

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS Policy Board**  
**Room 1A, Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices**  
**January 26, 2005**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

Members Present: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Scott Simmer for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), Terry Schneider (AMM- City of Minnetonka), Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council) and Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES).

Members Absent: Gary Delaney (Carver County), Joseph Wagner (Scott County), Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), and [vacant] (AMM - Large City Rep.).

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Nancy Read (Chairperson), David Claypool, Will Craig, Randy Knippel, Bill Brown, and Rick Gelbmann.

Visitors: Mark Vander Schaaf (Metropolitan Council)

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Mark Kotz, Steve Fester, and Paul Hanson.

Chairperson Reinhardt invited the members to introduce themselves to Dan Cook, the new member representing TIES and an Anoka-Hennepin School District Board member, and Tom Egan, Dakota County Commissioner.

Chairperson Reinhardt then invited everyone in attendance to have piece of the cake that she had made to celebrate the approval of the 2004-2008 Regional Parcel Data Sharing Agreement. She noted that this agreement is a significant achievement for the MetroGIS community and thanked all who were involved with this initiative.

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

Three items were added to Item 5 –Action/Discussion Items at staff's request. They were: 5f) Retreat Funding, 5g) Proposed LMIC Funding Cut, and 5h) NAZCA - Any Impact on Data Sharing Policies Fostered by MetroGIS? The meeting agenda was accepted modified.

**3. MEETING SUMMARY**

Member Pistilli moved and Member Fiskness seconded to accept the October 27, 2004 meeting summary as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

**4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION**

Mark Kotz, member of the MetroGIS staff support team, presented an overview of the capabilities of the new Regional Mailing Label Application (<http://www.datafinder.org/labels/login.asp>), which runs on the MetroGIS-endorsed Regional Parcel Dataset. Kotz noted that access to and use of this application is available free of charge for any interest that is licensed to use the Regional Parcel Dataset, which includes all government and academic interests with jurisdiction in the United States. The presentation included a brief history of the project's evolution, beginning with the sharing of the core application by Carver County with MetroGIS. Credit was given to Vice Chairperson Kordiak for suggesting that MetroGIS explore the idea of developing such a capability. Following a live demonstration, Kotz shared several enhancements that have been identified thus far for consideration when a Version 2 is pursued.

A copy of Kotz's slide presentation can be viewed at [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05\\_0126/tech\\_demo.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05_0126/tech_demo.pdf).

In response to questions from Vice Chairperson Kordiak, Kotz clarified that the application is designed for the non-GIS professional and that only an Internet browser is needed to use it; that the user can import the mailing label data for use in a local application or create a preformatted sheets of mailing labels (PDF format) directly from the MetroGIS application that can be printed in a copy machine; and that outreach efforts will include notifying managers of all forms of government that serve the metro area that this tool is available. Board members encouraged staff to publish a news release that can also be published in newsletters produced by the counties and others.

Following a live demonstration, Board members offered the following suggestions for Version 2 enhancements and encouraged the Coordinating Committee to remain on schedule to pursue desired enhancements after the application has been running for 9-12 months:

- Ability to produce labels based upon a specified land use (single family dwellings, offices, commercial, etc). (*Editor's note – this type of complex query would likely require GIS functionality beyond that practical to provide in a mailing label application targeted at the non-GIS professional.*)
- Ability to create labels for a specified jurisdiction – watershed district, school district, city, etc.
- Ability to create labels for ad-hoc areas – a study area that does not conform to any established jurisdiction.

Member Schneider encouraged staff to produce an inventory of any additional enhancements that are desired by the user community before work on a Version 2 is initiated. He noted that if a particular desired enhancement(s) is expensive but desired by a number of interests, it is likely that the group would share costs to achieve the improvement(s).

The Staff Coordinator noted that although the primary purpose of the regional application is to provide a seamless means to create mailing labels for situations where the subject properties are located within multiple counties, if a particular jurisdiction would like a copy of the application for their internal use, they may have it free of charge.

The general consensus was that the Version 1 product is well done. Those involved were thanked for their efforts.

## **5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **a) Election of Officers**

Member Pistilli moved and Member Schneider seconded to move last year's slate of officers (Victoria Reinhardt to serve as Chairperson and Jim Kordiak to serve as Vice Chairperson) for the coming year. No further nominations were offered. Motion carried, ayes all.

The members congratulated Commissioners Reinhardt and Kordiak on their reelection as MetroGIS's officers for 2005.

### **b) 2004 Performance Measurement Report**

Coordinating Committee Chair Read summarized the Coordinating Committee's recommendation and the Staff Coordinator shared several findings that illustrate MetroGIS's efforts are achieving established goals.

**Motion:** Member Egan moved and Member Fiskness seconded that the Policy Board accept the MetroGIS 2004 Performance Measurement Report, dated December 2004, as recommended by the Coordinating Committee. Motion carried, ayes all.

### **c) 2005 Budget Allocations**

Coordinating Committee Chair Read summarized the Coordinating Committee's recommendation and the Staff Coordinator summarized proposed line item allocations that differ from the preliminary budget accepted by the Policy Board at its April meeting. The most substantive is a result of the new Regional Parcel Data Sharing Agreement with the seven counties, which in 2005 allocates \$22,000 for Regional

GIS Projects. These funds will come from the same \$50,000 line item that is used to compensate the counties for maintaining parcel data in accordance with MetroGIS-endorsed regional standards. Chairperson Reinhardt, who led the negotiations for the financial aspects of the agreement, stated that with improvements to efficiencies related to county support of the regional parcel dataset financed in previous years by MetroGIS, compensation to the counties could be reduced, freeing up opportunities to use this funding source for other projects critical to achieving priority common information needs of the MetroGIS community.

**Motion:** Member Schneider moved and Member Pistilli seconded that the Policy Board approve the proposed 2005 detailed budget allocations for MetroGIS, as recommended by the Coordinating Committee, dated December 15, 2004. Motion carried, ayes all.

**d) 2005 Key Objectives and Work Plan**

Coordinating Committee Chair Read summarized the Coordinating Committee's recommendation and the Staff Coordinator summarized several key program objectives for 2005.

**Motion:** Member Fiskness moved and Member Kordiak seconded that the Policy Board approve the Major 2005 Program Objectives for MetroGIS, as recommended by the Coordinating Committee on December 15, 2004.

**f) MetroGIS Strategic Direction Retreat Funding**

Member Kordiak commented, immediately following the work plan discussion about the proposed strategic planning retreat planned for spring 2005, that he believes this activity is very important to the continued success of MetroGIS, that the Policy Board should recognize the significant amount effort and time expended by the participants, and do whatever it can to support their effort.

**Motion:** Member Kordiak moved and Member Schneider seconded to authorize use of up to \$725 of funds in a special custodial account managed by the Metropolitan Council for the MetroGIS Policy Board to pay for food and/or room rental fees associated with the proposed 2005 Strategic Direction Retreat, if funds in the proposed 2005 budget are not adequate to cover these expenses. Motion carried, ayes all.

**e) Existing Land Use Information Need: Phase 1 Solution (FIX THIS SECTION –See web version)**

Paul Hanson, lead staff to the MetroGIS Existing Land Use Workgroup, summarized the Coordinating Committee's recommendation for a regional solution to the Existing Land Use Information Need. He explained that the proposed solution incorporates the Land Based Classification System (LBCS) developed by the American Planning Association (APA) then presented an overview of the history of the Workgroup's recommendation and the specifics of the recommendation which include accepting the Metropolitan Council's offer to prototype a regional data solution that implements LBSC.

Hanson then briefly explained each of the five LBSC database components: activity, function, ownership, site development, and structure. Hanson stressed that, if successfully implemented, the recommended strategy, is expected to address two deficiencies with use of traditional hierarchical existing land use classification schemas that have been recognized as problems by the MetroGIS community; ineffective for answering complex existing land use information queries and hampering analysis by jurisdictions that need to consider existing land use information from multiple cities (e.g., school and watershed districts and regional entities). Hanson's slides can be viewed at [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05\\_0126/elu\\_demo.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05_0126/elu_demo.pdf).

Hanson commented that support had been found for the LBCS style data model via theoretically discussions with a several focus groups. However, he also noted that gaining the desired broad participation of local government – those who have the most detailed knowledge of existing land use – is expected to require development of a prototype from which to actually demonstrate its value. He also acknowledged that this pilot effort might need to be in effect for several years before sufficient local understanding exists to decide whether to formally pursue the LBCS style data model as a preferred regional strategy. Hanson concluded his remarks

by noting the positive feedback obtained to date was sufficient for endorsement of the proposal by the Coordinating Committee for further testing.

Following Hanson's presentation, Board members asked zoning-related questions, as opposed to existing land use, such as ability to map all of the properties that zoned R1, single dwelling residential. Another Board member questioned if the proposal would create another level of regulation in addition to zoning and Land Use Plan approval that cities and the Council are directed to do by statute.

Staff acknowledged that the proposed Existing Land Use regional solution is not designed to include regulatory information, such as zoning, but rather it would be designed to describe the actual current use of land. The Staff Coordinator also commented that several years ago, a decision had been made to not pursue a regional zoning solution. This decision based upon findings of an I-35W Corridor Coalition study for MetroGIS. The principal reason was the inability to generalize complex zoning designations, which are in effect law, without a guarantee that legal complications would not arise. Staff also noted that at time, it was agreed that MetroGIS would pursue regional solutions for only Planned Land Use (implemented 2002) and Existing Land Use. With regard to the concern about a another level of regulation, staff affirmed that the proposal is to create a regional database that is based upon voluntary participation and which describes existing land use, leverages schemas used by local government, and in no way requires local adherence to any standardized coding scheme.

Member Schneider commented he believes that traditional hierarchical schemes currently used by many communities for describing existing land use characteristics may address as much of 90 percent of their planning needs. He further commented that he is not sure whether the additional investment of time and effort by local government is justified to get the most out of the proposed LBCS solution. He suggested tabling of the proposal for more information at the next meeting. This suggestion precipitated comments from some members that they are comfortable with the pilot project and design objectives, as proposed by the Coordinating Committee, and comments from others that they would prefer more information.

**Motion:** The proposal was laid over for more information, including: 1) clarification about whether the regional solution could be initiated with one or two of the components (e.g., activity and structure) so as not to overwhelm prospective local government participants, 2) whether an LBCS data structure with less than 5 components populated would equal the value of a hierarchical schema for a regional solution, and 3) what is the benefit to cities to participate, as they are the primary maintainer of existing land use information at the local government level.

It was agreed that it is appropriate for staff to expend time and effort to prepare for a rehearing of this topic.

#### **g) LMIC Funding Cut Proposed**

Chairperson Reinhardt shared that as a member of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI) she had learned that afternoon about a proposal to cut the Minnesota Land Management Information Center (LMIC) budget by 75 percent. This means that all of the geospatial coordination efforts supported by LMIC would be eliminated. She noted that the GCGI would be submitting a letter explaining the value perceived of the services that would be lost and suggested that MetroGIS consider doing likewise. The Staff Coordinator shared several examples of activities that would be affected if cuts were to be made:

- Advocacy for statewide policies that foster collar county acceptance of data sharing policies consistent with those implemented in the metro area to improve efficiencies of metro area watershed and school districts with jurisdictions that cross into the collar counties;
- Ability to leverage investments made by LMIC in application development, such as recent development of new raster clipping, and
- Collaboration on data distribution tools of common need to share the cost of both development and on going support.

Member Schneider commented that he believes LMIC provides a valuable resource that MetroGIS can tap into and as such supports submitting a letter on behalf of LMIC but suggests that it focus on the value of LMIC's services as opposed to negatives that would occur if the funding is cut.

Member Fiskness spoke for in favor of submitting a letter of support noting the benefit of investing in improving technology today to enable the ability to reap the organizational efficiency gains tomorrow.

**Motion:** Member Schneider moved and Member Egan seconded to direct staff to draft a letter of support for LMIC from the Policy Board to be signed by Chairperson Reinhardt.

Member Pistilli noted that he has some concerns about a perception of MetroGIS getting to someone else's business but can support the proposed letter, as it will not take a position.

Motion carried, ayes all.

**h) NAZCA – Any Impact on Data Sharing Policies Fostered by MetroGIS**

Member Pistilli shared a newspaper article that he had read about NAZCA and asked if any of the other Board members or staff was familiar enough with NAZCA's software to talk about how it differs from MetroGIS's efforts with the seven metro area counties. The Staff Coordinator commented that MetroGIS's efforts focus on policies to facilitate sharing of the actual data, whereas NAZCA's software is designed to facilitate viewing of a particular county's parcel-based records, many of which are not geospatial in nature (e.g., recorded deeds, judgements, assessors' CAMA records).

Member Cook commented that Anoka-Hennepin School District used NAZCA's product and concurred with staff that it is a robust software tool that allows for integrated viewing of data that are maintained in numerous databases that do not otherwise talk to one another.

William Brown, Hennepin County Surveyor, confirmed that Hennepin County has purchased the NAZCA product. He briefly commented that MetroGIS and NAZCA have different objectives, and concurred with the Staff Coordinator's assessment that NAZCA focuses on land and court records, much of which are not geospatial (e.g., recorded deeds, judgements, assessors' CAMA records). He noted that Carver County is testing their product and suggested inviting someone from Carver County familiar with both the NAZCA product and MetroGIS's objectives to speak to the Board.

Staff was directed to invite someone conversant about the NAZCA product, county parcel data structures, and preferably MetroGIS's efforts with counties to attend the April 2005 Policy Board meeting. The purpose of the requested discussion is to identify if there are any redundancies between the MetroGIS's and NAZCA's objectives.

**6. MAJOR PROJECT UPDATES**

Due to the lack of time, no project updates were presented.

**7. INFORMATION SHARING**

This was no discussion of the materials presented in the agenda packet.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2005.

**9. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Motion carried ayes all.

Prepared by,  
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MetroGIS Staff Coordinator