

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS Policy Board**  
**Room 1A, Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices**  
**April 20, 2005**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

Members Present: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Gary Delaney (Carver County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Scott Simmer for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Roger Lake for Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), Terry Schneider (AMM- City of Minnetonka), Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council) and Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES).

Members Absent: Joseph Wagner (Scott County), and [vacant] (AMM - Large City Rep.).

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Nancy Read (Chairperson), Bill Brown, Gordon Chinander, David Drealan, Jane Harper, and Brad Henry.

Visitors: Blair Tremere and Mark VanderSchaaf (Metropolitan Council), Pete Eggimann (Metropolitan 911 Board) and Tim Anderson, Barr Engineering, representing several watershed districts.

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

Chairperson Reinhardt invited the Board members and members of the audience to introduce themselves.

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

At staff's request, Item 6d was moved to a new Item 5b –Action/Discussion Items and originally proposed Items 5b-5e were changed to 5c-5f. The meeting agenda was accepted as modified.

**3. MEETING SUMMARY**

Member Schneider moved and Member Pistilli seconded to accept the January 26, 2005 meeting summary as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

**4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION**

Tim Anderson, with Barr Engineering, described the benefits that watershed districts are realizing from MetroGIS's efforts. The Coordinating Committee invited him to appear before the Policy Board as a follow-up to the testimonial in which he had participated in fall 2002, which can be viewed at <http://www.metrogis.org/benefits/testimonials/rpbcwd.pdf>.

Mr. Anderson commented that watershed districts are benefiting from MetroGIS's efforts to institute regional solutions to common information needs because their jurisdictions often include 5-6 cities and portions of more than one county. As such, the regional datasets that have been implemented via MetroGIS's efforts have resulted in substantive efficiency gains for water management organizations. Regional solutions of the most value to their efforts are street centerlines, land cover, city/county boundaries, as well as, the one-stop-shop for access to these data that is provided via MetroGIS DataFinder. Mr. Anderson's slide presentation can be viewed at [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05\\_0420/barr.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05_0420/barr.pdf).

Vice Chairperson Kordiak inquired about the districts' use of topographic (contour) data and any relationships they might have with other organizations to obtain these data. Anderson responded that there is little in the way of standards for the collection of contour data and that only scattered cost sharing is currently occurring. He noted that efficiencies could likely be gained if a regional focus were to be pursued. (Editor's note: Contour/elevation data was not among the top 13 common information needs identified, ranking 24<sup>th</sup> and as such has not been a focus of MetroGIS's efforts thus far.)

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked Mr. Anderson for explaining how watershed districts are benefiting from MetroGIS's efforts to improve both data consistency across multiple jurisdictions and access to commonly needed data.

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

### **a) 2006 MetroGIS Budget Request – Fostering Collaboration Role**

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Read summarized the Committee's recommendation that the Policy Board accept the 2006 budget for MetroGIS's "Fostering Collaboration" component, as set forth in the agenda materials (1.75 FTE and \$86,000 in non-staff project funding).

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked the Metropolitan Council for its past support of this component of MetroGIS's efforts, which she also credited with leveraging substantial resources from other stakeholders necessary to effectively and collectively address common needs.

Member Pistilli asked the board members representing the counties whether they are aware of any initiatives before the Legislature or elsewhere than might affect the counties' ability to carry out roles and responsibilities for the MetroGIS community that they have pledged to support. Each of the county representatives confirmed that they are not aware of any proposal that would cause a reduction in their level of participation.

Member Schneider commented that he understands the need to be prudent when proposing budgets but also expressed concern that the proposed budget does not factor in how MetroGIS's efforts might grow. He challenged all associated with MetroGIS to look at the bigger picture. Coordinating Committee Chairperson Read noted that the Coordinating Committee has recognized this need and in response proposed a Strategic Planning Workshop (Item 5b) to collectively discuss new opportunities that the major stakeholders would like explored as a community.

**Motion:** Member Delaney moved and Member Pistilli seconded to: 1) accept the 2006 MetroGIS funding request, as presented in the agenda materials for MetroGIS's efforts related to fostering collaboration, and 2) direct staff to forward this funding request to the Metropolitan Council for consideration. Motion carried, ayes all.

### **b) Strategic Planning Workshop and Business Plan Update**

The Staff Coordinator explained efforts made thus far by the Coordinating Committee to plan for hosting a Strategic Planning Workshop and that September 22, 2005 has been set as the date. He also commented that the Committee has encouraged its members to gain as good of an understanding as they can about how their respective organizations are benefiting from MetroGIS's efforts, their costs vs. value of perceived benefits, whether MetroGIS should concentrate on managing what has been built or seek out additional opportunities to collaborate on, etc.

Mark Vander Schaaf, Director of Planning and Growth Management for the Council, commented that the Council has initiated an internal evaluation of the MetroGIS program in preparation for the proposed workshop and encouraged other stakeholders to do the same, as requested by the Coordinating Committee.

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that relationships between the counties and the Council related to various topics are at times tense but emphasized that has not been the case with the MetroGIS initiative, emphasizing that the collaborative efforts via the MetroGIS experience have been very positive. She stressed that the MetroGIS forum has resulted in the counties and Council working side-by-side to truly make a difference and collectively improve organizational efficiencies across the entire government community that serves the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. She reminded the group that MetroGIS's efforts have attracted attention from others across the country as they seek to emulate efficiencies achieved here. Chairperson Reinhardt concluded her comments by stating that a great loss would be experienced if MetroGIS ceased to exist and challenged all involved to look forward to new collaborative opportunities when preparing for the proposed strategic planning workshop.

Member Schneider commented that quantifying benefits is often very difficult and asked if the Council's internal evaluation had had any success or insights for measuring value in other ways. VanderSchaaf acknowledged that MetroGIS is a unique endeavor but also believes that generally accepted evaluation principles exist to accomplish the task.

Chairperson Reinhardt concurred that qualitative benefits are real, even if quantification is impossible and, as such, should also be acknowledged.

In response to a question about who is expected to participate in the proposed workshop, Chairperson Reinhardt commented that she and Member Schneider have, thus far, committed to participating to represent policy makers and encouraged other Board members to likewise commit to participating. At Member Schneider's suggestion, the group concurred that a separate forum for private sector interests might be an effective way for those interests to collectively identify challenges for the workshop participants to consider.

### **c) Vision – E911-Compliant Regional Street Centerline Dataset**

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Read commented that for this Agenda Item and the Item that follows, a business need exists by many stakeholder organizations on many levels for a coordinated regional solution. She also commented that achieving the full potential for each of the proposed visions will require involvement by those who produce street and address data daily (e.g., cities) and that the Metropolitan 911 Board has a need for a regional solution. The 911 Board's acknowledgement of its need for a regional solution made it possible for MetroGIS to support the forum for the visioning that has occurred thus far. Finally, Read noted that due to the complexity of the intergovernmental relationships anticipated to achieve these visions, they are being shared with the Policy Board at this time to identify any policy issues that may have been overlooked before proceeding with development of detailed implementation strategies.

Read then introduced Gordon Chinander, GIS Coordinator for the Metropolitan 911 Board, to explain the key components of the proposed vision to achieve a E911-Compliant Regional Street Centerline Dataset for the seven county Metropolitan Area.

Chinander explained that the Metropolitan 911 Board needs street centerline data that are standardized across the seven county area to effectively support 27 PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Points). He explained the genius for the current vision as an awareness that surfaced last fall. Several cities and counties were considering or had begun developing their own E911-compliant street centerline datasets because the regional street centerline data solution that had been previously endorsed by MetroGIS for address matching did not satisfy their needs. In response, MetroGIS convened a focus group at which all parties concurred that a regional solution, as opposed to continued independent efforts, would be in the public interest.

Chinander then summarized the main points of the vision for the proposed regional solution (refer the slides at [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05\\_0420/e911.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05_0420/e911.pdf) for more information):

- Expand functionality potential associated with the current street centerline dataset to include navigable routes.
- Define a single official source for address data for each distinct area throughout the Metro Area.
- Implement an effective means to capture for the regional solution data pertaining to new streets when produced by local officials.
- Define appropriate organizational roles and responsibilities for all participants, including the regional custodian, which the Metropolitan 911 Board has expressed interest in assuming.
- Define data content standards to facilitate sharing and ease of use by the user community.

He concluded his presentation noting that multiple county E911-compliant street centerline datasets have been previously developed in other parts of the country but that he is not aware if any of those solutions sought to capture street and address data from so many local units of governments at the time they create it.

Member Pistilli asked if there were any plans to expand this concept beyond the seven-county Metropolitan Area. Chinander commented that depending on the outcome of legislation currently being considered, the E911 Board's jurisdiction may be expanded to include counties beyond the Metro Area, which could result in expansion of the vision beyond the seven county area. Regardless, the envisioned solution assumes that a 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor will provide data for units of government which do not wish to or do not have the resources to transmit the subject data at the time of initial creation. Additionally, this 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractor concept could also be considered for jurisdictions outside of the Metro Area if the local PSAP/E911 entity would so choose.

Member O'Rourke asked for clarification on the timeline for implementation. Staff Coordinator Johnson noted that detailed strategies have not been prepared, awaiting the outcome of the Policy Board's consideration. However, in preliminary discussions, the consensus of those who conceived the vision is that a process of prototyping several scenarios, each of which respects existing and varied intergovernmental relationships, and subsequent demonstration of benefits to cities to encourage participation would comprise anticipated immediate next steps.

Pistilli asked about the expected role of The Lawrence Group (TLG) in the proposed vision. Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party contractor component anticipated in the proposed vision would likely be decided via an RFP process and that there is a general desire to migrate to publicly owned data from the proprietary ownership that currently exists. Johnson noted that he is hopeful that this transition can be successfully negotiated so that locally-produced street centerline data can be shared with the U.S. Census Bureau and become the foundation for the future versions of the Bureau's census geography (TIGER database).

Member Schneider encouraged the workgroup to speak with engineers and planners working for the target local governments early-on to ensure their practices related to street naming and address assignment are clearly understood. He also encouraged the workgroup to be sure to regularly ask those cities that initially opt out (of providing the data directly to the regional solution) whether they wish to reconsider participating in the event their internal situation has changed.

Vice-Chairperson Kordiak asked how much of the desired data already exists. Mark Kotz, member of the MetroGIS Support Staff and lead staff for the regional parcel dataset, commented that much of the data exists but that the lack of standards makes it difficult to readily assemble for routing purposes. He commented that the proposed vision involves creation of an application (Web interface) that would standardize data capture in an attempt to make assembly across various jurisdictions more manageable. Staff emphasized that use of the proposed application and participation, in general, is assumed to be voluntary, hence the emphasis on demonstrating benefits of participation.

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that she believes the most important of the proposed objectives is the call for a single official source, noting that it is not only the foundation of the proposed vision but also most likely the most difficult objective to achieve.

None of the Board members expressed any opposition to the proposed vision. No political issues were raised that had not been previously identified by the workgroup.

#### **d) Vision - Regional Occupiable Units Data Solution**

(Refer to Coordinating Committee Chairperson Read's introduction of Item 5c.)

Read explained that the proposed vision calls for the creation of a regional database with a data point for every occupiable unit – residential and non-residential – that exists in the entire seven county area. She also noted that the utility representative to the Coordinating Committee expressed interest, on behalf of the broader utility community, in an opportunity to participate in the discussions to develop the detailed implementation strategies.

Read commented that most organizations support multiple address databases that do not always talk to one another and many times have different, if not conflicting, information for the same address. Another

reason for proposing creation of this database, she explained, is that there is a widespread business need for information related to occupiable units, in particular by the E911 community, and that the proposed regional solution offers the only means to effectively manage and access the desired information. Read concluded her remarks by stating that the City of St. Paul has completed Phase I of its STAMP project, which provides useful insight into the obstacles that will have to be overcome to achieve the proposed regional vision, and introduced Mark Kotz, member of the MetroGIS Staff Support Team and lead staff to this visioning effort, to explain the vision's key objectives.

Kotz began his presentation by illustrating differences between street centerline and parcel data and explaining why neither of those data types provides the additional level of detail desired and which is possible to acquire only via the proposed regional occupiable unit database. He then summarized the process through which the proposed vision was developed, emphasized that local procedures for assignment of street names and unit numbers are NOT within the scope of this project, summarized the justification for pursuing the proposed vision, and then explained the following key objectives of the proposed vision (refer to the slides at [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05\\_0420/kotz.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/05_0420/kotz.pdf) for more information):

- Define a single official source for address data for each distinct area throughout the Metro Area.
- Provide multiple avenues to input address data to the regional solution at the time produced by local officials and accept varying levels of spatial accuracy provided the method of data creation is documented.
- Implement a data transfer standard - a key to success.
- Synchronize the proposed regional solution with the 911 community's Master Street Address Guide (MSAG)
- Clearly define appropriate organizational roles and responsibilities for all participants, including the regional custodian, which the Metropolitan 911 Board has expressed interest in assuming with the understanding that a solution to a 911-compatible street centerline dataset (Item 5b) is a higher priority.
- Implement an outreach plan to ensure timely communication with local producers of address data.

Chinander commented that the ability to attach attribute (descriptor) information at the unit level would be greatly beneficial to the E911 community, noting that the availability of AEDs (Automated Electronic Defibrillators), as well as the existence of and type of any hazardous materials, could be maintained as a component of the information associated with each unit and, thus, provide valuable and potentially lifesaving information for E911 dispatchers in the event a call is received for an emergency involving that unit. Additionally, landmark, alias, and common building names for particular addresses could also be identified, which could improve routing information and related applications.

Member Schneider affirmed his earlier comment for the need to regularly revisit communities that initially elect to opt out (of the opportunity to participate as a primary producer of address data) to give them an opportunity to regularly reevaluate their decision in the event their circumstances change.

The presenters were thanked for their work on the proposed vision and for their enthusiasm.

#### **e) Existing Land Use – Board Request for Additional Information**

Due to the late hour, Chairperson Reinhardt briefly commented that the Coordinating Committee is proposing to host a forum to address questions raised by the Board at the January meeting. None of the Board members expressed any opposition to the proposed forum, as outlined in the agenda materials.

#### **f) Comparison of Objectives: NAZCA Solutions Software and MetroGIS**

Chairperson Reinhardt introduced Dave Drealan, Director of Planning and Zoning for Carver County, to explain the NAZCA product as it is being implemented by Carver County and how it compares and contrasts with the objectives pursued by MetroGIS.

Drealan began by commenting that NAZCA's product is a sophisticated data mining tool and that its primary audience in the county's installation is the real estate community (attorneys, brokers, closers,

bankers); individuals who regularly require access to data maintained by the county important to real estate transactions and generally pertaining to a particular parcel(s). Drealan then demonstrated, via the Internet, the type of queries that are being developed for Carver County. He explained that the NAZCA application reports (often in PDF format) are the end product, not digital data; and only parcel-related data is involved.

Drealan noted that in comparison to MetroGIS's efforts, there is no attempt via the NAZCA application to standardize processes from county to county and queries pertaining to multiple parcels generally have to be completed one-by-one, and they do not possess GIS functionality (e.g., ability to analyze relationships among and between features (roads, parcels, houses, utilities, natural features). He also mentioned other MetroGIS objectives, which are not a component of NAZCA implementations, including efforts to standardize data content and related data management and access processes for many data themes (land cover, planned land use, city/county jurisdictional boundaries, census geography, street centerlines, socioeconomic characteristics of areas, etc.), in addition to parcels, principally to improve intergovernmental sharing of these commonly needed data, which are produced independently by several governmental organizations serving local, regional, state and federal interests.

Drealan concluded his remarks with the following comments:

- 1) Carver County has justified its investment in the NAZCA application because it is experiencing rapid growth, which equates to a need to process lots of permits and a resulting need to improve the manner in which the County processes a variety of information requests from real estate professionals.
- 2) The NAZCA application is being developed to "mine" parcel-related data and documents from several disparate databases maintained by the county's enterprise which do not cross-talk to expedite access by the real estate industry. He believes this functionality is at the other end of the spectrum from benefits gained via MetroGIS's objectives – implement on a regional basis data content standards and best management practices needed to facilitate sharing and easy use of a multitude of data themes and that are commonly needed by local and regional government interests which serve the entire seven county area.

Member Pistilli commented that the NAZCA product offers an example of collaborative opportunities not currently being considered by MetroGIS. He encouraged all associated with MetroGIS to investigate ways in which MetroGIS might pursue endeavors of this nature to broaden the community of those benefiting from MetroGIS's efforts.

## **6. MAJOR PROJECT UPDATES**

Chairperson Reinhardt encouraged the members to review the materials provided in the agenda packet, noting that there is insufficient time to talk about them at the meeting and that if anyone has any questions to contact the Staff Coordinator.

## **7. INFORMATION SHARING**

There was no discussion of the information presented in this report, other than Chairperson Reinhardt commented that she had testified before a Senate subcommittee in favor of restoring funding that the Governor has proposed to cut from LMIC's budget and that the letters, emails and testimony appeared to be making a difference.

## **8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27, 2005.

## **9. ADJOURN**

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

Prepared by,  
Randall Johnson, AICP  
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator