizing major MetroGIS activities since the last newsletter were submitted for the Fall 2004 issue. They can be viewed at

<http://www.mngislis.org/newsletter/issue38/issue38toc.htm>.

2. **GIS/LIS Conference in October**

Mark Kotz and Alison Slaats of MetroGIS staff summarized technical aspects of Web Mapping Services associated with accessing data via MetroGIS DataFinder.

e) **Related Metro and State Geospatial Initiatives Update**

1. **U of M and Twin Cities Consortium of Non-Profits Awarded \$599,000 Commerce Department Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) Grant**

The consortium partners include neighborhood and community organizations, city and suburban municipalities, and county, regional and state government entities. An excerpt from the Application’s Executive Summary follows: “Building on the existing GIS infrastructure, Minnesota 3-D is an Internet-accessible and integrated system of employment, housing and development information and analysis tools for neighborhoods, community development corporations, employment trainers, businesses, central cities, suburbs, counties of the Twin Cities metropolitan region, and the State of Minnesota.... By combining new statewide data on employment and demographics through an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Social Security Administration, and the Census Bureau with the existing region-wide parcel-level housing data, Minnesota 3-D will be a ‘first-of-its-kind’ system.... Minnesota 3-D is a scalable, standards-based system that can accommodate expanded data layers and geographic coverage.

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M3D is coordinated by CURA, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is a major partner contributing access to the newly developed community development data set and developing online IS applications to integrate employment, housing and transportation data for use by community development organizations to close the spatial mismatch between affordable housing and living wage jobs in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. For more information see <http://www.npcr.org/M3D/M3DIndex/M3D.html>.

## **2. MN Spatial Data infrastructure (MSDI) Strategic Plan**

*A Foundation for Coordinated GIS*, a strategic plan for Minnesota's Spatial Data Infrastructure, was approved by the MN Governor's Council on Geographic Information in June. It draws upon the experiences of MetroGIS and recognizes the importance of Minnesota's geospatial efforts aligning with the National Spatial Data Infrastructure. Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator, and David Arbeit, LMIC Director and a member of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee, serve on the Council's Strategic Plan Committee that prepared the plan. For more about the plan and the work of the Strategic Plan Committee, see <http://www.gis.state.mn.us/committe/MSDI>.

## **3. MN Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI)**

The last meeting of the GCGI was held at the Otter Tail County Government Center in Fergus Falls on November 4. The Pine to Prairie GIS User Group, which facilitates interaction among GIS users in western Minnesota, and eastern North Dakota and South Dakota, hosted the meeting. The meeting highlighted the extensive use of GIS within the region and served as a forum for identifying the region's GIS needs. Regional participants demonstrated the extensive use of statewide data resources, such as the 2003 FSA orthoimagery, and expressed a strong consensus for state support for local development of parcel data. For more about the Pine to Prairie GIS User Group, see <http://www.pinetoprairie.org>.

## **f) Federal/National Geospatial Initiatives Update**

### **1. I-Teams:**

*A Foundation for Coordinated GIS*, Minnesota's strategic plan for a Minnesota's Spatial Data Infrastructure [Item e(2)] originated in response to the federal Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) "I-Team Initiative." I stands for Implementation Plan. An objective of the I-Plan Initiative was to coordinate federal program expenditures with geospatial needs identified in state I-Plans. The status of the I-Plan Initiative is no longer clear as the federal strategy has been refocused on The National Map and Geospatial One Stop activities. For more about the I-Team Initiative, see <http://www.fgdc.gov/I-Team>.

### **2. U.S. Census:**

#### **2004 First Edition TIGER/Line Files to be Released in December**

The U.S. Census Bureau is beginning twice a year releases of the TIGER/Line files. The 2004 First Edition TIGER/Line files are the first of two versions of the TIGER/Line files that will contain 2004 geographic boundaries.

The 2004 First Edition TIGER/Line files are the first version of the TIGER/Line files to include a significant number of counties or statistically equivalent entities containing realigned street feature coordinates that have progressed through the MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Project (<http://www.census.gov/geo/mod/maftiger.html>). Except for those counties with improved street feature coordinates, the 2004 First Edition TIGER/Line files contain very few updates to street features or address ranges from the Census 2000 versions of the TIGER/Line files.

The Census Bureau has added a new record type to the 2004 First Edition TIGER/Line files. Record Type M provides spatial metadata for each feature in a TIGER/Line file, identifying the source for the spatial coordinates. A description

(<http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/tiger2004fe/rtdmdesc.html>) and explanation of the fields in Record Type M is available. Two new fields (UACU and URCU) have been added to Record Type A containing the corrections to the Census 2000 Urbanized Areas and Urban Clusters announced by the Census Bureau in August 2002. See 2004 First Edition TIGER/Line File Record Layout ([http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/tiger2004fe/ch6\\_2004fe.pdf](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/tiger2004fe/ch6_2004fe.pdf))

**g) County-based GIS User Group Activity Update**

Each County GIS User Group has been invited to share information about their respective activities. The following replies were received. Contact information for the groups can be found at [http://www.metrogis.org/about/affiliations/co\\_user\\_groups.shtml](http://www.metrogis.org/about/affiliations/co_user_groups.shtml).

**Scott County**

These are some activities that the Scott County GIS User Group is currently working on:

- Preparing a plan of action for creating / maintaining Easement Data in GIS.
- Planning the Visioning / Strategic Planning Workshop with MetroGIS.
- Determining if we want to continue hosting GIS Open Houses for the public.
- Sharing ideas about "internal" user groups at the city-level.

**Ramsey County**

- The User Group provided support for Minnesota 3D, a project to develop tools for community GIS in the Metro area under the auspices of the University of Minnesota. The project is funded by a recently awarded federal TOP grant.
- We recently completed our strategic plan for 2005 and beyond.
- Our online mapping service (<http://maps.metro-inet.us>) has received some significant enhancements with more in the works.
- We are working on plans to create an online version of our user handbook with major additions and updates in 2005.
- We have begun discussions of the next aerial photography update, coming in 2006.
- Our address committee continues to work, on several fronts and with many partners, toward our vision of a complete County-wide address data resource.