

**Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Policy Board
Room 1A, Metropolitan Council's Mears Park Offices
July 30, 2002**

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Members Present: Terry Schneider (AMM-City of Minnetonka), Gary Schiff (AMM-City of Minneapolis), Jim Kordiak (Anoka County), Willis Branning (Dakota County), Randy Johnson (Hennepin County), Victoria Reinhardt (Ramsey County), Molly O'Rourke (Washington County), Conrad Fiskness (Metro Watershed Districts), and Roger Williams (Metropolitan Council).

Members Absent: Antoinette Johns (TIES), John Siegfried (Carver County), and Joseph Wagner (Scott County).

Coordinating Committee Members Present: David Arbeit, Bill Brown, Eli Cooper, Dave Drealan, Jane Harper, Brad Henry, Jim Hentges, and Randy Knippel.

Support Staff: Randall Johnson, Steve Fester, Kathie Doty, with Richardson, Richter and Associates, and Alison Slaats.

Visitors: Gary Criter (City of Minneapolis)

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

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

3. MEETING SUMMARY

Member Branning moved and Member Kordiak seconded to approve the summary of the April 10, 2002 meeting as submitted. Motion carried, ayes all.

4. GIS TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION – MetroGIS DataFinder Café

Alison Slaats, MetroGIS DataFinder Manager, summarized the project objectives and demonstrated the functionality of MetroGIS's recently launched DataFinder Café -- a state-of-the-art Internet-enabled data browsing and distribution application. Another purpose of the demonstration was to help the Board members better understand the particulars involved in the emerging issues that would be presented for discussion later in the agenda: (1) the blurring of the line between data distribution and increasing interest in online GIS applications used to analyze relationships between and among data objects and/or produce maps and (2) whether or not to pursue an eCommerce extension to Café to extend its robust data downloading functionality to distribution of parcel and other data for which a fee is required for access by non-government interests.

In response to a question from Member Kordiak, the Staff Coordinator noted that development of DataFinder Café has cost between \$85,000 and \$90,000 in addition to the previous investment in the development of MetroGIS DataFinder, costing in excess of \$150,000 over the past 4 years, all financed by the Metropolitan Council with funding allocated to MetroGIS. Staff also noted that the Metropolitan Council, on behalf of the MetroGIS community, is also absorbing the annual out-of-pocket software maintenance expenses in excess of \$20,000 and related hardware expenses which have capacity beyond the Council's internal needs.

Member Fiskness asked staff to comment on who can have access to the software code. The Staff Coordinator noted the contract with Syncline, the software developer, at his insistence, permits the Council, who owns the code to share it, free of charge, with any government interest serving the State of

Minnesota that would further the objectives of MetroGIS. At that point, the Staff Coordinator introduced David Arbeit, Director of Minnesota Land Management Information Center (LMIC) to share with the Board LMIC's intention to leverage the Council's investment in DataFinder Café and deploy it statewide as a component of the state's GeoIntegrator project. Arbeit announced that he had received notice this afternoon that the state Office of Technology had awarded a \$117,000 grant for this purpose. Staff commented that the City of St. Paul is in the process of gearing up to use Café as the primary means to distribute geodata to both internal and external users and the negotiations are in progress with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission to take advantage of the investment made to date in DataFinder Café.

Member Branning asked for clarification as to whether the data producer would continue to decide which data are shared and under what circumstances. Staff responded that the data producer community, through MetroGIS's Common Business Information Needs polices development process, decide collaboratively the access rules for data they produce. He noted as an example product of this process the current data sharing agreements with each county. Staff also emphasized a foundational MetroGIS philosophy that no interest will be asked to do anything for the broader MetroGIS community for which the interest does not have an internal business need.

5. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) 2002 Business Plan – Key Challenge Areas

Jane Harper, Vice Chair of the Coordinating Committee, introduced Kathie Doty, member of the MetroGIS Staff Support Team and with the firm Richardson, Richter and Associates, who summarized the June 19 recommendations of the Coordination Committee concerning key challenges areas that have been identified for MetroGIS through a process that began in March 2002. The discussion was approached from two perspectives: challenges relating to ongoing work and those related to emerging issues. (Note: The Attachments cited next to each section refer to the attachments to the staff report dated July 23 and included in the agenda materials.)

(1) Challenges Related to Ongoing Work (Attachment B)

Doty summarized five challenge areas related to ongoing work and requested direction from the Board to continue to include in MetroGIS's Business Plan. The five areas are: Common Information Needs, Regionally Endorsed Data Solutions, Organizational Constraints to Data Distribution, Support for the MetroGIS Mission, and Outreach and Broader Coordination.

There was general discussion about the progress that has made to address the thirteen initial priority common business information needs. A table was provided in the staff report that showed six completed, five in progress, and two (Rights to Property and Land Regulations) that had not been started. Staff was asked to comment on the reasons why the two had not been started and whether they should be dropped from consideration. The Staff Coordinator commented that although these two common information needs had been identified as priorities by the data user community, to date, no organization has been identified that has a business need to investigate/implement a regional solution. Member Schneider commented that a regional (normalized) dataset for the seven-county area may not be possible given the complexities involved and differences in local policies that by their nature can not be effectively merged into a normalized solution. He encouraged the Committee to consider the possibility of a *technology solution, as opposed to a standardized data content solution*, such as a one-stop-shop concept for access to the many components.

There was also general discussion about the multitude of decision-making benefits that could occur by encouraging *continuity between data produced beyond the Metro Area and regional data solutions endorsed by MetroGIS*. The Staff Coordinator commented that this concept of integrating the geodata policies of the metro area with those for the surrounding counties is at the core of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI) I-Plan initiative. He also noted that work on a statewide parcel data policy, which incorporates principals endorsed by MetroGIS, is progressing nicely and that its impetus was the Policy Board's request last July to GCGI asking it to pursue a statewide parcel policy.

Motion: Member Branning moved and Member Williams seconded to direct the Coordinating Committee to include in the Business Plan Update the five Challenge Areas related to Ongoing Work, presented in Attachment B to the staff report. Motion carried, ayes all.

(2) Challenges Related to Emerging Issues

Chairperson Reinhardt commented that much progress has been made by MetroGIS to resolve common geodata needs. She also commented that had the Board not acted last July to direct the Request for Proposals that lead to implementation of the DataFinder Café, the possible solutions before them now to address emerging issues would not be options.

➤ Distribution of Parcel Data to Non-Profit and Private Sector (Attachment C)

Staff support team member Doty summarized the history of MetroGIS's involvement in this matter, dating back to April 2000, and the findings of the market analysis conducted by staff in April and May, as outlined in the staff report.

Chairperson Reinhardt asked staff to comment on the potential for the opposite of the desired effect of implementing an automated and collaborative solution; that is, less revenue from data sales and an increase in staff time. Doty commented that in general the county representatives interviewed believe pursuing an automated solution would be a plus but she also acknowledged the benefit varied among the counties and are there are still unknowns. Coordinating Committee Vice Chair Harper commented that for Washington County the benefit is limited when only parcel data is considered but she believes that the ability to use an automated system (eCommerce + DataFinder Café) to distribute other data for which a fee is required for access (elevation, imagery, etc.) greatly increases the potential benefit.

Members Kordiak and Johnson concurred that the ability, via DataFinder Café, to distribute portions of the parcel dataset, as opposed to the all or nothing, is a better business proposition. The question before the Board is now how much more is MetroGIS willing to invest to pursue the additional technology needed to automate and support online fee collection. Member Kordiak asked whether the fee for access has to be consistent among the Counties, noting that he believes the \$0.05/parcel fee is too high for Anoka County. The Staff Coordinator commented that the data model upon which DataFinder Café has been developed was purposefully developed to be policy driven; that is, the counties could each have different fees if they so chose. Member Kordiak also stated that this is not a novel proposition and is doable if we would choose to move forward, noting that Anoka and other counties currently provide online access to their property records data to non-government interests for a fee.

Member Schneider encouraged staff to look into the state and League of Cities eCommerce initiatives to determine if there is a possibility of partnering, given the scoping price of \$40,000+; or if partnering is not an option, to investigate ways to simplify the proposal, such as eliminating the design complexity, which provides the flexibility for counties to charge varying fees.

Doty summarized the Coordinating Committee's June 19 recommendation, which called for establishing a workgroup made up of individuals affiliated with data producers and with the appropriate expertise and established six objectives (a-f) to be addressed in a multi-party agreement. Staff noted that a seventh objective, "g", was added to the recommendation by staff for the Board's consideration in response to comments received from the Coordinating Committee chair during the preparation for the Board meeting. It also noted that Dave Drealan, Carver County Planning & Zoning Director, had agreed to chair the recommended workgroup.

Board members noted their preference for additional market information before getting into design issues and concurred that objective "d" (a means to ensure the product is attractive to the target customers) should be the first objective.

Motion: Member Schiff moved and Member Johnson seconded to approve the Coordinating Committee's June 19 recommendation to establish a workgroup comprised of representatives with appropriate expertise and leadership from data producers, supported by MetroGIS staff, to begin negotiations for a multi-party agreement that would address provisions a-g listed in Attachment C to the staff report dated July 23, with the understanding that the workgroup will deal with market and fee matters first, and that it will report its progress to the Board.

Motion carried, ayes all.

➤ *Common Tools for Data Discovery and Distribution (Attachment D)*

Coordinating Committee Vice Chair Harper commented that much of MetroGIS's activity to this point has been focused on resolving issues and challenges that benefit the data user. She encouraged the Board to endorse a philosophy that encourages sharing of the development and use of tools for data discovery and distribution as a means to keep the producer community actively involved in MetroGIS.

The consensus of the Board was that a philosophy of fostering sharing of geodata applications and tools for discovery and distribution of data is appropriate for MetroGIS. The Board also concluded that no further action was necessary at this time concerning this challenge area, given the eCommerce component is common to the challenge of a collaborative solution to distribution of parcel data to non-government interests, and thus achieving the common tools challenge will be a natural outgrowth of successfully addressing the distribution of parcel data to non-government.

➤ *Common Geodata Application Needs (Attachment E)*

Staff support team member Doty summarized the background and policy implications outlined in Attachment E of the staff report. Member Kordiak commented and other members agreed that it is a good idea to share applications and to move in this direction. The members also concurred it is important to move cautiously, endorsing the concept of establishing a workgroup that would help the Board define an appropriate scope for collaborative application-based activities.

Member Schneider noted his concern about getting too far into applications, suggesting that MetroGIS should let it be known to the software development community that MetroGIS invites them to suggest ideas for joint ventures and to foster a means sharing of independently developed applications. He also stated his preference, which was shared by other Board members, that MetroGIS needs to keep its focus on ensuring that the data user is able to secure commonly needed data, when they need it, in the form they need it, in accordance with the intent of MetroGIS's mission statement.

Motion: Member Kordiak moved and Member Branning seconded to endorse the "Common Geodata Application Needs" as an emerging challenge area for the Business Plan Update, as outlined in Attachment E of the staff report and dated July 23, with the understanding that a workgroup will be established to help the Board identify a proper scope for MetroGIS's involvement and that MetroGIS proceed into this area cautiously and secondarily to efforts to address common information needs via regional endorsed data solutions.

Motion carried, ayes all.

b) MetroGIS Participant Appreciation Event

The Staff Coordinator informed the Board the original November 14 date no longer works. November 19 was proposed and acceptable to everyone present. Staff also commented that Nancy Tosta had accepted an invitation to keynote the event, noting that she is well known in the geodata community, having served as president of URISA, Director of California's Teale Data Center and Staff Director of the FGDC at the time the NSDI concept was conceived.

c) I-Team Designation Request

Approved
October 22, 2002

Chairperson Reinhardt summarized the invitation that had been received from Ron Matzner, the National I-Team Coordinator, for MetroGIS to seek designation as an I-Team, noting that the expectations of MetroGIS would be: 1) to keep doing what it has been to foster geodata coordination and implementation of solutions to common geodata information needs and 2) participate in Minnesota's I-Team initiative. Chairperson Reinhardt stated that she did not see any negatives to accepting this invitation and encouraged the Board to accept the invitation.

Motion: Member Branning moved and Member Schneider seconded that the Policy Board endorse the concept of seeking designation as an I-Team and direct its management leadership to draft a letter of acceptance for Chairperson Reinhardt's signature.

Motion carried, ayes all.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

Chairperson Reinhardt called attention to several upcoming conferences at which papers will be presented about various aspects of MetroGIS. Staff also encouraged the Board members to suggest non-GIS conference opportunities that would be in line with MetroGIS's outreach plan, such as the Minnesota state planners conference (MnAPA). I-35W and MetroGIS will be teaming up to promote use of the recently endorsed regional Planned Land Use dataset.

There was no discussion of any of the other information items presented in the agenda materials.

7. NEXT MEETING

October 9, 2002

8. ADJOURN

The meeting concluded at 8:40 p.m.

Prepared by,

Randall Johnson, AICP
MetroGIS Staff Coordinator