

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Counties Government Center
2099 University Avenue, St. Paul
July 22, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and asked each of the members and visitors to introduced themselves.

Members Present: Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Tom Egan (Dakota County), Gary Swensen for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Steve Elkins (Metro Cities – City of Bloomington), Terry Schneider (Metro Cities - City of Minnetonka), and Roger Lake (Metro Watershed Districts). The Chair of the Coordinating Committee, Sally Wakefield, also attended in the capacity of a non-voting, ExOfficio member.

Members Absent: Tony Pistilli (Metropolitan Council), Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Randy Maluchnik (Carver County), Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES), and Jim Joseph Wagner (Scott County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Rick Gelbmann, Nancy Read, Ben Verbick, Mike Fiebiger, Mark Vander Schaaf, and Sally Wakefield.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Mark Kotz

Visitors: Alison Slaats, 1000 Friends of Minnesota; David Fawcett, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Dave Hinrichs, Metropolitan Council; and Joel Koepp, City of Roseville.

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Reinhardt moved and Member Egan seconded to approve the agenda, as proposed. Motion carried, ayes all.

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Elkins moved and Member Egan seconded to approve the April 27, 2009 meeting summary, as submitted with the exception of minor corrections called attention to by the Staff Coordinator. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

Ben Verbick, GIS Manager for LOGIS and member of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee, explained how cities, who are members of the LOGIC consortium, are leveraging the power of GIS technology to improve operational efficiencies, communicate with their citizens, and improve decision support. He commented that LOGIS members are interested in expanding data sharing beyond themselves, leveraging web service developed by others, and sharing their services with others.

In response to a question from Chairperson Schneider, Mr. Verbick noted that LOGIS's GIS efforts are entirely user-driven and that he would be happy to share with MetroGIS leadership a listing of desired services and applications defined by his member organizations.

Mr. Verbick's presentation slides can be viewed at

http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/09_0722/4_GIS_Tech_Demo_MetroGIS_Policy_Board.ppt.

5. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Regional Web Service/Application Recommendations

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Wakefield introduced the topic and summarized the Committee's recommendation to authorize funding for three web services development projects totaling \$35,000. She then introduced Mark Kotz, Chair of the Technical Leadership Workgroup, to

explain each of the proposals. Kotz described the process used to define shared application needs and that of the workgroups that resulted to the subject proposals. He then explained the process used to evaluate proposals received and summarized the information provided in the agenda report about each proposal. He closed with a comment that the Technical Leadership Workgroup (TLW) believes the projects, as recommended, represent the best value for the funds available.

Members Reinhardt and Egan complemented the TLW for their excellent work to assist the proposers fine tune their ideas. They also noted that they concur that the recommended proposals are good uses of limited resources. Chairperson Schneider agreed and articulated he hopes that funding resources will grow substantially in the future.

Alternate Member Swenson asked for clarification of next steps for each project. Kotz commented that the Best Image Service and enhancement to the existing Geocoder Service are both intended to be production products and that the Proximity Finder project is intended to be a prototype from which to learn. Following the prototyping exercise, a decision will be made whether to pursue a production application and by whom.

Member Reinhardt moved and Member Egan seconded to:

- 1) Endorse the Coordinating Committee's recommendation to fund three projects, totaling up to \$35,000, as described in the agenda report, to comprise MetroGIS's 2009 Regional GIS Projects program.
- 2) Concur with the Coordinating Committee's finding that each of these recommended projects will address an application/ web service need that has value across sectors in accordance with the "shared application needs" objective set forth in the 2008-2011 MetroGIS Business Plan.
- 3) Recommend that the Metropolitan Council authorize funding for these projects in accordance with funding allocated in MetroGIS's approved budget for the 2009 MetroGIS Regional GIS Project program and enter into the required funding agreements, if possible, by October 1.

Motion carried, ayes all.

b) 2008 Annual Performance Measures Report

The Staff Coordinator summarized the 2008 performance measurement highlights presented in the agenda report, emphasizing that MetroGIS's efforts continue to produce public value. He also noted that an initiative is under way to update MetroGIS's Performance Measurement Plan and identify ways to better understand trends identified in the current performance measures and user satisfaction with regional solutions. Chairperson Schneider concurred that MetroGIS leadership needs to know more about stakeholder needs to ensure that our efforts continue to provide value - continue to improve upon core assets. He also commented that a goal of the Performance Measurement Plan update process is create a means to effectively measure the extent to which we are on course to maximizing outcomes.

Motions:

Member Elkins moved and Alternate Member O'Rourke seconded to MetroGIS 2008 Performance Measurement Report, dated May 26, 2009. Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Elkins moved and Alternate Member O'Rourke seconded to the suggested actions recommended in the report to better understand the reason that trends detected in the metrics are occurring. Motion carried, ayes all.

c) 2009 Program Objectives – Mid-Year Priority Refinements

The Staff Coordinator summarized the highlights presented in the agenda report. In response to a comment by Member Egan suggesting use of a "balance score card approach" for subsequent years, Chairperson Schneider stated that he would also suggest putting more time into prioritizing work objectives. All concurred that the suggested modifications were reasonable.

Motion: Member Elkins moved and Member Egan seconded to:

- a) Defer to 2010 work on objectives “Pursue implementation of a more fully developed geographic data, applications and service broker” (#8) and/or Explore methods for Enhancing Trust in reliability of shared services (#9) with the qualification that the Technical Leadership Workgroup may work on them on an as time permits basis..
- b) Explicitly incorporate the survey of stakeholders called for in the 2008 Annual Performance Measurement Report (Agenda Item 5b) into the scope of the work for the “Plan to ensure obstacles do not materialize” objective.
- c) Explicitly call out the preference of new Policy Board leadership for expanded outreach as a component of the current top priority objective “Sustain traditional ‘foster collaboration’ support activities” objective.

Motion carried, ayes all.

d) Access Policy Direction – Regional Address Points Dataset

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Wakefield introduced the topic, summarized the Coordinating Committee request for direction on key suggested policy elements for a future policy statement, and introduced Mark Kotz, Chair of the Address Workgroup to explain the suggested policy elements for which direction is sought.

Prior to Kotz’s comments, in response to a concern raised by Coordinating Committee Member Brown about the phrasing in the recommendation, the Staff Coordinator emphasized that the purpose of this agenda item is to seek direction from the Board and that based upon the direction received the Committee will develop a detailed policy statement for the Board consideration at a subsequent meeting. Kotz then proceeded to explain the suggested policy elements and rationale associated with each, as presented in the agenda report and summarized in agenda report.

Joel Koepp, GIS Coordinator for the City for Shoreview, and Ben Verbick, GIS Coordinator for LOGIS, both commented on the value the proposed Regional Address Points dataset for cities. Both commented that those responsible for Public Safety operations want to move away from using street centerline data and toward individual unit address data for geocoding needs. Verbick emphasized that the 36 cities in the LOGIS consortium are ready to participate, noting they know the data they create have value to others but they are not necessarily in the loop to know how to effectively share it. Koepp added that he is shocked at the level to which low tech methods are currently being used by cities to distribute address data to various agencies and other organizations that need to know about new addresses. He believes that the address points effort can help cities move toward high tech methods to “push” the data to those who need it. He concluded by stating that he is excited to be part of this proposal and the prospect of more efficiently sharing Roseville’s address data with public safety officials.

A wide ranging discussion then ensued principally in response to the following major questions:

- **Comment:** Member Reinhardt asked how will the currency of the data be maintained if some cities decide not to participate?
Response/Discussion: Kotz noted that the Address Workgroup had conducted a survey through which it learned that nearly all cities update their address data on a daily basis. The group also learned that emergency responders are a standard driver to demonstrate benefit of regular updating of these data. Kotz acknowledged that the challenge is to eventually migrate these numerous automated and manual practices to a system that easily “pushes” the updated address information to the regional system as part of normal business operations. Kotz emphasized this “migration” is expected to take place over several years. He also emphasized that until a cities recognize the benefit themselves of voluntarily participating, there will be gaps in the regional dataset.
- **Comment:** Alternate Member O’Rourke asked how many cities are expected to participate?
Response/Discussion: A finding of a needs assessment conducted by MetroGIS found that of the approximately 140 address authorities, which operate in the region, initially at least 40

associated with small communities are expected to use the web editing application developed by MetroGIS to participate. In addition, many larger communities that have internal GIS support staff are expected to participate without the need for the web editing application. Kotz emphasized that slow growth is expected as benefits of participation become more widely understood and that the build out will involve a long term marketing effort.

Coordinating Committee member Gelbmann noted that MetroGIS has experience “growing” participation of the type needed via the Regional Land Cover Dataset. Over a period of five or so years this dataset has been developed through over 50 contributors.

Chairperson Schneider commented that he believes a number of circumstances have changed since the preliminary build out estimate which he believes will result in faster completion than earlier estimated. These changed circumstances include:

- End user expectations for online geospatial data are higher than when the project was conceived and continue to grow.
- Emergency preparedness leadership are more likely to realize they need to leverage and embrace technology advances such as those that underpin the proposed Regional Address Points Dataset.

- **Comment:** Member Egan asked if the value of providing this information had been investigated.

Response/Discussion: Member Elkins and Chairperson Schneider, who represent cities, responded that cities and counties have a different mind set as to the value of data; noting that cities generally see the value in having the information widely available and used within their communities.

Alternate Member Swenson noted that Hennepin County definitely needs better address data for locations beyond Hennepin County for its day-to-day operations. He also mentioned that the proposed regional dataset could be used as an address validator, which in itself, could result in a huge savings to the county. He closed by encouraging the Address Workgroup to consider developing a case study(ies) to demonstrate how accurate address data could improved efficiencies.

Chairman Schneider and Member Elkins restated that cities are already creating address data and they see the proposal as a value added service, noting that the presence of the regional dataset would greatly improve efficiencies associated with sharing new address data with number organizations that have a need to know, especially for emergency services, thereby, saving cities money.

Member Egan asked why the proposal offered two access options (limit access to government and access to all) if value is not an important consideration. In response, the city representatives noted that the proposed access restrictions are not suggested for monetary reasons but which organizations will have access and for what purpose (e.g., preventing use of the data for mass mailings). This comment led to a broader conversation about how value might be defined e.g., function of savings from operational efficiencies gained, new functionality enabled via access, fostering uses valuable to the community that might otherwise be discovered and supported without widespread access. Coordinating Committee member Gelbmann offered an observation that the broader the access, the higher the value. Chairman Schneider reminded the members that both access options will be offered to the producers and that the suggested policy leaves it up to local policy makers to decide which option best fits their needs.

- **Comment:** Although she stated that she favors pursuing the proposed regional dataset and is not concerned about charging for access, Alternate Member O’Rourke shared a concern for potential duplication of effort, whereby counties or others would be expected to complete data for any areas for which cities elect not to participate.

Response/Discussion: Kotz reiterated that the proposal is that the source of address point dataset is to be official address authorities, via voluntarily participation. No other organizations will be asked to take on this responsibility. If a community/address authority chooses not to participate, data for that area will not be a component of the regional dataset. The strategy is to promote the benefits of participation and for cities to achieve eventual internal justification of the benefits of participating.

The members concurred with Chairperson Schneider's observation that most cities can be expected to eventually participate given anticipated advocacy from emergency services leaders. Member Reinhardt commented that this proposal presents an opportunity to those who elect to participate, which she noted is an approach that she favors. She noted that also favors getting started now rather than waiting for a perfect solution.

Policy Board members agreed that the suggested policy elements, as outlined in the agenda report and explained by Kotz, have merit and that the Coordinating Committee should move forward to develop the specifics for a proposed detailed policy statement to govern the proposed Regional Address Points Dataset. All members also agreed with Chairperson Schneider that they expect that the specifics will continue to be refined as modifications are deemed to be in the best interest of the region.

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

1. Direct the Coordinating Committee to develop a formal policy statement (for the proposed Regional Address Points Dataset) for its consideration.
2. Direct the Coordinating Committee to propose an outreach plan that builds upon Chairperson Schneider and Member Elkins willingness to advocate among city leadership for the proposed Regional Address Points Dataset and related access/distribution policy proposed and endorsed by MetroGIS.

Motion carried, ayes all.

e) MetroGIS Appointment to MnGeo Statewide Coordinating Council

Member Reinhardt, who served on the Governors Council on Geographic Information committee that was involved to recommending the subject statewide geospatial coordinating council, explained the purpose of the new Council, expectations for the appointment process, designation of seat specifically for MetroGIS, and goal for the new Council to be operational by October. She also summarized the recommendation presented in the agenda report that the Policy Board Chairperson be nominated to represent MetroGIS on this council.

Motion: Member Reinhardt moved and Member Elkins seconded nominate Chairperson Schneider to represent the MetroGIS perspective on the newly created Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council, as a standing role of its Chair, and authorize a letter of recommendation in this regard to be forwarded to the Mn Department of Administration.

Motion carried, ayes all.

f) Fostering Partnerships via a Contest

Coordinating Committee Chairperson Wakefield introduced the topic and summarized the Coordinating Committee's request for concept approval to pursue a contest aimed at promoting widespread publishing of web services and innovative ways to consume those services that provide public benefit. Wakefield then introduced Alison Slaats, 1000 Friends of Minnesota, and David Fawcett, Mn Pollution Control Agency, to explain the idea of the contest in more detail. (Ms. Slaats presentation can be viewed at http://www.metrogis.org/teams/pb/meetings/09_0722/5f_PolicyBoard_MetroGIS_Feature_Service_Group.pdf)

Slaats and Fawcett began by stating the purpose of the contest is to make more data available and improve usability. Slaats stated that the idea is to model the proposed contest after a successful context hosted by Washington D.C. two years ago that has since been successfully emulated in

several other locations. Referencing information provided in the agenda report, Slaats explained that the Apps for Democracy Washington D.C. contest involved a \$50,000 investment that yielded over \$2.3 million worth of applications that were determined to create public value. She also noted that \$30,000 of the \$50,000 investment was to retain a firm to manage and advertise the contest, with the remainder of the investment used for prizes; a model that the project team also believes would be a good fit for this area. All concurred that several sponsors, in addition to MetroGIS, will be required to be successful.

Slaats continued by explaining that the contest would be designed to catalyze connections between data resources and prospective data users and, by doing so, create public value. She emphasized this outcome is consistent with the vision statement adopted by the Policy Board - "*organizations serving the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area are successfully collaborating to use geographic information technology to solve real world problems*".

Slaats went on to comment that traditional needs assessment techniques have not worked to explore partnerships with no-government interests in large part because the data producer community has little to no understanding of who comprises the non-government user community, let alone their needs. Slaats then used an analogy that involved a boy scout troop to illustrate value that can be added to information by emerging users when they are able to leverage web-based geospatial information in easily to use formats.

Slaats and Fawcett closed their presentation by stating they believe, and the Coordinating Committee concurs, that hosting the proposed contest is seen as a way to catalyze self definition of non-traditional users of geospatial information as well as begin to understand their needs; needs which if met have the potential of creating substantive public value with little or no additional public investment other than to publish data in the form of web services that are developed as an result of day of day business operations.

Member Elkins asked if there are currently enough base services – raw material - available to stimulate the desired participation. This comment led to a wide ranging conversation about the need to do the contest right or not at all and if done well that the result could be a significant motivator for producers to publish more services. Fawcett commented that the contest would be held no earlier than mid spring 2010 for two reasons: 1) significant outreach is needed to encourage producers to publish their data via services, also noting that an application exists in GeoServices Finder that was developed last year with MetroGIS funding though which prospective users can locate and access existing services and 2) to secure other sponsors.

All concurred that the contest would, in effect, leverage the concept of "crowd sourcing" a means with substantial potential to more effectively define needs and explore partnerships with non-government entities than practical with traditional assessments methods. Members also acknowledged that hosting a well-publicized contest would likely attract application developers from outside of the GIS community and, thereby, leverage creativity of non-traditional users, a goal established in the Business Plan.

Members Reinhardt, Egan, and Elkins each stated they believe the context idea presents an outstanding opportunity through which to explore partnering/cost sharing with others to address shared needs, provided the base services available are adequate.

Chairperson Schneider concurred that the concept is very good but perceives a disconnect with the goal to demonstrate the value of access by non-government entities unless all data for a given area are available. He suggested that a study area might be defined for which all data could be made available during the contest. He also encouraged the design team to develop a marketing piece that clearly defines the outcomes sought and use of this material to pursue corporate sponsorships from large firms with potential to benefit from resulting actions (.e.g., offering free products as part of the prizes.

A question was raised, but not resolved, as to whether the contest should be limited to proposals that pertain to the seven-county Metropolitan Area, as opposed to statewide. Agreement was reached that a condition of submittal should be that all applications have to be permitted to be used freely elsewhere in the state.

Chairperson Schneider summarized by restating his support for the concept and the Coordinating Committee working to continue to refine it, in particular, to clarify the goals to be achieved and packaging them to share with prospective sponsors. He encouraged the Committee to involve the private sector in the contest design beginning immediately, emphasizing that he believes the emerging initiative to seek out partnerships with the non-government interests to address shared needs should be expanded to incorporate this concept.

Motion: Member Reinhardt moved and Member Elkins seconded that the Policy Board:

- a) Grant concept approval to the idea of MetroGIS participating in the hosting of a contest, involving awards to successful submitters, to catalyze increased use of web services and applications that leverage these services as described in the agenda report, with the understanding that sponsorship of the contest will involve organizations in addition to MetroGIS.
- b) Direct the Coordinating Committee via its Web Feature Services Workgroup to propose a plan of action for its (Board's) approval.

Motion carried, ayes all.

g) October Meeting – Change Date

Vice Chairperson Egan moved and Member Elkins seconded to change the October meeting date from the 28th to the 14th. Motion carried, ayes all.

6. MAJOR ACTIVITY UPDATES

There was no discussion of the items presented in the agenda report

7. INFORMATION SHARING

There was no discussion of the items presented in the agenda report.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy Board is scheduled for October 14, 2009. Member Elkins suggested the Cyclopath project as a candidate for the October GIS Technology Demonstration.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Prepared by:
Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator