

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Coordinating Committee
MN Counties Insurance Trust Building - Room 300
September 17, 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), Karen Johnson (AMM: core cities - City of St. Paul); Counties: Bill Brown (Hennepin); David Claypool (Ramsey); Dave Drealan (Carver); Jane Harper (Washington), Gary Swenson (Anoka); Metropolitan: Rick Gelbmann (Metropolitan Council), Nancy Pollock (Metropolitan 911 Board), Nancy Read (Metropolitan Mosquito Control District); Non-Profits: Sandra Paddock (Wilder Research Center); Schools: Lee Whitcraft (TIES); Special Expertise: Brad Henry (URS Corp.); State: Chris Cialek for David Arbeit (LMIC), Chad Martini for Joella Givens (Mn/DOT), Robert Maki (DNR); Utilities: Al Laumeier (CenterPoint Energy/Minnegasco).

Members Absent: Academics: Will Craig (U of M); Business Geographics: Steve Lehr (CB Richard Ellis); Counties: Randy Knippel (Dakota), Jim Hentges (Scott); Federal: Ron Wencil (USGS); GIS Consultants: Larry Charboneau (The Lawrence Group); Metropolitan: [*vacant*] (Metropolitan Airports Commission); Watershed/Water Management Organizations: Cliff Aichinger (Ramsey-Washington-Metro Watershed District).

Support Staff: Randall Johnson (Staff Coordinator), Steve Fester, and Paul Hanson.

Visitors: Pete Eggimann (Metro 911 Board) and Wallis Turner (graduate student, St. Mary's University).

2. APPROVE AGENDA

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

3. APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY

Cockriel moved and Paddock seconded to approve the summary for the Committee's June 18, 2003 meeting as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. SUMMARY OF JULY 30 POLICY BOARD MEETING

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

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 2004 Preliminary Budget

The Staff Coordinator provided an overview of the preliminary 2004 MetroGIS budget and requested comment from the Committee. Member Read asked for clarification of a footnote in the budget that referred to a custodian fund that had been established to manage donated funds. No other comments were received.

b) Next Steps - Lakes and Wetlands Information Need

Paul Hanson, MetroGIS Technical Support Staff, summarized past and current efforts related to the Lakes and Wetlands, etc. Priority Information Need. Maki asked if EPA's Reach IDs add value important to MetroGIS's needs. Hanson commented that a system to index stream locations is needed but is not sure if the Reach ID will satisfy this need. Maki stated that differing philosophies and business needs of multiple parties make this solution extremely complex. Henry clarified that no priority actions are proposed at this time but rather the request is to continue to investigate options.

Read stated that issues of scale - spatial accuracy of the line work (stream locations) and data structure issues (recognizing the same things as the same) are the largest obstacles between local and state interests.

Claypool asked the state agency representatives present if they are following FGDC standards. Maki commented that federal National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) standards found their way to the state through the Pollution Control Agency, but that business interest in the DNR is lacking to support it. He believes to some extent the standards are unproven, but recognizes the NHD program has momentum. Hanson acknowledged that differences need to be resolved. Cialek said that NHD at a scale of 1:24,000 will be completed in spring 2004. The question is how will it be maintained?

Cockriel stated that he agrees with staff's suggestion to split work on the Lakes and Wetlands Information Need into components and noted that several candidate datasets are already available such as the NPDES Phase II storm water plans. However, he acknowledged there is a need for coordination and that no single organization has been identified to carry out this need. Member Read commented that the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District has a need for rainfall data in a regional database.

Motion:

- 1) Maki moved and Karen Johnson seconded to authorize creation of a work group to assess the applicability of currently proposed state-level standards by the Hydrology Committee of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information for potential MetroGIS solutions. The work group will be responsible to develop the necessary strategies to accommodate any desired modifications and assure that any modification will integrate with State data. Motion carried, ayes, all. Harper directed the Staff Coordinator and Hanson to work with her to set up a workgroup.
- 2) The consensus of the membership was also as follows:
 - a) Support the concept of separating the substance of the hydrologic information need into 4 or possibly 5 sub-components that can be provided to users in a more timely and efficient manner than is currently in place.
 - b) Authorize staff to modify the general website (www.metrogis.org) to advertise for qualified organizations with a business need to step forward and facilitate the dialogue needed to address those priority information needs that thus far have not moved forward. The advertisement is to include a clear statement that no action will be taken to address these information needs until an organization with a related business need assumes a leadership role.

Staff was asked to report back on the effect of changes to the website.

c) 2004 Preliminary Work Plans

Staff Coordinator Johnson gave an overview of the 2004 preliminary work plans, noting that much of the activity is currently in progress.

Harper reported that Washington County's work on the Watershed Jurisdictional Boundaries Information Need is in progress but the final recommendations to the Committee must wait until MN Board of Water and Soil Resources comments are received on the preliminary recommendations. Hopefully this will be by the end of the year.

Cialek stated that since MetroGIS's preliminary work in 2000, LMIC has established a relationship with school districts and may now be in a better position to discuss longer term custodial responsibilities related to assembly of county produced data into a regional /sub-state dataset. The Staff Coordinator was encouraged to follow up with LMIC staff.

Claypool moved and Henry seconded to concur with the proposed structure of the Technical Advisory Team (TAT), to provide more emphasis on networking opportunities for technical staff as opposed to framing solutions to common information needs, which is now commonly a responsibility of special purpose workgroups. It was noted that the option of relying on the TAT for feedback will remain in situations where forming a special purpose group is not practical. Chairperson Harper stated that the goal is to avoid an unnecessary layer of reporting.

Cialek noted that LMIC has received a \$40,000 federal grant to continue metadata outreach and training activities. He also noted LMIC's preference to continue to work with MetroGIS to jointly get the word out.

d) Operating Guidelines - Proposed Modifications

Chairperson Harper summarized the proposed changes to the MetroGIS Operating Guidelines to reflect the current state of the organization, noting that the only new provision is that a liaison from the Coordinating Committee will be assigned to each special workgroup. Harper noted that Committee action is not proposed until the December meeting and requested comments on the modifications before finalizing the proposal. At that time, if the proposed changes are endorsed, a liaison will be assigned to each workgroup that does not currently have one.

No comments were offered concerning the proposal as presented in the staff report, other than where possible, each member Policy Board and Committee member should seek designation of an alternate to ensure the broadest perspective possible during all discussions. (*Note: Liaisons assignments to each of the workgroups that does not current have a liaison assigned (Hydrology and Road and Highway Networks) will be made at the Committee's December meeting.*)

e) Regional Municipal/County Boundary Dataset - Modification of Policy

Staff Coordinator Johnson summarized the proposed changes to the regional policy statement for the Regional Municipal/County Jurisdictional Boundary Dataset. Most of the changes were to bring the format into compliance with more recently adopted statements. The only change of substance involved changing the update frequency from yearly to quarterly. Staff noted, and the Committee concurred, that the Policy Board has authorized the Committee to implement the proposed format changes without the Board's approval, and as such the only item that needs Board approval is the update frequency change.

Motion: Henry moved, and Claypool seconded, to request Policy Board approval to modify the Policy Statement for the Regional Municipal/County Jurisdictional Boundary Dataset to stipulate a quarterly update policy that coincides with that for the Regional Parcel Dataset. Motion carried, ayes, all.

f) Performance Measures - Understanding Who is Using the Data / Quarterly Anomaly Discussion

Kathie Doty, member of the MetroGIS staff support team with Richardson, Richter & Associates, Inc., gave a status update of the Performance Measurement process as staff prepares for the 2003 report. She also asked, in accordance with the Committee's June directive to begin bringing one or more anomalies in the DataFinder activity statistics to the Committee on a quarterly basis for discussion, Committee members if they could provide possible reasons for the high data downloads activity in April and June 2003. Maki suggested, based on his experience with the DNR Data Deli, an online data distribution tool, that there may have been one or more large projects or Requests for Proposals underway where communities of users were responding at the same time. Also, academic usage may account for some of the activity, especially in April and June when students are completing year-end projects as well as possible physical field activity by the (land) development community.

Doty also commented on staff's inability to quantify benefits of MetroGIS's services and efforts to the data producer community (as called for by Performance Measures 6 and 7 in the Plan adopted in 2002) in large part because producers have very different procedures. As such, Doty summarized a proposal to modify the Plan and rely upon qualitative statements of benefits to the data producers as is currently the practice for the data user community. Maki stated that services have improved. The volume of data downloaded is a voice in itself, demonstrating the diversity of the user base and the value added by MetroGIS's efforts. Harper added that the issue is how to articulate benefits to the producer.

Maki noted that in DNR's experience, their efforts to make data widely available has resulted in a large amount of good will which, in turn, is proving to be a great benefit to them as a data producer. He also noted that one of DNR's objectives was to find an effective way to interject their resources into the decision process of others, an objective that is being realized through the Data Deli. DNR's open data sharing policy has also greatly improved DNR's ability to readily obtain data they need from others.

Claypool concurred that due to differences in producer environments it is difficult to measure benefit to the producers but he acknowledged MetroGIS's efforts are valuable to the producer.

Motion: Cockriel motioned and Henry seconded to recommend that the Policy Board modify Performance Measures 6 and 7 as set forth in the Performance Measures Plan adopted in April 2002 to reflect the difficulty of quantifying staff time-savings benefits and to convert them to qualitative and descriptive measures, as stated in the proposed language modification dated September 9, 2003. Motion carried, ayes all. (*Editor's note – On September 24th, Chairman Reinhardt asked to defer Board action on this item to the January 2004 Policy Board meeting to free up time at the October meeting to discuss the budget and related items.*)

g) Confirm GIS Demonstration for October Policy Board Meeting

The Committee's prior decision to invite Henry and Cockriel to explain the use of GIS to achieve the objectives of the GASB34 accounting rules was confirmed as the technology demonstration topic for the October Policy Board meeting. It was agreed that this topic should also be presented immediately following the December Coordinating Committee meeting for members who will not be attending the October Policy Board meeting. The Committee agreed that this follow-up presentation practice should become a regular part of the Committee's routine.

h) Reaction to 2002 Annual Report and Promotional Brochure

No comments or questions were offered.

6 and 7. PROJECT UPDATES and INFORMATION SHARING

a) Regional Mailing Label Application

Vice Chair Drealan updated the Committee on this project. He commented that initial concerns regarding conflicts with established revenue streams appear to be manageable, as 6 of the 7 counties are currently supportive. If the seventh county is not on board by the time of the October Policy Board meeting, the matter will be presented as an action item as opposed to an information item to decide if MetroGIS should continue the initiative. He noted that there are some technical issues that need to be resolved but that work on these issues has been postponed until the revenue stream issues are resolved.

b) Priority Business Information Need Solutions and User Satisfaction

Gelbmann and Knippel summarized the activities of the MN GCGI / MetroGIS Emergency Preparedness Workgroup. An interactive contact form has been placed on the Internet (<http://gis.metc.state.mn.us/emergencyprep/>) to improve communication among emergency preparedness workers. Making contacts and networking with state officials continues to improve.

Maki asked about opportunities for outside funding. Gelbmann noted that he believes there will be opportunities to capture outside funding in subsequent phases once common goals have been refined and agreed upon. Laumeyer asked how we are doing compared to other regions in the country. Gelbmann noted that needed data are generally in good shape but that more emphasis needs to be placed on mitigation as opposed to response and confirmed this is a goal of the workgroup. At Claypool's suggestion, the Committee concurred that placing more emphasis on mitigation as opposed to limiting efforts to response needs is an appropriate strategy.

c) Third Generation Data Sharing Agreements

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that a draft of the 3rd generation agreement had been circulated to each of the seven counties for comment. The agreements would set up a funding pool for regionally significant GIS projects as well as compensate the seven counties for costs beyond their internal needs to serve as primary producers of the regional parcel and MCD jurisdictional boundaries datasets.

d) Enhancements to MetroGIS DataFinder Café / MN GeoIntegrator Project

Cialek provided an update on the LMIC's progress on the MN GeoIntegrator Project. LMIC hired Syncline, Inc., who developed DataFinder Café for MetroGIS, to (in effect) create a Version 2 of the

DataFinder Café application. Version 2 is intended to include a “smart user interface” that will support multiple views of the application (DataFinder Café and LMIC’s GeoIntegrator) to run from a single source point (server). This functionality will in turn permit sharing of one set of operating expenses as opposed to supporting two separate installations. Other functional improvements over Version 1 would include support of OGC-compliant Web Feature Services (WFS).

e) Collaborative Parcel Data Distribution Strategy - Non-Government Access

Drealan commented that the legal staff for six of the seven counties have accepted a greatly streamlined licensing document and associated procedures, as recommended by the workgroup. The license incorporates the concept of "shrink wrapping", greatly expediting the process of obtaining a license. He noted that although the workgroup was successful in significantly reducing differences in fee structures between the counties that some modest differences remain, although they are lower than in the past, the group decided that the remaining differences are not a major impediment to achieving the goal to greatly streamline the process. Drealan noted that, hopefully, any concerns that the seventh county may have with the proposal will be addressed by the time of October Policy Board meeting. If not, the issues will be raised at the Board meeting for direction. The workgroup’s goal is to have a pilot in place by November 2003 to test the market’s reaction to the streamlined web-based procedures.

f) Investigation of Data Sharing with Utility Interests

Drealan commented that Carver and Scott Counties are developing a sample of the regional parcel dataset for the participating utility interests to review to see if it would be useful to them. If the data are useful to the utilities, the next step will be to investigate the usefulness of utility data for local government business needs.

g) DataFinder Informational Forum Planned

The Staff Coordinator commented that a forum is tentatively planned for January 2004 to get the word out about the DataFinder Café’s Web Mapping service capabilities and explain the relationship with LMIC’s GeoIntegrator project.

8. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

December 17, 2003 (*Election of Officers*)

9. MEETING ADJOURNED

Johnson moved and Maki seconded to adjourn at 3:35 p.m. Motion carried, ayes all.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson and Steve Fester
MetroGIS Staff Support Team