

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Coordinating Committee
MN Counties Insurance Trust Bldg. – Board Room
December 21, 2006

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Read called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. She introduced Harold Busch, who replaced Bob Cockriel as the representative from the City of Bloomington. Chairperson Read then introduced Tim Loesch, who joined the Coordinating Committee as the representative from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, replacing Robert Maki.

Chairperson Read also presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Al Laumeyer who was resigning from the Committee as the Utility Representative. Mr. Laumeyer thanked the Committee for the opportunity to serve.

Members Present: *Academics:* Will Craig (U of M); *Cities:* Harold Busch (AMM: suburban cities - City of Bloomington); Steve Lorbach (AMM: core cities - City of St. Paul), *Business Geographics:* Chet Harrison (CB Richard Ellis); *Counties:* Dave Drealan (Carver), Randy Knippel (Dakota), Bill Brown and Scott Simmer (Hennepin) and Jane Harper (Washington); *Federal:* Ron Wencl (USGS); *GIS Consultants:* Terese Rowekamp (Rowekamp Associates); *Metropolitan:* Rick Gelbmann and Mark Vander Schaaf (Metropolitan Council), Nancy Read (Metropolitan Mosquito Control District); *Non-Profits:* Sally Wakefield (1000 Friends of Minnesota); *Special Expertise:* Brad Henry (URS Corp.); *State:* Joella Givens (MN/DOT) and Tim Loesch (DNR); *Utilities:* Al Laumeyer (CenterPoint Energy); and *Watershed/Water Management Organizations:* Ned Phillips (Rice Creek Watershed District).

Members Absent: *Counties:* David Claypool (Ramsey); Jim Hentges (Scott) and John Slusarczyk (Anoka), *Metropolitan:* David Bitner (Metropolitan Airports Commission); Gordon Chinander (Metropolitan Emergency Services Board); *Schools:* Dick Carlstrom (TIES) and *State:* David Arbeit (GDA/LMIC).

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Christopher Kline (MetroGIS Staff Support Team)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Simmer moved and Laumeyer seconded to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

(Editor's Note: Due to late arrivals of some Committee members, Agenda Items D and F were considered last. The order below reflects the actual order the items were addressed.)

3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY

Harper moved and Knippel seconded to approve the summary for the Committee's September 13, 2006 meeting, subject to showing Will Craig as having been present. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. POLICY BOARD MEETING:

Chairperson Read commented on the M3D presentation that was provided to the Policy Board during their October 18, 2006 meeting. No further discussion of the Board meeting occurred.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Election of Officers

Chairperson Read commented that it has been a pleasure to serve as the Committee Chair for the past two years. She then requested nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee. Knippel nominated Bill Brown, seconded by Drealan. No further nominations were received in response to three calls for additional nominations by the Chair.

Motion: Drealan moved and Knippel seconded to elect Bill Brown as the 2007 Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee. Motion carried, ayes all.

Chairperson Read then requested nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Coordinating Committee. Loesch nominated Ned Phillips; the nomination was seconded by Givens. No further nominations were received in response to three calls for additional nominations by the Chair.

Motion: Loesch moved and Givens seconded to elect Ned Phillips as the 2007 Vice Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee. Motion carried, ayes all.

b) 2007 Meeting Schedule

Chairperson Read requested comments on the proposed meeting schedule for 2007 presented in the agenda packet. She suggested changing the proposed December 12, 2007 date to December 5, 2007 to avoid conflicts with Annual State IT Symposium.

Motion: Harper moved and Wakefield seconded that the Coordinating Committee to adopt a 2007 Meeting Schedule of March 28, 2007, June 27, 2007, September 12, 2007, and December 5, 2007. Motion carried, ayes all.

c) Non-Profit Representative Seat on Coordinating Committee

Chairperson Read summarized the situation outlined in the agenda report. Two options were offered for discussion: 1) eliminate the second non-profit seat on the Committee that was added earlier in the year, or 2) initiate the process to appoint a new non-profit representative.

Harper remarked that it would be best to appoint another non-profit representative, since the second seat was added to accommodate a different viewpoint from a diverse community. She suggested that a replacement be sought who has possesses a “non-traditional GIS user” She recommended appointing someone with a social services, public health, or public safety background noting they would bring valuable perspective to the Committee’s deliberations. Wakefield added that the viewpoint possessed by someone in the mentioned fields would be different than the viewpoint she provides as the current non-profit representative. Harrison also suggested seeking out someone from the epidemiology community.

The group then discussed whether this new representative should be affiliated with a “community-based” interest similar to the new Hennepin County policy concerning eligibility for no-fee access to parcel data. After some discussion, the group concluded that it should be not rule out other perspectives to give itself flexibility but that preference should be given to interests that are “community-based”, in other words have an active role in the Twin Cities community. Knippel added that he supports the idea of seeking out a new member from “non-traditional users” of GIS technology because these interests represent potential market and partnering opportunities.

Loesch suggested reviewing the attendance listings for the both the June 2006 Imagining Possibilities and November 2005 Beyond Government Users forums for prospective candidates. It was agreed that work on recruiting a new member should not be begin until following the February 8, 2006 Strategic Directions Workshop in the event something related arises at the Workshop.

Motion: Harper moved and Brown seconded that the Coordinating Committee retain the two non-profit seats on the committee and seek to fill the current opening with a person who social services, public health, or public safety background and who is affiliated, if possible, with a local community-based organization. Motion carried, ayes all.

e) 2006 Accomplishments and Annual Report Theme

The Staff Coordinator commented that he believes that receiving endorsement form the Metropolitan Council of MetroGIS's value to the community and the upgrading of DataFinder Café were the top two accomplishments in 2006. He then requested feedback on the proposed list of accomplishments presented in the staff report.

The following modifications were agreed upon:

- 1) Move reference to the June 21 forum closer to the top of the list and make a stronger statement about its positive impact. Craig stated that this was the best event he has attended in 10 years and that it has had significant impact.
- 2) "Change "corroboration" in the first bullet to "endorsement".
- 3) Modify the fifth bullet to read "Fostered discussion among county officials to investigate the possibility of permitting licensed access to parcel data, without fee, by specified non-profit interests on a county-by-county basis." Item Iii(2) in the detailed report also to be modified accordingly.
- 4) In the 6th bullet change "documentation" to "identification" and add reference to discussions with non-profit and for-profit interests to identify opportunities common with the public sector.
- 5) In the ninth bullet add who funded the projects and who received the funding.
- 6) Add that a bullet noting that Washington County concluded a pilot project for MetroGIS regarding development of a regional solution for water management organization jurisdictional boundary data. The pilot involved documenting suggested custodian roles and responsibilities and data standards needed to support a regional data solution. The proposal was submitted to BWSR in October along with a request that BWSR consider serving as the area integrator.
- 7) Knippel agreed to submit a revised statement to summarize the efforts of the Emergency Preparedness Workgroup

Chairperson Read and the Staff Coordinator asked members to submit any other suggested modifications to the detailed report by January 6, 2006 so the report could be modified accordingly for inclusion in the January 17th MetroGIS Policy Board agenda packet.

Chairperson Read asked if any of the members had any suggested modifications to the suggested theme for the 2006 Annual Report outlined in the staff report. None were offered.

g) GIS Technology Demonstration for January 2007 Policy Board Meeting

Chairperson Read introduced this item and suggested that a demonstration of the new DataFinder Café be used to illustrate both this impressive tool and the data that are available t to the public. A general discussion of the differences between the DataFinder Café and online

tools such as Google Earth occurred next, ending with a consensus that online services such as Google Earth are dependent upon GIS technology.

Henry and Knippel commented that the previous suggestion to compare Pictometry (ortho-oblique imagery) to GIS was too narrow and probably should be recast as an overview of “neo-geography” tools in general, including Google Earth, Live.com, etc. This comment led to a brief discussion that these neo-geography tools are essentially visualization tools and do not have the analytic capabilities that are the heart and sole of GIS technology.

Knippel then offered that the value of “place” is rapidly increasing and that he believes it would be valuable to help policy makers understand not only the visualization tools but also the added value that can be attained using GIS tools. A demonstration at the January Board meeting that touches on where we have been (emphasis primary on solutions to common data needs by traditional users) and where the community is likely headed would provide a good foundation for the February 8th Workshop.

Wakefield commented that at 1000 Friends they are using data and WMSs obtained from DataFinder, converting it for use on Google Earth, and training communities to use these tools to better understand policy implications and in so doing are extending the reach of GIS technology to non-traditional users.

Brown and Craig commented and the group concurred that a focus of the demonstration should be to demonstrate how these tools are improving effectiveness using actual case studies. We did this and the result was this. Knippel added that the mainstreaming of technology that is occurring through the Google Earths and Live.coms and the growing importance of the concept of place are important to understand for the process to define a vision for the next 3-5 years. In other words as the public becomes more in tune with these capabilities there will be increased demand for public services to keep pace.

Harrison commented that the private sector can not effectively generate or maintain parcel data. Given the many local government interests involved, a standards body is needed. This is the role of MetroGIS.

In Harrison and Loesch both stated that their organizations are each obtaining web services from DataFinder to conduct their daily business and have realized substantive improved efficiencies as a result. Both agreed to provide quotes to this effect.

The following demonstration concept was conceived:

- 1) Harrison and Loesch agreed to provide an overview of DataFinder’s capabilities with an emphasis on how this tool is assisting organizations improve efficiencies. Highlights of benefits that can be received from use Google Earth, Live.com will also be touched on.

It was agreed that this segment should include a briefing to help policy makers understand on how use of WMS (and like technology) are expanding upon the efficiencies already gained through implementation of regional data solutions (e.g., regional solutions are interoperable and because standardized across the region require little manual preparation before putting to use whereas these efficiencies are expanded by the ability to access the data in an automated fashion totally eliminating manual access processes as well as providing the more current data available more efficiently than could be done manually).

It was also agreed that Committee members, as opposed to staff, should make the presentation as comments from users will carry a stronger message.

- 2) Wakefield will provide a link to reality by demonstrating how the data and web services available through data finder are being used by a host of traditional and non-traditional users alike in community-based decision-making processes.

Finally, Craig suggested and the group agreed that the Board members should be provided with a hand out that lists the data available through DataFinder.

Motion: Givens moved and Harrison seconded that the Coordinating Committee endorse the topic of organizational benefits that can be received from use of MetroGIS DataFinder and visualization tools such as Google Earth as the GIS Demonstration topic for the January 17, 2007 Policy Board meeting. Motion carried, ayes all.

Rowekamp asked of this and other GIS Technology Demonstration could be made or the Committee, as well as to the Policy Board. Read commented that it in the past an effort was made to have the Committee preview presentations before they are made to the Board but for a number of reasons this practice was not successful. She noted that if the demonstrators are okay with the idea, their January presentation to the Board could be offered before or after the next Committee meeting. She deferred to the incoming Chair to look into options.

h) Policy for Decisions Between Meetings

Chairperson Read introduced the topic, explaining that during the October 18, 2006 Policy Board direction was given to staff to determine if the Open Meetings Law pertains to MetroGIS. She also noted that if the Board is of the opinion that e-voting is not permitted based upon a finding of the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities. Read commented that the finding was although the Open Meeting Law does not pertain to MetroGIS, MetroGIS holds itself to that standard given the Board is comprised of elected officials. .

Harper commented that the Coordinating Committee should be treated differently from the Policy Board since it is comprised of staff, who are not subject to the Open Meetings Law. General discussion followed, with an end result being the Committee wishes to utilize the e-voting procedures it recommended for enactment at its September 2006 meeting unless the Policy Board objects.

Chairperson Read agreed to share the Committee's position with Chairperson Reinhardt as they prepare for the January Policy Board meeting.

d) 2006 Annual Performance Measurement Report

The Staff Coordinator introduced the topic, requesting feedback on the draft 2006 Annual Performance Measurement Report. Harper asked if the number of Land Cover dataset downloads could be included in the next report. Loesch confirmed that Department of Natural Resources (DNR) now possess the ability to separate the Land Cover download activity for the seven county area from that for the remainder of the state and can provide it in the future. Harper commented that increased outreach activity should be pursued in 2007 in an attempt to increase the number of produces using DataFinder as the rate of growth has been flat. Staff concurred noting that outreach resources had been limited in 2006, in larger part due to the evaluation of MetroGIS conducted by the Council, and that more time for outreach is expected to be available in 2007. Loesch also suggested adding server activity as a potential measure.

Staff commented that the Performance Measurement Plan is scheduled to be updated in 2007 and that this suggestion could be looked in to at that time.

A general discussion of the necessity of creating empirical performance measurement targets ensued. The group acknowledged that when the Performance Measurement Plan is updated in 2007 this is topic that should be given further consideration but the consensus at this time is that setting performance targets is premature at best.

That said, all agreed that the metrics currently captured are valuable for evaluating trends and identifying where changes are occurring so that adjustments can be made to rectify problems and support good outcomes. Some of the members expressed concern that the process of setting targets is an arbitrary exercise that would takes time away for the value that can be received from simply evaluating reasons for trends. Brown added that MetroGIS should continue to use the existing data to analyze trends and determine where to focus its efforts.

f) Preparation for Strategic Directions Workshop

Chairperson Read provided an overview of the efforts thus far to prepare for the February 8th Strategic Directions Workshop. She noted that in an effort to make the best use of the limited time available at the Workshop, the Workshop Planning Team wants to identify current philosophy and practices that all members agree should continue. These items will not be a topic of further discussion unless circumstances change during the course of the Workshop.

Chairperson Read then asked the Committee members to split into small groups to comment on the listing of current philosophy and practices provided in the agenda packet and answer the question “If _____ does not happen as a result of the Workshop, I will be disappointed.” Each of the members of the Workshop Planning Team facilitated discussion in the small groups. The results of each small group discussion are listed in Attachment A. The group was informed that this information would be consolidated and shared with the Policy Board for consideration at its January 17th meeting. Each member was also asked to share the information in Attachment A with the leadership in their respective organizations in preparation for their participation in the Feb 8th Workshop.

6. PROJECT UPDATES

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

7. INFORMATION SHARING

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

8. ADJOURN

Henry moved and Laumeier seconded to adjourn at 3:05 p.m.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator

and

Chris Kline
MetroGIS Administrative Technician

ATTACHMENT A

REVIEW OF CURRENT GUIDING PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICES

(The following comments are listed by focus group under the name of the group facilitator.)

I. If _____ Doesn't Happen at the MetroGIS Strategic Directions Workshop, I will be disappointed...

Harper

If we don't gain consensus on the 2 or 3 most pressing issues that need to be focused on.

We need to focus on relevance, not theory.

We need to get to the guts of the issues - don't gloss over things. We need to have a good deal of candor to get to the heart of the issues.

We need a follow up activity that revisits the common needs.

Vander Schaaf

Preparation - Participant Expectations ("If _____ does not happen at the Workshop, I would be disappointed.")

Diverse opinions are considered

A well-defined and organized path is set

Current objectives are strengthened without wandering from the path

Read

Want to hear from a diverse group

Want to review unmet info needs and consider their continued relevance

Want substantive discussion (not just review of history)

II. Current Desired Outcomes

1. Improved participant operations.
2. Improved stakeholder effectiveness in achieving liveable community goals, enhancing their constituents' quality of life, and improving their economic competitiveness.
3. Reduced participant costs.

Harper

Are we achieving these outcomes? Maybe some examples of our successes related to each outcome should be part of the Setting the Stage. Our performance measurements should focus on measuring whether or not we are achieving these outcomes.

Vander Schaaf

All seem pretty obvious - maybe don't require discussion

#2, however, seemed wordy and not applicable to everyone (e.g., "achieving livable community goals") - maybe could be combined with #1.

Maybe could be simplified to Improved Effectiveness (more achieved with same input) and Improved Efficiency (Reduced costs for same achievement)

Read

All three items were agreed upon.

III. Potential New Desired Outcomes

4. Enhanced capacity resulting from partnering
5. Improved capacity for cross-jurisdictional decision making

Harper

No comments provided

Vander Schaaf

No comments provided

Read

We thought these were part of it already; only new thing is perhaps the word "capacity", which there were some questions about what it meant.

IV. Current Guiding Philosophies and Principles

1. Build Once, Sharing Many Times
2. Secure Champions
3. Have Broad Support of Vision and Expectations
4. Have Active Involvement of Policy Makers to Set Policy Direction
5. Rely on Consensus on Policy Decisions Fundamental to Long Term Success
6. Represent Diverse Perspectives
7. Maintain Focus on Common Business Information Needs
8. Focus on Stakeholder Benefits
9. Involve all relevant and affected parties, dominated by none
10. Acknowledge Fair-Share Contribution in several forms (data, people, equipment, and/or funds)
11. Share Investments Made By One Government Entity With Other Government Entities
12. Rely on Voluntary Compliance With Endorsed Standards and Procedures
13. Align with Internal Business Needs
14. Equity is defined on an organization-by-organization basis and exists if the collaborative solution is more efficient than pursuing the solution on one's own
15. Contribution of assets to a collaborative solution assumes all parties view the transaction as equitable and relevant to their needs
16. Encourage adding value to public sector assets provided it does not detract from the public sector objective
17. Rely upon willing stakeholders with adequate capacity to voluntarily support components of endorsed regional solutions to common information needs
18. Rely on Metropolitan Council to support MetroGIS "foster collaboration" function

Harper

General Comments: There should be at least one activity for each of the philosophies. The overriding philosophy is that we cannot work as an island.

Specific Comments:

1 and 11 should be combined. Possibility: Share investments made by one government entity with other government entities, i.e. build once share many times.

2-5. Agreement

6-8. Okay with principles but need to focus on how do we do it? Need more work on how to measure our success with these principles.

9. & 10. Okay

12. Okay with this. Want to expand it, or add another principle, that recognizes the need to align with the state and with LIS/GIS. There was a lot of discussion about how there is no GIS champion at the state and how LIS/GIS has floundered in recent years. We feel that in order for MetroGIS to be as strong as it could be the state needs to be strong. We need to figure out how we can both be strong together and to empower each other. This relationship seemed to be there before the state started to dismantle LMIC.

13. Okay with the principle but suggested rewording to specify what is being aligned and for whose business needs. Suggest something like: Align roles and responsibilities for regional solutions with stakeholder business needs.

14-16. We couldn't agree or disagree because we couldn't figure out what these principles were saying. They need to be greatly simplified.

14. Could just say "Collaborative solutions will be pursued when it is more efficient than pursuing the solution on one's own." However, this may miss the mark. We wondered if the thrust of this was getting at the concept that the collective benefit is of a higher order of importance than the individual needs of organizations.

17. Okay but shorten. Suggest: "Rely upon willing stakeholders to support components of endorsed regional solutions.

18. We had some discussion on this one but came to no conclusion as to whether we could live with the statement or not. We weren't sure if it should be included in the list of guiding principles. Maybe it should be combined with #10, so that one principle focuses on where MetroGIS gets its resources.

Vander Schaaf

Again, most seem pretty obvious - especially #1, #11 and #13

Some concern about #2: Secure Champions - not sure if that is legitimate and/or should be rewritten to say something like "Promote GIS awareness and appreciation"

Read

3. Wording seemed awkward; we thought what it meant was vision and expectations needed to have broad support (i.e., to be adopted by group)

9. Thought that was a worthy goal, even if it doesn't always happen that way

12. We agreed that because of cross-jurisdictional nature we were stuck with "voluntary" compliance with standards

13. Just checking - the internal business needs are those of the participants (not the Council, right?)

14. Only one of us (me) seemed to have trouble with the word "equity" as sounding too much like "equal"; others figured rest of statement clarified that it's up to participants to decide what is appropriate

15. We interpreted this as "nobody is strong-armed to contribute"

16. Agreed; interpreted as allowing private for-profit use of public data (given caveat)

17. Agree, if possible - but we wondered if there was no willing stakeholder with adequate capacity, then what?

All others all fine, no comments.

Gelbmann

People agreed with 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13.

Comments on #3 needs further discussion, Hard to maintain, needs structure

Comments on #7 have to consider the diversity of needs (PSAPs and Emergency Services).

These may not be "common needs" but they are important to all.

Comments on #9 Work on the intended goal, clarify.

Comments on #10 – should this be dropped?

Comments on #11 – Does this cover #10?

Comments #14-17 are wordy. Clarify make them shorter, explain why they are core.

V. Current Activities

1. Develop and maintain regional solutions to previously identified common information needs
2. Develop standards for GIS content, data documentation, and data management for regional solutions to MetroGIS-endorsed common information needs
3. Operate an Internet-based tool (DataFinder) for discovering and retrieving geographic data
4. Provide a forum for knowledge sharing
5. Collaborate to fund regional GIS research and development projects
6. Facilitate data sharing agreements among MetroGIS stakeholders
7. Foster wide-spread data sharing
8. Maintain liaison relationships with interests that have similar objectives
9. Secure broad support for vision and policies
10. Secure elected officials as policy makers and advocates for MetroGIS
11. Support a metro-wide, structure that effectively represents all key stakeholder interests
12. Waive cost recovery for data development expenses
13. Advocate for MetroGIS needs and desires to State and Federal policy makers
14. Document Stakeholder Benefits
15. Promote Understanding (*among policy makers*)
16. Maintain an Institutional Memory
17. Connect with other Spatial Data Infrastructure Initiatives with similar objectives

Harper

5. We are okay with this activity but want some discussion on how the activity is administered and how the decision is made. We think the recommendation on what gets funded should be made by a work group with broad representation - one state, one county, one regional and one non-profit organization. We don't like that they final decision is made solely by the Met Council. This is contrary to the nature of MetroGIS as a collaborative group. It goes against many of the principles, specifically #6, #8, #9.

12. We need to expand this activity to include raising awareness and buy in that GIS cannot be justified by a direct return in terms of revenue generated; it needs to be seen as a cost of doing business in today's world with today's technology; it is part of the internal business infrastructure.

20. See comments above regarding the relationship with the state and LIS/GIS. We aren't sure that the solution is to create a statewide equivalent to MetroGIS. The activity should be written in such a way as to not presume the solution.

Vander Schaaf

These should be the focus of some debate - most are genuinely debatable.
#16 may be so obvious as to not be proposed for debate.

Read

No comments on these except for:

15. We agreed policy makers important, but also include others?

18. Wanted to expand to "Evaluate need and review relevance of current" as well as add more.

19. Info as infrastructure is a good one, DNR is pushing this now too.

Others look fine.

Gelbmann

People agreed with all except 5, 15, 17

Comments #5 Need to talk about this one. People may not know or understand this.

Comments #12 Strongly agree

Comments #15 – Same as 9 & 10

Comments # 17 Same as #8

VI. Potential New Activities:

18. Add more items to the list of MetroGIS-endorsed common information needs

19. Advance idea that data is infrastructure (key asset)

20. Advocate for the creation of a Statewide equivalent of MetroGIS

21. Develop standards and processes for developing and sharing commonly needed GIS programs, applications and services.

22. Make available a comprehensive set of applications running on MetroGIS-endorsed regional datasets

23. Engage non-traditional users

24. Provide for users to contribute data directly to MetroGIS endorsed regional datasets

25. Pursue public-private partnerships to address common information needs

26. Pursue technology interdependencies (shared services) among organizations

27. Work with adjacent counties (beyond 7-county area) to ensure that their data is readily available and compatible with that endorsed by MetroGIS