



**Draft**

*Setting the Stage for the  
Next-Generation of Collaboration*

**Summary of the Process to Update  
MetroGIS's Policy Foundation  
(February to April 2007)**

*Last Modified: April 17, 2007*

Compiled by  
MetroGIS Staff Support Team

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- John Bryson, Professor of Planning and Public Affairs and Associate Dean for Research and Centers, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota - Lead workshop facilitator
- David Arbeit, Mn Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis - MetroGIS Coordinating Committee member and former Chair of the Committee
- Rick Gelbmann, Metropolitan Council – MetroGIS Coordinating Committee member and Chair, Mn Governor's Council on Geographic Information
- Jane Harper, Washington County - MetroGIS Coordinating Committee member and former Chair of the Committee
- Nancy Read, Metropolitan Mosquito Control District – MetroGIS Coordinating Committee member and immediate past Chair of the Committee
- Trudy Richter, Richardson Richter Associates, MetroGIS Staff Support Team
- Mark Vander Schaaf, Metropolitan Council - MetroGIS Coordinating Committee

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This forum and the numerous follow-up discussions to refine the vast amount of material generated at the forum into coherent and useable statements of desired policy could not have been successful without the combined efforts of these individuals and organizations.

Respectfully,

Randall Johnson, Workshop Project Manager  
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	i
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	ii
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Welcome / Introductions</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>Setting the Stage:</b>	
<i>Historical Overview – A Decade of Fostering Collaboration</i>	<b>x</b>
<b>Provide Strategic Direction:</b>	<b>xx</b>
<i>Part 1 – Opportunities, Challenges, Activities</i>	xx
<i>What should MetroGIS be doing the next 3-5 years?</i>	
<i>Part 2 – Outcomes, Results</i>	xx
<i>What would result if MetroGIS did these things?</i>	
<i>Part 3 – Guiding Principles</i>	xx
<i>What principles and operating standards should guide MetroGIS’s future efforts?</i>	
<i>Part 4 – Priorities and Capabilities</i>	xx
<i>What are the desired priority outcomes, major strategies, and capabilities for the next 3-5 years?</i>	
<i>Part 5 – Implications for Mission Statement</i>	xx
<i>Is the current MetroGIS Mission Statement consistent with outcomes desired for the next 3-5 years?</i>	
<b>Reflections</b>	<b>xx</b>
<b>Forum Closing</b> .....	<b>xx</b>
<b>Refinements to Products Following Workshop (<u>Part 6</u>)</b> .....	<b>xx</b>
<b>Listing of Figures</b> .....	<b>xx</b>
A. Welcome – Chairperson Reinhardt .....	xx
B. Introductions – Professor John Bryson.....	xx
C. Historical Overview – William Craig.....	xx
D. Wall Space Created by “Lines” Workgroup ( <i>Picture</i> ) .....	xx
E. Wall Space Created by “Points” Workgroup ( <i>Picture</i> ) .....	xx
F. Wall Space Created by “Polygons” Workgroup ( <i>Picture</i> ) .....	xx
G. Wall Space Created for the Combined Outcome and Activity Labels ( <i>Picture</i> ). ..	xx

<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>XX</b>
A. Final Program .....	XX
B. Program Transition Slides .....	XX
C. Forum Evaluation Results .....	XX
D. Background Information Packet .....	XX
E. “Starter Kit” Statements .....	XX
F. Forum Participants, Small Group Assignments and Support Team .....	XX
G. Letter of Invitation .....	XX
H. Concept Map – Enhanced Version .....	XX
 <b>Endnotes</b> .....	 <b>XX</b>

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On February 8, 2007, thirty-two individuals, each of whom possesses insight important to MetroGIS's continued success<sup>i</sup> participated in the day-long MetroGIS Strategic Directions Workshop.

The purpose of the Workshop was to provide policy level direction to guide MetroGIS's efforts over the next 3 to 5 years, that is, focus was on "whats" and "whys". The participants were informed that defining the "hows" would be the focus of the subsequent MetroGIS's Business Plan Update project. Specifically, the purposes of the Workshop were to:

- Collectively define major desired outcomes and activities that MetroGIS should pursue over the next 3 to 5 years.
- Provide clear and agreed upon direction to regarding key issues and opportunities important to MetroGIS's continued success.

The participants included five (5) members of MetroGIS's Policy Board, twenty-one (21) members of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee, and six (6) individuals possessing special expertise important to setting direction for MetroGIS. The mix of perspectives also included that of policy maker, manager, and technologist, representing a wide variety of professions affiliated with all forms of government that serve the seven-county Metropolitan Area, Greater Minnesota and beyond, as well as academic, utility, non-profit, and for-profit interests.

Numerous desired outcomes, and strategies to achieve those outcomes, were identified. Straw polling was used to identify outcomes and activities of most importance to the participants. General agreement was also reached on desired modifications to guiding principals and mission statement.

According to the participants' evaluations, the Workshop successively achieved this purpose. On a scale of 1 to 5, with a 5 meaning "outstanding", the effectiveness evaluation ratings from the participants for each of the core workshop components ranged from 4.25 to 4.72, with an overall average of 4.44<sup>ii</sup>, with a 5 meaning "outstanding".

**General Policy Direction:** The participants concluded that the mission statement that served MetroGIS during its first decade should be modified to reflect both the growth that has occurred in the technical capabilities and maturity of the community as to its understanding of the benefits possible through collaboration to address shared information needs. Several policy issues were also identified during Parts 3 -5 of the Workshop which the group concurred need to be resolved before sustainable next-generation strategies can be developed and implemented<sup>iii</sup>. The group also collectively concluded that:

- 1) MetroGIS is serving a valuable public purpose,
- 2) The collaborative solutions and best practices that have been achieved through MetroGIS's efforts should be sustained,
- 3) The scope of MetroGIS's activities should focus on "shared" as opposed to "common" information needs thereby enabling work on shared needs recognized to be critical to the region but which do not directly impact all core stakeholders. .
- 4) Efforts should be made to broaden participation – users, contributors, and jurisdictions adjoining the Twin City Metropolitan Area.
- 5) The range of existing activities should be expanded to include:
  - Addressing shared application needs related to solutions to shared information needs,
  - Fostering development of technology advancements and infrastructure improvements needed to achieve MetroGIS's desired outcomes,
  - Expanding outreach efforts to include benefits of using GIS technology in addition to the current focus on fostering collaboration to address shared needs.

Through the use of a group facilitation and analysis technique called “causal or concept mapping”. the desired outcomes, strategies/activities, and relationship defined among and between them that had been generated by the participants<sup>iv</sup>. Following the Workshop, the information captured at the Workshop was refined to improve readability<sup>v</sup>. From this enhanced version of the “map”, the following desired outcomes and activities are easily recognized and logic of the relationships among and between them is more readily depicted.

**Desired Outcomes:** Three types of desired outcomes were identified to guide MetroGIS’s efforts for the next 3 to 5 years.

**Community-focused Outcomes:** The first type is comprised of major outcomes that MetroGIS can influence but other organizations are actually responsible for their achievement. The following such “community-based” outcomes that the participants desire as a result of MetroGIS’s efforts are as follows:

- Solve Real World Problems
- Better decisions being made
- Stronger local economy
- More informed citizens
- Achieve community goals
- Improve quality of life

Community-based outcomes relate to the substance of a vision or destination statement for an organization. Through the process to refine the products of the Workshop, the following draft vision (destination) statement from MetroGIS was crafted:

**Draft Vision Statement:** *“Organizations serving the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area are successfully collaborating to use geographic information technology to solve real world problems.”*

**MetroGIS-focused Outcomes:** The second type of major outcome involves results for which MetroGIS can directly influence and which MetroGIS should be accountable. These outcomes are good in tot own right. The Workshop participant identified the following such outcomes for MetroGIS over the next 3 to 5 years:

- Expanded Resource Availability Through Partnering
- Cost Avoidance
- More Efficient/Effective Core Stakeholders
- Enhanced (Broadened) Understanding of Our Region
- Broadened Participation (Users, Contributors, and Jurisdictions Adjoining the Metro Area)

These major outcomes relate embody the substance of a mission statement or statement of operational purpose which is intended to work in concert with guiding principles:

**Draft Mission Statement:** *“The mission of MetroGIS is to address shared geographic information technology needs, through a collaboration of organizations that serve the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area, especially regional and local governments.*

**Performance Measurement-focused Outcomes:** The third type of outcome involves those outcomes that are subordinate to major outcomes, they typically are a means to achieving a major outcome and therefore often are important performance indicators. They are not listed separately in this report but are depicted on the “casual map” in presented in Appendix H<sup>vi</sup>.

### **Desired Activities/Strategies (To Achieved Desired Outcomes)**

The participants identified the following eight major activity areas to focus on over the next 3 to 5 years. These activity areas are strategically related to the MetroGIS’s ability to achieve desired

major outcomes. They are not intended to be listed in any order of relative importance, as setting of priorities will occur during development of the Next Generation Business Plan:

- Facilitate better data sharing (*more data available, more users, improved processes*)
- Sustain stakeholder satisfaction with MetroGIS's accomplishments to date.
  - Regional data solutions to shared information needs
  - One-stop, Internet-based tool for data discovery and access (MetroGIS DataFinder)
  - Adopted standards and best practices
  - Data sharing policies and agreements
  - Forum for knowledge sharing and spirit of working together
- Expand regional solutions (*to shared information needs*) to include applications and foster infrastructure enhancements needed to fully leverage the capabilities of those regional solutions.
- Expand of MetroGIS stakeholders :
  - Interoperability with jurisdictions adjoining the seven-county Metropolitan Area.
  - Municipal government participating as producers of data for regional solutions (*addresses*)
  - Partnerships with non-government entities to secure resources needed to address shared needs.
  - Expand users of MetroGIS's services.
- Build advocacy and awareness (*of the benefits of collaborative solutions to shared needs*)
  - Improve understanding among government leadership that use of GIS technology is a cost of effectively doing business in today's high-tech world and that cross-organization collaboration is necessary to fully realize these capabilities.
  - Coordinate with the State of Minnesota's Spatial Technology Infrastructure planning to seek alignment between state policies and MetroGIS's solutions to shared information needs and distribution architecture.
- Optimize MetroGIS organization
  - Sustain a broadly supported stakeholder-governed organizational structure that operationalizes the guiding principles and is consistent with the capabilities required to achieve the vision.
  - Have funding policies that result in the most efficient and effective use of taxpayers' money
  - Sustain and enhance core and distinctive competencies

### **Next Steps**

The policies statements, desired results activities put forth in this document are intended to remain designated as "works in progress" until adopted as part of a complete Next Generation Business Plan to guide MetroGIS over the next 3 to 5 years. The "works in progress" designation is because it is possible that desired modifications may be identified to these statements and preferences as specific recommendations are developed as part of the subsequent Business Planning process.

These "works in progress" are scheduled to be shared with the Policy Board on April 25, 2007. Once Policy Board endorsement is received for the "works in progress" policy foundation described in this document and which comprise the core components of the Next Generation Business Plan, the work to develop detailed strategies will begin to define the "hows" for each of the priority activities and priorities for work programming.

## ENDNOTES:

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- <sup>i</sup> See Page 8 of the Background Information Packet provided in Appendix D. A “Give-Take” diagram is presented on this page that illustrates interests important to the long-term success of MetroGIS. This document was sent to participants prior to the workshop.
- <sup>ii</sup> See Appendix B for a full accounting of the evaluation results.
- <sup>iii</sup> The participants agreed that a workgroup should be formed to refine the direction generally agreed upon at the Workshop to propose specific modifications to MetroGIS’s mission statement and guiding principles. Two workgroups engaged immediately following the Workshop. The results of their efforts were presented to the MetroGIS Policy Board on April 25, 2007. The agenda report can be viewed at [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/07\\_0425/index.shtml](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/07_0425/index.shtml).
- <sup>iv</sup> See Appendix XX. This “map” is the as depicted on the walls at the Workshop prior to any refinement to improve readability. The “casual mapping” technique was selected to provide a means to readily visualize the agreed upon desired outcomes and activities and relationships among them.
- <sup>v</sup> See Appendix XXX. The information depicted on this “enhanced map” is the same as shown on the “original map” created at the workshop. However, enhancements were made to improve readability without changing substance.
- <sup>vi</sup> These indicators will be the substance of the Performance Measurement Plan Update process that is schedule to launch once the Business Plan Update project is essentially complete. Identification of these performance indicators is a direct result of utilizing the “casual map” facilitation and analysis technique.