

**Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Coordinating Committee
Centennial Office Building – Rm 302
June 19, 2002**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Craig called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Members Present: *Academics:* Will Craig (U of M); *Cities:* Don Cheney (AMM: City of St. Paul); *Counties:* Bill Brown (Hennepin); David Claypool (Ramsey); Dave Drealan (Carver); Jane Harper (Washington); Randy Knippel (Dakota); Gary Swenson (Anoka); Jim Hentges (Scott); *Metropolitan:* Rick Gelbmann (Metropolitan Council); *Non-Profits:* Sandra Paddock (Wilder Research Center); *Special Expertise:* Brad Henry (URS/BRW); *State:* David Arbeit (LMIC), Joella Givens (Mn/DOT) and Bart Richardson (DNR); and *Utilities:* Al Laumeier (Reliant Energy Minnegasco).

Members Absent: *Business Geographics:* Steve Lehr (CB Richard Ellis); *Cities:* Bob Cockriel (suburban cities: Bloomington); *GIS Consultants:* Larry Charboneau (The Lawrence Group); *Federal:* Ron Wencil (USGS); *Metropolitan:* Eli Cooper (Metropolitan Council); *Schools:* Dick Carlstrom (TIES); *Watershed/Water Management Organizations:* Cliff Aichinger (Ramsey-Washington-Metro Watershed District).

Support Staff: Steve Fester, Randall Johnson, Alison Slaats, and Kathie Doty (Richardson, Richter & Associates)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The agenda was accepted as submitted. Chairperson Craig introduced Al Laumeier, Reliant Energy Minnegasco, as the new Utility Representative to the Committee. Bob Cockriel, City of Bloomington, who was unable to attend, is the new AMM - Suburban Communities Representative to the Committee.

3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY

Member Henry moved and Member Arbeit seconded to approve the March 20, 2002 meeting summary as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. SUMMARY OF APRIL 10 POLICY BOARD MEETING

There was no discussion of this item.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Business Plan Update - Challenge Areas

Kathie Doty summarized 8 challenge areas identified by staff and a Coordinating Committee subgroup, noting that the purpose of this agenda item is to reach agreement on the broad challenge facing MetroGIS in the next few years. Doty noted that incomplete draft strategies and tactics have been offered for comment and to stimulate discussion. Once the challenge areas are accepted by the Board, which is planned for July30, work will turn to seeking agreement on appropriate strategies and tactics for each. The Committee did not offer any additional challenge areas for consideration.

Henry asked if the eight identified areas had been prioritized in any way. Staff Coordinator Johnson replied that no ranking was implied by the listing and that there was no intent to modify the priority functions as set forth in the 2000 Business Plan. Vice Chair Harper commented that some of the challenges will be more difficult than others and encouraged staff to communicate this distinction in the Plan.

The Committee did not offer comment on the draft associated with six of the challenge areas. A summary of the discussion regarding the other two (Distribution of Parcel Data to Private and Non-Profit Interests and Role of MetroGIS concerning Geodata Applications) follows:

Distribution of Parcel Data to Private and Non-Profit Interests: Member Brown questioned whether the private sector had been involved in developing the original priority common information needs, in particular parcels. Member Arbeit replied that the process used to identify and rank the MetroGIS community's original priority information needs included representatives from all sectors but that the emphasis had been on the needs of government and, in particular, on local and regional government interests – those interests represented on the Policy Board.

The Committee concurred that the proposed challenges areas should be modified to include an evaluation of the desired relationship between MetroGIS and the private sector; in particular, better articulate government's responsibility to provide data to the private sector and identification of boundary of what is in the public interest and what is not.

Member Knippel cautioned that each of the stakeholder organizations (counties) is likely in a different philosophical place on this issue depending on the personalities involved and past policy. He encouraged an effort on the part of MetroGIS to understand the breadth of the current policies, noting that he believes MetroGIS could be a catalyst to resolve differences that present obstacles to achieving consistency but also cautioned that delving into an evaluation of the preferred relationship with the private sector will raise a cadre of questions involving data and applications. Harper added that MetroGIS's relationship with non-profit organizations should not be neglected, as their work is important in developing public policy.

Claypool commented that the counties have an obligation to deal with these issues regardless of whether or not a collaborative solution is sought. All agreed there is need to better clarify the obligations of government in terms of making geodata available to non-government interests. Arbeit also suggested that staff add an introduction to each challenge to expand its origin.

MetroGIS concerning Geodata Applications

Kathie Doty commented that the purpose of this challenge area is to decide the appropriateness of MetroGIS expanding its mission to enter into the realm of geodata applications, but cautioned that there is no intent to get into the specifics at this meeting. At Harper's suggestion, the Committee concluded that the term "application" needs to be defined. Some examples were suggested which stressed the outcome or product as opposed to the application process. Knippel cautioned that an application to some may not seem as though to others, citing that some officials in his county would consider the scripting used to join parcel attributes with parcel polygons an application, whereas others may be thinking of applications in terms of the scripting required to convert data into maps and other analysis outputs. All agreed that this topic is appropriate as a challenge area.

Doty commented that in a recent meeting with three Policy Board members, including the chair and vice chair, staff was asked to conduct an inventory of geodata applications currently in use as a way to help the Policy Board better understand the differences between data and applications, as well as, to provide a foundation for the Board to talk about the appropriateness of MetroGIS expanding its vision to address common application needs.

Knippel requested and the Committee agreed that a strategy should be added to this challenge area to direct MetroGIS to "explore implications of the Data Practices Act on data distribution" options.

Motion: Henry motioned, and Member Claypool seconded to accept, for Board consideration, the eight identified challenge areas as presented in the staff report subject to modification of the strategies and descriptions as outlined above. Motion carried ayes all.

b) MetroGIS DataFinder Café: Beta Test Results, Proposed Enhancements & Policy Board GIS Technology Demonstration Topic

Support Staff Member Slaats gave a demonstration of the new MetroGIS DataFinder Café, explaining the capabilities that are now in place, why the application is "leading edge" technology, and enhancements proposed as a result of the beta testing conducted in April 2002. Slaats also mentioned that a similar presentation is proposed for the Policy Board's July 30 GIS Technology Demonstration to not only familiarize the Board with the leading edge capabilities but also to lay the foundation for discussion of two of the proposed Business Planning challenge areas: distribution of parcel data to the private sector and the appropriateness of entering the realm of collaborative solutions to commonly needed geodata applications. All agreed that this presentation should be pursued as the Board's July GIS Technology Demonstration.

Arbeit and Harper commented that the Board demonstration should stress that the presence of DataFinder Café provides data producers with a simple and inexpensive way to distribute any data they wish in addition to regionally endorsed data via a robust data discovery and distribution tool. Further, the group asked staff to stress that the producer has the option to utilize WMS technology or submit the data to MetroGIS staff, whichever fits their needs. Staff was asked to emphasize the availability of the tool as a distribution option for the producer and the robust data delivery capabilities that meet all of the desired functions identified by the community. These combine to significantly reduce data access constraints and improve efficiencies for the producers and users. The group also suggested that staff add a live demonstration of the download function to the July 30 presentation to reinforce that this is a real product that is already benefiting the MetroGIS community.

Slaats then summarized several enhancements that were identified by the beta testers and a proposal by staff to address them. The proposal involved a recommendation to pursue a sole source contract with Syncline, the firm that developed the DataFinder Café application, because the fee is reasonable, other consultants would have to learn what Syncline developed before they could work on the attachments, and Syncline has proven they capable of the successfully delivering the desired products.

The only enhancement discussed was the proposed projection converter. Knippel questioned investing in a sophisticated enhancement because it will likely be a standard component of GIS software. Cheney countered noting that the City of St. Paul has an immediate need for this enhancement and is willing to finance most of the cost. Cheney also noted that this enhancement is directed in large part of toward making data more easily useable by GIS novices who are not conversant in the particulars of projections. Knippel withdrew his objection given the stated circumstances. Claypool and Givens concurred with Cheney's rationale for a need to make the use of GIS data as intuitive and easy as possible.

The group also concluded that request from beta testers to enhance the "Print Map" feature to allow for more flexibility and customization should not be pursued to reinforce that DataFinder Café was designed to be a data distribution tool, not an online GIS analysis or mapping tool.

Motion: Harper moved and Cheney seconded that the Metropolitan Council pursue a "sole source" contract with Syncline with funds allocated to MetroGIS to enhance the MetroGIS DataFinder Café tool, with as many of the desired enhancements identified during the beta testing as possible in 2002, and the remainder in 2003 as proposed by staff in the staff report. Motion carried, ayes all.

c) Regional Parcel Dataset - Private Sector Version & eCommerce Study

Staff members Johnson and Doty summarized direction received from the Policy Board on April 10. There were mixed results of the subsequent interviews with prospective purchasers of parcel data and with county staff concerning the results of a scoping study financed by MetroGIS to investigate the cost to implement an eCommerce capability in conjunction with the new DataFinder Café data downloading capabilities, and the recommended next steps. Doty also commented that the challenge area identified in

the Business Plan Update pertaining to distribution of data to the private sector is framed as a “how to” given the direction previously received from the Board in October 2000 to pursue a collaborative solution.

Member Arbeit commented that the recommended eCommerce solution might be premature until the Policy Board clarifies the relationship between MetroGIS and the private sector as called for in a challenge area that has been identified in the Business Planning process. Arbeit noted that as a state agency, LMIC cannot independently pursue eCommerce solution and he cautioned Metropolitan Council to investigate any such limitations that may exist related to it, in particularly concerning enterprise solutions for document as well as geodata distribution. Gelbmann and Johnson commented that consideration had been given to document distribution in addition to geodata and rejected as too labor intensive on the product fulfillment side, exactly the thing that the geodata option would eliminate.

Knippel expressed concern for a recommendation that imposes responsibilities on the counties when they are in different places with regard to data access philosophy and consequently would benefit differently. Harper noted that the benefits of the proposed eCommerce capability should be viewed in terms larger than just distribution of parcel data, noting that Washington County would likely opt to distribute elevation and other data via this mechanism. She spoke for the project as being consistent with the “seek collaborative solutions commonly needed tools” challenge area and would result in efficiencies gained by the user as well as producers and stated her preference to start the discussions called for in the staff recommendation.

Claypool concurred, arguing that the counties have a current obligation to service data requests by the private sector regardless of whether or not a collaborative solution is pursued. He argued that the proposal has merit and that he strongly supports moving forward as recommending by staff, noting that Ramsey County could free up an estimated one FTE if this capability is realized.

Drealan concurred with Harper and Claypool, noting that Carver County does not see any down side to the proposal and that the eCommerce proposal is consistent with where Carver County is moving to improve public service as well as staff efficiencies through the use of the Internet. He stated is strong support to add eCommerce to DataFinder Café’s leading edge one-stop-shop capabilities for access to geodata via the Internet.

Brown also stated Hennepin County’s support for maximizing use of the Internet to distribute data.

Knippel restated his concern for the proposed motion because it obligates counties that, in some case, may not receive benefit equally to the cost. He noted that Dakota County is in a different place than others citing at best an estimated staff savings of only 0.1 FTE, though he believes the project is moving in the right direction but that a good deal of education will be needed. He also raised a question of whether or not all counties would have to participate for the project to move forward and the impact on the Supplemental Data Maintenance Payment. Staff member Johnson stated that the all-or-nothing requirement need not necessarily apply to move forward and that he was confident that adequate flexibility could be worked out in the negotiations once all of the issues are identified. Harper suggested that at this time the Committee only act on Recommendation B and that Recommendations A and C be dealt with if a satisfactory conclusion is reached for Recommendation B. The Committee concurred.

Motion: Harper motioned, and Knippel seconded to direct (Recommendation B in the staff report dated June 11, 2002) the creation of a workgroup comprised of representatives with appropriate expertise and leadership from the producers, supported by MetroGIS staff, to immediately begin negotiations for a multi-party agreement that:

- 1) Outlines roles and responsibilities for assembly, documentation, and distribution of regional parcel data as was accomplished with the agreement that expired in May 2002.
- 2) Defines the regional parcel data product as the same regional parcel dataset distributed to government and academic interests.

- 3) Relies upon a single license and a single set of procedures.
- 4) Establishes a committee of data producer interests responsible for establishing procedures to ensure the parcel data product and related fees are attractive to the target customers.
- 5) Establishes funding responsibilities, including but not limited to a guarantee by the data producers for payment of the annual operating costs to support the eCommerce extension and the procedures to accomplish this responsibility.
- 6) Is consistent with the MetroGIS Business Plan and underlying principles.

Motion carried, ayes all.

d) Possible Expansion of Coordinating Committee Membership

Consideration of this item was postponed to the next meeting.

e) Amendment to Technical Advisory Team Workplan

Chairperson Craig stated the changes recommended by staff are reasonable. No one objected.

f) Regional Street Centerline Dataset - Positional Accuracy and Maintenance

Consideration of this item was postponed to the next meeting.

g) Participant Appreciation Event Update

Chairperson Craig asked the members to mark November 14 on their calendars and encouraged anyone on the committee who is interested to contact staff with suggestions for the program, in particular a keynote speaker. There was no other discussion of this item.

6. PROJECT UPDATES

a) Priority Business Information Needs and Census Data Workgroups

There was no discussion of this item.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

There was no discussion of these items.

8. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Staff will query the membership for a alternative to September 18, 2002, the scheduled date due a conflict that has arisen.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson and Steve Fester
MetroGIS Support Staff Team