

Meeting Summary
MetroGIS Technical Advisory Team
Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust Building, St. Paul, MN
2:00-4:00 PM, Room 205
November 16, 2006

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Basques called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Members Present: Bob Basques (City of St. Paul), Jim Bunning (Scott County), Gordon Chinander (Metropolitan Emergency Services Board), Dan Falbo (ESRI), Bart Richardson (Minnesota DNR), Brad Rupert (Carver County) and Charlie Teff (Anoka County), Rick Gelbmann (Metropolitan Council), Kent Tupper (Dakota County), Ron Wencil (USGS).

Visitors: Alison Slaats and Matt McGuire (Metropolitan Council) and James Klasser (City of St. Paul).

Support Staff: Mark Kotz and Randall Johnson

2. ACCEPT AGENDA

Kotz suggested adding a new Item 4f, Serving KML Services from DataFinder. The agenda was accepted, as modified.

3. ACCEPT MEETING SUMMARY

The summary of the July 13, 2006 meeting was accepted, as submitted.

4. ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION OR DISCUSSION

a) Election of Chair for 2007

Tupper nominated Bob Basques to serve another year as Chair of the Technical Advisory Team. There were no other nominations. Basques accepted the appointment.

b) 2007 Meeting Schedule

The group agreed to have three meetings again in 2007, on Thursdays afternoons in the months of March, July and November. Chair Basques noted that if the need arises, a special meeting of the Team may also be called. MetroGIS staff will setup the meeting dates and inform the members.

c) Preparations for MetroGIS Strategic Directions Workshop

Johnson summarized the information provided in the agenda packet, noting that the proposed Strategic Directions Workshop is scheduled for February 8, 2007, calling special attention to the scoping themes that have been identified. He encouraged TAT members to offer suggested additions or modifications that they would like included in the facilitation scope of work.

Chair Basques commented on scoping themes 6 – Geographic Extent and 7 – Intellectual Property Rights as follows:

Theme 6: Encourage MetroGIS participants not to limit their data contributions to their respective jurisdictions if they maintain data that goes beyond their jurisdictional boundaries. This comment led to a brief comment from Johnson about the desire for MetroGIS to be a component of statewide solutions for common data needs – that is, attain a capability where the user can obtain data they need for multiple jurisdictions across the state that are fully interoperable, current, and reliable.

Theme 7: Data should be freely available to any user that wishes access. MetroGIS should pursue buyouts of data that are proprietary to enable widespread access. If a buyout is not possible, he believes

there should be a sunset on cost recovery stipulated in data subject to licensure so that at a certain point the data convert to public domain.

No other comments were offered.

d) Federal Enterprise Architecture, Geospatial Profile – Direction from CC

Kotz commented that at the July meeting three members of the Team had expressed interest in reviewing this document but that the review had not occurred because higher priorities existed. Chair Basques noted that he continues to believe the proposed philosophy is on the right track but that since there is no tangible application it is difficult to justify time to review and comment given other higher priorities and limited resources.

Wencl commented that there is an individual within the USGS organization that gives workshops on the proposed philosophy but that his travel expenses must be reimbursed. This comment led to investigating the possibility to seek endorsement of this topic as a GIS/LIS workshop item.

Ultimately the consensus was that until one or more of the Team's members recognizes a compelling need to review the subject philosophy, the matter will remain tabled.

e) Beyond Government Users – Assistance with “Opportunities Statements”

Johnson described the efforts of the Workgroup that is summarizing public-private partnering opportunity statements to present for consideration at the pending Strategic Directions Workshop, noting the five themes for which a recommendation is being developed:

- *Expand Policy Board membership to include non-government interests*
- *Foster a Marketplace for Geospatial Data Resources*
- *Foster an Open Source Data Model*
- *Foster statewide adoption of Principles that Underpin MetroGIS.*
- *Implement ApplicationFinder concept*

No comments were received.

f) KML and DataFinder

McGuire summarized a proposal he authored to investigate adding a capability to DataFinder that would allow data distributed via DataFinder to be viewed in Google Earth. Among the options offered for consideration to explore were Mapdex

(<http://www.mapdex.org/search/search.cfm?serverkeyword=datafinder&tab=svr&type=svr>) and an extension that will be provided in ArcGIS 9.2, both of which allow distributing KML as a web service.

The group voiced some concerns about data accuracy problems that have been experienced using Google Earth but all believed that it is valuable to test this technology. Falbo agreed to report back to MetroGIS staff the details of its licensing of its KML serving extension, which is integrated into ArcGIS 9.2.

The group concurred that MetroGIS staff should proceed with the suggested evaluation and report back at the next meeting.

5. PROJECT AND WORKGROUP REPORTS

b) Address Information Needs Workgroup Update

Mark Kotz reported on the results of pilot project focused on data conversion and formatting. Nine cities and counties participated. All concluded that the vision for a regional occupiable units dataset is realistic from a data perspective, but that several challenges will need to be resolved to realize the vision. Kotz, summarized the findings and a proposed recommendation to modify the National Street Address Standard to accommodate two-word pre-types.

Kotz also summarized the status of the MetroGIS Regional Project to assess the viability of a proposed web editing application for occupiable units. The assessment will determine how many small communities would use the application and what functionality it would need to entice them to use it. Kotz noted that three consultant proposals had been received to conduct the viability assessment and hopes a decision will be made in the next week or so.

b) Coordinating Committee and Policy Board Updates – There was no report other than some discussion about links to websites.

6. TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS & DEMONSTRATIONS

a) The New DataFinder Café, WMS and Statistics Module

Alison Slaats, DataFinder Technical Manager, summarized the changes that have been made recently to DataFinder and its Café component. She explained that the changes were needed because the previous platform was failing. The improvements that have been made were in response to the results of a user survey conducted in 2005. (See the slide presentation at http://www.metrogis.org/documents/presentations/tat_datafinder_cafe_wms.pdf for the specific improvements that were made.) Chinander offered that he is very pleased that the new site is noticeably quicker and more user friendly to navigate. Others concurred.

Slaats commented that the current Café interface has been limited to only those features that support data discovery and downloading. Some out-of-the-box functions in the GeoCortex software have been removed, for example graphical markup tools. Gelbmann reported that a conscious decision was made not to include these features until the matter is vetted at a policy level. Gelbmann commented that the reason is that those functions, while useful to some, are out of the original data distribution scope of DataFinder. He believes that the scope of DataFinder should not be changed without clear MetroGIS policy direction. Turning on these functions could also lead to the need for increased staff resources to support Café.

received that acknowledges that additional resources will be needed to support a “data use” tool as opposed to continuing to restrict Café to essentially a “data finder/access” tool.

These comments led to a wide ranging discussion regarding benefits and concerns of supporting broader functionality for Café, as a data viewing tool/online GIS tool. Several members commented that MetroGIS’s own survey results indicate that many users of Café have been using its data browsing capabilities as opposed to its data downloading functions. Others noted that multiple applications will be required to address the variety of data viewing business needs within MetroGIS and that no one application (e.g., Café) will suffice. Others commented that if the tools exist, they should be turned on unless their use would negatively affect performance.

Slaats concluded her presentation with a summary of next steps for further improvements (see slide presentation for specifics).

b) The MOOSE is out the door

Klasser and Chair Basques demonstrated MOOSE (Map Objects Open Source Environment), a web portal that they have developed to provide access to Geospatial data maintained for the St. Paul. A significant amount of the discussion revolved around the use of SVN protocol that permits a federated data maintenance model through which the custodians of the web portal are no longer involved in data maintenance, mapping symbology, etc. The data producers, of which there are many, now update the data on the site as part of their responsibilities. This protocol also supports version stamping. For more information see ([URL](#)). The group concurred that this site provides proof that a federated data maintenance model can work.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

a) Round Table Information Sharing

Chair Basques commented that St. Paul now needs a policy on which data will be public domain and which will be subject to cost recovery. Johnson commented that MetroGIS is seeking a policy that distinguishes public domain access via WMS from downloading a copy of the source datafile or obtaining it via WFS.

Chinander – MESB is continuing to work with Mn Department of Public Safety to promote statewide standards for data critical to emergency services management.

Bunning noted that Carver and Scott Counties will be pursuing collaborative solutions to common geospatial needs as part of a comprehensive evaluation of how the counties can collaborate.

Gelbmann encouraged the members to fill out the Map Services Survey currently being administered by LMIC in cooperation with a Governor's Council o Geographic Information initiative.

Kotz welcomed Charlie Teff who was recently hired onto the GIS staff at Anoka County.

Falbo commented that on December 19 there will be workshop/debriefing on a shared services project underway between MnDOT and Mn Department of Health. Ramsey County's reorganization of its IT function, including GIS, will also be a topic of discussion.

8. ADJOURN

Basques adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m. noting that the next meeting will be in March 2007. Kotz agreed to set the date via email.

Prepared by,
Randall Johnson and Mark Kotz
MetroGIS Support Staff Team