

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS Coordinating Committee**  
**MN Counties Insurance Trust Bldg. – Room 307**  
**April 9, 2003**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Harper called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**Members Present:** *Academics:* Will Craig (U of M); *Cities:* Bob Cockriel (AMM: suburban cities - City of Bloomington); *Counties:* Bill Brown (Hennepin); David Claypool (Ramsey); Dave Drealan (Carver); Jane Harper (Washington); Jim Hentges (Scott); Randy Knippel (Dakota); *Federal:* Ron Wencil (USGS); *GIS Consultants:* Larry Charboneau (The Lawrence Group); *Metropolitan:* Mark Kill (Metropolitan Airports Commission), Rick Gelbmann (Metropolitan Council), Nancy Pollock (Metropolitan 911 Board), and Nancy Read (Metropolitan Mosquito Control District); *Non-Profits:* Sandra Paddock (Wilder Research Center); *Schools:* Dick Carlstrom for Lee Whitcraft (TIES); *Special Expertise:* Brad Henry (Special Expertise); *State:* David Arbeit (LMIC), Bart Richardson (DNR); *Utilities:* Al Laumeyer (CenterPoint Energy/Minnegasco); and *Watershed/Water Management Organizations:* Cliff Aichinger (Ramsey-Washington-Metro Watershed District).

**Members Absent:** *Business Geographics:* Steve Lehr (CB Richard Ellis); *Cities:* Don Cheney (AMM: core cities - City of St. Paul. *Resigned effective April 9*); *Counties:* Gary Swenson (Anoka), and *State:* Joella Givens (Mn/DOT).

**Support Staff:** Randall Johnson, Staff Coordinator, and Mark Kotz, Regional Database Manager

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

Henry moved and Charboneau seconded to approve the agenda, as submitted. Motion carried ayes, all.

**3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY**

Craig moved and Charboneau seconded to approve the summary for the Committee's December 18, 2002 meeting. Motion carried, ayes all.

**4. SUMMARY OF JANUARY 29 POLICY BOARD MEETING**

The Staff Coordinator summarized the major action and discussion items considered by the Policy Board at its January 29, 2003 meeting. Chairperson Harper commented that the demonstration by Carver and Washington Counties on the use of GIS for emergency response was very well received and that Chairperson Reinhardt is interested in hearing an update on how other counties are using GIS.

**5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**a) MetroGIS 2003 Funding and Work Programming Update**

The Staff Coordinator commented that the Metropolitan Council would be acting on its 2003 budget modifications for the entire agency later that afternoon. He briefly summarized the expected impacts if the budget is adopted as presented in the agenda packet.

Chairperson Harper commented that to compensate for the anticipated reduction in funding for the testimonials to the benefits of MetroGIS, the Committee and staff should consider shifting some of the work to the stakeholder community. Gelbmann commented that these testimonials are consistent with achieving the efficiencies being sought through the collaborative practices fostered by MetroGIS and that these practices are consistent with the Pawlenty administration's call for increased program efficiencies through the use of technology.

**b) GIS Technology Demonstration for the April Policy Board Meeting**

It was agreed that the next three presentations will be as follows:

- April: Metropolitan Mosquito Control District – Nancy Read (*cross-jurisdictional emphasis on data development and improved access*)
- July: Neighborhood organizations – Will Craig (*cross-jurisdictional emphasis on data development and improved access*)
- Oct.: Use of GIS to achieve GASB 34 reporting requirements - Brad Henry and Bob Cockriel (*emphasis on potential for sharing costs to develop and implement GASB 34 related applications.*)

#### **c) Best Practices Policy Endorsement – ISO Geospatial Data Theme Categories**

Mark Kotz, member of the MetroGIS staff support team, summarized the proposed categorization scheme and the activities that lead to the recommendation. He noted that the scheme had been in place and tested on DataFinder and the state’s GeoGateway since last fall without incident.

The members suggested that the report to the Policy Board should stress that use of the proposed scheme is voluntary; that subcategories had been created to accommodate local needs and that further breakouts (e.g., Social Justice and Emergency Services category) are likely to be created once the scheme is more widely used by local government; and that a statement should be included about how others stakeholders might use the scheme.

**Motion:** Wencil moved and Pollock seconded to recommend that the Policy Board endorse the table of International Standards Organization (ISO)-based themes for categorizing geospatial data and metadata and promote them for use by the MetroGIS community. Motion carried ayes, all.

#### **d) Quarterly Performance Measures Report**

The Staff Coordinator commented that the Policy Board had requested a Performance Measures Report quarterly, but that discussion of trends and possible modifications in policies would occur only once a year. In addition to the current report, the other three reports are expected as information items.

Arbeit called attention to the large difference in data downloading activity between the FTP versus Café methods and the inverse cost to accommodate these preferences. Gelbmann noted that the total numbers are likely not telling the whole story – the Café was developed primarily to subset large datasets and was not intended to reduce the use of FTP. It was agreed that we should think about how to measure satisfaction and possibly think about setting targets.

Several members commented that the report appears to involve a significant amount of staff time to prepare and suggested reporting less often than quarterly. Staff noted that the process of assembling the numbers is highly automated but concurred that detailed evaluation of the meaning of the numbers takes time and is proposed only on an annual basis. The Committee was comfortable with this approach.

#### **e) Return on Investment Study**

The Staff Coordinator summarized the results of an initial scoping process into a return on investment study for the broad MetroGIS community and the initial conclusion that such a study would not yield results more convincing than the current testimonial approach. Craig commented that he is not surprised since the academic community has not yet figured out how to accomplish such a study.

Arbeit argued and others concurred that a narrower focus might serve the desired goal to quantify benefits. He shared a method used to justify funding for the GeoIntegrator project whereby he estimated savings in staff time as a derivative of downloads of data in the form the user needs. The Committee concurred that thought should be given to applying this methodology to MetroGIS and agreed that a conventional, comprehensive return on investment approach is not needed to demonstrate significant return.

Knippel suggested that the Committee might want to think about setting data downloading targets at a level that represents the cost of supporting the service. Staff agreed to take this discussion under

advisement and to speak with Kathy Doty about ways to incorporate these ideas into MetroGIS's Performance Measures reporting efforts.

## **6 and 7. PROJECT UPDATES and INFORMATION SHARING**

Chairperson Harper asked each of the members who is involved in a MetroGIS project to summarize their respective projects. The following updates were received. (See Information presented in Sections 6 and 7 of the agenda packet for further information):

- **Knippel and Gelbmann - 6a(1) Emergency Preparedness Information Need**

Knippel and Gelbmann have been investigating data that are available and seeking broad representation to define who should do what (i.e., custodians for specified datasets) and the appropriate role for MetroGIS. Also investigating recently released guidelines for action by local government distributed by NSGIC.

Arbeit informed the Committee of a summit planned for April 23 at the History Center co-hosted by the Governor's office, Secretary of State and several Commissioners entitled "9/11 from an IT Perspective". The New York City CIO is scheduled to keynote the event.

A general discussion ensued about the need to improve networking and sharing information among disparate interests that have common needs. Only about one of the committee members was aware of the 4/23 summit. Wencl observed that in his experience GIS is used by emergency managers in small communities, in particular the northern part of the state, and that the managers rely upon their own sources of data.

Knippel commented that the GIS community needs to do more to communicate the value of GIS technology to others within government who are not currently using it to its full extent. Staff commented that Knippel's observation is consistent with the objectives of the MetroGIS's Outreach Plan, which was adopted two years ago, to seek out opportunities to participate in conferences sponsored by other professional associations – emergency management, health care, education, planners, public works, etc. Members were encouraged to inform the Chair and/or staff of these conferences and how to get on their agendas to convey the message that the GIS community has resources important to their work and is here to serve them.

- **Craig - 6a(10) Socioeconomic Information Need**

This workgroup met on April 7 and will meet again in early May. The members are in the midst of Step 2 in the process, which involves clarifying priority socioeconomic related information needs. Craig commented that Step 1 was completed last fall with the completion of tutorials and data formatting modifications to improve access and usability of 2000 census data. The current Step 2 effort will focus on information needs that can be satisfied with currently published data (i.e., U.S. Census Bureau). The final phase will likely involve another group that will look at other data sources to address priority information needs, in particular for small area analysis, not satisfactorily addressed with published data, such as the iBlock product developed by Excensus LLC.

- **Drealan - 6c Parcel Data Policies for non-government access**

The workgroup's goal is to implement a single license acceptable by all seven counties that applies to all data and which is processed via shrink-wrapping. Drealan commented that these procedure changes are key to implementing the one-stop-shop access to parcel data by non-government interests. The group is also investigating discounts for large volume and subscription purchases. The driving concept is to make distribution simpler for the counties and more affordable for the user.

- **Drealan - 6e Regional Mailing Label Application**

Carver County has agreed to share its mailing label generation application with the Metropolitan Council to investigate if it can be adopted for a regional solution. The group will be discussing preliminary findings at its May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- Claypool - 7b(1) DEM Legislation

The Bill was heard by Senate Committees but not House Committees. If funded, a major beneficiary would be the DNR Floodplain Mapping program. Justification includes a statement from an Army Corps of Engineers economist that 30 to 40 percent of the last decade's flood damages (over \$3 billion from 1990-2000) could have been avoided if proposed data had been available. During that time, \$1 billion was mitigated by the DNR. The bill requests funds (\$7.5 million desired) from the State to fund a pilot of 22 counties which, in turn, would leverage FEMA funds.

Chairperson Harper commented that Washington County could take advantage of this program, as it needs elevation data. She commented that the county does not have the resources to purchase it from the watershed districts that have developed it for portions of the county.

- Arbeit - 7b(2) GeoIntegrator

Negotiations are in progress with Syncline, the contractor that helped MetroGIS implement DataFinder Café, to expand upon Café's functionality and deploy it statewide via GeoIntegrator. The prototype for the enhanced application can now interface directly with MN Mapserver, a goal of the original Café project that could not be achieved within the scope of the initial deployment. Another enhancement currently being pursued is the ability to extract raster data.

Arbeit reported that he just returned from the a national NSGIC conference where he learned from Hank Gerry, Director of the Geo-Spatial One-Stop initiative, that the proposed architecture for One Stop is very similar to that used by MetroGIS DataFinder Café and GeoIntegrator.

- Wencl -7c TNM (The National Map)

The distinction between NIMA's 133 Urban Areas project and USGS's National Map project was offered, noting that much of the data managed by NIMA is sensitive with restricted access, whereas the objective of USGS's programs is to provide widespread access to data it produces. Notwithstanding, Wencl commented that USGS has received the authority to serve as the broker for locally-produced data needed to implement NIMA's 133 Urban Areas project. A list of data being pursued was handed out for the group's information. Elevation and imagery data were cited as high priorities, which it was acknowledged that partnerships to acquire are extremely important due to the high cost of development.

Topic reported on that was not mentioned in the packet materials:

- Claypool – Ramsey County User Group's TOP Grant Proposal

The Ramsey County GIS user group, Ramsey County, several St. Paul neighborhood groups, and four communities of color, for a total of 44 interests, are proposing to collectively sponsor an application for a Technology Opportunity Program grant (formerly THAP), awarded annually from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Average grant awards are \$500,000. A Minneapolis neighborhood was previously awarded a TOP grant. A grant writer, familiar with the Minneapolis application, has been retained. The sponsors had met several times and are continuing to meet to define a problem statement. The submission deadline is April 23.

Chairperson Harper encouraged the members to review on their own the other information presented in the reports for Agenda Items 6 and 7.

## **8. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

June 18, 2003

## **9. MEETING ADJOURNED**

Claypool moved and Charboneau seconded to adjourn at 3:40 p.m. Motion carried, ayes all.

Prepared by,  
Randall Johnson  
MetroGIS Support Staff Team