

**Meeting Summary**  
**MetroGIS Policy Board**  
**Metropolitan Counties Government Center**  
**2099 University Avenue, St. Paul**  
**April 20, 2011**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Schneider called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Members Present: Terry Schneider (Metro Cities - City of Minnetonka), Randy Maluchnik (Carver County) Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Joseph Harris (Dakota County), Jim Bunning for Joseph Wagner (Scott County), William Brown for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Roger Lake (Metro Watershed Districts), Dan Cook (School Districts - TIES), Dave Hinrichs (Metropolitan Council)

Seat Open: Metropolitan Council

Members Absent: Jim Kordiak (Anoka County)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Sally Wakefield, Nancy Read, Jim Bunning, Rick Gelbmann, and Mark Vander Schaaf

Support Team: Randall Johnson

Visitors: Steve Elkins (Candidate to represent the Metropolitan Council)

**2. ACCEPT AGENDA**

The meeting agenda was accepted as proposed.

**3. MEETING SUMMARY**

The Policy Board's January 19, 2011 meeting summary was accepted, as submitted.

**4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION**

Jim Bunning, GIS Manager for Scott County, [demonstrated](#) a web-based application used by Scott County this spring to disseminate information about road closures due to flooding. Bunning noted that the application was initially developed by Carver County and that Scott County had the same business need for which the Carver County application was developed. As such, with a minor programming modification to point to Scott County's data, Scott County was able to leverage the application in its entirety. He stressed that Scott and Carver County routinely collaborate in this manner. Bunning also noted that the editing component of the application meets MnDOT data standards, which permits these road closure data to be consumed by a similar MnDOT statewide application in addition to using it locally.

Bunning then demonstrated both components of the application – the public facing viewer and the editor. The latter permits local community content experts (emergency managers, city engineers, etc.) to upload information themselves, providing near-real time information to the public. Enabling local content experts to upload the data themselves greatly reduces the time it takes to “push” the information to the public.

Bunning concluded by sharing some of the improvements that will be looked into for the next generation of this application. They included the ability to use a smart phone in the field to upload data, in particular photos. The programmers will also be investigating the potential of more fully leveraging the MnDOT application, as opposed to supporting a separate application, if the MnDOT application does not prove to be too complex to suit the local content manager's business needs.

The members asked several questions to clarify understanding of the functionality that is provided, components of data that the application runs on, how the public viewer component might be linked to local community website, an opportunity to expand this type of application to rapidly provide other types of information such as crime related.

## 5. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

### a) **Next Generation MetroGIS Needs Assessment**

Staff Coordinator Johnson provided a brief introduction for this project. He then introduced Michael Turner, with AppGeo Boston, MA, who is the lead support for this project, noting that Turner would be joining the meeting via a phone and GoToMeeting Internet connection.

Using a slide [presentation](#), Turner summarized the needs assessment process; explained the high-level major findings that have been divided into three major categories of: data, communication, and organizational needs; he explained six policy related questions for which the Coordinating Committee has requested direction from the Policy Board before attempting to work on recommendations. The remainder of the time was dedicated to discussing and receiving direction on the following six policy questions:

- **Should MetroGIS expand its areas of activity (add fee for service function)?**
- **Should locally produced data be “pushed” to commercial mapping providers?**
- **Should the definition of collaboration be broadened (e.g., a different standard other than “regional significance”)?**
- **Is the current role of the Policy Board still relevant?**
- **Can MetroGIS resources be expended more flexibly?**
- **Should MetroGIS Continue to seek/obtain funding support from multiple organizations?**

At the conclusion of his presentation, Turner commented that notwithstanding the suggestions for improvements, MetroGIS remains among the top regional organizations in existence. He then invited the Board members to decide how they would like to attack the six discussion questions. Chairperson Schneider commented that the goal from his perspective is what measures need to be taken to ensure MetroGIS does the right things at the right time? In short, how can MetroGIS be both more nimble and more effective?

Chairperson Schneider commented that the role of the Board has changed since its inception. At that time, among its most important roles was to find ways for the seven counties to work better together in a manner that also improved efficiencies for other government interests. Chairperson Schneider went on to comment that he believes these roles has been achieved and that now the question is how to enhance MetroGIS’s effectiveness. Paraphrasing, he said “the turf battles have been settled, and the larger sums of money have been spent.” Members concurred that more can be done and that GIS technology will continue to play a vital role in the region’s planning.

All concurred that with some of the major issues settled there is a need to be more flexible and open to acting on smaller scale needs, including the needs of others, with similar interests in regional collaboration (i.e., the driving reason for MetroGIS’s existence). He also noted that citizens’ knowledge of geospatial technology and their expectations have changed, which in turn has broadened the potential set of shared needs. A wide-ranging discussion ensued, during which the following direction was provided:

- Call to change the current organizational structure by:
  - Modifying the role of the Policy Board to move/share the current responsibility to define the organizational vision and activities to those who

are experts within geospatial industry. The Board's roles should be to endorse guiding principles, and provide advocacy, political support, and in general a political reality check, as opposed to direction for specific activities. It was observed that the way Policy Board has functioned recently is more like a "Guidance Committee" than a "Policy Board", and perhaps that's what is now most needed.

- Creating a "super" committee, or a "sub" committee that would be designed to act in a more agile fashion and potentially meet more regularly, than the quarterly Policy Board schedule and on an as-needed basis. Such a committee would be smaller than the Policy Board and it was suggested should be no more than 3-5 people. This committee could act as an additional bridge between the Policy Board and Coordinating Committee and could be more responsive to opportunities that present themselves and could provide approvals for smaller scale expenditures. It was also suggested that non-Policy Board members might be appointed to this kind of a committee.
- Utilize/modify, as needed, the Executive Committee of Policy Board to act on contracts when windows of opportunity are discovered and to improve nimbleness. It was suggested that a reconstituted Executive Committee could potentially act as the "super"/"sub" committee.
- Delegate authority to the Coordinating Committee, or another surrogate for approvals to spend up to \$50k without explicit Policy Board approval (*once the Policy Board approves higher level, overall budget*). Discussion indicated that there was general agreement of this concept amongst Board members. It was observed that recently MetroGIS has not always been able to fully spend its budget due to "contracting delays."
- Modify the Committee structure and activities to be bring more non-government interests into the fold in substantive ways and in so doing recapture the leadership role that has slipped in the past few years. With governments collaborating better, this would be a natural evolution of expanding collaboration throughout the *region*.
- Acknowledgment that two types of funding are involved to make progress with the types of collaboration solutions sought by MetroGIS:
  - Funding for administrative focused functions involved in fostering collaboration
  - Funding for specific projects.

All concurred that partners/multiple funding sources should continue be sought for projects that have distinct deliverables (e.g., application development, imagery collection). Specific mention was made to seek out a public-private pilot with CB Richard Ellis to demonstrate value that could be created if they have an ability to "hang" their data on public parcel data records.

The conversation was not definitive with regard to the fostering collaboration component. An argument was offered that it is appropriate for the Council to continue to wholly fund the foster collaboration component, given that the Council is generally viewed as the largest beneficiary of MetroGIS's efforts. Indeed, it was pointed out (by Rick Gelbmann) that Council has a business requirement for what MetroGIS does which is why they funded it in the first place. Others commented that efforts should be rekindled to investigate opportunities to bring more resources to the table. No specifics offered other

than the counties believe their in-kind contributions of data and human resources are considerable.

- Continue the long-standing tradition of presenting a GIS technology demonstration at each Policy Board meeting. Indeed, Board members observed that continuing education on geospatial matters has been one of the most valuable functions of the Policy Board both personally and to the parent organizations of Board members.
- Clarify and/or refine the definition of “regional significance” to include projects with less than a full seven-county geographic extent, provided they comply with MetroGIS’s “produce once and use many times” guiding principal. (E.g., if three counties develop an application or web service that could be used by others it *could* be considered “regionally significant”.)
- Board members acknowledged that seeking further avenues for data dissemination – such as using commercial mapping tools like Google Maps – was worth investigating further.

At the conclusion of Board’s consideration of this topic, the members were asked if they thought that the remotely facilitated discussion, which lasted for more than an hour, was effective. All concurred that they thought that the remotely facilitated discussion was well done and that the results were meaningful. Mr. Terner was thanked for his effort.

**b) Statewide (Minnesota) Geographic Advisory Council (MGAC)**

Chairperson Schneider and Member Reinhardt, who is the Chairperson for the MGAC, briefly commented that the majority of the conversation at the March 31<sup>st</sup> MGAC meeting concerned the eminent sun-setting of the Council and the unknown whether the Legislature will have time to consider an extension this session. There was no other discussion.

**c) Quantifying Public Value (QPV) Study Update December 29 Statewide**

Chairperson Schneider shared with the members that the QPV Study Advisory Team is slowly making progress to define a methodology. He mentioned that the next meeting of the Team is scheduled for April 25, at which time the goal is to reach agreement on an overarching strategy. There was no discussion, due to the lateness of the hour.

**d) 2011 Program Objectives and Budget Refinement**

Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that the GECCo forum proposed for September has been approved for federal funding, meaning that the \$3,000 allocated by MetroGIS is now available to be used for another purpose. He noted that the results of the MetroGIS Needs Assessment will be presented at the July meeting and will include a use for these funds. No action was requested.

**e) Election of Officers**

Chairperson Schneider commented that he is willing to serve as chairperson for another year and that Member Maluchnik has volunteered to serve as vice chair if that was the wish of the members.

**Motion:** Alternate Member O’Rourke moved and Member Reinhardt seconded to elect Members Schneider and Maluchnik as chairperson and vice-chairperson, respectfully, for 2011. Motion carried ayes all.

**6. MAJOR PROJECT UPDATES**

No questions were asked.

**7. INFORMATION SHARING**

No questions were asked.

*Approved on:  
(pending)*

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Policy Board is scheduled for Wednesday, July 20, 2011.

**9. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Prepared by:  
Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator