

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS Policy Board**  
**Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Offices**  
**January 30, 2008**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

Members Present: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Janice Rettman for Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Roger Lake (Metro Watershed Districts), Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council), Steve Elkins (Metro Cities – City of Bloomington), Terry Schneider (Metro Cities - City of Minnetonka), and Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES).

Members Absent: Tom Workman (Carver County), Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), and Joseph Wagner (Scott County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Rick Gelbmann, Randy Knippel, Nancy Read, and Mark Vander Schaaf.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Christopher Kline

Visitors: Dan Ross (Minnesota Department of Transportation), Steve Swazee (Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Mn Governors Council on Geographic Information, and Paul Weinberger (City of Minneapolis)

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

Vice-Chairperson noted that an Item 5e - Executive Committee - Approval of Letter of Support for Grant Application was being added to the agenda. Member Schneider moved and Member Pistilli seconded to approve the proposed agenda, as modified. Motion carried, ayes all.

**3. MEETING SUMMARY**

Member Pistilli moved and Member O'Rourke seconded to approve the October 17, 2007 meeting summary, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

**4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION**

***GIS's Role In Response to I-35W Bridge Collapse***

Paul Weinberger from the City of Minneapolis introduced himself and Dan Ross of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Weinberger explained that he would focus on describing the City of Minneapolis's GIS response to the bridge collapse, while Ross would describe the Department of Transportation's GIS response. (A copy of their slide presentation and handouts will be posted on the MetroGIS website when available.)

Weinberger continued, explaining that at the time of the collapse all the GIS staff had left for the day. However, remote access through laptops and broadband allowed many of the workers to log in from their homes to provide immediate support. The city's Emergency Operations plan did not have the GIS staff listed as resource group, but they showed up on their own. All emergency vehicles in the City of Minneapolis are equipped with global positioning system devices; integration of GPS technology and GIS allows a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to locate resources and routed the closest emergency vehicle to the bridge site. ESRI, the developers of ArcGIS software, offered staff support to the City of Minneapolis during this time, as well.

GIS technology was used to clarify the boundaries of the site over time, establish the security plan and perimeter, manage staffing, distribute site information, and communicate information about the site to outside organizations.

New GIS applications were developed within a short time, some using templates and others created from scratch. An example application was an online atlas allowing a person to receive driving directions across the region, factoring in the closure of the bridge and surrounding streets – something that Google Maps or Mapquest did not have available for quite a while after bridge had collapsed.

Member Egan asked if resources from other agencies, such as Dakota County, were captured and in the resource management systems. Weinberger replied that if these resources were provided in a GIS format that was compatible with the City of Minneapolis's system, then it would have been easy to integrate them. Unfortunately the time constraints around the collapse and recovery did not permit time-consuming integration. He commented that a lesson learned is that establishing common data practices would be helpful for integration in any future crisis.

Member Egan then asked if a priority system had been implemented for the transportation network. Weinberger explained that a prioritization system had not been implemented at the time of the bridge collapse, but was currently under development as the need for such a system was obvious during the incident.

Member Cook asked how long ESRI was on site and what tasks they performed. Weinberger stated that six ESRI staff members were on site for two days, beginning the morning after the collapse during which time they provided data translation services among the data provided by the various organizations involved.

Member Pistilli asked if any existing software development rules or other kinds of rules that the GIS staff discarded during the crisis that are no longer viewed as necessary. Weinberger replied that the situation was unusual and in most software development there are testing phases that were not able to be implemented due to time constraints.

Ross continued the presentation, adding that MN DOT also used remote access to create new maps, designate road closures and detours, and coordinate efforts with the City of Minneapolis. New aerial photography was requested and flights began the morning following the collapse. These photos were available immediately online for all responders to access. These photos were integrated into a recovery grid for investigators and rescue workers to reference.

In addition to assisting the recovery effort, GIS technology was also used for planning for the replacement bridge which began the day after the collapse. Using MetroGIS data, MN DOT planners were able to designate the spatial footprint of the new bridge considering the local streets and any parcels nearby.

Utilizing existing web service templates, MN DOT was able to create basic maps in less than four hours using City of Minneapolis data. Over time, more data was added to the web service – such as the aerial photos and emergency services layers. MN DOT also added their own data to the City of Minneapolis's online mapping and directions tool, adding in state road closures to the municipal grid as well. This was further expanded during the flooding of southeastern Minnesota a few weeks later.

Ross commented that collaboration between organizations was good during the rescue and recovery processes and that web services allowed fast access to the data on demand. However, licensing restrictions resulted in a week's delay in access to data that was requested to respond to the emergency. He recommended that pre-arranged agreements between organizations should be developed to allow sharing of data during emergencies without license restrictions, or similar language to be incorporated into license agreements.

In response to a suggestion that data sharing agreements implemented by MetroGIS should be modified to **provide access to licensed data in an emergency**, Member Schneider suggested that the data sharing impasse encountered **should be addressed either through statute or executive order**, given the problem is broader than the Metropolitan Area. Member Egan added that local governments should adopt standard language into their license agreements to facilitate data sharing during emergencies. Member O'Rourke

commented that licenses are usually used for legal liability reasons, and not to simply restrict access to public data – therefore, the issue is best left to the state to regulate.

Member Cook commented that the Governor’s power to regulate private utilities information and networks during an emergency likely differs from his ability to access publicly produced data, and suggested that these differences be investigated if authority is sought to access data during emergencies via statute or executive order.

Vice Chairperson Kordiak asked about the method of communication used to capture information from the emergency management personal was via paper or electronic. Weinberger commented that a combination method was used. The Emergency managers communicated with post-it notes attached to the maps and other documents and white boards. Their comments were then captured electronically to provide the ability to easily integrate the information provided for a variety of uses including the rapid printing out of coordinated schedules and presentation on map products.

Vice Chairperson Kordiak also inquired about procedures of during a disaster, access to the power grid and/or Internet is lost. Alternate Member Rettman added that redundancies are incorporated into emergency preparation plans. Networks such as the 800 MHz system are an excellent example of built-in redundancies for such a situation.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Policy Board requested that the Coordinating Committee offer recommendations for relaxing licensing procedures during emergencies, including but not limited to,

- Offering example universal (boilerplate) language for mutual aid agreements which defines what constitutes an emergency, who has authority to authorize rule waivers and procedures to rapidly distribute data to predetermined interests with a need to know,
- Pursuing desired authorities via Executive Order or modification of state stature
- Suggestions regarding legal and technical language for agreements and backup procedures.

The Board also requested that the Committee provide the following information:

- Document the reasons for the licensing geospatial data (e.g., liability concerns). What issues/concerns would come in to play if licensing was eliminated?
- Identify the types of data currently subject to license that can not be readily accessed during the response to an emergency, such as occurred during response to collapse of the I-35W bridge

The presenters were thanked for their presentation and the lessons learned they shared.

## **5. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **a) MetroGIS Emergency Preparedness Model Recognized by State and Leveraged In Federal Grant Application**

Randy Knippel, member of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee and Emergency Management Committee of the Mn Governor’s Council on Geographic Information, introduced the presentation by informing Board members that:

- 1) The Minnesota Department of Homeland Security’s Emergency Preparedness Division had formally recognized MetroGIS for its leadership in the collection, management, and coordination of data critical to emergency preparedness efforts
- 2) An application for a \$50,000 federal grant had been submitted to assist with implementing a statewide system of capturing and managing emergency preparedness data based upon MetroGIS’s model.

Staff Coordinator Johnson added that in January the Executive Committee of the Policy Board had authorized a letter of support for the federal CAP grant application reference by Knippel (Agenda Item 5e) because the application had to be submitted between Board meetings. Vice-Chairperson Kordiak noted that a copy of the letter had been provided to each member for their information and asked if there were any comments or questions. None were offered.

Knippel introduced Steve Swazee, co-chair of the Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) of the Mn Governor's Council on Geographic Information, who talked in general terms about the need for locally-produced data for effective emergency preparedness and to support tools that provide for an accurate accounting of "situational awareness" – available assets and where they are located (e.g., fire stations, policy stations, hospitals, police and fire personal, large staging areas, etc.) (See [http://www.metrogis.org/resources/pb/08\\_0130/gcgiecp\\_metrogis\\_013008.pdf](http://www.metrogis.org/resources/pb/08_0130/gcgiecp_metrogis_013008.pdf) for a copy of the slide presentation.)

He commented that it is the goal of the EPC that MetroGIS participate in an Emergency Management Data "roll-up" process (integration of locally-produced data) that is beginning throughout the nation. This data "roll up" focused program is referred to as the Homeland Security Information System (HSIN). The EPC has recognized the value of the Emergency management organizational model that has been endorsed by MetroGIS as a viable means to gain collaborative participation and achieve the "data roll up" promise of the HSIN. As such, MetroGIS model structure has been leveraged as the focus of the federal CAP grant proposal that was submitted this past December. Notification is expected in March or April of those interests who have been awarded grants.

Knippel added that Minnesota is in a good position for award of the grant because of MetroGIS's track record to achieve collaborative solutions and in general its efforts to foster collaboration to address shared needs. He and Swazee commented that they believe an **important next step for MetroGIS will be to formally endorse, as regional solutions**, several specified emergency preparedness related datasets that have been developed through the subject model organizational structure.

Member Schneider commented that a "bigger emergency preparedness table" will be needed that can be effectively supported by MetroGIS to ensure all key stakeholders are involved, such as utilities and jurisdictions beyond the seven county Metropolitan Area. Swazee replied that the proposed strategy is to focus on four core data layers (fire stations, schools, hospitals, and police stations), all of which are within the domain of interests that are currently participating in MetroGIS's efforts. Through development of these layers, the need for standards can be readily communicated, which is the key to achieving the goal of interoperability among adjoining jurisdictions. Once buy-in is achieved at this base level, additional data layers can be readily added as the standards are defined and the producers agree to adhere to them.

Member Schneider asked if a web-based mechanism would be used to directly update the subject data layers to minimize the bureaucracy needed to manage the data. Knippel responded that indeed this "direct updating of the regional dataset" is a goal and the that protocols under development to support the proposed development of the Address Points database are directly applicable to the four core Emergency Preparedness datasets. Knippel also commented that perhaps the maintenance requirements might also be fostered/implemented through local emergency management plans.

In response to a question from Member Pistilli asking Knippel if he and his EPC colleagues would like Policy Board members to open the door so to speak for them to gain access to key individuals within their respective communities and organizations, a wide ranging conversation occurred in which two needs were recognized: 1) Policy leadership is needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with the Emergency Management officials and 2) Emergency Management officials are not generally cognizant of the value that GIS technology can bring to their operations as noted in the presentation about the I-35W bridge collapse (Agenda item 4).

As a result of this discussion, the Policy Board asked Knippel to work through Coordinating Committee to develop an outreach strategy recommendation for the Board's consideration designed to connect GIS and Emergency Management officials within county government. The Board also suggested that the strategy include a model resolution for County Board approval

through which to define the public purpose to be served and the importance of their emergency managers leveraging GIS technology.

**b) Twin Cities Regional Economic Development Site**

Alternate Member O'Rourke encouraged the members to review the information provided in the agenda report. She added that Members Elkins, Schneider, the Staff Coordinator and she has met with the President of the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, and web site support staff to discussion how the Chamber and MetroGIS might collaborate to enhance upon the current capacities of the site, noting that the discussion was well received by all and that she had agreed to serve as liaison between the two groups. She closed her comments by noting that the initial launch of the site is planned for late February or March and that the two groups agreed to resume talks once the site was fully operational.

In response to a question from Member Pistilli, O'Rourke commented that the budget for 2008 is \$250,000 of which half will be paid by the Chamber (private sector) and the other half is being sought from public sector partners. In response to a question about benefit to the public sector from Vice-Chairperson Kordiak, O'Rourke briefly commented on the capabilities of the site to rapidly connect prospective land developers and businesses interested in expanding with suitable sites, as service that several public sector partners, including the Washington County have found worth the investment requested of them.

**c) 2007 Accomplishments Report**

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that development of the 2008-2011 MetroGIS Business Plan was the principle accomplishment in 2008 for which he thanked the members of the Policy Board for their involvement and ongoing support. He also noted that significant progress had also been made on several important application related projects.

**Motion:** Member Egan moved and Member Elkins seconded to:

- 1) Accept the summary of major accomplishments for 2007.
- 2) Direct staff to utilize the proposed annual report theme "How the MetroGIS Efforts Are Making a Difference and How Pursing Three Scope Expansions Are Expected To Increase MetroGIS's Relevance" for the 2007 MetroGIS Annual Report.

Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Pistilli announced that Member Johnson (Hennepin County, who was not present) and the Staff Coordinator had been notified earlier in the week that they had been appointed to serve on the newly created National Geospatial Advisory Committee, and offered his congratulations and thanks to both. The other members responded in kind.

**d) 2007 Performance Measures Annual Report**

Chris Kline, member of the MetroGIS Staff Support Team, provided an overview of the performance measures reporting process and major findings outlined in the 2007 annual report. He called attention to the large increase of downloads during the 2007 reporting period, which contrasted with a substantial decrease in website activity from the previous calendar year. Kline also commented that another changed from the 2006 findings was that only four of the regionally endorsed datasets were among the top 10 download datasets for the year, compared to six from the previous reporting period.

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that while there these findings do not include access to datasets via web service technology, that is, only downloads of the actual source data are counted because an effective means to count access to services has not be defined. He also mentioned that the suspicion is that more use of the data is occurring because there is no indication of discontent with the endorsed regional datasets. He closed his remarks by stating a new means of measuring

this activity and participant satisfaction will be investigated when MetroGIS's Performance Measurement Plan is updated, a project that is tentatively scheduled to begin later this year

**Motion:** Member Lake moved and Member Pistilli seconded to approve the 2007 MetroGIS Performance Measurement Report.

Motion carried, ayes all.

**e) Executive Committee - Approval of Letter of Support for Grant Application**

*See Item 5a.* No comments offered regarding the Executive Committee's action. (Editor's comment: The Operating Guidelines require actions of the Executive Committee to be shared with the full Board at the meeting following the action for information.)

**6. MAJOR ACTIVITY UPDATES**

- a) January 24<sup>th</sup> Workshop: Milestone to Defining MetroGIS's Role Related to Addressing Shared Application Needs

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that this workshop from early indications was a success and thanked those present who participated, noting that Board members Cook and Elkins had been among the 33 participants. He continued by saying that the Technical Leadership Steering Committee planned to would meet with the consultant team on February 1 to discuss next steps regarding development of a recommendation for the Coordinating Committee to consider at its March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting and for the Board to consider at its April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

No further discussions of any update items presented in the agenda report occurred.

**7. INFORMATION SHARING**

There was no discussion of the items in this section of the agenda.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2008.

**9. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Prepared by:

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and

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