

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS Coordinating Committee**  
**MN Counties Insurance Trust Bldg. – Board Room**  
**June 28, 2006**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Read called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Members Present: *Academics:* Will Craig (U of M); *Cities:* Steve Lorbach (AMM: core cities - City of St. Paul); *Counties:* John Slusarczyk (Anoka), Scott Simmer (Hennepin), David Claypool (Ramsey), and Jane Harper (Washington); *Federal:* Ron Wencl (USGS); *GIS Consultants:* Terese Rowekamp (Rowekamp Associates); *Metropolitan:* David Bitner (Metropolitan Airports Commission); Gordon Chinander (Metropolitan Emergency Services Board), Rick Gelbmann and Mark Vander Schaaf (Metropolitan Council), and Nancy Read (Metropolitan Mosquito Control District); *Non-Profits:* Sally Wakefield (1000 Friends of Minnesota and Jessica Horning (Greater Minneapolis Day Care Assoc.); *Special Expertise:* Brad Henry (URS Corp.); *State:* David Arbeit (LMIC), Joella Givens (MN/DOT) and Robert Maki (DNR); and *Watershed/Water Management Organizations:* Ned Phillips (Rice Creek Watershed District).

Members Absent: *Business Geographics:* Chet Harrison (CB Richard Ellis); *Cities:* Bob Cockriel (AMM: suburban cities - City of Bloomington); *Counties:* Dave Drealan (Carver), Randy Knippel (Dakota), Bill Brown (Hennepin), Jim Hentges (Scott); *Schools:* Dick Carlstrom (TIES); *Utilities:* Al Laumeyer (CenterPoint Energy).

Visitor: Fred Logman (LMIC & Governor's Council on Geographic Information and (XXX intern with MAC)

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Polly Townes (MetroGIS Staff Support Team) and Mark Kotz (Metropolitan Council)

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

Givens moved and Simmer seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried, ayes all.

**3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY**

Arbeit moved and Maki seconded to approve the summary for the Committee's March 29, 2006 meeting, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

**4. Policy Board Meeting:**

Vander Schaaf briefly commented on the process that the Council has engaged in over the past 15 months or so to evaluate MetroGIS's value to the Council and that the conclusion of the workgroup charged with the evaluation is that MetroGIS is a cost effective mechanism to obtain data it needs from others and that its existence is providing value to the entire community. Vander Schaaf explained that the specifics of the evaluation and the proposed recommendations were shared with the Policy Board at the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Board fully accepted the recommendations, the two most prominent being that the Council adopt a resolution ratifying continuing support of MetroGIS and that Council leadership communicate with state agencies the Council's preference that collaborative environment sustained via MetroGIS also be pursued statewide. He concluded his comments by stating full Council approval of the recommendation was scheduled for that afternoon. (Editor's note: The full

Metropolitan Council unanimously approved its workgroup's recommendations as proposed. To review the agenda packet [click here](#))

Chairperson Read commented that by Professor Shashi Skekar's Technology Demonstration, in which he demonstrated how he used utilized GIS technology to automate emergency preparedness planning, was outstanding and encouraged the members to review the presentation slides that are linked to from the meeting summary.

## **5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **a) 2006 Regional GIS Project Proposals – Final Review**

Chairperson Read explained that Hennepin County had decided to withdraw their proposal leaving two proposals for the Committee's consideration. Reminded the Committee that its role is to offer advice to the Metropolitan Council, which funds the Regional GIS Project Program, regarding each project's merit in terms of addressing a regional geospatial need and to the extent possible a funding strategy that maximizes the benefit from the funds available. She then invited a representative from each proposal team to summarize their proposals and to address questions that the Proposal Review Workgroup had posed to them.

#### **Project B – Architecture to support an “Application Finder”**

Bitner made an introductory statement to explain that, in accordance with the Committee's comments and suggestions offered at last March's meeting, the proposal has become more focused and that LMIC has agreed to serve as the custodian for the proposed tool to enable sharing of web-based services and related technology. Arbeit then summarized the proposal as outlined in the information provided in the agenda packet.

Arbeit noted that LMIC stepped forward to play a key role in this project because it aligned well with a vision which has been endorsed by the Governor's Council on Geographic for a Minnesota Geospatial Architecture that is service-oriented. The goal is to enable services created and hosted by a variety of organizations to be located and utilized on an ongoing basis by other organizations in their day to day operations. To accomplish this vision, a “broker” is required, which would “certify” “best of breed” service availability and through both manual and automated means link available services with users desiring a particular service. The current proposal seeks to develop this “brokering” mechanism. Arbeit noted that the current proposal is more aligned with the vision for a statewide MN service-oriented architecture than the initial concept offered by Bitner but explained that adjustments have been made to the previously defined vision to provide the functionality outlined by the concept proposal and, in general, needs important to the MetroGIS community. He then explained the specific functions as stated in the proposal, noting that the goal is that the broker mechanism is to include at least two operational services in addition to an image service that has been developed by LMIC, and explained that the requested \$20,000 in funding would leverage around \$30,000 in resources from others.

Arbeit concluded his comments by emphasizing that the project team views this project as a valuable demonstration for a strategic component of the statewide vision for a services oriented geospatial architecture

Chairperson Read thanked the proposers for their comments and then asked for clarification as to who will manage/construct the “broker” mechanism. Arbeit commented that LMIC will manage the project and Bitner will be a main contact for insuring that the MetroGIS community's needs are clearly understood and a means of regular feedback is sustained. He

also commented that regular reporting to the Committee will be a priority. He also emphasized that for the broker mechanism to be successful, stakeholder participation is essential, just as stakeholder participation has been essential to the success of DataFinder and the state's geospatial data clearinghouse.

In response to a question from Vander Schaaf, regarding the need for relevance to the MetroGIS community for the web services that would be supported, Arbeit explained that this proposal involves development of the service discovery and access mechanism and not the services themselves. The Staff Coordinator offered a suggestion that if the "broker" mechanism is created, an activity of MetroGIS, possibly for discussion at the Strategic Directions Workshop, could be to foster web services that run in conjunction with endorsed regional datasets to address priority common information needs yet to be fully addressed. Maki concurred noting that the goal is to create an environment to enable leveraging of existing resources in a robust way that does currently exist in the application world and that builds upon the successes that MetroGIS has had to date in the data sharing world. He concluded his comments by stating he is excited about this opportunity for MetroGIS to play a substantive role in the evolution of a statewide service-oriented architecture given the mature collaborative environment that exists in the MetroGIS community.

In response to a question from Chinander whether fees will be involved in accessing the services, Arbeit clarified that the individual web services will remain the property of the organizations that create them and that they will retain control over access rights and policies, just as data producers currently maintain control over access rights for geospatial data for which metadata are posted on DataFinder and other data clearinghouse/distribution mechanisms. All interests which produce geospatial web service will be welcome to advertise their services via the proposed broker, as is the current policy regarding data searchable via DataFinder. As for the "broker" mechanism itself, Arbeit stated there will be no fees for searching or obtaining access to service through it. LMIC, serving in its role as the "broker" custodian, will also encourage no charge for services.

Chairperson Read commented that at last November's forum non-government interests were excited to learn they could publish data via DataFinder. She offered that extension of this policy to the proposed "broker" mechanism will be another important step towards fostering partnering opportunities valuable to addressing common information needs not yet addressed.

Chinander asked if the project team had a sense of the number of interests that use the "broker". Five of the Committee members indicated they each currently have services that they would contribute. Arbeit briefly summarized a survey that is in progress to define the current landscape of services and to document those underdeveloped and planned. Chairperson Read commented that the proposal is consistent with "big ideas" heard at the June 1 forum and commented that the existence of the proposed broker is necessary to realize the possibilities shared at the forum. The group concurred.

**Motion:** Chinander moved and Givens seconded to recommend that the Policy Board find that his project has merit as a Regional GIS project, satisfies each of the established criteria, and that the requested \$20,000 is reasonable and justified. Motion carried, ayes all.

Project D –Needs Assessment for Regional Occupiable Units Web Editing Application

Mark Kotz, lead staff for the Address Workgroup, began his comments by noting that the vision for a regional occupiable units database was adopted by the Policy Board in April 2005 and that since that time the Workgroup has facilitated the development of addressing standards consistent with the emerging national standards. A pilot was conducted to test the effort needed to convert stakeholder address databases to standards proposed for the regional database and the results showed the process is sustainable. The issue is what about the smaller communities which do have the support resources of the larger communities? Kotz stated it is these communities that are the focus of the this proposal, as the Workgroup has recognized that a key challenge to realizing the vision will be to establish a cost-efficient means to capture address data at the time of its creation by these smaller communities.

Kotz noted the Workgroup’s current thinking is that a direct (web-based) data capture tool is the most promising option but the Workgroup would prefer to conduct an analysis to clearly define functionality that would be valuable to the producer to incentivize their participation. Kotz provided an example that many of the smaller communities often do not have the capacity to create and maintain address maps so they outsource or rely upon paper working maps maintained individually by multiple departments. He noted that if the proposed web based data capture application included a utility to easily create address maps and other products they identify in the proposed study, that the smaller communities would elect to integrate the proposed tool into their daily operations.

Kotz then commented on the application itself and the questions posed by the Application Review Workgroup:

- \$21,000 is requested to hire a consultant; the methods would be defined by the consultant in collaboration with the Address Workgroup,
- Value of leveraged resources is difficult to estimate because many interests will contribute and/or benefit – time contributed by 21 workgroup members, staff time, time contributed by individuals involved in the formulation of the National Address Standards, organizational efficiencies gained as the result of the application one implemented, etc.
- Compliance with the regional address standard will ensure that data captured by means other than the subject web-based application will be interoperable with address data captured via the proposed application.

Harper suggested, and the Committee concurred, that the deliverable should be expected to suggest other options to capture address data from small communities if the proposed web-based application is determined to be unrealistic.

Harper also asked if it would be viable to skip the proposed needs assessment and go directly to application development. After some discussion, the group concurred with Maki’s comment that a “needs assessment” is important to identifying the benefits important to the business case and to establishing a viable project scope. The group also concurred that some form of prototyping was desirable to demonstrate capability and facilitate identification of additional functions desired by small communities. It was agreed that the demonstrating of capability is important and that the evaluation should include some form of visualization mechanism but not necessarily a functioning web interface.

Harper and Rowekamp encouraged the project team to utilize the proposed assessment as an outreach opportunity to build enthusiasm for the product but also cautioned not to build false expectations. Harper noted that the focus is on “inputs” and asked if the user’s needs are understood. Kotz responded that the user’s needs were the focus of the standards development process.

The term “needs assessment” was questioned by Arbeit given that a “vision statement” has been adopted. The group concurred that the proposed web-based tool is a means to achieving the vision and that the need for the specific tool is the focus, not the general vision, for a regional occupiable unit address database.

Wakefield spoke in favor of the needs assessment proposal, noting that from her experience working with small communities, that even with limited staff if the benefit/internal need (e.g., public safety) is well understood, time will be made to participate.

**Motion:** Craig moved and Givens seconded to recommend that the Policy Board find that his project has merit as a Regional GIS project, satisfies each of the established criteria, and that the requested \$21,000 is reasonable and justified. Motion carried, ayes all.

**b) MetroGIS Major Program Objectives: June-December 2006**

The Staff Coordinator summarized the listing of projects presented in the agenda materials. He commented that a formal 2006 work plan has not been adopted for MetroGIS and that the Policy Board had agreed last fall that projects in process should be the focus until the Metropolitan Council concluded its evaluation of the value of MetroGIS to its operations. He further noted that this listing of projects for the remainder of 2006 is before the Committee for ratification with the assumption that the Metropolitan Council will adopt that afternoon a recommendation before it to continue supporting MetroGIS with no change to the funding or organization structure currently in place.

Claypool asked about the status of securing staff support for Item 7- Performance Measurement Program. Vander Schaaf commented that the Council is in the process of filling the position that will support this activity and is hopeful that the individual will be on staff by late July, early August.

**Motion:** Bitner moved and Henry seconded to recommend that the Policy Board ratify the work program activities presented in Attachment A as major priorities for the remainder of 2006 or until the Strategic Directions Workshop, if they are modified at that time. Motion carried, ayes all.

**c) Strategic Directions Workshop Preparations**

Chairperson Read commented that two important activities in preparation for the Strategic Directions Workshop have been essentially completed (June 1 Possibilities Forum and November 15, 2005 Non Government Interests Forum) and that attention now can shift to refining the objectives and logistics for the Workshop. The discussion then focused on reflecting on the June 1 forum and establishing workgroups to complete the preparations

June 1 Forum Wrap Up: In response to a question from Chairperson Read, the members concurred that they thought the June 1 Imagining Possibilities Forum was a success. Chairperson Read commented that she is glad to see that this community will be closer to

realizing several of the “possibilities” shared at the forum if the two Regional GIS Projects discussed at this meeting are successful.

Craig commented that Michael Liebhold has authorized one copy of his presentation to be downloaded provided it is posted on the Internet. He suggested, and the Committee concurred, that the Staff Coordinator download it, send it in its entirety to the members for their internal use, and obtain permission from Liebhold to use a few of the slides in the summary document. Craig also encouraged the other members to submit their notes to staff on any “big ideas” they heard at the June 1 forum that have not been sufficiently captured in the draft summary document.

#### Non-Government Perspective Forum

The Staff Coordinator reported that now that the June 1 Forum is completed, the final phase of the process begun with November 15, 2005 can begin. The next phase will involve scoping out the details and implementation strategies for several of the 45 partnership ideas identified at the November 15 forum. Staff informed the Committee that 10 or so of the forum participants indicated interest in serving on a workgroup to accomplish this task. The expectation is that this task can be completed by mid September.

#### Strategic Directions Workshop Preparation Workgroup

Chairperson Read called for volunteers to serve on a workgroup to refine the objectives and logistics for the pending Workshop. Harper suggested that the members should represent as many perspectives as possible – user/producer as well as the various government types and sectors. The following members volunteered: Vander Schaaf, Harper, Arbeit, Read, and Gelbmann. Chairperson Read noted that those from sectors not yet represented may receive an invitation to participate as the effort moves forward.

#### **d) Modification of Operating Guidelines – Decisions Between Meetings**

Chairperson Read briefly summarized the history of the proposed changes, the most recent being a request from Chairperson Reinhardt to investigate options that are consistent with conventional quorum requirements as defined by Robert’s Rule of Order.

Craig and Givens spoke in favor of the proposed two-step voting process – appropriateness then substance. The only modification suggested to the language presented in the agenda materials was to convert from a specified number to a percentage for the threshold that determines whether a topic is appropriate or not for an E-vote. The consensus was to replace the “2-member” requirement with “10 percent or more” of the membership in the fourth bullet.

**Motion:** Harper moved and Givens seconded to recommend that the Policy Board amend the MetroGIS Operating Guidelines to authorize decisions between meetings via E-voting, as stated in the proposal dated June 12, subject to changing “2-member” threshold for determining whether an E-vote is appropriate to state “ten (10) percent or more of the membership”. Motion carried, ayes all.

#### **e) Technology Demonstration – July Policy Board Meeting**

As options for the July Board meeting, the group discussed demonstrating the Pictometry product (and its relationship to orthoimagery and GIS technology in general) or an explanation of MN Geospatial Architecture Plan. It was agreed the MN Geospatial Architecture Plan would be the most appropriate at the July meeting, given its relevance to a

Regional GIS Project proposal, the Metropolitan Council's affirmation of MetroGIS's value and directive to speak with state agencies about fostering collaborative opportunities with the state, and the request by Chisago County to join the collaborative environment created by MetroGIS, each of which is an agenda topic at the July Board meeting. Arbeit and Maki agreed to the Committee's request to make a presentation about the Governor's Council on Geographic Information Geospatial Architecture Plan for MN at the July 19 Policy Board meeting.

The Staff Coordinator was directed to contact Dakota County, which has an operational Pictrometry capacity, and ask if they would be interested in demonstrating this capability at the October Policy Board meeting. Craig commented that Knippel submitted an article for the GIS/LIS Consortium newsletter that provides a nice description of benefits associated with the Pictrometry product.

**f) Chisago County – Request to Join MetroGIS**

Chinander summarized the material in the agenda materials with regard to Chisago County's interest in leveraging/joining MetroGIS's collaborative environment, which raises the general question of how best to address accommodating data sharing with jurisdictions that border the seven county area. This matter has arisen because Chisago County will mostly likely be joining the Metropolitan Emergency Services Board.

The Staff Coordinator commented that sharing of data, knowledge and related geospatial resources with collar counties has been a goal for sometime but that this goal can be accomplished without modifying MetroGIS governance structure (adding voting members) or expanding the parties to formal agreements. This comment led to a short discussion about the role of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information to foster equity among standards and policies so that jurisdictions within the various geographic areas of the state can interact with one another with the need to expand already complex multi-party agreements.

Harper commented, and the group agreed, that this topic appears to be an appropriate discussion topic for the Strategic Directions Workshop. Givens concurred with Harper, noting that in a service-based architecture climate it will be increasingly important to look beyond the boundaries of the seven metro area counties to achieve the broader goal of MetroGIS being a component of coordinated statewide geospatial infrastructure. Vander Schaaf noted that the Metropolitan Council recognized that cooperation is needed with the adjoining counties because the issues surrounding its core functions extend beyond the Metro Area.

All agreed that dialogue to clarify Chisago County's needs and an evaluation of the pro and cons of meeting those needs is the appropriate first step to responding to this request. The Staff Coordinator was directed to develop a listing of responses to the question "What does it mean to be a member of MetroGIS (e.g., willingness to agree to common fee structures and access policies, honor the requirements of formal agreements and licenses - Regional Parcel and Regional Street Centerline datasets, actively participate in studies and activities designed to identify sustainable regional solutions to common information needs, maintain support custodial roles and responsibilities consistent with adopted regional policy)?

The Staff Coordinator was also directed to initiate a dialogue with Chisago County, in conjunction with Chinander, to clarify needs and preferences of Chisago County and to list these preferences accompanied by a statement of the current MetroGIS norm.

**g) Federal Enterprise Architecture – Geospatial Profile Version 1.1**

The group concurred with staff's suggestion to request the Technical Advisory Team to evaluate the subject document and offer a recommendation for consideration by the Committee at the September meeting as to what, if any, action MetroGIS should take in response to the policies and direction set forth in this document, in particular any issues/opportunities that are likely to be discussion points at the pending Strategic Directions Workshop.

**6) PROJECT UPDATES**

Chairperson Read called attention to two items – DataFinder Café Improvement Project and policy recommendations pending by of the County Data Producers Workgroup. It was agreed that the Updated Café should be demonstrated at the September meeting. Harper, Craig and Read summarized the Workgroup's progress on several policy amendments that are progress:

- Parcel data related:

- Allow publication of parcel data summarized to the block group or larger level of resolution,
- Allow no-cost license access to parcel data by non-profit interests,
- Allow view-only access to all components of the regional parcel dataset.
- Reject a request from the media to obtain free access via classification as an academic or a non-profit interest.

- Watershed District Jurisdictional Boundaries – Regional Solution

Harper briefly commented on BWSR hesitancy to serve as the regional custodian for this dataset. She and workgroup will be reviewing other options and hopefully will be in a position to make a recommendation to the Committee at the September meeting.

**7) INFORMATION SHARING**

There was no discussion of the items presented in the agenda materials.

**8) ADJOURN**

Henry moved and Givens seconded to adjourn at 3:10 pm.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson, AICP  
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator