

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Mosquito Control District Offices
April 23, 2008

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Members Present: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), William Brown for Randy Johnson (Hennepin 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), and Joseph Wagner (Scott County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: David Claypool, Rick Gelbmann, Nancy Read, Mark Vander Schaaf.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Mark Kotz, and Jonathan Blake (MetroGIS Staff Support Team)

Visitors: John Hoshal (LMIC) and Dave Hinrichs (Metropolitan Council)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

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

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Pistilli moved and Member Elkins seconded to approve the January 30, 2008 meeting summary, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

Mapping Minnesota Emergency Response Structures: An Initiative to Support the National Map and National Spatial Data Infrastructure (aka Minnesota Structures Project)

John Hoshal, GIS Services Supervisor with LMIC and lead support for the subject project, commented that the focus of the subject project is to develop sustainable partnerships and technical capacity needed to capture, in a standardized manner, data related to critical infrastructure for use in responding to emergency situations. Mr. Hoshal's presentation slides can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0423/4_CAP_Award.pdf.

He then highlighted current national efforts to collect data important to responding to emergencies (where facilities are located / situational awareness) and shared some of the shortcomings of these data collection efforts. The goal of the federal programs known as HSIP Gold and HSIP Freedom is to provide a standardized common national operating picture by gathering and consolidating source data from a variety of sources. He also noted that development of these datasets is challenging because the source data are collected by many organizations and are not easily consolidated into a common operating picture. And, even when collected in a similar manner, they are often not described similarly.

A common theme was that each has limited utility at the local level due to various inaccuracies, which in some cases are substantial, and inability of local agencies to become familiar with the data except in times of emergencies and thus resulting in large learning curves when immediate use is essential. The newest of the HSIP programs (Freedom) attempts to overcome these shortcomings by seeking partnerships with local agencies to produce these data on a transaction basis as a matter of their daily business practices. A major downside still remains in that the only produced by a particular organization are available to that organization prior to an emergency.

Mr. Hoshal then shared the goals of the state project that is the subject of this presentation. This project, which is partially funded with a \$50,000 federal CAP grant, was initiated to greatly expand the emergency response data produced by local authorities in Minnesota and establish a standardized mechanism to ensure these data work with one another across the state. He then commented on the four types of structures for which a systematic data capture and maintenance mechanism (read relationships with local government and processes) is proposed - fire stations, hospital/clinics, police stations, and schools – and the how the subject project will leverage ongoing MetroGIS efforts, including MetroGIS’s shared Emergency Preparedness Data Custodian Model (http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/emergency_prep/ep_endorsed.pdf), to manage the subject “structures” data. MetroGIS’s model is being leveraged because it emphasizes clear definition of roles and responsibilities and seeks acceptance by organizations with aligned business needs and resources sufficient to carry these roles.

The subject project is expected to officially begin in May 2008 and run for one year. The project team believes that once a statewide process is in place for the four initial datasets that the model will be able to be expanded to other apply to other data which are not only to important to emergency response needs but to other shared data needs as well.

Hoshal closed by noting that only a few statewide data coordination mechanisms exist and that the experience responding to Hurricane Katrina had called attention to the need for substantially improved coordination and availability of suitable data to facilitate timely emergency response. Member Cook asked if this project would serve as a model for other states. Hoshal commented that this is the expectation, given the award of a federal grant to accomplish the project.

5. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) **Election of Officers**

Motion: Member Pistilli moved and Member Egan seconded to nominate the current officer slate for reelection. Chairperson Reinhardt called for further nominations three times. No further nominations were offered. Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Pistilli thanked Chairperson Reinhardt and Vice-Chairperson Kordiak for accepting reelection and for providing critical leadership.

Chairperson Reinhardt and Vice-Chairperson Kordiak commented that although they are both willing to accept reelection for the coming year they but both encouraged other Board members to consider accepting these roles next year, noting that they believe important to the sustainability of the organization that others also have the opportunity to lead.

b) **Next Steps to Address Shared Application Needs**

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Brown introduced this item and summarized the Coordinating Committee’s multipart recommendation, as presented in the Agenda Report. He then introduced Mark Kotz and Nancy Read, members of the Technical Leadership Steering Workgroup, to present the specific recommendations.

Mark Kotz begin by providing an explanation of the terms “geospatial application” and “web service”, noting that these terms are the focus of the recommended next steps. (Kotz’s presentation can be viewed at

http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0423/5b_Applications_and_Services_Primer.pdf.)

To provide an introduction to Read’s portion of the presentation, Kotz noted that acting on the following three questions will drive MetroGIS’s efforts to accomplish the applications-focused scope expansion called for in the MetroGIS 2008-2011 Business Plan:

- 1) What application/service needs are shared by MetroGIS stakeholders?
- 2) How can we find/use existing applications or web services?
- 3) How can I trust another organization’s web service to be reliable and meet my needs?

Nancy Read, Technical Leadership Steering Workgroup liaison to the Coordinating Committee, then summarized the charge from the Policy Board that guided the Workgroup’s efforts, the role played by the January 24th “Meeting Shared Needs Beyond Data” Workshop, how the Workgroup arrived at the recommendations presented in the Agenda Report, and the rationale for each recommendation.

Read began her comments by reporting that the participants of the January 24th workshop had corroborated several findings set forth in the Business Plan adopted last fall and that she the Workgroup was also amazed that the participants, who were mostly technically focused, had concluded that an appropriate organizational structure is central to achieving the trust necessary for organizations to use another's applications and web services, that is, have assurance that will do what they are suppose and that they will be available when needed. (Read's presentation can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0423/5b_TechLdrshp_Wkgrp_Rec.pdf.)

Read then summarized the four roles recommended for MetroGIS in pursuit of solutions to address shared application needs: Leadership, Coordination, Policy/Procedures, and Funding for pilot (research and development) projects. She concluded her presentation by summarizing each of recommended next steps presented in the agenda report and explaining how they align with proposed revisions to the 2008 workplan and the proposed preliminary workplan for 2009.

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked the presenters and the participants for their hard work that led to the recommendations currently before the Board. She then invited Board members to ask questions of the presenters. The following is a listing of the major topics discussed following the presentation:¹

- Need to address concerns about quality of information in web services, reliability, privacy;
- What does it take to have/support a "broker";
- Are web services intended for use directly by citizens;
- Analogy of GeoServices Finder to a card catalogue;
- How might county staff contribute and benefit;
- Do MetroGIS participants have the expertise to build what's needed or should we be working with private companies that can do the work quickly, appropriate to consider MCCC as a potential partner;
- Who pays for development of the applications defined as shared needs;
- Suggest leveraging of tools such as SharePoint for communication, "extranet" concept;
- Requests for some specific apps/services including a re-routing application for traffic problems and a voter precinct look-up as a service.

The remainder of this section text captures topics of interest to Board members and related direction relevant to development of next-step strategies:

Data Quality and Reliability: Member Egan noted that he generally concurred with the recommendations set forth in the agenda report but offered an observation that web services and applications are only as good as the data they utilize and asked about MetroGIS's role in assuring that data and services meet expectations: how is/will this data quality need be met, how a particular user is assured that web services they are seeking from others are appropriate for the use intended, and whether these questions need to be addressed before the proposed Technical Coordinator is hired.

In response, the Staff Coordinator explained that availability of the proposed Technical Coordinator would greatly expedite the process of defining shared application needs and pursuing solutions to them that meet user expectations. He also explained that MetroGIS's processes address this important suite of related topics for each of the "endorsed regional" solutions approved to address shared information needs, noting that currently eight of the 170-plus datasets and their associated web services² available via MetroGIS DataFinder are classified as endorsed regional" solutions. The characteristics of "endorsed regional" solutions being that they are:

¹ *The Staff Coordinator commented that given that at least two members have joined the Policy Board since a presentation had been given that gets into the details of the functions performed by MetroGIS that a refresher might provide additional understanding useful as solutions to shared application needs are brought to the Board for direction and endorsement. The Chairperson took this suggestion under advisement.*

² *Editor's note: The other 168+ datasets are encouraged to be posted on DataFinder by their respective producers to reduce their costs of distribution and to provide a streamlined means for users to discovery and access data produced by others.*

- Built and maintained to specifications (data content and custodian responsibilities) developed through MetroGIS's collaborative processes.
- Endorsed by the Policy Board as representative of the community's needs.
- Maintained by one or more "custodian organizations" that have pledged to provide the necessary operational capacity to perform the community defined maintenance roles and responsibilities, that is they have pledged to the Policy Board they have the willingness, appropriate resources, and an internal business need to perform this function and share the product with the community.
- Monitored for compliance with agreed upon specifications as a component of MetroGIS's Performance Measurement Program and as concerns/unexpected issues arise they are dealt with to the extent possible in a voluntary environment, driven by the producer's internal business needs.

Read also commented that, although there is no guarantee that data quality will meet desired specifications, the "centers of excellence" approach, which is being leveraged by the approach taken by MetroGIS, is believed to be the most cost-effective way to achieve the most complete, accurate, and current data possible. That is, organizations concentrate on developing the data, services, and applications that they are skilled at as a result of an internal business need(s); share those assets with others; and in turn, depend upon others for such assets that they need to carry out their functions but do not produce themselves on an ongoing basis.

Service Broker: In response to Vice Chairperson Kordiak's inquiry about who will be able to use the proposed web services and Member Egan's inquiry about how users will be able to find the particular data or service they need that are produced by others, staff demonstrated the search functionality provided by Internet-based MetroGIS DataFinder and breadth of data and associated web services. During the ensuing discussion, Board Members were informed that the current policies, which relate to providing access to data assets, will also be incorporated into the policies for access to applications that consume those data and that access policies are also proposed to remain driven by the producers (owners of the data).

Members Elkins and Pistilli asked for clarification of the how the proposed "GeoServices Broker" is intended to function. Read offered an analogy of a card catalog used by libraries to help the members understand the purpose of the proposed services directory. This analogy was well received. Kotz added that the proposed "GeoServices Broker" project would leverage knowledge gained through a pilot project completed last fall³ that involved prototyping of an Internet-searchable catalog for discovery and access to web services and applications. Through the course of the Board's discussion, the members were informed that organizations will decide if they want to participate in making web services and applications available, just as they do regarding the posting of datasets. In response to a question from Member Pistilli about who (custodian organization) might host the proposed "broker" application, Kotz commented that no decision has been made other than to comment that the host during the development and testing phase might be different than the host of the mature application. That is, the "broker" function could over time evolve into a function supported at the state level, given that applications and services need not be specific to a particular geography to be useful to others.

Privacy and Security: Member Egan commented that as we move into the realm of addressing shared application needs we will bring more disciplines together than in the past and that as a result checks and balances, possibility greater than we have provided in the past, will be needed to safeguard against issues arising related to privacy and security. All concurred that collaborative solutions pursued by MetroGIS must continue to address privacy and security needs to the satisfaction of all involved. This comment resulted in brainstorming about specific applications that might be defined as shared needs (e.g., reroute traffic if a bridge fails or is scheduled for repair and redistricting)

Expand Operational Capacity: Schneider noted that he concurred with the recommendations presented in the agenda report and stated that he believes MetroGIS has the capacity to define and

³ *The Mn Land Management Information Center (LMIC) was the project manager. The project was funded in part with MetroGIS Regional GIS Project funds.*

prioritize next steps to address shared application needs. But he also cautioned that partnerships with non-government interests will be needed to achieve the operational capacity necessary to build/accrue/maintain the actual applications to address those needs. He also concurred with the proposal to pursue dedication of a Technical Coordinator to join the MetroGIS support Team, noting that this resource will be instrumental in securing partnerships with those entities that will actually carry out the development work.

A question from Member Pistilli, about how stakeholder organizations currently meet their application needs, resulted in an understanding that most application development needs among the stakeholders represented by the Policy Board are being supported by internal staff. The members also concurred that the existence of a Technical Coordinator would be beneficial to leverage these existing resources to focus on shared needs. Read commented that from the perspective of a small organization, such as the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District, collaborative solutions make it possible for them to meet needs they might not otherwise be able to accomplish.

Alternate Member O'Rourke suggested investigating if the Mn County Computer Consortium (MCCC) might also play a role in solutions to shared application needs. The Staff Coordinator offered to contact them as specifics become known about candidate needs relevant to the county community.

Member Pistilli suggested that recommendation should include a statement calling a business case to justify the proposed hiring of a Technical Coordinator. All concurred.

Motion: Vice Chairperson Kordiak moved and Member Pistilli seconded that the Policy Board:

- 1) Endorse, as appropriate for MetroGIS's efforts, support of the following roles in pursuit of collaborative solutions to shared needs for applications and web services:
 - Leadership
 - Coordination
 - Policy direction
 - Testbed funding to leverage the GIS resources possessed in the metropolitan region.
- 2) Endorse the Coordinating Committee's suggested next steps and their relative importance regarding MetroGIS's pursuit of collaborative solutions to shared needs for applications and web services, as presented in the agenda report, dated April 3, 2008.
- 3) Concur that a need exists for dedication of a Technical Coordinator to join the MetroGIS support team to maintain relevance to changing stakeholder needs. Development of business case to fully document this need was directed.
- 4) Endorse continued negotiations with the Metropolitan Council to dedicate additional support resources to MetroGIS's "foster collaboration" function sufficient to accomplish the roles and responsibilities of a Technical Coordinator, as set forth in the agenda report, dated April 3, 2008.

Motion carried, ayes all.

c) 2008-2009 Budget and Work Plan Refinements

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Brown introduced this item and summarized the Coordinating Committee's multipart recommendation, as presented in the Agenda Report. Nancy Read, Technical Leadership Steering Workgroup liaison to the Coordinating Committee, then provided context for and explained the specific recommendations.

Member Schneider encouraged those involved in developing a business case for securing a Technical Coordinator to think broader than seeking the resources solely from the Metropolitan Council. Broader support for MetroGIS's efforts will be needed to fully realize the goal of partnering to achieve solutions to shared application needs and funding for this position could serve as an opportunity to act on this need.

Motion: Member Egan moved and Member Lake seconded that the Policy Board:

- 1) Adopt the revised 2008 and preliminary 2009 MetroGIS Major Program Objectives, as presented the Agenda Report dated April 8, 2008, with the understanding that securing of a Technical Coordinator is required to fully achieve the associated outcomes in a timely manner.
- 2) Endorse the revised line items for the 2008 “foster collaboration”, non-staff budget of \$86,000, as presented Attachment D of the Agenda Report dated April 8, 2008.
- 3) Endorse the preliminary 2009 MetroGIS “foster collaboration” line items for the \$86,000 non-staff budget request of the Metropolitan Council, as presented in Attachment D of the Agenda Report dated April 8, 2008, with the understanding that: a) the goal is to fill the Technical Coordinator support role by January 1, 2009 and b) funding for the 2009 competitive Regional GIS Project program is hereby temporarily dedicated to pursuing solutions to shared application and web service needs for which priorities are defined by MetroGIS leadership.
- 4) Direct the Coordinating Committee to inform it (Policy Board) at the July and October meetings of progress made to secure a Technical Coordinator and any related work programming modifications that should be considered, with the understanding that work on development of a business case to justify the need for a Technical Coordinator is to begin immediately.

Motion carried, ayes all.

d) 2008 Regional GIS Projects – Call for Proposals and Process Adjustments

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Brown introduced this item and summarized the Coordinating Committee’s recommendation, as outlined in the Agenda Report. The Staff Coordinator explained the rationale for suggesting that the Board consider authorizing its Executive Committee to consider the appropriateness of authorizing funding at the concept phase, as opposed to full Board consideration for the 2008 program.

After some discussion, the Board concluded that it would prefer to rely upon the Coordinating Committee’s judgment to decide the appropriateness of authorizing funding under this program and that the Board’s Executive Committee need not be part of the concept review process, given that the full Board would consider the final proposals. The Staff Coordinator was asked to circulate the Committee’s conclusions regarding the concept proposals to the full Board for the members’ information.

Motion: Alternate Member O’Rourke moved and Member Lake moved to modify the concept review procedures for the 2008 Regional GIS Project program to eliminate Step 4 in the program review schedule, as presented in the agenda report dated April 7, with the understanding that the results of the Coordinating Committee’s consideration will be forwarded to the Board members for their information.

Motion carried, ayes all.

6. MAJOR ACTIVITY UPDATES

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

7. INFORMATION SHARING

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

Chairperson Reinhardt encouraged the members to review the summary of the April 15-16 National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) meeting prepared by the Staff Coordinator provided to each member when they arrives along with a copy of the 2007 Annual Report.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2008.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Prepared by:
Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator