

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS**  
**Coordinating Committee**  
**December 18, 1996**

**1. Call to Order**

Chairperson Arbeit called the meeting to order at 8:45 am. The meeting was held at the Earle Brown Conference Center on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota.

Members Present: *Federal:* Ron Wencl (USGS); *State:* David Arbeit (LMIC); *County:* David Claypool (Ramsey), Jim Hentges (Scott), Gary Caswell for Pat O'Connor (Hennepin), Virginia Erdahl (Washington); Gary Stevenson, (Dakota); Dave Drealan (Carver), and Margo LaBau (Anoka); *Metropolitan:* Richard Johnson (Metropolitan Council); Rick Gelbmann (Metropolitan Council); *Cities:* Brad Henry (City of Minneapolis); *Schools:* Jim Sydow (TIES); *Academics:* Will Craig (CURA); *Watersheds:* Cliff Aichinger (Ramsey-Washington-Metro Watershed District); and *Economic Development Partnerships:* Scott Beckman (Dakota County Partnership)

Members Absent: *Cities:* Dennis Welsch (City of Roseville); *Business Geographics:* Tim Nuteson, (Dayton Hudson Corporation); *Utilities:* Alan Srock, (NSP);and *GIS Consultants:* Larry Charboneau (The Lawrence Group)

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Heidi Welsch, Mark Kotz, Tanya Mayer

**2-3. Acceptance of the Meeting Minutes and Agenda**

Will Craig moved and Cliff Aichinger seconded to approve the October 24, 1996 meeting minutes, as submitted. Gary Caswell asked that designated alternated members to the Coordinating Committee be added to the mailing list for agendas and meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Arbeit suggested that Item 4d should be considered as the first business item because several members must leave no later then 10:30 a.m. Chairperson Arbeit motioned and Will Craig seconded to approve the agenda with the revised order for Item 4d. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Action Items**

**4d) Policy Advisory Team: Coordinating Committee Interim Operating Procedures**

Chairperson Arbeit, speaking on behalf of the Policy Advisory Team, explained the major components of the Team's recommended interim operating guidelines for the Coordinating Committee and its affiliated teams, as presented in the staff reported dated December 12, 1996. The major components reviewed were as follows: definitions, committee composition, liaison/reporting requirements, voting rules, meeting notification requirements, and an amendment procedure.

David also noted that the Policy Advisory Team is requesting direction from the Policy Board concerning voting and membership guidelines for current and any future members of the Coordinating Committee from organizations that are not represented on Policy Board (such as

LMIC, University of Minnesota, USGS, etc.). Gary Caswell requested that designated alternates to the committee be added as official members.

Meeting Summary 12/18/96

Page 2

There was some discussion about the ease with which the guidelines should be permitted to be amended, once adopted. Gary Stevenson suggested that the guidelines should be flexible to allow prompt responds to situations as they may arise, given that we are learning as we go. It was agreed that members should receive a minimum 15 days prior notice before any proposed amendment changes can be considered and that each amendment proposal should receive two readings before it can be acted on by the Committee. David Arbeit noted that the once the interim guidelines are endorsed by the Policy Board, any amendments would have to be approved by the Policy Board before they could become effective. The committee also agreed that its chair and vice-chair should have annual appointments.

### **Motions**

1. Gary Stevenson moved and Will Craig seconded to adopt the interim operating guidelines for the Coordinating Committee, its Steering Committee, and its Advisory Teams, as proposed by the Policy Advisory Team and presented in the report dated December 12, 1996, subject to the revisions to the amendment procedures and officer terms agreed upon at this meeting and to direct the Steering Committee to inform the Policy Board of these guidelines. Motion carried unanimously. The Coordinating Committee Chair and staff were authorized to make editorial revisions, as deemed appropriate.

2. David Claypool moved and Gary Stevenson seconded to direct the Steering Committee to prepare and present the following recommendations for Policy Board consideration:

- a) Endorse itself (the Board) as a group/entity that comprises the policy decision making authority for the MetroGIS.
- b) Endorse the current Coordinating Committee members, who represent organizations also represented on the Board, as the core voting membership of the Coordinating Committee.
- c) Endorse the other current members of the Coordinating Committee as voting members if the Committee for six months or until such time that the Board adopts voting and membership guidelines for itself and its supporting Committees and Advisory Teams.

### **Amendment #1:**

Will Craig moved and Cliff Aichinger seconded to add the following item as "d" under Motion 2: "Direct the Policy Advisory Team to prepare and recommend interim operating guidelines to govern the Policy Board for Policy Board consideration and that the recommended Policy Board guidelines should be an extension of the interim guidelines adopted by the Coordinating Committee for itself". Motion carried unanimously. Staff was also directed to send each Committee member a copy of the proposed Board guidelines for comment before presentation to the Policy Board.

### **Amendment #2:**

Richard Johnson moved and Cliff Aichinger seconded to add the following item as "e" under Motion 2: "Encourage the Policy Board to continue the diversity and inclusiveness of the Coordinating Committee as it currently exists". Motion carried unanimously.

Vote on the motion, as revised by Amendments 1 and 2, carried unanimously .

Meeting Summary 12/18/96

Page 3

#### **4a(1) Access Advisory Team: MetroGIS Web Index Model**

Rick Gelbmann explained that the Data Access Advisory Team has defined a conceptual WEB index model to facilitate access to GIS data located throughout the region. Rick also explained a pilot project, to be financed by the Metropolitan Council, that the Team has endorsed to test the proposed WEB index model. Will Craig stated that he endorses the WEB index concept proposed by the Team and that he also supports the Team serving as an advisor to the Metropolitan Council for the proposed pilot project. However, Will emphasized, that as general rule, he is opposed to the MetroGIS Advisory Teams acting as an advisor to the Council but noted that he is comfortable making an exception for this proposal because the pilot will directly affect the design of the MetroGIS data access mechanism.

Ron Wencil noted that he also supports further work on the proposed WEB index model but asked for clarification of the definition of 'index', noting that "clearinghouse" is a more commonly used term for the proposed functionality. Gelbmann explained that the Team envisions the 'index' to be similar to a library search engine, allowing access, querying, and searching for data and metadata through a webpage-type environment comprised of numerous links to data producers transparent to persons using the index.

Will Craig noted that he is more comfortable with the term "index" than with the term "clearinghouse" because the term clearinghouse implies a repository/data warehouse (how do I get the data) which is inconsistent with the primary intent of the MetroGIS -- to provide a mechanism to link users to the data sources (who has the data). Coordinating Committee members also asked questions about relationships among 'index', 'query', 'generalization of information', 'data access', server access specifications to manage traffic, and 'metadata' which Jim Sydow and Rick Gelbmann stated can not be adequately answered until the proposed pilot project is completed. Rick Gelbmann also noted that purpose of the pilot is to provide the basis for a detailed design for the MetroGIS data access mechanism.

A concern was also raised that this pilot project should not turn into the development of an application(s). Jim Sydow, Liaison to Access Advisory Team, noted that the purpose of the pilot is test the index model. Scott Beckman stated that he agrees with the need to develop a working model/prototype for an access mechanism. He also concurred that the Team should not become involved in the application development. He suggested that any activity that provides for ease of access to data should be within the Team's scope of work. He also suggested that the Team should first focus on establishing the links between users and producers then proceed to design access to combination sources. The membership agreed with Scott's suggestions and also agreed that the Data Access Advisory Team should focus on designing access links to commonly needed data rather than to data needed for specialized uses with little common benefit.

David Arbeit stated that a "visualization tool", such as being proposed, is important to decide whether the selected data/information will be useful to someone searching for data. He stated that he agrees that the Team should work with the Metropolitan Council on the proposed pilot project to investigate issues that concern the model and concurred with earlier comments that the Team should not become engaged in application development. He also noted that there is a need to coordinate with the clearinghousing development work that is being undertaken by the Governor's Meeting Summary 12/18/96  
Page 4

Council on Geographic Information (GCGI). Rick explained that both he and Tanya Mayer are members of the GCGI Access Team and that the referenced cross-reporting is in place.

Margo LaBau stated that Anoka County staff have many questions about the index model and that she believes some of them will need to be resolved at the Policy Board level, in particular, who will have access to what level of detail of data? Margo stated that she agrees with the need to pursue the pilot project and to continue to refine the model but emphasized that Anoka County can not support the recommended second motion to accept the Coordinating Committee as the approval authority for the index model. She restated that Anoka County believes that adoption of a final model will require resolution of policy matters which is the role of the Policy Board. Margo stated that she would be comfortable with a motion that directs the Access Advisory Team to continue to work out the details of the proposed model and to report back to the Coordinating Committee as further information is available. Will Craig emphasized that the Access Advisory Team's role should be to concentrate on testing the proposed "index" and that discussion of the associated data access issues should follow definition of the index.

Gary Stevenson stated that he is very supportive of the proposed index model and of proceeding with the proposed pilot project to work out the issues that have been raised.

**Motion:**

Chairman Arbeit moved and Gary Stevenson seconded to direct the Data Access Advisory Team to continue to develop and test its proposed WEB Index Model, as outlined in the staff report dated December 12, 1996. Motion carried unanimously.

(Note: The Coordinating Committee concluded that it should not be the final authority for this matter, except during the pilot phase. As such, recommendation Number 2 for this agenda item was not acted on.)

**4a(2) Access Advisory Team: Standard Geographical Unit for Aggregating Sensitive Data**

Rick Gelbmann explained that the Access Advisory Team has concluded that census blocks or census tracts should be used as basic units for data aggregation and that this proposal is being brought to the Committee at this time because the it is an important component of the index model that the Team wishes to test and refine. He further stated that the Team believes that aggregation of sensitive data to the proposed units of geography is a responsible means to address

data privacy issues concerning data about individuals, households, parcel of land, etc. while also providing a practical and useful means to share information with other organizations that have a business need for it.

Ron Wencil, Liaison to the Standards Advisory Team, asked who would direct/manage the data aggregation. Rick noted that the concept is to leave the decision of whether aggregation is needed and the type of aggregation up to the individual data producer, subject only to general guidelines to facilitate sharing with other organizations, and that he hoped to be able to test this strategy with the pilot project. He explained that this strategy of producer-governed generalization was chosen because it appears to be a means to eliminate liability/obligation on the part of the receiving organizations to provide others with the detailed data from which the summary information was

Meeting Summary 12/18/96

Page 5

derived. Rick explained that a generalization mechanism that eliminates liability of others to provide the detailed information is necessary to realize wide-spread data sharing. He noted that additional research is pending and that this issue will also be a matter of discussion for the Policy Team and Policy Board.

Cliff Aichinger stated that he believes the Team's proposal offers a responsible strategy and that there will be ample time for further discussion before a final recommendation is made to the Policy Board.

**Motion:**

Chairman Arbeit moved and Cliff Aichinger seconded to direct the Data Access Advisory Team, for purposes of testing the model [Recommendation 4a(1)], to continue to explore and test to following two (2) common units of geography for those data producers who need to aggregate their data so no discrete entity is identifiable, yet provide a practical and useful means to facilitate sharing of sensitive data. Data producers are not limited to this format. This is a guideline for those who require aggregation of data:

- Census Bureau Census Blocks (with cross-reference tables between decades)
- Census Bureau Census Tracts (with cross-reference tables between decades)

Motion carried unanimously.

(Note: The Coordinating Committee concluded it should not be the final authority for this matter, except during the pilot phase. As such, recommendation Number 2 for this agenda item was not acted on.)

**4a(3) Access Advisory Team: Advisor to Interactive Mapping Pilot Project**

Rick Gelbmann presented a brief overview of the interactive mapping pilot project to be undertaken by Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services and GIS Departments. He noted that other participants in this pilot project may include: City of Minneapolis, Anoka County, City of Roseville, and LMIC and that brief discussions have been held with ESRI and Intergraph to determine if they have any interest in assisting with the project.

The Committee agreed that the Data Access Advisory Team's involvement as an advisor to the Metropolitan Council's pilot project would be useful to the MetroGIS initiative. The consensus was that the Access Advisory Team's involvement should be viewed as a learning experience and as a means to test of the index model (Agenda Item 4a(1)). The Committee also emphasized the need for the MetroGIS Access Advisory Team to work closely with the Access Committee of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information as work progresses with the index model pilot project.

Arbeit moved and Will Craig seconded to authorize the Data Access Advisory Team to act as an Advisory Board to the Metropolitan Council's WEB/ interactive mapping pilot project. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Summary 12/18/96  
Page 6

**4b) Standards Advisory Team: Metro-Wide Coordinate System Guideline**

Ron Wencil, Liaison to the Standards Advisory Team, explained why his Team is recommending selection of Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) as the Metro Wide coordinate system guideline. Mark Kotz, staff to the Team, explained that data producers would not be obligated to change their current practice and could continue to use the coordinate system and projection that best suit their local needs. Mark emphasized that the UTM guideline would come into play to facilitate sharing among organizations throughout the seven county area.

Gary Caswell asked why UTM was selected over Latitude/Longitude. After some discussion of the pros and cons, the Committee agreed with the recommendation to use UTM. David Claypool asked what type of quality control mechanism is envisioned for conversions of local producer data to the Metro Wide UTM coordinate system. Ron Wencil noted this matter has not been addressed by the Team. Ron also noted that the Team is working on a primer to explain coordinate systems, projections, datums, and how to convert from one another, as well as reasons why the UTM coordinate system guideline was chosen for the Metro Area..

**Motion:**

Gary Stevenson moved and Jim Sydow seconded to:

- 1) Accept the following components as the best practices guideline for a Metro Wide coordinate system guideline for transferring of metro-wide GIS layers:

Coordinate system:	Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)
Projection:	Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM)
Units:	Meters
Datum:	NAD83

- 2) Direct the Standards Advisory Team to proceed with: a) development of a the primer to explain coordinate systems, projections, and datums, and how to convert from one another, as well as, the reasons why the UTM coordinate system guideline was chosen for the Metro Area, and b) development of a proposal to implement the Metro Area UTM coordinate

system guideline, to include a quality control mechanism for conversions of local producer data to the Metro Wide UTM coordinate system, for consideration by the Coordinating Committee.

Motion carried unanimously.

(Note: The Coordinating Committee concluded it should not be the final authority for this matter. As such, the last recommendation associated with this agenda item was not acted on.)

#### **4c) Policy Advisory Team: First Meeting of the MetroGIS Policy Board**

Randall Johnson summarized the work of the Policy Team and staff to prepare for the first Policy Board meeting on January 15, 1997. The meeting will be held at the Metropolitan Council Chambers in St. Paul, beginning at 7:00 p.m. He noted that a poster/social session will follow the meeting and shared a sample one page exhibit summary format for the Committee's information and comment. The group accepted the proposed format. Randall also summarized the

Meeting Summary 12/18/96

Page 7

presentations to be made by each member of the Steering Committee at meeting, invited all members of the Committee to attend, and noted that eleven of the twelve board members had been named.

#### **6. Information Sharing -- MetroGIS Related Activities**

Will Craig reported that the Data Content Advisory Team is continuing to make progress with its Business Object Modeling Project. He summarized the object modeling sessions that were held on Oct. 30th-31st and on Dec. 4th and noted that the next step, planned for mid-February will be a survey to rank each the business information needs identified at the Business Information Needs Forum held last Sept. 19th. Presentation of the project results is scheduled for May 22nd.

Randall Johnson noted that a list of accomplishments for 1996 was included with the agenda packet. He also noted that immediately following this meeting, several of the county representatives to the Committee would be attending a meeting of the Metropolitan Association of County Officials (MACO), at the request of MACO, to present an overview of the MetroGIS program to their membership.

#### **7. Next Meeting**

**Date:** Thursday, March 6, 1997  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m.  
**Location:** Earle Brown Conference Center; St. Paul Campus, University of Minnesota

#### **8. Adjournment**

Chairperson Arbeit moved and Cliff Aichinger seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 a.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Prepared by,

Heidi Welsch  
GIS Administrative Intern

and

Randall Johnson  
GIS Liaison