

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Offices
April 25, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. She welcomed Commissioner Tom Workman as the new representative from Carver County, and invited all persons present to introduce themselves.

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

Members Absent: Tom Egan (Dakota County) and Joseph Wagner (Scott County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: David Arbeit, William Brown, David Drealan, Rick Gelbmann, Jane Harper, Randy Knippel, and Nancy Read.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Christopher Kline, and Jonathan Blake (Richardson Richter Associates and member of the Staff Support Team)

Visitors: Dan Falbo (ESRI) and Brian Hubberty (U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Pistilli moved and Member Workman seconded to approve the proposed agenda, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Pistilli moved and Member Cook seconded to approve the January 17, 2007 meeting summary, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

Efficiencies Realized Through Coordinated Application Development: Lessons Learned From The OpenMNND Project

Randy Knippel, member of the Coordinating Committee, introduced the topic and provided a brief background on the OpenMNND (pronounced "open mind") project. OpenMNND is a collaborative effort between organizations in Minnesota and North Dakota, facilitated through contacts and relationships that originally developed as a result of networking fostered by the MetroGIS forum provided by MetroGIS, a point that Knippel emphasized. Funded through a Federal grant of \$75,000, the project's objectives are to create a low-cost, easy to implement, and highly customizable open-source mapping application that can be shared many times with organizations everywhere. In other works, work to together to leverage resources and improve cost efficiencies for the hosting organizations and establish more consistency among similar websites to improve user efficiencies. Knippel noted that support from MetroGIS stakeholders and users was critical to obtaining the grant from the Federal government. OpenMNND leverages existing open-source efforts, such as GeoMOOSE from the City of Saint Paul and MapServer from the University of Minnesota. OpenMNND uses a decentralized data structure, relying on Internet-based web mapping services to provide the data layers upon demand. Knippel explained how web mapping services work machine to machine and emphasized the efficiencies that the user can realize by taking advantage of this technology. The presentation slides can be viewed at (URL)

Member Pistilli asked what would motivate a county to share their data – asking "Why would a county give up the revenue from their data by making it for free?" Knippel responded by stating that use web mapping service technology enables them to improve service delivery by minimizing staff support and provide the user with the most update to date data 24-7. He noted that the Dakota County's policy and

that of most of the other metro area counties that support on-line real estate look-up services find that the reduction in support costs and improved service to residents is more important than pursuing a strict cost recovery policy. He mentioned that the web-based applications/tools allow the hosting agency to turn off parcel and other valuable data, such as contours, when the user zooms out to a given radius beyond the subject property. Knippel commented that users that want to investigate larger areas or have a need for data analysis still need to purchase the data to accomplish their needs.

Pistilli asked if this type of access policy will be considered for regional applications facilitated by MetroGIS's efforts. The Staff Coordinator commented that a regional policy concerning related to parcel data has been under consideration for some time and that the OpenMNND project is helping to mature it. He also commented that an agreement in principle has been reached with The Lawrence Group concerning this type of "view-only" access to the regional TLG Street Centerline dataset. Pistilli then encouraged the staff and the Coordinating Committee to investigate a partnership with the real estate industry to leverage access to their parcel related data resources in a way easily combinable with data produced by the counties.

Rick Gelbmann, a member of the Coordinating Committee, asked if a county can control what data they release via the web services used by OpenMNND. Knippel replied, stating that since a data provider has control of their data at their location, they can restrict access to data to whatever criteria they establish.

Alternate Member Simmer asked what would happen if one or more web services was unavailable when the interface is being used. Knippel stated that the OpenMNND application would "gray-out" the option for that data layer until it again becomes available. This capability was specifically created by the City of St. Paul in the foundation code to insure that the web application does not become disabled when a particular service goes down for whatever reason. The idea being that the producer of the data contained in each service is responsible for that service and its operation is independent of all other services accessible via a particular application.

Member Kordiak asked if the application was specific to Minnesota and North Dakota. Knippel replied that the application is not specific to particular area and could be adapted for use anywhere.

Members Lake and Kordiak asking what would happen if the visual aspects of the data did not match – using an example of two jurisdictions mapping stop signs, with one using a red dot and others using another kind of indicator. Knippel replied that the growing presence of applications will act as a catalyst to improving understanding of the value data content standards and adherence to them, particular with respect to data important to others, such as data that are components of regional solutions pursued by organizations like MetroGIS. Knippel also noted that the individuals developing their respective OpenMNND interfaces will be insuring that metadata is provided for the data that comprise each web mapping so the user can determine if a particular dataset meets their respective needs.

Member Pistilli asked if the OpenMNND project would eliminate the need for the regional parcel or street centerlines dataset. Knippel replied that the need for these datasets would be reinforced to insure interoperability among jurisdictions, even though the geographic extent shown by a particular organization would comprise only a portion of the whole.

Member Cook commented that school districts in the area are pursuing interoperability regarding data that are routinely used by multiple districts and encouraged Knippel to speak to them about the OpenMNND web interface.

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked Knippel for his presentation commenting on its timeliness given the desire of the MetroGIS community's preference to pursue collaborative solutions to shared application needs and opportunities.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Election of Officers

Chairperson Reinhardt introduced the topic, stating that she and Vice-Chairperson Kordiak have served for many years and are both amenable to reelection if that is the preference of the Board.

Motion: Member Pistilli moved and Member Schneider seconded to move the current slate of officers to serve as MetroGIS's officers for the coming year. Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Pistilli asked about the open seat on the Board for the representative from the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities (AMM) for Large Cities. Member Schneider elaborated, explaining that AMM had not been able to find anyone that would fill the Large City position, and he suggested that an option may be pursue a GIS professional affiliated with the LOGIS organization as they are as knowledgeable as anyone of the city community's use of GIS technology. Following a comment by the Staff Coordinator that members of the Policy Board are intended to be a member of a stakeholder organization's policy body the members asked Member Schneider staff to continue to look into the LOGIS option and the possibility of the GIS professional serving as an alternate for a policy maker. .

b) MetroGIS Business Plan Update Project

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Brown introduced the topic, providing background related to the February 8 Strategic Directions Workshop and the process used to distill the results for this [presentation](#) to the Board. Brown stressed that the information being presented during the meeting was the raw material from which a final business plan would be crafted, and urged the Policy Board to recognize that what they were reviewing was a work in progress.

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that she left the February 8th Strategic Directions Workshop with a sense of vitality and believes that the time spent together was valuable use of each participant's time. She emphasized that the reasons that the workshop and MetroGIS work are working well is that no one is attempting to tell anyone else how to do anything but rather focusing on how we can work together to accomplish shared needed. She also noted that she believes the camaraderie among the participants is also improved as a result of the networking and knowledge sharing that occurred at the workshop. Chairperson Reinhardt concluded her introductory remarks by emphasizing that significant technological advancements have occurred since the current mission statement was adopted and MetroGIS's initial success of figuring out how to "stitch" together parcel data produced by the seven counties, warranting the scope changes identified for MetroGIS at the workshop.

Member Kordiak asked how many years the new plan would cover. The Staff Coordinator replied that the plan's time frame had not been established beyond a general 3 to 5 year timeframe that was used to generate discussion at the Strategic Directions Workshop and that the actual duration of the new plan would be determined as part the plan development as strategies are considered. Member Schneider added that he concurred with the request for Policy Board endorsement of set some basic goals, with the understanding that some strategies will be short term and others will likely have a longer term the basis for which will be defined in the final recommendation.

Brown continued, stating the mission statement that has been effect for some time is technologically and process focused, while the suggested new statement is aimed on the why - improving the region's livability and effectiveness.

Brown proceeded to review the general findings of the strategic directions workshop, a suggested vision statement, the suggested mission statement, and major business functions to guide MetroGIS's efforts for the next 3-5 years. He added that the suggested vision statement was a new concept, as a vision statement had not been previously adopted as a separate statement. Brown stressed that the suggested vision statement and the suggested mission statement are not final versions, but should be viewed as starting places from which to proceed with development of the Next-Generation Business Plan and that as such approval is "works in progress" was sought. The presentation slides can be viewed at [URL](#).

Member Kordiak asked if the public can access data through MetroGIS. The Staff Coordinator replied that the general public can access over 150 datasets, without fee or licensure from through DataFinder but not including parcel or street centerline data which require licensure as an academic or government

interest. Member Kordiak then asked for clarification whether MetroGIS's primary focus is government interests or the general public. Chairperson Reinhardt responded that the public has been able to use the data for personal uses for some time but she also mentioned that MetroGIS's focus is on helping organizations, whose business it is to serve the general public, to do a better a better job more cost effectively. Coordinating Committee Member Gelbmann stated that indirect benefits to citizens arrive by having increased efficiency in government programs. Member Schneider replied that the general public is more sophisticated with GIS technologies than it used to be and that this increasing sophistication will continue to push government to provide information in increasingly supplicated ways. Brown commented that the counties have implemented applications like Knippel demonstrated earlier in the meeting in an attempt to address the increasingly web-reliant services demanded the public.

Chairperson Reinhardt suggested **removing "... especially local and regional governments." from the suggested mission statement.** After a brief discussion of the Board's desire for MetroGIS to seek out partnerships with non-government interests to address shared needs, consensus on this change was obtained. In defense of the change, Chairperson Reinhardt commented that MetroGIS is each of our organizations working tighter to do a better job and not about getting bigger. The members **concurred with the concept that MetroGIS is a "capacity builder"** and that to achieve the "greatest public good" goal stated in the guiding principles that future efforts cannot be limited to action that focus on the needs of some of the stakeholders (local and regional government) but rather needs to be responsible to the shared needs of the broad community – government and non-government alike. Seeking out "quid pro quo" solutions to shared needs was acknowledged as an important tactic for future regional solutions. Chairperson Reinhardt commented that the need for analysis of data to address issues and needs that cross jurisdictions is a primary reason for MetroGIS's being. *(Editor's note: Following the Board meeting, at Member Harper's suggestion, the Planning Oversight Team elected to add back the "capacity builder" statement that it had removed from the initial draft of the mission statement suggested by staff.)*

Schneider concurred noting that he supported the suggested change in the guiding principles to seek out other interests (other than local and regional government) to participate in regional solutions because he believes such partnerships will add value to solutions supported solely by parochial interests. He also encouraged Board members to think about opening Board membership, not necessarily voting, to include a broader range of stakeholder interests. Pistilli commented that he is supportive of investigating the opening up of the Board membership as a topic of consideration in the Business Planning process. In response to a question from Kordiak Schneider commented that he would like to see a policy whereby stakeholder interests not currently at the table set up "coordinating committees" of their own like interests and that their chairperson have a set at the Policy Board. Kordiak noted that he is supportive of a process and procedures that results in more opportunities.

In response to a comment from Reinhardt and Kordiak that they did not believe it be appropriate to describe MetroGIS's place or territory as "Minneapolis- St. Paul Metropolitan Area, the group concurred that retaining a designation of "place" in the mission statement was important but asked staff to offer a substitute for "Minneapolis- St. Paul". (Editor's note: "Twin Cities" will be offered as the suggested substitute.

No other modifications or suggestions were offered to the suggested vision and statements, guiding principles statement, and major business functions to guide MetroGIS's efforts for the next 3 to 5 years.

Motion: Member Kordiak moved and Member Schneider seconded to accept the Next-Generation Policy Foundation, as presented in the agenda packet, as "works in progress" from which to proceed with the development of a Next Generation Business Plan for MetroGIS, subject to:

- 1) Removing the phrase "essentially local and regional government" from the suggested mission statement
- 2) Offering a substitute for the place description of "Minneapolis-St. Paul" in the suggested mission and vision statement.

Motion carried, ayes all.

Motion: Member Pistilli moved and Member Schneider seconded to authorize the Chair to call a special MetroGIS Policy Board before the next regular scheduled meeting, if necessary, to review key performance measures. Motion carried, ayes all.

Motion: Alternate Member O'Rourke moved and Member Schneider seconded to authorize development of a modified 2007 MetroGIS budget and associated workplan for Policy Board approval that realigns preliminary allocations to be consistent with the priorities decided as a result of the February 8th Strategic Directions Workshop. Motion carried, ayes all.

c) 2007 Regional GIS Projects – Concept Endorsement

Coordinating Committee Chair Brown introduced the topic, stating that the Coordinating Committee had found that the “Geocoding Service and Application Code” project proposed by Nancy Read of the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, warranted concept approval. He explained that two other proposals were considered in the process, but the selected concept was deemed to have the most merit. Chairperson Reinhardt asked the Board if desired any further information before acting on the Committee’s recommendation. The members concurred that no further information was desired.

Motion: Member Lake moved and Member Pistilli seconded to concur with the Coordinating Committee’s finding that the concept project entitled “Geocoding Service and Application Code”, and involving approximately \$10,000 in funding, is consistent with the requirements for funding as a Regional GIS Project embodies a good use of public funds and warrants further consideration. Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Pistilli commented that U.S. Bank had considered submitting an application in conjunction with Professor Shekhar, from whom the Board heard a presentation last April, which would have sought a public-private partnership to implement the Professor’s Evaluation Planning Application. Pistilli noted that although an application was not made, he believes that this is the type of partnership that MetroGIS continue to explore.

6. MAJOR ACTIVITY UPDATES

a) Parcel Data Cost Recovery Policies – Estimate of Net Revenue Realized

Chairperson Reinhardt introduced the information that was presented in the agenda packet, noting that Board had requested this information at January meeting. Alternate Member O'Rourke suggested that before the Board gives further consideration that the Coordinating Committee should review, as suggested by David Claypool, the criteria used by each county to gather their data. Chairperson Reinhardt agreed, asking the Coordinating Committee to insure the data collection assumptions are the same across the counties, refine the table as needed, then report back to the Policy Board.

Schneider offered that the concept of limiting charging cost recovery fees to situations when data certification is needed and allowing free access to “uncertified” data as may be a middle ground worth pursuing. Those who need certification, expect to pay. General information for free is fine but can’t rely upon it.

Brown offered a similar question – Does cost recovery policy get in the way of good public policy associated with providing services?

Questions posed by the Board it asked the Committee to consider as it developing the Business Plan and related policies:

- What level of sophistication is needed in the data and when?
- What will a client need to do to correct any possible misinformation, if data is not accurate?

Kordiak commented that times and expectations have changed since the cost recovery policies were enacted. A comparison of desired outcomes then and now is probably in order.

Pistilli commented that if the stakeholder is the public, they have already paid for the data, unless a level of certification is needed.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

There was no discussion of the topics listed in the agenda report.

Cook commented that the Anoka-Hennepin School District has d recently completed the installation of 80 miles of fiber. He noted that it was installed for the purpose of sharing. Cook agreed to send a brief abstract to staff to pass along to local government that have jurisdiction in the area served by Anoka-Hennepin School District

Hubberty informed the Board that Minneapolis has a good chance of being selected as the location for a 2011 National Conference of Remote Sensing professionals. He also informed the Board about an EROS conference that will be held in the Twin Cities in June 2007. He agreed to send information to the Staff Coordinator who agreed to forward it to Coordinating Committee and Board members.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for July 25, 2007.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Prepared by:

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and

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