

MetroGIS Coordinating Committee: Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 8, 2017, 1:00 – 3:30 pm

Metro Counties Government Center, 2099 University Avenue, St Paul



Meeting Minutes (Draft)

Attendees:

Brad Henry, University of Minnesota
Jim Bunning, MnGeo
Norine Wilczek, MnDOT
Randy Knippel, Dakota County
Len Kne, U-Spatial
Carrie Magnuson, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District
Dan Tinklenberg, SRF Consulting Group
Ben Verbick, LOGIS
Alex Blenkush, Hennepin County
Curt Carlson, formerly of NorthStar MLS
Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council
Jon Hoekenga, Metropolitan Council
Catherine Hansen, MnDNR
David Brandt, Washington County, Vice Chair of Committee

Guests:

Andra Bontrager, MCEA
Julia Shephard (intern), MCEA
Todd Graham, Metropolitan Council
Matt Schroeder, Metropolitan Council

Staff:

Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator

1) Call to Order

Vice Chair Brandt called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.

2) Approve Meeting Agenda

Motion, Henry, Second, Kotz; no discussion, unanimously approved.

3) Approve Minutes from January 12, 2017 meeting

Motion, Kotz, Second, Kne; no discussion, unanimously approved.

4) Approval of Dan Tinklenberg to Private Sector Seat to Coordinating Committee

In February 2017, Dan Tinklenberg of SRF Consulting Group tendered a letter of request to fill the Private Sector seat vacated by David Bitner. His letter was circulated to the Coordinating Committee membership in March 2017; no comments were received on his letter from the Committee membership.

Motion, Brandt; Second, Kotz; no discussion, unanimously approved.

5) MetroGIS Representative to the Geospatial Advisory Council

MetroGIS Vice Chair David Brandt has served as MetroGIS' official representative to Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC); he also serves as the Vice Chair of the GAC. Brandt is interested in fulfilling another term as the MetroGIS representative to the GAC with the consent and approval of the Coordinating Committee.

The GAC has a specifically designated position for a MetroGIS representative, Dave Brandt has served in that position and is willing to continue. For the upcoming GAC term (2 years) no-one else applied from the Coordinating Committee or the MetroGIS collaborative. Brandt asked if there are any other candidates interested from the Coordinating Committee. Randy Knippel (Dakota County) expressed potential interest in the future but voiced his support of David Brandt continuing in the role at present.

Motion to endorse Brandt as MetroGIS representative to the GAC.

Motion: Henry, Second: Knippel - No discussion, unanimous approval;

6) Policy Board Update

Coordinator Maas provided a quick update on the Annual Policy Board meeting held on Wednesday, April 26, 2017. The meeting was well attended by Policy Board members, with presentations by Hennepin County staff on their forthcoming UI2 (Utility Infrastructure Integration) application and by Ramsey County on their forthcoming Open Data Portal. Maas provided brief updates on MetroGIS projects underway and a discussion.

Brandt: It's helpful to have GIS staff and tech people there as well, it's good we retain our connection to leadership and can keep them apprised of what we're working on.

7) Census Bureau's Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program

Todd Graham and Matt Schroeder of the Metropolitan Council's Community Development Department gave a presentation on the Census Bureau's Local Update of Census Addresses Program (LUCA). They provided an overview on the need for and uses of Census data, these being apportionment, redistricting, distribution of funds to states and provide a benchmark for the American Community Survey and other Census survey work.

Graham and Schroeder described the LUCA program, it being a voluntary geographic partnership through which governments add addresses to the Census Master Address File. The work was authorized by the Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-430) and is vital to the goal of counting in everyone once and counting them in the right place. Participation in the LUCA is extended to the highest elected officials invited, these being generally governors, county board members, city and town officials and leadership of federally recognized tribal nations. Offices and personnel within each government agency are designated by the highest elected officials to the actual work. For the State of Minnesota, the State Demographic Center under the Department of Administration has been identified as the lead agency to conduct state-level activity. Three years before the actual decennial Census, the Census Bureau opens its address data to the local partners (this federal dataset is confidential, local agencies may not use the data for their own work). This sharing of data for a period of time is a form of semi-formal crowd sourcing and enables the Census Bureau to make use of local knowledge to improve its data sets.

Graham and Schroeder went on to describe why local government agencies might wish to participate in the LUCA program. Key reasons include the opportunity to improve the Census Bureau's Address List prior to the decennial count ensuring a more accurate count for their jurisdiction which impacts potential funding from the federal government. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for the local government to compare its data against the Census's federal address database. As part of the LUCA program the Census has prepared the Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) as a resource for local users. The GUPS is a self-contained customized, stand-alone GIS package for working with Census data and specifically for working with the address data review and update as part of the LUCA work program. The GUPS includes the Census Bureau's Address List Data, Census Bureau's TIGER geometry as well as checking and validation tools assuring the LUCA edits are valid before they are submitted. The GUPS is intended to be used by agencies that do not have their own GIS systems or software in place and was designed with the task specific design for exclusive use for Census work.

Next steps in the LUCA process will be that the Census will be setting up training opportunities for participating governments, these will be both in person sessions and webinars. The Census Bureau will be asking for a turnaround time of 120 days for review and checking of the LUCA data by local agencies.

The general timeframe for the LUCA work is as follows:

Oct-Nov 2017:	LUCA participants receive training from Census geographic staff;
Feb-Apr 2018:	Census mailing out the materials to local and state agencies;
120 Review Period:	Participants review and update the Census Bureau Address List
Through Sep 2018:	Census Bureau processes LUCA submissions
Aug 2019:	Feedback and summary of Census action provided to respondents

For local agencies prepping for participating in the LUCA program:

- Watch for letter from Census Bureau – arriving in July 2017
- Agencies determine who (staff/department) will be involved from their agency
- Identify local data that can be used to validate (building permits, E911 data, structures databases)
- Confirm that your local data resources provide multi-unit structure identifiers (Apt 1, Suite 2, etc.)
- Recommended focus on area of house stock additions and changes to accurately capture the number of
- housing units.

Schroeder provided a number of specific examples where the Metropolitan Council, various municipalities and the Census Bureau either over- or under-counted the number of housing units in areas around the metro region, these tend to be in inner city areas with multi-unit housing containing many addresses, new buildings and new subdivisions. The consequence of these discrepancies is that a given area may not be accurately enumerated in the Census which can impact re-districting and the creation of voter precincts.

Graham and Schroeder went on to explain the LUCA program emphasizes the necessity of partnership, as the Census Bureau is unable to fund or mandate local participation in the program.

Graham also stressed the usefulness and continued need for the number of units within a given parcel. When parcel data doesn't contain the number of units it can be a hindrance to accuracy for a variety of analyses and uses. He encouraged the counties to continue to add and improve the number of units on a given parcel attribute. Enhancing this attribute not only facilitates more accurate data for the LUCA review, it helps with post-Census population estimates and forecasting and to refine other datasets such as base line data for the Transportation Analysis Zone (TAX) counts for households and population. The Metropolitan Council generates estimates and data that can be used to help local agencies, which might be particularly helpful for post-Census estimates in the allocation of state funding for communities in the region and is happy to share that information with city and county partners.

Bontrager: For counts of multi-unit buildings, wouldn't that information come from the cities instead of the counties, are you reaching out to the cities for additional information?

Schroeder: On some specific projects, counties have done some aggregation of that data, however we do also just as often need to turn to the cities to gather that info. In Hennepin County for example, some cities perform their own assessments so we actually winding up having to rely on, and sometimes, to compare and use both.

Brandt: This kind of work is always a challenge at the county level, our work with cities on these kinds of data generally has a 911 focus as the primary use. In many instances, a city may not know what it has for data either, so both city and county staff have to do a fair amount of work to pull it together. For determining what's happening on a site or a given location, we will often take number of units from the assessor's data, and then work with police or the fire department to determine the linkage to the addresses in place.

Carlson: We know that the Census and other agencies have some challenges in correctly pulling together enumerations in apartment buildings, do you find that to be the most challenging part of this?

Schroeder: Multi-unit housing are one of the biggest challenges, this shows up in other analyses that we perform as well. How Commerce Dept. receives data from city is a challgen, as Commercial vs. Residential, can impact, MetCouncil will often look at how to reclassify the data.

Carlson: Is there any consideration for seasonal/recreational use dwelling units. Likely not as much a factor in the metro, but elsewhere in Greater Minnesota this is a large portion of housing in some jurisdiction.

Brandt: In Washington at least, we are able to track this with the homestead vs. non-homestead category at the parcel level, we have a fair number of absentee or non-homestead owners which fall into this.

Schroeder: We are aware of the seasonal use dwellings, but they form a relatively small portion of the metro housing picture as a whole.

Carlson: The Census is supposed to be a snap shot in time, what is the actual enumeration date in 2020?

Schroeder: The enumeration date for the next Census is Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Carlson: How are vacant units numerated? For example, housing units that are for sale or rental units that are not occupied on or around the enumeration date?

Graham: The Census Bureau is admittedly trying to do less 'on foot' and 'on the ground' enumeration than in years past so properties for sale that are not occupied may not fully be captured, however in multi-unit examples, they will work with property managers to verify if a unit is not occupied.

Blenkush: Are there any best practices for creating and maintaining this data that can help researchers and data creators?

Schroeder: We don't know of one that exists, it would certainly be helpful. We could potentially put something together that uses our process, which includes building permits by block with a list of estimates.

Brandt: I suspect this would be a good discussion for the county managers meeting (Eight County Collaborative/MetroGIS Data Producers Work Group). One of the other things you mentioned, if a county wasn't able to participate in LUCA, that the Council might be able to assist the county, what type of work that you can provide to assist us?

Graham: We have discussed this a little bit, some of our leadership was skeptical, but we could assist on a fee-for-service basis if a county didn't have the resources to engage it on their own.

Knippel: We are aware the Council has a vested interest in this, it might be something we could do through informal channels of data sharing and working together rather than having to deal with a more formal process.

Brandt: From the GIS side, we could certainly work on this informally, that would be worth more formal discussion.

Knippel: I will add this to the agenda of the county managers meeting (to be held on June 14th), and we can check in on that and gauge the interest in working with the Council and develop a process.

Verbick: I am interested on how the work flow comes together; at some point there will be cities who will participate with their unique process (LUCA process) will that data then be delivered to county for aggregation?

Brandt: This depends on the agreement between the cities and county. In Washington County, we have agreed to work with and aggregate data for our cities.

Graham: It appears that the Census wants to see both data from the county and city levels; the Census gives itself a year to sort through what it receives.

Blenkush: While this was before my time with Hennepin County, we first started with working with LUCA ten years ago; Hennepin County we assisted 18 cities with their lists, the remaining 28 or so cities worked independently. We will still offer services to the cities in Hennepin County to cities that desire it.

8) Single Parcel Polygon Layer Proposal

Mark Kotz of the Metropolitan Council proposed a small project idea for a metro-wide parcel polygon layer. The goal of the proposal would be to create and maintain a single parcel polygon layer and service for the seven-county area. No edge matching would be performed. The layer would simply be the result of appending all seven county parcel layers together. Work would be done by Metropolitan Council staff. The goal is to have a single parcel layer for the seven-county area that could be added to maps and applications without having to manage seven different layers. This dataset is not intended to replace, but to be offered in addition to the seven currently available MetroGIS parcel datasets. The business need for this project is that many applications that require parcels require more than one county. Metro regional applications usually require all seven counties. Service, map and application development and maintenance would be easier and more efficient when accessing one layer rather than seven. A successful deployment of the project would be a data layer containing parcel polygons from all seven metropolitan counties merged together. This data layer would be available as a web service and as a download on the Geospatial Commons;

Kotz: As this would be something the Coordinating Committee would be supporting we wanted to check in with the counties and the Committee before formally moving forward on this.

Knippel: Don't think we need to agree formally, the data is out there, so I'd say feel free to go ahead with it.

*Motion to support development of a regional aggregated parcel data services:
Motion, Brandt; Second: Knippel – no discussion, unanimous decision for approval.*

9) Standards Development Update

Maas provided a brief overview of the recent developments in, and status of, geodata standards in Minnesota. Maas became the chair of the GAC Standards Committee in April 2016. He described the status of the following standards:

NextGen9-1-1 Data Standards. The NextGen9-1-1 effort has published its third iteration of its proposed data standard out for stakeholder review. The review period ended on June 2nd with comments being collected and applied to their materials as needed.

Parcel Data Transfer Standard. This standard was built upon the original Metro Parcel Data Standards and was published for formal review from October 2016 through January 2017. Two documents of all the comments received (Comment Document) and the alignment of those comments to the attributes (Alignment Document) were published in March 2017 and two in-person sessions (Duluth, March 13 and Fergus Falls, April 5) were held on the content and next steps for the parcel standard. The Parcel and Land Records Committee has agreed to hold on advancing the parcel data standard until the state address point standard has been advanced for approval as the parcel standard contains address attribution and it is desirable to have these elements align across the standards.

Key decisions remaining to be made on the Parcel Data Transfer Standard include:

- Which attributes are to remain and what order they are in
- Inclusion of the address attributes from the Address Point Standard

Address Point Standard. This standard is being proposed by the Metro Address Workgroup as a candidate for a statewide address point standard. This standard has its origin with the Metro Address Point Standards that was originally developed in 2004 and eventually adopted and put into use in 2010. The metro standards was modified in 2015, and more substantially modified again in 2016 to more closely align with, and satisfy, the needs of the 911 stakeholders.

Damage Assessment Data Standard. This standard remains in preparation by the Emergency Preparedness Committee with the involvement of several counties, cities and state agencies. The standard is being assembled with info from the application developed by WSB, the ESRI Data model, the Dakota County specification and information from the Department of Homeland Security.

The Standards Committee will convene on June 21 to work through the following:

- Review and decision on the fitness of the proposed Address Point Standard
- Handing back the Parcel Data Transfer Standard to the Parcel and Land Records Committee for their determination of next steps.
- Revision and review of the standards development process by the Committee.

This meeting is open to the public and Maas encouraged interested stakeholders to participate if they were interested.

10) Current MetroGIS Work Plan Projects – Brief Updates

10.1) Support for the Geospatial Commons

The Commons presently has 28 organizations providing a total of 667 resources.

10.2) Free + Open Public Geospatial Data Initiative

As of June 2017, there are 25 total counties with free and open data, 12 of which have adopted a resolution at the county board level. Of note, Otter Tail County has been making its data available since 2009 and is moving to adopt a formal resolution at the board level sometime in 2017 according to GIS Coordinator George Meyer.

Maas indicated that a new version of the ‘Free + Open Public Geospatial Data in Minnesota: A Guide for Practitioners’ white paper (known within the MetroGIS Community as “White Paper II”) is available (Version 6.0, April 2017) and will be continually updated as new questions are received, researched and answered.

Upcoming outreach regarding free and open data include Maas making presentations to the Southeastern Minnesota GIS User Group on June 20 in Red Wing and to the South-Central Minnesota GIS User Group on June 22 in Mankato. Additionally, on behalf of the GAC Outreach Committee, Maas has tendered an abstract to present on the topic to the Association of Minnesota Counties annual conference in St. Cloud in December.

10.3) Address Points Aggregation

Maas described this work item as having three component parts, these being:

Address Point Aggregation; this takes place twice per year. The Metropolitan Council aggregates the address points prepared by cities and aggregated by the counties in April and again in October and publishes them as a regional dataset.

Address Point Standard; At present the Metro Address Point Standard is in use for the regional dataset. This standard, modified in August 2016 to align with 911 needs and attribution is being advanced to the Standards Committee as a candidate for the statewide address point standards on June 21.

Address Point Editor Tool; the most recent version of the tool (Version 3.0) was deployed in March 2015. Many users have identified a number of issues and desired improvements for the tool and its potential need for a refresh.

Randy Knippel (Dakota County) provided a short presentation on the benefits of potentially moving toward ESRI's Web App Builder (WAB) for a regional address point tool solution, citing potential enhancements including:

- Enhanced mobile compatibility
- Cross-browser compatibility
- Better user management
- More export options
- More print options
- Better future stability
- Better code management / extensibility

Knippel cited the ease in which custom widgets could be created and shared and how all the widgets are available as source code and proposed the following for advancing the next generation of the Editor Tool:

- No further development of current address point editor
- The current editor tool has served an important role, but it is at the end of its life cycle.
- Identify current capabilities beyond standard WAB widgets
- Repackage existing code as custom WAB widgets
- Create an address point editor with WAB

Knippel proposed the next steps for the development of an Address Editor Tool:

- Direct the Metro Address Work group and Metro Address Editor Tool sub-group to explore and endorse migrating to WAB;
- Identify unique capabilities needed to extend WAB;
- Consult with North Point Geographics on feasibility of repacking existing modules;
- Develop and execute a work plan;

Kotz: Overall an excellent proposal, we can convene the Address Editor Tool work group to begin reviewing and working on this. I will have Tanya Mayer in our GIS group begin the communications on that. One key point is the fact that in our current agreement, North Point owns the code for the tool, we can edit it for our own use and it can be distributed among governments in Minnesota, but we may not be able to re-purpose it in the way you propose. We will examine what our options are.

10.4) Metro Regional Centerlines Collaborative

The first version of the MRCC road centerline dataset is available on the Commons, it was published on April 21st. It contains over 164,000 road segments representing over 19,000 miles of road and represents the result of three years of work by the MRCC group. The counties have requested the Metropolitan Council to develop an aggregation and validation solution. The Council is working with its GIS staff and key staff at MnGeo to develop a staging and ingest workflow to collect the data. The goal will be for monthly updates of the dataset once this portal is developed and active. This effort will move into maintenance mode with the potential for other counties, including Isanti, Chisago and possibly Olmsted County also participating.

10.5) Park and Trail Dataset and Data Standard

The metro partners have been developing a metro-wide park and trail dataset and data specification since fall 2016. On Mya 31, the first proto-type version of the data with some initial attribution was assembled by Alex Blenkush at Hennepin County as is available on the project BaseCamp site. This initial dataset will serve as the springboard and discussion point for the next steps and which attributes to populate in subsequent builds of the dataset.

10.6) Statewide Centerlines Initiative

This effort has ‘morphed’ into the NextGen9-1-1 effort, this effort has published its third iteration of its proposed data standard out for stakeholder review. The review period ended on June 2nd with comments being collected and applied to their materials as needed.

10.7) Metro Regional Stormwater Dataset – On-Going Requirements Gathering and Research

This effort remains a research and information gathering effort at this time. Maas and Magnuson have been working on an outline of a plan to move the project forward into more specific actions. Maas proposed two key actions to be taken in calendar 2017, these are the preparation of a sample data set for public use and review in the Draft Stormwater Exchange Standard (including portions of two cities in the metro region) and a Business Needs session (half-day session) in late October. More details on these proposed actions will follow in later meetings.

10.8) MetroPlus Free Geocoder

This was proposed in late 2016 by Curt Carlson, he convened two conference calls with interested members of the geospatial community on documenting the business needs for a geocoding tool and how to get it going. The Metropolitan Council has shared its composite locator services with those who wanted to use them, most of the users have their needs met with metro-level tools available, however there remains interest for the development of an eventual state level tool.

10.9) Method for proposing new projects to MetroGIS

Maas reminded the group that project submittals for next year’s Work Planning cycle are encouraged to be submitted by August 30th. These will be included in the next prioritization exercise at the September meeting. Project templates are found at metrogis.org > **Projects** > **Project Templates**.

11) Lightning Round Update

Meeting attendees are encouraged to share any updates or work relevant to their agency or interests.

Bunning (MnGeo): As was shown in the earlier slide, the Minnesota Geospatial Commons is now up to 667 resources from 28 contributing agencies. Focus on the development of the NExtGEn9-1-1 project remains a priority for MnGeo.

Wilczek (MnDOT): No update.

Knippel (Dakota County): Dakota County worked with Pictometry this spring to acquire imagery, there were some issues with the capture, still in the process of working those out.

Kne (U-Spatial): No major updates, working with the GAC Outreach Committee to have a survey ready for the cities in Minnesota on the status and availability of their data.

Bontrager (MCEA): I'm the GIS Specialist with MCEA, I'm interested in joining the group, filling in the vacant non-profit seat interested in joining, I'm joined today by Julia Shepherd, she is interning with MCEA this summer and is a student at Colorado College.

Magnuson (Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District): No major updates, Geoff and I are still pulling together a plan for the stormwater effort.

Tinklenberg (SRF Consulting Group): Thanks for the opportunity to join the group, no updates at this time.

Verbick (LOGIS): No updates.

Blenkush (Hennepin County): Hennepin County has started publishing to the Commons, this includes just a couple of application resources at this time. We are exploring the possibility of more publishing in the future. We are planning on acquiring imagery in 2018, we are preparing our Request for Proposals for a spring flight.

Carlson (formerly of NorthStar MLS): As some of you may have heard, I have been laid off from NorthStar MLS, they have closed the business that I worked directly for. I am performing some of my own analysis on real estate sales and am 'on the market'.

Kotz (Metropolitan Council): No updates.

Hoekenga (Metropolitan Council): No updates.

Hansen (MnDNR): I'm here on behalf of Hal Watson, the DNR assisting MnGeo with assembling and standardizing parcel data. We are having a busy training season, we are in the process of developing applications for Collector, performing lots of work in the field linking photos to points and sites.

Brandt (Washington County): The county was working with Pictometry this spring, important to have that imagery for the new bridge across the St. Croix River. We are planning for a grand opening event of the bridge in the near future. We have received a grant through the MDPS and MESB to do develop 911 address points in Washington County; we are excited to get that going at long last.

12) Next Coordinating Committee Meeting:

The next Coordinating Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21, 2017.

13) Adjourn

Vice Chair Brandt adjourned the meeting at 3:28 pm