

**Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices
July 11, 2001**

1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Members Present: Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), John Siegfried (Carver County), Willis Branning (Dakota County), Barbara Johnson (AMM), Richard Johnson for Randy Johnson (Hennepin County) Terry Schneider (AMM) and Eli Cooper for Roger Williams (Metropolitan Council).

Members Absent: Antoinette Johns (TIES), Dennis Hegberg (Washington County) and Joseph Wagner (Scott County).

Coordinating Committee Members Present: Jane Harper, Ed Shukle, Gary Stevenson, David Claypool.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Jeanne Landkamer (MetroGIS Support Staff), Mike Dolbow (Metropolitan Council GIS), Trudy Richter and Peggy Aho (Richardson, Richter & Associates, MetroGIS Support Team).

2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Schneider moved and Member Fiskness seconded to approve the agenda of July 11, 2001 as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Kordiak moved and Member Fiskness seconded to approve the minutes of April 11, 2001 as submitted. Motion carried. Member Branning abstained.

4) GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

Mike Dolbow demonstrated the data search and delivery capabilities current supported via MetroGIS DataFinder and explained the data downloading capability improvements that are desired by the MetroGIS community and the subject of Agenda Item 5a. Mike noted that MetroGIS DataFinder (www.datafinder.org) allows the MetroGIS community to quickly and easily locate data produced by MetroGIS stakeholders and also allows them to search and access data from others who produce data about the Twin Cities area. The site allows users to examine a variety of GIS information including transportation information, municipal boundaries, watershed districts, school districts, etc.

Randall Johnson noted that MetroGIS's adopted metadata standards are the key to the searching functionality provided by DataFinder and that MetroGIS uses the metadata standards endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and the State of Minnesota so that data are searchable in a standardize manner. Randall also noted, that with regard to MetroGIS endorsed datasets such as the Regional Municipal Boundaries dataset used in the demonstration, the Policy Board approves the data specifications, roles and responsibilities for the primary producers of the data and the regional custodian, and appoints organizations to fulfill these roles.

Chairperson Reinhardt asked to see watershed district boundaries in addition to the municipal boundaries that Mike had used in his demonstration. Mike also demonstrated some of the capabilities of the most complex of the five Internet mapping services currently on DataFinder; the Transportation Map Service which shows roads, proposed light rail stations and bus stations and he noted that it had recently won a national award. Access to this service can be gained

through a standard Internet browser (i.e., Netscape, Internet Explorer, etc.) at <http://www.datafinder.org/maps.asp>

5) ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Regional Parcel Dataset – Public/Academic Interests Version

The Policy Board was asked to: 1) endorse MetroGIS moving from the pilot phase to a long-term commitment to support a quarterly-updated regional parcel dataset solution by approving the Regional Parcel Data Business Information Need Policy Summary dated May 22, 2001, 2) endorse the proposed Request for Proposals to design and implement an internet-based, data delivery mechanism; 3) retain MetroGIS's current unincorporated organizational structure until a need is demonstrated for a more formalized structure; and 4) direct a letter to be sent from Chairperson Reinhardt to the managers of the seven counties and the Council to thank them for agreeing to serve in the custodial roles and to encourage their compliance with each of the Board-endorsed responsibilities, in particular, documentation of data in a standardized form.

Chairperson Reinhardt noted that MetroGIS represents the work of over 100 stakeholders over the last two years. Chairperson Reinhardt further noted that the pilot project provided many answers to questions and allows MetroGIS to pursue a long-term commitment.

Member Schneider questioned the recommendation to retain MetroGIS's current unincorporated structure until a need is demonstrated for a more formalized structure. Randall Johnson responded that this recommendation was offered as closure to a directive from the Business Planning process. That process which concluded with Board action in April 2000 deferred action on this topic to see if the negotiations to set up the Regional Parcel Data Pilot Project would identify information important to this matter. Johnson noted that he and Trudy Richter, lead negotiator, had concluded and that the Coordinating Committee concurred that a more formalized structure would not have expedited the pilot project in any way as the fundamental issue involved intellectual property rights. There was no further discussion of Member Schneider's question.

Member Kordiak questioned the number of attribute fields identified listed in the proposed data specifications. Randall clarified that the attribute fields identified in the specifications are only for the public sector version; the private sector dataset offers less attributes. Member Kordiak was comfortable with this explanation. Johnson also commented that the proposed policy does not obligate the respective counties to provide the attribute data, if they do not produce it.

Member Kordiak asked what would happen if a county decided not to continue as member of the MetroGIS project. Chairperson Reinhardt noted that if one of the member counties decided to discontinue participating in the project, the Policy Board would need to rethink the project and its objectives.

Motion:

Member Branning moved and Member Cooper seconded that the Policy Board:

- 1) Endorse MetroGIS moving from the pilot phase to a long-term commitment to support (at minimum) a quarterly-updated regional parcel dataset solution by approving the Regional Parcel Data Business Information Need Policy Summary, dated May 22, 2001 and presented in the agenda packet, to:
 - a) Amend the desired data specifications, roles and responsibilities, and custodian organizations previously approved by the Policy Board October 1999 to reflect the findings of MetroGIS's May 2000-May 2001 Regional Parcel Data Pilot Project.
 - b) Designate the Metropolitan Council to serve in the role of regional custodian and carry out the Board-endorsed responsibilities, assuming a commitment is maintained by the counties to provide the source parcel data.

- 2) Endorse the following objectives for the proposed Request for Proposals to design and implement an Internet-based, data delivery mechanism:
 - a) Automate the data distribution process, including ability to distinguish between data requests that require licensing and data requests that require fees.
 - b) Provide the user with the ability to specify a geographic area of interest within the seven county area.
 - c) Support a format(s) readily useable by all major GIS software types used by the MetroGIS community to the extent possible and practical.
 - d) Work in conjunction with MetroGIS's Web Map Services capabilities.
 - e) As a bid option, provide the user with the ability to specify attributes from all those available for each data theme.
- 3) Retain MetroGIS's current unincorporated organizational structure until a need is demonstrated for a more formalized structure.
- 4) Direct a letter be sent from the Chairperson Reinhardt to the managers of the seven counties and the Council to thank them for agreeing to serve in these custodial roles and to encourage their compliance with each of the Board-endorsed responsibilities, in particular, documentation of data in a standardized format.

Motion carried, ayes all.

b) MetroGIS Membership in National GeoData Alliance (GDA)

Chairperson Reinhardt summarized the recommendation that MetroGIS join the National GeoData Alliance as an institutional member and that the Board endorse the idea of a Board member seeking appointment to the GDA National Council of Trustees.

Member Siegfried asked if it was the responsibility of the Policy Board to look at the whole State and get the whole State up to speed on GIS, encourage outstate Minnesota to invest in GIS technology. Chairperson Reinhardt noted that being a part of the National GeoData Alliance would assist the Policy Board learn from others that have similar needs. Member Cooper noted, on behalf of the Governor's Council, that MetroGIS has put a lot of time and funds into the development of MetroGIS and this investment is acting as a catalyst for the others outside of the Metro Area. Member Schnieder encouraged MetroGIS members and staff to talk on a regular basis with others throughout the State and begin to provide quarterly or more frequent updates to one another on MetroGIS's progress as well as initiatives underway by the Governor's Council on Geographic Information and others.

Member Kordiak asked if MetroGIS has a travel budget for participation in the GDA. Randall Johnson responded that there are monies budgeted for one trip. He also noted that Chairperson Reinhardt has been asked to speak at the National GeoData Alliance annual meeting on November 2 in Denver, Colorado. Chairperson Reinhardt's travel expenses will be reimbursed by the National GeoData Alliance.

Motion

Member Siegfried moved and Member Fiskness seconded the motion authorizing MetroGIS to apply for membership (\$500 annual fee) in the National GeoData Alliance (GDA) as an institutional member. Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Kordiak moved and Member Schneider seconded the motion of MetroGIS to endorse the idea of a member of the Policy Board seeking a seat on the GDA Board of Trustees as a representative of regional or multi-jurisdictional government. Motion carried, ayes all.

Member Siegfried moved and Member Schneider seconded the motion that the Chair or designee of the chair of the MetroGIS Policy Board be identified as the person to be the representative of the MetroGIS on the GDA Board of Trustees. The motion carried, ayes all.

c) October Meeting Date – Change from the 10th to the 17th

It was noted that the 10th of October is the date that the Minnesota State GIS/LIS Conference is being held, therefore, staff suggested that the October meeting date be changed to October 17.

Motion

Member Fiskness moved and Member Cooper seconded the motion that the Policy Board set October 17th as its next meeting date. Motion carried, ayes all.

d) NSDI Grant and National Award from ESRI

Randall Johnson noted that MetroGIS has received two national awards: a National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Web Map Services Grant and ESRI's Geography Challenge grand prize.

The MetroGIS Transportation Map Service was selected as the first place winner in ESRI's 2001 Geography Network Challenge contest. The prize is \$5,000 of ESRI credit to be used by up to 40 MetroGIS participants to take the ESRI virtual campus courses. Staff encouraged Board members to inform their staff and colleagues to contact Alison Slaats, DataFinder Manager (651-602-1561), if to take advantage of one of these scholarships.

Johnson also reported that MetroGIS had applied for and was awarded a \$18,000 National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Web Mapping Services Grant. The funding will be used to convert, using an emerging industry standard protocol defined by the Open GIS Consortium (OGC) MetroGIS's existing Web Mapping Services, to a format that can be used by all GIS software, not just ESRI software as the case currently and to develop additional OGC-compliant services. MetroGIS is inviting one technical person, with GIS and Internet expertise, to accompany Alison Slaats at the training scheduled for September 5-7. Board members were encouraged to inform their staff and colleagues to contact Alison at alison.slaats@metc.state.mn.us, to be considered for this training opportunity.

e) Thank You to MetroGIS – TIES and Stillwater ISD

Randall Johnson reviewed a letter Chairperson Reinhardt had received from Dick Carlstrom of TIES. Mr. Carlstrom noted that school districts in the metropolitan area have truly benefited from the climate of cooperation fostered by MetroGIS's efforts.

f) MetroGIS's Organizational Structure

Chairperson Reinhardt summarized a letter she had received from Hennepin County's Commissioner Randy in which Commissioner Johnson's raised a concern that involvement in MetroGIS is consuming a significant amount of Hennepin county staff time and suggested that MetroGIS consider a more streamlined organizational structure. Chairperson Reinhardt explained that she had asked staff to propose some options for the Policy Board's consideration.

Trudy Richter, of Richardson, Richter & Associates and member of the MetroGIS support team, noted that she had spoken with other MetroGIS stakeholders and they also expressed concern for the amount time they are investing in the affairs of MetroGIS, although everyone that she had spoken to also acknowledged that MetroGIS's activities are resulting in significant benefits to the stakeholder community. Trudy then summarized a proposed revision to the MetroGIS organization structure in which the Policy Advisory Team would be replaced with a "chairs workgroup" to assist staff develop non-technical policy recommendations. Chairperson Reinhardt noted that the proposed structure could possibly eliminate up to 16 meetings a year for the individuals most active in MetroGIS. Member Richard Johnson supported the proposed changes and in addition asked if the Coordinating Committee and Policy Board meetings could be held at the call of the chair. Chairperson Reinhardt noted that this is basically how it works now. The meetings are scheduled ahead of time so that they can be placed on member's calendar and then if the Chair feels there is not enough action to warrant a meeting, a meeting is cancelled.

Member Fiskness argued that MetroGIS's work is not a one-time effort but that it is comprised of an on-going effort to guide the development of GIS coordination to make it a cost-effective tool to serve the public. He then offered a quote he believed to be fitting for MetroGIS "Without the effort of individuals nothing is done" and "without institutions nothing survives". Member Fiskness noted that MetroGIS needs to come up with a structure that will institutionalize the system. Chairperson Reinhardt noted that MetroGIS was developed as a flexible structure so that there is flexibility in the process. Member Schneider noted that it works better to have a schedule, that perhaps MetroGIS needs to develop a more explicit work plan which, in turn, would establish a more outcome-based agenda. Member Schneider further noted his belief that the Policy Board needs to continue meeting quarterly from the perspective of keeping abreast of the changing technology, needs and opportunities..

Member Cooper noted that the Metropolitan Council sees a value in the funds and staff time MetroGIS members contribute for this project and that the Council is receiving significant value in the collaborative efforts of MetroGIS.

Motion

Member Kordiak moved and Member Siegfried seconded the motion to approve the suggested modification to MetroGIS's organizational structure proposed by Trudy Richter (eliminate the Policy Advisory Team and replace with an chairs workgroup) and to make Committee Chairs aware that they have the ability to cancel meetings at their discretion. Motion carried, ayes all.

6) INFORMATION SHARING

a) National GeoData Alliance

Chairperson Reinhardt has accepted an invitation to participate on a collaborative panel at the National GeoData Forum on November 2, 2001. Randall Johnson has accepted an invitation to work full time from July 17 to September 7 on a project for the GDA in Reston, Virginia.

b) New Coordinating Committee Members

On May 22, the Coordinating Committee unanimously appointed Brad Henry (URS/BRW) and Mark Vandershaaf (City of St. Paul) to its membership.

c) MetroGIS Internet Site Statistics

Randall Johnson summarized statistics for use of the both of MetroGIS's Web sites that were included in the agenda packet.

d) Major Project Updates

No discussion.

7) NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2001.

8) ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Prepared by,

Peggy Aho, RRA