

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Coordinating Committee
MN Counties Insurance Trust Bldg. – Board Room
September 17, 2008

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Brown called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.. Larry Charboneau, the newest member of the Committee who is with NCompass Technologies formerly known as The Lawrence Group, was asked to introduce himself. Chairperson Brown commented that Charboneau will be filling the GIS Consultant representative vacancy created when Terese Rowekamp resigned prior to the June meeting.

Members Present: *Academics:* Jeff Matson for Will Craig (U of M); *Cities:* Jim Engfer (AMM: core cities - City of St. Paul), *Counties:* Pete Henschel (Carver), Randy Knippel (Dakota), Bill Brown (Hennepin), Gosh Gumm for Jim Bunning (Scott); and Jane Harper (Washington); *GIS Consultants:* Larry Charboneau (NCompass Technologies), *Metropolitan:* 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); *State:* David Arbeit (GDA/LMIC) and Joella Givens (MN/DOT).

Members Absent: *Business Geographics:* (Vacant); *Cities:* Harold Busch (AMM: suburban cities - City of Bloomington); *Counties:* John Slusarczyk (Anoka), David Claypool (Ramsey), *Federal:* Ron Wencil (USGS); *Metropolitan:* David Bitner (Metropolitan Airports Commission), *State:* Tim Loesch (DNR); *Special Expertise:* Brad Henry (URS Corp.), *Utilities:* Allan Radke (Xcel Energy); and *Watershed/Water Management Organizations:* Mark Doneux, Capital Region Watershed District.

Open Seats: *Business Geographics and Non-Profits*

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Jonathan Blake (MetroGIS staff support team)

Visitors: Mark Kotz (Metropolitan Council and member of the Technical Leadership Workgroup) and David Brandt (Washington County and Chair of the Technical Advisory Team)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Knippel moved and Member Wakefield seconded to approve the agenda, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY

Member Wakefield moved and Member Knippel seconded to approve the June 18, 2008 meeting summary, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. SUMMARY OF JULY POLICY BOARD MEETING

Chairperson Brown asked if there were any questions about the summary provided in the agenda packet. No questions or comments were offered.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Shared Application Needs – Phase II Progress Update

Mark Kotz, Chairperson of the Technical Leadership Workgroup, provided an overview of the charges to the workgroup and its preparations for a November 20 Forum to define shared application needs. He stated that the Workgroup's goal is to present recommendations for specific shared application opportunities to the Committee for its consideration at the December meeting. Kotz's talking points, which were handed out at the meeting, are presented in Attachment A.

b) Use of Uncommitted 2008 Regional GIS Project Funding

Staff Coordinator Johnson summarized the reason for this agenda item – only \$23,500 of the \$25,000 budgeted were allocated by the Policy Board at its July meeting and that the Board had requested the Committee to offer recommendations for how to best use the remaining \$1,500. He noted that the

Board had also asked the Committee to consider the appropriateness of using these uncommitted funds to increase funding for the Geocoder service project as suggested by the project manager at the Board meeting. Johnson stated that the source of the subject funding is the Metropolitan Council and, therefore, the Council's procurement rules must be followed. In this case, this means there is a cap of \$1,400 (10 percent) in additional funding permitted to be used for the Geocoder service project without triggering the need to reauthorize the project.

Member Read, the project manager, explained the programming modifications that the project team had discovered the need for when testing the beta version of the service, for which the additional funds had been requested.

During the Committee's discussion of the request, Member Knippel asked for clarification of the statement made by the Staff Coordinator that if the Committee views the programming modifications as "enhancements", as opposed to critical to achieving the originally proposed functionality, that additional funding from the original project funder – the Council - should not be authorized. The Staff Coordinator went on to explain that the Council's initial investment was made, in part, to test the notion that open source application development will attract additional investor contributions to enhance functionality of such applications once they are placed into operation. He also noted that this project is one of a couple of open source pilots that are in progress, which he hopes will help shape business rules for deciding such matters down the road. Knippel offered that during this testing/education process that the idea should be considered that government investments in software should always result in open source licensure.

Member Knippel moved and Member Givens seconded to recommend that the Committee:

- 1) Concur that 2008 Regional GIS Project program funds should be used to rectify unanticipated programming issues encountered during development of the 2007 Geocoder Service Project.
- 2) Concur that rectification of the unanticipated programming issues is critical to proper functioning of the Regional Geocoding Service with regional datasets as originally conceived (a requirement of authorizing additional funding under Council procurement rules).
- 3) Recommend the maximum of \$1,400 to be used this propose, with the understanding that any additional modification of the Regional Geocoding Service must be treated as an "enhancement" and subject to confirmation that funds needed in addition to the subject \$1,400 have, in fact, been secured.
- 4) Assign responsibly to the Staff Coordinator to recommend policy and associated guidelines to guide decision making for funding requests from MetroGIS to enhance products developed with MetroGIS resources, in particular, open source products. Said policy must be in place prior to considering a specific request.

Motion carried, ayes all.

c) Exploring Shared Needs with Non Government Interests

The Staff Coordinator summarized the proposal, as outlined in the agenda report, in particular the request of the Committee to offer examples of partnership possibilities, such as a regional land information system which would support queries of data provided by multiple, cross-sector producers.

Chairperson Brown questioned why a county representative had not been included in the list of candidate participants for the Phase I meeting of policy makers and senior non-government managers. He raised this concern from the position that as producers interest among counties in partnering must be confirmed. After some discussion, the group concurred that the focus should remain, as suggested, on partnering opportunities needed to achieve functionality enhancements that are supported by a range of data types and not limited to opportunities that rely upon existing endorsed regional datasets (e.g., parcel data).

Member Knippel continued by stating that in addition to the suggested land information model theme that the time is also ripe to explore partnering possibilities related to the theme of emergency preparedness. This comment led to a broad discussion about how best to stimulate the discussion at the Phase I forum - who should be invited to participate (e.g., utilities), need to structure the

conversation to ensure the focus is on collaborative objectives, and potential outcomes if partnering is successful.

Knippel offered the label of “current, accurate, virtual models of the community” as a means to better relate to the private sector’s business needs. He also concurred that the proposal to create a private sector coordinating committee would be a good way to test willingness on the part of non-government interests to engage and contribute to collaborative solutions with government interests.

Chinander offered the option of limiting the discussion initially to an emergency management focus as a way to engage the utilities, real estate, banking interests and possibly others, who possess information valuable to partnerships, but who have not elected to share data previously due the sensitivity of their data.

It was agreed that the methods and facilitation questions should drive toward the following outcomes and in terms that an executive can related to:

- Missed opportunities if there is no change in current geospatial environment
- High level business needs that the private sector shares with government. How can we do _____ better through partnering. Business function, NOT a data focus. The more concrete the better
- Contributions the private sector is willing to make to catalyze collaborative solutions (what does the private sector have that the public sector needs?)
- What does the private sector need to get in return to consider partnering with the public sector (e.g., non-disclosure agreements)?”.

Read suggested that the Phase I meeting should be targeted to one of the two major themes discussed at this meeting - **land information system or emergency management** - and that both options should be shared with the **Policy Board to decide among them**, with the understanding that the participants will be different. The Committee members concurred. The group also concurred that the **outcome(s) needs be more clearly defined** (e.g., 4-5 pilot projects to demonstrate the value cross-sector partnering and which resolve policy obstacles such as those presented with current non-disclosure requirements.)

Read then called attention to the statement made by the Staff Coordinator in the agenda report that if partnering with the private sector is demonstrated to be viable that MetroGIS’s current government-centric organizational would likely have to change to sustain cross-sector partnering. She asked staff to elaborate. The Staff Coordinator shared the major organizational/governance changes that he believed would be needed, including: securing legal standing, expanding the policy board to include non-government voting members, and implementing a mechanism that does not currently exist to nest regional organizations, such as MetroGIS, within a statewide structure for Minnesota, and ultimately within a national structure. He went on to note that the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) has recognized exactly the same need and tasked one of its working groups, which he is a member, to investigate options to, in effect, reinvent the way we currently work across organizational lines to support core functions of the NSDI (e.g., regional parcel dataset that is interoperable with parcel data produced by adjoining jurisdictions).

Read asked if any work had been initiated to investigate specific organizational structure options. Johnson commented that this need had been shared with faculty at the University of Minnesota and that an NGAC colleague is also looking into other options to help frame the issues that will need to be addressed. In all cases, the axiom of form follows function would drive the evaluation. More specifically, once specific shared application needs are defined and partnering is demonstrated to be viable, the investigation will shift to evaluating specific organizational options appropriate for the desired partnership(s). The concept of an Information Utility, cited in the agenda report, was offered as an example of an idea that has been offered for further investigation. There was no further comment on this topic.

d) Leadership Development Plan

Jonathan Blake, lead author formerly with Richardson, Richter Associates, and the Staff Coordinator introduced this item. They reiterated that the purpose of requesting direction on the suggested and partially defined key elements proposed for the plan is to ensure that time is not wasted on topics/strategies that the Committee does believe to be relevant or which it does not agree.

Blake then led a conversation with the Committee to corroborate key ideas proposed for the detailed plan. Key points made in the discussion were as follows:

Item 4 - Development of a Leadership Development Structure: The group concurred that this proposal makes sense and expressed a desire to test and refine the proposed structure elements with the process to hire a Technical Coordinator, assuming permission is received to create and fill this position.

Item #6 - Address Volunteer Burnout: Concurred that a listing of current projects and participants should be provided on the website in a conspicuous location. The group also concurred that as next steps in the development of this Plan and the related Outreach Plan are pursued that the potential should be looked into to: a) add a mechanism to the website to support regular (daily updates?) postings of specific needs – technical and other - to keep stakeholders and potential participants aware of needs and opportunities to contribute, and b) support a means for potential contributors to identify themselves and explain how their skills/knowledge align with stated needs. (Editor's Note: this functionality is similar to that previously identified as part of a "portal")

Item #7 Substitutes/Surrogates: Concurred that encouraging members to arrange for alternates to attend meetings in their absence would serve an important educational purpose, that is, the alternate will generally learn more than they will be able contribute but would work toward developing broader understanding and interest among stakeholders needed to successfully transition to new leadership.

Item 8: Outreach Materials: Concurred with Member Harper's suggestion that a summary of what MetroGIS does, its current activities, etc. should be posted on the website for stakeholders to use when they train in new staff/policy makers about MetroGIS. All agreed that this material should be posted and available for the transition in Policy Board Chair anticipated to occur in April 2009.

Item #9 Bimonthly Meetings: Concurred that the concept of creating an executive committee should be investigated as an option to the Committee meeting more often. The Staff Coordinator also commented that in terms of making more progress on work objectives, a greater need exists for workgroups to frame and address issues and opportunities than for the Committee to meet. Read offered two other reasons to create an Executive Committee; to take some of the load of the Committee for administrative items as well as provide valuable leadership during transitions of key staff and committee leadership. Harper also suggested that the concept of an Executive Committee should be explored in conjunction with modifications to the existing "e-vote" authority to allow the committee to take action on non-administrative items under specified circumstances.

General:

- 1) The Chair suggested that a search should be conducted to determine how other organizations deal with transitions in key leadership before a workgroup is formed to expand upon the preliminary direction suggested to achieve the ten key elements. Blake commented that the references cited in the Reference Section of the agenda report provide a good starting place for such proven practices.
- 2) At Gelbmann's suggestion, the group concurred that a priority should be added to document Standard Operating Procedures as a component of preparing for transitions in key leadership (e.g., meeting preparations, hosting forums, data sharing practices, out sourcing/Request for Bids). It was agreed that staff and Committee leadership should share this recommendation with Chairperson Reinhardt to obtain her input as to material that she would like to include concerning chairing the Policy Board.

Committee concluded its consideration by postponing the creation of a workgroup to a later time, deferring to staff to offer suggested courses of action concerning refinement of ten key plan elements.

Chairperson Brown called for a ten minute break at 2:10 p.m. He also suggested that Agenda Items 5h and 5i be considered before Item 5g. The members concurred.

e) 2009 Major Work Program Objectives - Finalize

The Staff Coordinator summarized the proposed work objectives for 2009 as presented in the agenda report. He noted that the proposal includes objectives shown in *italics* that cannot be fully accomplished without the addition of a Technical Coordinator to the staff support team. They have been included to demonstrate the impact of the additional resource. He then asked the Committee members to offer suggestions as to any objectives that were missing or which should have less or more priority.

Vander Schaaf suggested, and the group concurred, that the results of Item 4 “Define Shared Application Needs” are expected to play a large role in demonstrating the value to the Council of investing in the Technical Coordinator position and, therefore, should be listed as the #2 in priority.

Charboneau asked why the Council is being looked to fund the Technical Coordinator position. The Staff Coordinator responded that there are two reasons: 1) a dilemma exists in that until shared application needs are defined, there is little basis upon which to begin to look beyond the Council for staff support and 2) in January, Council leadership recognized that the Council would benefit from investing in this position but that the subsequent imposition of a hiring freeze has complicated the position creation process. This response lead to a conversation about whether there is adequate potential for the Council to add the Technical Coordinator in order to continue to plan on it, as opposed to the need to put effort into developing a contingency plan in the event this position is not filled by the Council. Gelbmann and Vander Schaaf commented that there is hope that the results of the applications needs definition process will play a large role in providing the justification needed moving ahead despite the current hiring freeze. They also commented that a funded position exists but has not been able to be filled due to the hiring freeze. Chairperson Brown stated that MetroGIS is a child of the Council and as such he is looking to the Council for leadership to address this support need. No other staffing options were offered for consideration.

Knippel commented that there is a history of securing voluntary participation where value is perceived. This comment prompted a response by the Staff Coordinator that Technical Leadership Workgroup had concluded that a Technical Coordinator is needed to effectively support project management activities important to effectively utilizing volunteers and that continued use of a workgroup to serve as a surrogate coordinator is not workable in the long term.

The discussion than returned to the proposed 2009 objectives. Read suggested that the priority of Item 7 “Update Performance Measurement Plan” is to too high, offering that the emphasis should be on technical solutions (data and applications).

Harper suggested incorporating the concept of “stretch objectives” into the format in which the objectives are listed to help the Policy Board understand the core proposal and those items that we will attempt to accomplish time and resources permitting. She concurred with Member Read that Performance Measures Plan Update should be a lower priority than #7.

Charboneau asked if two additional columns could be added to the table that explains the proposed 2009 objectives – Who and Timeframe. This comment lead to a brief discussion of the need for the services of a Technical Coordinator to effectively define these dimensions for the actual projects. The Staff Coordinator acknowledged that some information about these two aspects could be provided but that it would be in the form of a high level deliverable, such as, defining who should be responsible for the detailed project plan and a general statement of the outcomes sought.

Given the number of suggested modifications and the announcement in Item 5a of the proposed November 20th forum to define shared application needs, the Staff Coordinator suggested postponing action on the 2009 program objectives until the Committee’s December meeting. The Committee agreed.

The Staff Coordinator agreed to work with the Technical Leadership Workshop to modify the format, in which the 2009 objectives are presented, to incorporate the ideas suggested by the Committee.

f) 2009 “Foster Collaboration” Budget - Finalize

The Committee concurred this item should be tabled until the agreement is reached in the major programs objectives for 2009 (see Item e, above) but also encouraged the Staff Coordinator to proceed with a process(es) to capture funds identified in the agenda report that will not likely be able to be used in 2008 for carry over to 2009.

The Staff Coordinator agreed to work with the Technical Leadership Workshop to prioritize use of funds if able to be carried over to 2009.

h) GIS Demonstration for October Policy Board meeting

The Staff Coordinator explained efforts that had been made to secure availability of presenters and that a presentation from Dick Carlstrom of TIES about how school districts are using the regional parcel dataset is recommended for the October meeting. Member Carlstrom briefly commented on the key points that he proposed to make to the Board. The Committee accepted Carlstrom’s offer to present to the Board at its October 22nd meeting.

i) Change December Meeting Date

It was explained that the originally proposed date of December 17 conflicts with the State IT Symposium. The members agreed to change the December meeting date to the Wednesday the 10th.

g) Mn Drive to Excellence: State Agency Coordination Update

The Staff Coordinator introduced this item by noting that Chairperson Reinhardt has asked for an update at the October 22 Policy Board meeting on the anticipated recommendations from the Mn Drive to Excellence: State Agency Coordination project. David Arbeit, member of the project team, explained the objectives and timeline for the project to the Committee but was only able to share generalities about the forthcoming recommendations, as the details had not been shared with the project team for consideration.

Harper suggested, and the Committee concurred, that when Arbeit appears before the Policy Board he should stress those recommendations which relate to interaction with non-state agency stakeholders and provide a summary of what they heard the non-state agency stakeholders say they needed from the state.

Vice Chairperson Wakefield acknowledged the importance of achieving better coordination among state agencies but encouraged Arbeit not to focus his comments to the Policy Board on recommendations to accomplish state agency coordination but rather that he emphasize those recommendations designed to accomplish coordination among state agencies and the remainder of the stakeholder community

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator

ATTACHMENT A

Handout Agenda Item 5a

Technical Leadership Workgroup Charge

1. To define a process to identify and prioritize commonly needed geospatial web services and applications
2. To identify issues and solutions related to trusting and using web services
3. To define a more fully fledged mechanism – a broker – to discover and acquire or use geospatial data, web services, applications and other resources.

Additional Tasks

4. Encourage the development of rapid prototypes and examples.
 5. Inventory existing services and applications (populate Geoservices Finder)
 6. Promote and champion the concept of shared web services and applications.
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1. Commonly Needed for Geospatial Web Services and Applications

Planning a Needs Assessment with these Deliverables:

- List of high priority applications and web services for the MetroGIS community
 - This means there is consensus that they are very important and would be of benefit to many organizations
- Definition of who wants them, by organization type/sector
 - Who's business needs do they support?
- Description of how we benefit from these high priorities
 - What do they leverage?
 - What processes can take advantage of them?
- Expert recommendations from the TLW as to what MetroGIS should focus on in the next year and why (expert interpretation of the results)
- An evaluation of the needs assessment and prioritization process with the possibility of it being something we repeat periodically (e.g. annually) to reassess as technology and priorities change

We hope to hold the forum in 2008

We expect to invite about 30 people to represent MetroGIS stakeholders.

2. Trusting Web Services

3. A Broker for Web Services, Data and Other Geospatial Resources

- Formed a Geospatial Architecture Subgroup
- Defined a list of Quality of Service factors for web services
- Forming a vision for roles and responsibilities related to trust issues (central authority, service provider, service user)
- Defining the pieces of functionality for a fully fledged broker. Categories:
 - Search, Discovery, Inform, Administration