

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Coordinating Committee
MN Counties Insurance Trust Bldg. – Room 312
June 18, 2003

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Harper called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

Members Present: Cities: Bob Cockriel (AMM: suburban cities - City of Bloomington); Counties: Bob Moulder for Bill Brown (Hennepin); David Claypool (Ramsey); Dave Drealan (Carver); Jane Harper (Washington); Randy Knippel (Dakota); Metropolitan: Rick Gelbmann (Metropolitan Council); Non-Profits: Sandra Paddock (Wilder Research Center); Special Expertise: Brad Henry (URS Corp.); State: David Arbeit (LMIC), Joella Givens (Mn/DOT), Robert Maki (DNR); Utilities: Al Laumeyer (CenterPoint Energy/MinneGasco).

Members Absent: Academics: Will Craig (U of M); Business Geographics: Steve Lehr (CB Richard Ellis); Cities: Karen Johnson (AMM: core cities - City of St. Paul); Counties: Gary Swenson (Anoka), Jim Hentges (Scott); Federal: Ron Wencil (USGS); GIS Consultants: Larry Charboneau (The Lawrence Group); Metropolitan: *vacant* (Metropolitan Airports Commission), Nancy Pollock (Metropolitan 911 Board), and Nancy Read (Metropolitan Mosquito Control District); Schools: Dick Carlstrom for Lee Whitcraft (TIES); Watershed/Water Management Organizations: Cliff Aichinger (Ramsey-Washington-Metro Watershed District).

Support Staff: Randall Johnson (Staff Coordinator), Steve Fester, Mike Dolbow.

Visitors: Jonette Kreideweis (Mn/DOT) and Dan Ross (Mn/DOT).

2. INTRODUCTION AND ACCEPT AGENDA

Staff Coordinator Johnson introduced Robert Maki as the new Committee member representing the DNR, replacing Les Maki who retired from the DNR earlier this year. Maki manages the GIS Unit within the larger IT department at the DNR central office.

Henry moved and Arbeit seconded to approve the agenda, as submitted. It was agreed to begin with Agenda Item 5e, as one more member was needed to make a quorum. Motion carried ayes, all.

4. SUMMARY OF APRIL 30 POLICY BOARD MEETING

The Staff Coordinator summarized the major action and discussion items considered by the Policy Board at its April 30, 2003 meeting.

Member Gelbmann arrived making a quorum.

3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY

Cockriel moved and Laumeyer seconded to approve the summary for the Committee's April 9, 2003 meeting. Motion carried, ayes all.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

e) Quarterly Performance Measures Report

Staff Coordinator Johnson summarized a proposal to cease including detailed raw numbers with the Committee's agenda packets, except for the annual performance measures report proposed for each fall. The committee concurred with the proposal to instead share a good or troublesome anomaly with the Committee at the other three meetings during the year. The proposed performance reporting changes were accepted with the exception that if there is more than one anomaly that deserves attention by the Committee, the staff should bring the others to the Committee's attention.

a) Highways and Roadways - Regional Framework Management Scheme

Staff Coordinator Johnson introduced Mike Dolbow, lead staff for MetroGIS's Highway and Road Networks Information Need Workgroup, to introduce the proposal. He introduced Jonette Kreideweis, Director of Planning Office for Mn/DOT, and Dan Ross, Mn/DOT GIS Support Unit and project manager for the Linear Reference Model (LRM) Project. Joella Givens, Mn/DOT representative to the Coordinating Committee, commented that she is excited about the proposed partnership between Mn/DOT and MetroGIS to refine the LRM to address local and regional government needs.

Dan Ross began the presentation by noting that Mn/DOT produces a significant amount of data about highways in a variety of formats for a variety of purposes. And, as such, Mn/DOT has been talking since the 1980s about how to better integrate the wealth of data developed by its internal units. Development of the subject LRM was initiated 3 years ago. It is fully compatible with a national model standard (NC HRP-20-27). Because Mn/DOT's efforts were out in front of many, its work on the LRM has helped define the national model. A team of twenty Mn/DOT staff is currently assigned to this effort.

In response to a question from Laumeyer, Ross clarified that the Metropolitan Council played an important role in funding the forums and workgroups that identified the common highway related needs of local government via MetroGIS's efforts and which led to the proposed partnership with Mn/DOT.

Ross provided an overview of: a) why a new system was needed, b) its relationship to the national standard, c) the basic concepts (anchor points/section/) that lay the foundation for the LRM and the importance of location as the common element that allows the wide variety of road related data elements to be integrated and accessed for use by interests other than the producer, d) how interoperability is maintained with adjoining states that adhere to the national standard, e) a statewide site license that has been secured by Mn/DOT from the software vendor so any government unit that wants to use the model may, and f) Mn/DOT's intention to partner with local government units to incorporate data that is not generated by Mn/DOT but important to the many other interests. (Refer to the [presentation slides](#) for more information.)

Gelbmann asked if anchor points can be added in places other than road intersections; currently the only location important to Mn/DOT. Ross confirmed that the model has been designed to be flexible in this regard and that anchor points can be added elsewhere, such as, at the intersection of road and railroads and that the support tools have already been built.

Ross concluded his remarks by stating that Phase I has been delivered and work on Phase II is now underway – development of the Location Data Manager. The schedule anticipates that the tools related to Phase II will be deployed next year. As such, Mn/DOT is also now looking for partners to expand the data involved to all public roads in addition to trunk highways, as well as, improve data quality and coverage, and make the model and its related tools more usable for everyone. Kreideweis added that Mn/DOT is serious about seeking input via partnerships to define core attributes, access strategies, definitions, etc. and that partnering is not limited to government, i.e. utilities are eligible. Ross commented there is a good deal of interest in using the LRM for right-of-way management and that the system is designed to provide full security with varying permissions depending on the need to know.

The Committee discussed the Highway and Road Network Workgroup's recommendation that MetroGIS partner with Mn/DOT to provide a focused local government voice to the LRM development process. In response to a question from Chairperson Harper, Kreideweis confirmed it is Mn/DOT's intent to seek input from MetroGIS through its standard workgroup/forum process. Dolbow also noted that unlike several previous regional solutions, the solution envisioned for the Highway Roads Networks Information Need will not be a dataset, but rather a system solution (model). The group concluded MetroGIS can add value to the process by involving broader interests in a coordinated manner.

In response to a question from Claypool, the group was informed that although automation of right-of-way data is a priority within Mn/DOT, this topic cannot be integrated into the LRM project until that data are converted to a digital format compatible with the model, which is not likely to be completed for some

time. Claypool encouraged Mn/DOT to add individuals with a county perspective to their right-of-ways workgroup, given the critical nature of the issues involved particularly to county surveyors and others who are required to review and approve plat documents. Kreideweis noted that she would pass this request along to those in charge of rights-of-ways management.

Member Arbeit commended the Mn/DOT staff for their work on this project and thanked them for seeking out partnerships with others on this very important initiative.

Motion: Arbeit moved and Henry seconded that the Coordinating Committee accept the Highways and Roads Data Content Standard as a possible solution for the MetroGIS community, and authorize the MetroGIS Highways and Roads Information Needs Workgroup to actively participate in refinement of the standard in accordance with the needs of the MetroGIS community. Motion carried ayes, all.

Givens commented that Mn/DOT has a business need to lead this effort, is very interested in doing so, and is excited about the pending collaborative work with MetroGIS.

Chairperson Harper asked for regular updates that she can pass along to the Washington County Transportation Department, noting this project could serve as a catalyst to demonstrate the value of GIS technology to Transportation Department and to get them to participate in the county's GIS initiatives.

b) Planned Land Use - Modification of Regional Policy Statement

Gelbmann explained a data maintenance issue that has arisen concerning alignment of Planned Land Use dataset with right-of-way (ROW) and parcel data, as specified in the custodian responsibilities for the regional Planned Land Use dataset. He noted that differences in the way each of the counties collects and stores ROW data require a substantial amount of staff effort by the regional custodian (Council GIS Unit) to reconcile. This reconciliation was completed for the first version of the regional dataset. At that time, it was believed this reconciliation process could be automated and, as such, the annual alignment provision was originally accepted. Unfortunately, after nearly a year of effort, attempts to automate the process have not been successful and thus the proposed recommendation to forego this requirement until the Rights to Property Information Need is addressed or two years has elapsed, whichever comes first. Gelbmann explained that the Rights to Property Information Need workgroup is expected to investigate measures to address the subject inconsistencies between the county data structures.

Claypool confirmed that resolving questions involving the location of ROW require a significant amount of research. He mentioned that three methods are used by Mn/DOT alone. He commented that a more pragmatic approach for MetroGIS might be to define ROW by what is left over when compared with parcel polygon data.

Maki asked whether the proposed change in custodian responsibilities would lead to any hardship for the users and/or pass along any costs to them. This comment led to a reaffirmation of a guiding principle that custodians should not be expected to perform any tasks or take on expenses for which they do not have an internal business need, since another principle is to seek institutionalization of endorsed solutions (make part of someone's ongoing job responsibilities). Gelbmann mentioned that the proposed relaxation of the custodian roles may, in fact, have the positive effect of catalyzing a rethinking of how data are organized and possibility result in more consistency with regional Existing Land Use dataset. He emphasized that the land use data will continue to be updated on a quarterly basis but that realignment with parcel and right of way data would be deferred for up to two years to identify a more efficient means to accomplish the desired realignment.

Motion: Claypool moved and Givens seconded to authorize the modifications illustrated in the Regional Planned Land Use Dataset policy statement, dated May 16, 2003. Motion carried unanimously.

(Editor's note: At its April 2003 meeting, the Board authorized the Committee to implement modifications, without Board approval, to adopted regional solutions in cases such as this where all affected parties unanimously support the modification.)

Following approval of the motion, members talked about the need to avoid a negative perception by the stakeholder community by effectively communicating with the Board and other stakeholders the rationale for postponing the annual realignment provision. Arbeit offered that he believes this action is positive because it demonstrates MetroGIS's flexibility to accommodate custodian needs as learning occurs. All agreed that is very important to move ahead with solutions to common needs as quickly as possible, which in many cases is in the absence of proven models, and to do so, the community must also be open to and expects adjustments as the need is identified. The notion of a "living dataset" was accepted as an appropriate metaphor to convey the understanding that change over time is natural and to be expected. All concurred that demonstrating this flexibility to accommodate changes as new information becomes available will be very important to engage qualified candidate custodians where the initial roles and responsibilities are perceived as a possible burden and to retain those where conditions have changed. Staff was directed to include in the metadata for the regional Planned Land Use dataset an explanatory statement that places the postponing of the annual realignment with parcel data in a positive light and to clearly stipulate that the land use polygons will be updated quarterly, as called for in the adopted regional Planned Land Use policy statement. This qualifying information is also to be provided to the Policy Board when this decision is shared with them.

c) ISO Theme Category Descriptions

Staff Coordinator Johnson summarized the changes in the ISO theme category descriptions directed by the Policy Board when it endorsed the Themes as a best practice for the MetroGIS community at its April meeting. The Committee, at the lead of Claypool, concurred that the recommended changes as presented in the staff report are acceptable, given concurrent and related changes to the keywords.

Motion: Member Henry motioned and Member Cockriel seconded to accept the modified geospatial theme category descriptions for "elevation" and "cadastral" (land ownership) data, as recommended by the Technical Advisory Team and presented in the June 10, 2003 staff report. Motion carried, ayes all.

d) Confirm GIS Demonstration for July Policy Board Meeting

Staff was directed to speak to Will Craig to confirm that he is still planning to present how neighborhood groups are benefiting from MetroGIS at the July 30 Policy Board meeting, as decided at the previous Committee meeting.

Henry offered, as an option, sharing the content of the Mn/DOT presentation held earlier in the meeting. The group concluded that it would be better received by the Board if the plans are more concrete related to the partnership with MetroGIS and we could report on what we have been able to accomplish together. Staff was asked to bring this topic back to the Committee at a later date for consideration.

6 and 7. PROJECT UPDATES and INFORMATION SHARING

- **Mn/DOT Imagery Distribution Proposal:** Givens shared a proposed collaborative "Digital Image Distribution Mechanism" project proposed by Mn/DOT. Givens explained the purpose of Mn/DOT's proposal is to stimulate a discussion to clearly define what is needed within Mn/DOT and with other organizations to identify opportunities for partnering. The focus at this time is on definition of a clear problem statement. Maki confirmed that the DNR is facing the same imagery-related data management issues as Mn/DOT. Staff was asked to provide contact information to Givens for the Committee members not present and for the Technical Advisory Team.
- **Emergency Management:** Knippel and Gelbmann summarized and expanded upon material that was presented in the agenda materials related to the Emergency Management Information Need, in particular the major focuses for the near term and the relationship between MetroGIS's efforts and the newly formed Emergency Management Committee of the Governors Council on Geographic Information, which are both co-chaired by Knippel and Gelbmann. They asked Givens, 2003 GIS/LIS Conference Chair, to do what she could do to grant exposure to these efforts at GIS/LIS conference due to urgency of issues.

Time ran out before any of the other update items could be discussed.

- **Committee Meeting Agenda Distribution Procedures**: Staff called attention to several procedural changes that are being tested to reduce the cost of distributing the Committee's agenda packets:
 - a) eliminate the colored paper spacers between reports,
 - b) stop distribution of the raw performance measures numbers, except for one time per year when a comprehensive report will be made, and
 - c) distribute the project update and information sharing reports, which comprise 10+ pages, only by email.)

After some discussion and agreement among the members of a preference for the packet to be distributed as one document, as opposed to part mailed and part electronic, it was agreed that from now on Committee's agenda packets should be distributed in its entirety via PDF, that staff will send an email to the members with a link to the file, and that the members should be responsible for downloading and printing it on their own from the MetroGIS website. It was also agreed that staff should bring a few paper copies of the complete agenda to the meeting as a backup measure.

8. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

September 17, 2003

9. MEETING ADJOURNED

Henry moved and Cockriel seconded to adjourn at 3:45 p.m. Motion carried, ayes all.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson and Steve Fester
MetroGIS Staff Support Team