

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Room 1A, Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices
January 29, 2003

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Terry Schneider (AMM-City of Minnetonka), Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Patrice Bataglia (Dakota County), Gary Delaney (Carver County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Bob Vogel (Scott County), Molly O'Rourke for Dennis Hegberg (Washington County), Lee Whitcraft for Antoinette Johns (TIES), Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), and Ann Beckman for Roger Williams (Metropolitan Council).

Members Absent: Randy Johnson (Hennepin County) and Gary Schiff (AMM-City of Minneapolis)

Coordinating Committee Members Present: David Arbeit, Bill Brown, David Claypool, Will Craig, Dave Drealan (Vice-Chair), Rick Gelbmann, Jane Harper (Chair), Randy Knippel, and Ron Wencil.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson and Steve Fester.

Visitors: David Brandt (Washington County) and Peter Henschel (Carver County).

2. INTRODUCE NEW MEMBERS

Four new members were appointed to the Policy Board in January: Patrice Bataglia (Dakota County), Gary Delaney (Carver County), Bob Vogel (Scott County), and Dennis Hegberg (Washington County). Chairperson Reinhardt invited each of the members and staff to introduce themselves.

3. ACCEPT AGENDA

Member Fiskness moved and Member Bataglia seconded to accept the agenda, as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Kordiak moved and Member Fiskness seconded to approve the summary of the October 2002 meeting as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

5. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

David Brandt (Washington County) and Peter Henschel (Carver County) demonstrated how their respective organizations are using the ALOHA and CATS emergency management applications and how GIS is being used to support them. In addition, Peter Henschel demonstrated an application developed by Carver County that automates preparation of mailing labels from the county's parcel data and David Brandt demonstrated a product called GeoNotify, which uses GIS technology to identify targeted households and automates phone/mail contacts for evacuation/notification of the affected parties.

Member Kordiak asked if someone in Carver County, other than GIS staff, is trained to use the emergency response applications on weekends and evenings when the GIS staff are not present. Mr. Henschel noted that although the GIS staff installed and supports these applications, the county's risk management and emergency response personnel actually operate them on a daily basis. Carver County's emphasis is on building applications that are intuitive and easy to use by emergency personnel in the field who do not have expertise with GIS technology. Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that this philosophy of easy to use applications by non-GIS specialists would also be proposed as a guiding principal for MetroGIS's efforts to develop collaborative solutions to common GIS application needs.

Member Fiskness asked about the relationship between MetroGIS's regional common information need solutions and proposed 2003 work to address commonly needed geodata applications. Johnson commented that the regional data solutions "normalize" data across the seven-county area, which is necessary to support commonly needed applications usable by stakeholders throughout the seven county area.

Will Craig commented that the GeoNotify application appears to use the Census Bureau's population data as a source and questioned whether it could be configured to run on "daytime" population, which is more accurately derived from employment data. Mr. Brandt acknowledged that the current configuration used by Washington County is in fact "night-time" or population-based data but that the application could be configured to use "day-time" population data. Craig commented that MetroGIS's "socioeconomic characteristics of areas" information need may be able to help address this "daytime" population data need.

6. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 2002 Accomplishments and Annual Report Preparations

Coordinating Committee Chair Harper summarized several of MetroGIS's major accomplishments in 2002, including regional data solutions, enhancement of DataFinder, shared best practices, and their effects to minimize duplication of effort, improve decision making support, and improve organizational efficiencies. Chairperson Reinhardt commented that she is pleased with the national recognition that MetroGIS is receiving for its efforts.

Harper also invited Board members to comment on proposed themes for the 2002 Annual Report. In response, the Board suggested that a central theme of the Annual Report should be cost savings that are being realized due the existence of MetroGIS. Staff Coordinator Johnson commented that the proposed outsourcing contract with Jeanne Landkamer, who has produced the annual report the past four years, has not yet been approved, and that if it is not, the interview style of report that has produced in the past may not be possible.

b) 2003 Budget and Major Program Objectives

Coordinating Committee Chair Harper summarized the proposed workplan for 2003 as recommended by the Coordinating Committee on December 18. The Staff Coordinator commented that following the Committee's action, funding for proposed outsourcing to accomplish some of the proposed tasks had been suspended by the Metropolitan Council in accordance with a directive from the Governor. To maintain momentum that has been established, Board members concurred that the proposed work plan should be accepted and that, if need be, modifications could be made once the status of the proposed outsource contracts is determined.

Member Fiskness asked whether the possible loss in funding would impede MetroGIS's ability to continue to make progress to address common user needs. Coordinating Committee member Gelbmann commented that DataFinder's support is not currently at risk, nor is the staff support needed to develop solutions to common information needs but that funds to enhance DataFinder's capabilities may not be available in the near term via the Council. Gelbmann noted that MetroGIS's ability to leverage resources from multiple sources will be more important than ever to accomplish solutions that require out-of-pocket expenses for hardware, software and system design. He also commented that he would advocate for a solution with Council management to accomplish the annual report because it is an important vehicle to connect the MetroGIS community with possible federal resources.

Motion: Member Kordiak moved and Member Whitcraft seconded that the Policy Board:

- 1) Approve the attached 2003 MetroGIS major program objectives, as recommended by the Coordinating Committee on December 18, 2002, subject to any funding changes that may be imposed by the incoming administration.

- 2) Accept the detailed 2003 MetroGIS budget document, as recommended by the Coordinating Committee on December 18, 2002 and attached to the agenda materials, subject to any changes that may be imposed by the incoming administration.

Motion carried, ayes all.

c) Update on County Data Producer Workgroup Activities

Dave Drealan, Coordinating Committee member and Chair of the County Data Producer Workgroup, summarized the activities of the workgroup and its makeup. He commented that the workgroup had been previously directed by the Board to: 1) recommend a collaborative solution among the counties for distribution of parcel data to non-government interests, 2) recommend a collaborative means for distribution of other county-produced data to non-government interests, and 3) provide policy direction concerning addressing common geodata application needs of the MetroGIS community.

He explained that the Workgroup has concentrated on the first task thus far and outlined for Board comment a strategy for evaluating market interest in a proposal to distribute parcel data to non-government interests consistent with the guidelines endorsed by the Policy Board at its October 2002 meeting. Key components of the current proposal were noted as follows:

- There would be no further work to evaluate the current policy to treat non-profits the same as for-profits until the for-profit policies are in place.
- A fee of \$0.05/parcel has been agreed upon to test market interest with the understanding that the product is the 25-attribute version of the regional parcel dataset that is currently available to government interests and that access to subsets of the regional dataset is permitted. The later two circumstances were not part of the first offering of the dataset for \$0.05/parcel.
- A common license and procedures have been agreed upon and the workgroup members are investigating the acceptability of a “shrink wrap” concept with their respective administrations.

There was some discussion about licensing requirements and what might happen if license conditions are breached. Following a comment from Bill Brown, Hennepin County’s representative to the workgroup, that the data become stale and that users will want to keep their relationships with the counties intact to be able to obtain updates, Board members concurred with the workgroup that few problems are expected with licensing requirements.

Member Fiskness commented that, as a representative of watershed districts - a class of organization that relies heavily on consultants to carry out their planning and administration - he strongly supports continuation of the current Third Party Agent policy that grants free access to parcel data to consultants working on behalf of government interests. Staff confirmed this practice is proposed to continue.

The workgroup was thanked for its efforts and encouraged to bring its recommendations to the Board as quickly as practical.

d) Support of Collaborative Emergency Response Resolution - National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC)

Coordinating Committee Chair Craig summarized the purpose of the resolution and the Coordinating Committee’s recommendation that MetroGIS support it. Craig also noted that as Minnesota’s representative to the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) he is responsible for bringing this recommendation before MetroGIS and that the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Geographic Information had endorsed it.

Member Bataglia commented that the Metropolitan 911 Board had recently passed a similar resolution and that she believes it is an appropriate action for the MetroGIS Policy Board.

Motion: Member Bataglia moved and Member Fiskness seconded that the Policy Board endorse the “Declaration of Interdependence” resolution sponsored by the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) and authorize its chair to add her signature on behalf of MetroGIS to the list of those entities that have acted in support of the resolution. Motion carried, ayes all.

e) Support to Reauthorize the MN Governor’s Council on Geographic Information (GCGI)

Coordinating Committee Arbeit commented that the GCGI is the only entity that is currently attempting to coordinate GIS-related activity at the state level in Minnesota similar to the coordination function that MetroGIS is serving in the Twin Cities area. He commented that the GCGI is authorized by Executive Order and that the current authorization expires April 16th. The purpose of the proposed resolution is to inform the new administration that MetroGIS supports reauthorization of the GCGI and its efforts to coordinate GIS activity. Arbeit noted that endorsement by MetroGIS is very important to the GCGI, given MetroGIS’s presence as a leading GIS collaborative in the state and in the country. He also commented that even with a small budget, most believe the GCGI’s efforts are extremely valuable and worthwhile.

Board members asked for clarification of the GCGI’s budget and what is likely to happen if MN Planning, the state planning agency that currently supports the GCGI, is eliminated. Arbeit commented that the budget is comprised of about ½ FTE or about \$20,000/year. He acknowledged there is a strong likelihood that MN Planning will be eliminated but that the Land Management Information Center (LMIC), the entity that provides support to the GCGI, would probably be transferred to the Department of Administration.

Coordinating Committee member Wencil, representing the USGS, commented that the GCGI is recognized by federal agencies as the entity in Minnesota responsible for coordinating GIS activities.

Board members encouraged Mr. Arbeit to develop an information packet that clearly conveys the purpose and benefits of the GCGI, in particular, beyond the Metro Area.

Motion: Member Schneider moved and Member Delaney seconded that the Policy Board:

- 1) Endorse the resolution included in the agenda materials calling for the Governor to reauthorize the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Geographic Information.
- 2) Authorize its chair to sign a letter of support on behalf of the MetroGIS Policy Board for submission to the Pawlenty Administration.

Motion carried, ayes all.

f) Performance Measures Report

Kathie Doty, with Richardson, Richter & Associates, Inc. and a member of the MetroGIS staff support team, summarized that MetroGIS established a performance measurement program in 2002 to ensure that MetroGIS’s activities and policies are responsive and consistent with stakeholder needs. She also commented that accountability is more critical in the current climate and that this measures reporting program is an effective means to demonstrate the benefits of MetroGIS’s efforts.

Ms. Doty then summarized the findings for each of the measures contained in the report included with the agenda materials. Member Schneider predicted that the current average of 1000 data downloads/month should increase dramatically when applications are involved.

Member Bataglia asked for clarification as to the source of the data distributed via DataFinder. This comment led to a general discussion of MetroGIS’s philosophy that all data should be maintained as close to the source as possible and that DataFinder was designed to provide the producers with flexibility to submit their data to MetroGIS on an agreed upon schedule or serve it locally to users via a remote link via DataFinder.

Ms. Doty commented that in addition to continuing to monitor performance via the measures cited, she encouraged the Board to consider setting targets for each measure once it is comfortable with the measures. Staff asked if the Board would like a presentation at each meeting or once a year? Board members requested a presentation once a year with recommendations for any suggested modifications in policy or procedures and a summary of activity as a component of the Information Sharing agenda item for the other meetings.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

Chairperson Reinhardt reported to the members that she and staff had presented to the Metropolitan Council the Exemplary Systems in Government Award received from URISA, and also asked the members to review on their own the other information sharing items written about in the agenda packet.

Member Fiskness commented that the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts had recently met and that he had responded to questions about MetroGIS for approximately 30 minutes. He noted that the association would most likely invite MetroGIS to present at its conference on December 6, 2003.

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that MetroGIS has been invited to make a presentation to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) on February 19.

8. NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Reinhardt reminded the Board members that the election of officers will be held at the next meeting, which is scheduled for April 30, 2003.

9. ADJOURN

The meeting concluded at 8:30 p.m.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator