

**Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Room 1A, Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices
January 28, 2004**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Members Present: Gary Delaney (Carver County), Terry Schneider (AMM- City of Minnetonka), Patrice Bataglia (Dakota County), William Brown for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Bob Vogel (Scott County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Jane Harper for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Antoinette Johns (TIES), Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), and Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council).

Members Absent: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County) and Gary Schiff (AMM-City of Minneapolis).

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Will Craig, Rick Gelbmann, Randy Knippel, and David Claypool.

Visitors: Curt Peterson (Ramsey County), Carla Coates (Ramsey County), Bernadette Lantz (Washington County), Dorothy McClung (Ramsey County), Chris Samuel (Ramsey County), Frank Zobitz (Ramsey County), Pat Boeckman (Scott County), and Dan Pfeffer (Scott County).

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

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Johns moved and Member Fiskness seconded to accept the agenda as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all. (*Note: During the meeting, Item 5e was moved up to follow 5a.*)

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Bataglia moved and Member Harper seconded to approve the summary of the October 29, 2003 meeting as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION: Improving Information Access Efficiencies with GIS - Scott County's Story

Member Vogel introduced Pat Boeckman, Scott County Recorder, and Dan Pfeffer, Scott County GIS Manager, to explain how Scott County has used GIS technology to improve its internal processes related to how the Recorder, Assessor and Surveyor offices manage maintenance and distribution of data, as well as, the efficiencies the county has realized, and improved service its customers are realizing due to these improvements. (An Adobe PDF version of the PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at <http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/012804/index.shtml>.)

Prior to 2000, none of the county's core data management systems were integrated. Now, data from these 15 or so systems can be obtained via a single web-based application – the user no longer has to request the information (if they even knew who to ask) from multiple departments. It was noted that the current one-stop application was implemented without changing any current data management practices other than adding a PIN to documents (plats, deeds, etc.) that are currently being scanned as matter of standard practice. The speakers estimated that it now takes about 2 weeks for the time a land records document, such as a plat, is recorded until it can be accessed via this web application. The County's next step will be take an enterprise approach to evaluating its data holdings and assigning roles to specific departments to management specific data to eliminate as many of the current duplicative management practices as possible.

Member Vogel commented that the availability of this application is greatly streamlining the county's development review process, the keys being that developers are now required to submit their plans in electronic form and in county coordinates and the integrating power of GIS technology is used to quickly evaluate major deficiencies/issues with proposed plans.

The speakers noted that the Scott County GIS Users Group played a significant role in providing a vehicle to communicate the availability of this application to government users and, just as importantly, to the real estate/appraiser community as well. As a result, the number of calls fielded by county staff has dropped, even though the County is experiencing rapid growth. In addition, calls that are fielded can usually be dealt with more efficiently by staff using the web site as a resource.

In response to a question from a manager with another county, the speakers shared that Scott County does not have a history of significant revenue from data sales. About \$10,000 is the maximum that has been realized, so it was not a difficult sell to obtain Board permission to implement policies that emphasized improved customer service as opposed to generating revenue. Their experience, thus far, is that sales have remained essentially the same but that the staff resources to respond to data questions have dropped substantially.

Another question about how Scott County deals with property-related searches/queries by property owner name spawned a discussion of options and appropriate policy. Scott County's current policy is to permit searches by name, and although they have had few complaints, are considering a reporting scheme that would list the name only under specified circumstances.

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked the speakers for sharing Scott County's experience with the Board.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 2003 Accomplishments and Annual Report

Staff Coordinator Johnson summarized the materials provided in the agenda packet. A few minor modifications were offered concerning syntax matters in the Milestones article and to correct an incorrect reference to a member's organizational affiliation, which staff agreed to pass along the editor.

Schneider moved and Johns seconded to approve the 2003 Annual Report with the cited modifications. Motion carried, ayes all.

d) 2003 Performance Measurement Report and Recommendations

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Harper summarized the Committee's recommendation that the Policy Board approve the proposed 2003 MetroGIS Performance Measurement Report and introduced Kathie Doty, MetroGIS staff consultant with Richardson, Richter & Associates, Inc., to summarize the findings and recommendations.

Ms. Doty reminded the Board that this is the second such report since it adopted a Performance Measurement Plan in April 2002 and summarized the major findings. She reiterated that the goal is to monitor results and adjust policies and procedures as necessary to successfully achieve endorsed objectives.

Chairperson Reinhardt commented on the importance of the baseline information contained in this report to monitoring trends important to MetroGIS's success and thanked staff for producing this report. She commented that some of these measures are not easy to calculate, but nevertheless are important to understanding dynamics needed to effectively achieve desired outcomes.

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Harper commented on the importance of testimonials to gain a better understanding about how organizations are benefiting from MetroGIS's efforts. She used the example of how the existence of the Regional Planned Land Use dataset made it possible for her to

respond quickly to a request earlier in the week that would not have been possible in its absence, providing a substantive benefit not only to her but also to the requester. She encouraged others to think about similar experiences where MetroGIS's existence is making a difference.

Chairperson Reinhardt, recounted a major benefit that occurred a few years ago involving the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District and its need to rapidly notify property owners of a LaCrosse Encephalitis outbreak. The notification took 4 hours, instead of a week or more, due to the availability of the regional parcel dataset.

Fiskness moved and Delaney seconded to accept the findings and conclusions presented in the 2003 MetroGIS Performance Measurement Report and approve the follow-up actions:

- a) Continue outreach activities to increase awareness and understanding of tools and processes available through MetroGIS; in particular, the availability of DataFinder as a "one-stop" tool for producers to advertise and disseminate geospatial data.
- b) Continue to investigate ways to measure efficiencies gained by data producers from MetroGIS tools and processes.
- c) Continue to work with GIS stakeholders to assess the net benefit of the MetroGIS approach to coordination and collaboration.

b) 2004 Budget

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Harper summarized the Committee's recommendation to approve the 2004 MetroGIS budget allocations as presented in the Board's agenda materials. She noted that the proposed allocations had not changed since a draft was shared with the Board in October. She also noted that the detailed budget allocations were included in the packet for the Board's information.

Member Delaney noted that the largest change from 2003 to 2004 was in the funds targeted for support of DataFinder and asked for clarification. The Staff Coordinator commented that the reduction is due to the pending partnership with the Mn Land Management Information Center to integrate DataFinder with the State's GeoIntegrator and share the support costs.

Bataglia moved and Vogel seconded to approve the 2004 MetroGIS budget allocation document included in the agenda materials and dated December 18, 2003. Motion carried, ayes all.

c) 2004 Major Program Objectives

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Harper summarized the Committee's recommendation to approve the 2004 Major Program Objectives presented in the agenda materials. She noted that they had not changed since a draft was shared with the Board in October. She noted that the detailed work plan to achieve these objectives was included in the packet for the Board's information. No comments were offered.

Johns moved and Fiskness seconded to approve the Major 2004 MetroGIS Program Objectives as presented in the agenda materials, subject to receiving the funding requested of the Metropolitan Council. Motion carried, ayes all.

e) Socioeconomic Information Need Regional Solution - Phase I

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Harper summarized the Committee's recommendation to endorse the Phase I Socioeconomic Information Need Regional strategy as presented in the agenda materials and introduced Will Craig who chaired the Workgroup that crafted the recommendation. An Adobe PDF version of Mr. Craig's PowerPoint presentation can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/012804/craig_socio.pdf.

Craig emphasized that the Phase I Workgroup started its efforts with the priority socioeconomic information needs that were identified in 1996 through a highly participatory process and briefly summarized the workgroup's process that led its recommendation. He mentioned that the group

identified three data characteristics necessary to successfully address these information needs – subcity scale, annual updates, and 10 year times series. The members identified existing sources of data that meet or exceed the desired data characteristics. The results of their research were then input into a web-based resources page, developed by MetroGIS staff, to offer the user an easy and intuitive way to access this “catalogue” of existing socioeconomic data sources that meet or exceed desired characteristics. Craig then demonstrated the prototype web-based resources page that is proposed for testing by actual users of socioeconomic data.

Craig concluded his remarks with a recommendation that MetroGIS work with the producers of three datasets – county birth and death records, United Way’s First Call For Help, and county social services records – to determine the feasibility of implementing a few one-time data reporting changes that could markedly improve the data’s usability to address cited priority information needs. Special reports are currently being generated that include the formats sought by the workgroup. The goal would be to “hard code” these formats through a one-time project which would result in times savings for all affected parties.

Member Bataglia mentioned that she is aware of a couple data sources that are not listed in the workgroup’s Phase I report. Craig responded that the workgroup, although its members brought quite diverse expertise and knowledge to the project, admitted they were concerned that some sources of data could have been missed and for this reason proposed testing the resources page and seeking constructive feedback before offering it as an endorsed regional solution. Staff noted that they would follow-up with Member Bataglia and forward the sources along to the workgroup to consider as they refine the site.

A question from Member Bataglia, asking for clarification about the connection between MetroGIS and socioeconomic data, resulted in a wide ranging discussion about how MetroGIS initially established the common information needs of the broad MetroGIS community; the role of summary geography to map and analyze socioeconomic data in conjunction with other geospatial data, such as parcels and jurisdictional boundaries; MetroGIS’s workgroup staffing model that leverages the talents of motivated people within organizations that have a business need to address initiatives launched by MetroGIS to address recognized common priority needs; how priorities are set for allocating MetroGIS’s available resources, and the Staff Coordinator’s role as principally a project manager relative to support of workgroup activities as opposed to a content lead.

Member Schneider commented that the traditional priority setting process works when staffing is clearly defined. MetroGIS, by necessity, uses a different model because of the need to facilitate a coordinated approach, which he supports. He also commented that the process is not linear as it might be in a more traditional setting, in that, as protocols are worked out by one workgroup benefits are often realized in other areas.

Member Johns noted that she strongly supported the recommendation because school, as service provides, have been waiting a long time for this type of one-stop tool to readily access socioeconomic data. She commented that the investment of time that is currently required to gather this information on their own is often times not justified so they go without. Member Vogel asked for clarification that the recommendation will not effectively set scale of summary geographies expectations that are inconsistent with Data Practices policies. Craig stated that the recommendation would not set such expectations.

Schneider moved and Fiskness seconded to ratify the following actions pertaining to MetroGIS’s solution for its Socioeconomic Characteristics of Areas Information Need:

- a) Authorize, as a Phase I regional solution, implementing the prototype web-based resources page developed by the Phase I workgroup, direct staff to advertise its existence, and direct identification of a custodian and responsibilities to ensure the currency of the information presented on this site.
- b) Pursue modifications to existing datasets related to *County social service records, First Call for Help, and county birth and death records* to enhance their usability and better address priority common socioeconomic information needs identified by the MetroGIS community, and

- c) Direct the Coordinating Committee to pursue negotiations with the respective producers of the three named existing datasets to achieve the desired enhancements.

Motion carried, ayes all.

f) GIS Data Sharing Agreements with Counties – Adoption Status

Chairperson Reinhardt summarized the current expectations for the agreements. She proceeded to ask if there were any items in the proposed agreements that are causing any concerns. Brown replied that there is a license-related issue at Hennepin County that should be resolved within the next week. No other concerns were raised.

6. MAJOR PROJECT UPDATES (See the agenda materials for more information)

Randy Knippel updated the Board on the activities of the Emergency Preparedness workgroup. He reported that a duplication of data capture methods has already been found that will soon be eliminated. The prototype Emergency Preparedness Internet data distribution website is ready to "go live" soon. The group will also be submitting an article for the next Emergency Preparedness newsletter.

Knippel also mentioned that outreach efforts are planned, including a recent presence at a Governor's Symposium, with an opportunity to coordinate with Minnesota Public Safety Commissioner Rich Stanek. Furthermore, the National Stockpile program was noted as a convenient way to organize the GIS community to assist in these efforts.

Member Schneider asked about tapping into federal funding for work on Emergency Preparedness activities. He suggested that once the availability of the data is recognized, we should be well-positioned to obtain funding due to the organization that is in place, and our ability to demonstrate GIS capabilities.

Member Bataglia stated that she attended a Governor's Symposium on Emergency Preparedness in January. She noted that discussion about GIS's role was missing and that she will encourage participation next year to encourage collaboration. The Emergency Preparedness workgroup, in conjunction with the Governor's Council Emergency Preparedness workgroup, will be hosting a booth and presenting a 90-minute session at the 39th Annual Governor's Conference on Homeland Security, March 2-4.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

Chairperson Reinhardt asked the members to review on their own the information items presented in the agenda packet.

8. NEXT MEETING

April 28, 2004. Chairperson Reinhardt reminded the group that the election of officers would be held at that time. She also suggested that the elections be moved to the January meeting beginning in 2005. There were no objections.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting concluded at 9:15 p.m.

Prepared by,
Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator