

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Members Present: Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Gary Swenson for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), and Randy Maluchnik for Tom Workman (Carver County), 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: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Joseph Wagner (Scott County), and Roger Lake (Metro Watershed Districts)

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

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

Visitors: Jeff Matson, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), University of Minnesota

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

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

**3. MEETING SUMMARY**

Member Schneider moved and Member Pistilli seconded to approve the April 23, 2008 meeting summary, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

**4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION**

*Twin Cities Regional Parcel Data and Community Revitalization: Highlights of National Report By Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*

The presentation summarized several studies that leveraged GIS technology focused the Twin Cities that were cited in a March 2008 report from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy titled *Transforming Community Development with Land Information Systems*. (A copy can be obtained at <http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/PubDetail.aspx?pubid=1356>.) The subject case studies focused on housing issues surrounding the University of Mn campus, foreclosure research from a local non-profit agency, and a new storefront GIS, planning, and design organization which has opened along University Avenue in anticipation of the Central Corridor light rail transit line.

Jeff Matson, with the University's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and a partner in each of the Twin Cities projects highlighted, provided an overview of each case study. He stressed the importance of the Regional Parcel Dataset and related access policies made possible via MetroGIS's efforts, without which these projects would not have been possible. Matson thanked the Policy Board for its pioneering efforts through which the seven-county, Regional Parcel Dataset was accomplished. He commented that he believes this dataset is unparalleled in the country, adding that only a few other areas in the country have achieved standardized parcel data across multiple counties but none involves more than three counties to his knowledge. He went on to compliment the Board for its work to encourage development of applications, web services, and other tools needed to move the exemplar parcel data resource into the community development process. He closed by also encouraging the Board to continue its work to pursue cross sector solutions to shared application needs, in particular those related to "Integrated Regional Data Systems". (Go to [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08\\_0723/4\\_MetroGIS\\_policy\\_board\\_7-23-08.ppt](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0723/4_MetroGIS_policy_board_7-23-08.ppt) to view Matson's presentation slides.)

Member Elkins commented that he was encouraged by the focus of the case studies on support of work to craft public policy, as opposed to operational oriented uses of the technology. He commented that he would like to see MetroGIS's efforts continue to support such work, the end result of which in his opinion provides the region with a competitive advantage.

Member Schneider commented that he found it interesting that none of the case studies addressed the topic of how to sustain funding for similar efforts. Matson concurred, noting that he was also disappointed that the critical element of funding was not addressed in the studies.

In response to an inquiry from Member Elkins about data that would improve the robustness of the research to which CURA does not currently have access, Matson named rental property characteristics and address-specific crime data.

Members suggested speaking to LOGIS for crime data and conjectured that as GPS technology is more widely integrated into the applications provided in police cars that crime data will become more robust and accessible.

Coordinating Committee member Read commented that the work of the U-Plan project (GIS store front within the Central Corridor that was highlighted in the report by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy) is in effect supporting a goal of MetroGIS to better understand of the value of GIS technology.

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked Mr. Matson for his presentation. Mr. Matson agreed to provide staff with a hyperlink to a summary of the projects that he summarized in his talk.

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

### **a) 2008 Regional GIS Projects**

William Brown, Coordinating Committee Chairperson, summarized the Committee's recommendation to fund three proposals for the 2008 program year comprising \$23,500 of the \$25,000 budgeted.

There was a brief discussion about the need to encumber the remaining \$1,500 before year end to capture these funds, whether through increasing the funds available to the subject projects or for some other, yet to be defined, use. It was agreed that a use for these funds should be proposed at the October meeting.

Chairperson Brown then introduced Mark Kotz, Nancy Read and Randy Knippel to explain the specifics of their team's respective projects.

Web-based Address Points Editing Tool: Mark Kotz introduced this proposed by noting that it is a component of the proposed Regional Address Points Dataset and that it also builds on work underway to develop a tool to synchronize address data produced by multiple organizations. Kotz added that the technology, once developed, would be applicable to filling crime and rental housing characteristic data needs cited earlier in the meeting by Jeff Matson. He then summarized how the proposed project aligns with outcomes previously defined by MetroGIS - pursue applications needed to address shared information needs, engage cities as partners in support of regional datasets, and improve address data. He concluded his remarks by summarizing the major tasks that would comprise the project and how the \$13,500 in requested funding would be used to supplement additional support activities to be provided by the project team.

In response to a question from Alternate Member Swenson, Kotz noted that a specific organization had not been identified as yet to host the application but that candidates included the Metropolitan Council and the Mn Land Information Management Center (LMIC) because once the technology is developed it is expected to have statewide applicability. (Go to [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08\\_0723/5a\\_08\\_projects\\_Address\\_Points.ppt](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0723/5a_08_projects_Address_Points.ppt) to view Kotz's slide presentation.)

Geocoder Extension for Landmarks: Nancy Read provided a brief overview of the purpose of the foundation Geocoder web-service project that is in progress, how it works, and the benefits expected to be realized once it is fully operational. She then explained that the current proposal would add the

ability to locate places by landmark name, which would be valuable when the location does not have a street address and cannot be located using a street intersection (e.g., building in a park). Read closed her remarks by summarizing the major tasks that would comprise the project, that the \$5,000 in requested funding would be used to retain the services of a programmer, and that LMIC has agreed to host the extended service as well as the foundation service. (Go to [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08\\_0723/5a\\_08\\_projects\\_GeocoderII.ppt](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0723/5a_08_projects_GeocoderII.ppt) to view Read's slide presentation.)

In a supplemental request, Read asked the Board to consider allocating the \$1,500 in uncommitted project funds to the foundation geocoder service project currently under development. She explained that the team overseeing the geocoder service project had recently identified the need for two enhancements [add parcel and street segment IDs and add the original street name] that would greatly improve usability of the foundation service as originally anticipated. The cost to accomplish these modifications is \$1,880. Although the Board concurred that the suggested modifications to the foundation geocoder project are noteworthy it decided to defer further consideration until the relative merits of several options for use of this funding can be weighed against one another. The Board then asked the Committee for a recommendation to consider at its October meeting. Member Schneider also suggested that instead of pursuing incremental small modifications that he would prefer to bring together a number of the beneficiaries of this web service to define a larger enhancement project to be accomplished at one time, possibly as a partnered undertaking.

A wide ranging conversation followed about what is meant by the term "landmark" and the need for an agreed upon definition and standards, existing sources of landmark data that could be leveraged, how best to go about adding landmark names to existing data sources, which organization(s) is best suited to accept responsibility for maintaining the data source(s), how might Web 2.0 technology be leveraged to assist with the development support of the landmark database, and explaining the difference between the proposed web service (can be used by many interests as a component of any number of applications) and the existing proprietary geocoding component of the Metro Transit's routing program (the software that supports the Council's system can be incorporated applications maintained by other organizations).

In response, Read commented that the intent is to develop this capability by leveraging existing the landmark names data maintained as a component of The Lawrence Group's Street Centerline Dataset and, as a next step, pursue integration of other sources, such as the Council's if available and the emergency management dataset being created by the State presented at the April meeting, as well as investigate creation of a Web 2.0 tool/mechanism to enable the users to add landmark names to the dataset.

Member Cook stated that he supports the proposal and believes school districts could make immediate use of a geocoding service that utilizes schools as landmark names to help property owners quickly obtain answers to questions like what is the service area for a particular school relative to their property location.

Mailing Label Web Service: Randy Knippel introduced his team's proposal by describing the benefits of using a mailing label web service compared to using the conventional practice, which requires the regional parcel data to be physically located on the user's computer system. He then provided an example of how the proposed "intelligent" web service would function in an interactive environment via the Internet.

He also emphasized that he also believes this project can help policy get a better idea of what is possible makers frame solutions to effectively address the long standing matter of non-government interests wanting access to parcel data. A goal of the project is to demonstrate that leveraging web service technology, which eliminates the need for physical access to the parcel data in its native format, can be an effective alternative having to have physical access to the data and thereby eliminate the need for licensure. (Go to [http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08\\_0723/5a\\_MetroGIS-PB-MailingLabels.ppt](http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/08_0723/5a_MetroGIS-PB-MailingLabels.ppt) to view Knippel's slide presentation.)

A wide ranging discussion ensued about whether the service could use police cars (yes), possible to format the output options to print directly to an envelope (yes), the need for increased marketing among MetroGIS's existing stakeholder community of the capabilities currently available as well as those in the offing, the impact of Intellectual Property Rights laws on desired outcomes (asked for a presentation about these laws), and the need to balance data access fees against desire for free access (concluded this proposal provides a vehicle through which to explore solutions to this long standing policy issue).

**Motion:** Member Schneider moved and Member Pistilli seconded that the Policy Board:

- 1) Endorse the Coordinating Committee's finding that the three projects identified above, totaling \$23,500, would encompass prudent uses of Regional GIS Project resources as the anticipated importance and value to the MetroGIS community would exceed the requested amount of funding.
- 2) Recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize funding for these projects under the 2008 MetroGIS Regional GIS Project program and enter into the required inter agency agreements by October 1, if possible.
- 3) That the Coordinating Committee offer ideas to the Board for consideration at its October 2008 for how to best use the \$1,500 in Regional GIS Projects funds not yet allocated.
- 4) Modify the project entitled "Landmarks Extension to the Geocoder Project" to include two additional deliverables: define the term "landmark name" and identify likely users of the service (to participate in a subsequent forum to define desired enhancements)."

Motion carried, ayes all.

Chairperson Reinhardt thanked the Coordinating Committee for its work to winnow the proposals to those that were recommended and to present the recommendations in a form valuable to the Board members.

#### **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.

Member Elkins offered two candidates for presentations to the Policy Board future meetings:

- 1) Regional Economic Development Website. Alternate Member O'Rourke, who serves as the Board's liaison to the steering committee for the Regional Economic Development Website, commented that MetroGIS is among several organizations which the steering committee is aware that would like to learn about the progress being made on to accomplish the site's objectives. She agreed to inquire as to whether someone could be available to speak at the Board's October meeting and contact the Staff Coordinator.
- 2) Data Practices Law. The focus of this presentation would be how the law relates to objectives sought by MetroGIS. Member Elkins commented that an outcome could be to seek changes to the law current that might be needed to overcome obstacles to wide spread leveraging of investments in data development. Staff was directed to investigate possible speakers including Don Gimberling, who played a substantive role in the Legislature's adoption of the current law.

Member Cook shared that on August 12<sup>th</sup>, Mn CIO Gopal Khanna would be participating in the Digital Government Summit and asked if any of the Board members was planning to attend. The members asked Member Cook to provide information about the summit to them via staff.

#### **8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2008.

#### **9. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Prepared by:  
Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator