MetroGIS Coordinating Committee: Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Metro Counties Government Center, 2099 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55104

DRAFT

Attendees

☒	Educational Sector: Pete Wiringa, UMN/U-Spatial	☒	Govt - Regional: Pam Olsin, MESB
☐	Educational Sector: Kirk Stueve, St. Paul College	☐	Govt - Regional: Matt Baker, MAC
☒	Govt - City: Molly McDonald, City of Bloomington	☒	Govt - Regional: Nancy Read, MMCD
☒	Govt - City: Tami Maddio, City of Eagan	☒	Govt - Regional: Mary Mortensen, Met. Council
☒	Govt - City: Jonathan Mortensen, City of Shoreview	☒	Govt - Regional: Aaron Goemann, Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
☒	Govt - City: Jessica Fendos, LOGIS	☐	Govt - State: Catherine Hansen, MnDNR (late)
	Govt - City: Vacant	☒	Govt - State: Galen Sjostrom, MnDOT
☒	Govt - County: John Slusarczyk, Anoka County	☒	Govt - State: Alison Slaats, MnGeo
☒	Govt - County: Chad Riley, Carver County	☐	Non-Profit: Jeff Matson, MCN/CURA
☒	Govt - County: Joe Sapletal, Dakota County		Non-Profit: Vacant
☒	Govt - County: Jesse Reinhardt, Hennepin County	☒	Private Sector: Dan Tinklenberg, SRF
☒	Govt - County: Matt Koukol, Ramsey County	☐	Private Sector - Utilities: Tony Grossman, Xcel
☐	Govt - County: Tony Monsour, Scott County		Private Sector: Vacant
☒	Govt - Co: David Brandt (Vice-Chair), Washington Co.	☒	Special Expertise: Audrey Robeson, MCNet
☐	Govt - Federal: Shelby Sterner, USGS	☒	Special Expertise: Brad Henry, UMN
	Private Sector: Vacant	☒	MetroGIS (ex-officio): Tanya Mayer, Met. Council

Additional Attendees: Mark Kotz, retired, formerly Met Council; Sally Wakefield, MnGeo; Alysa Zimmerle, Met Council; Sean Murphy, Met Council; Hannah Wilson, Met Council; Heather Albrecht, Hennepin Co.; Frank Jarman, MESB 9-1-1 Services Manager; Diana Flores Castillo, MnDOT - Metro

See Meeting Slides for details regarding the following agenda items.

1) **Call to Order** *(Brandt)*
   - 1:03pm

2) **Approve Today's Meeting Agenda (motion item)** *(Brandt)*

Motion to approve Agenda: Sjostrom *Second:* Wiringa *Motion carried*

3) **Approve Minutes from last meeting (June 4, 2025) (motion item)** *(Brandt)*
   - Review action items from last meeting
     - **COMPLETE:** Change the Metro County GIS Managers scheduled November meeting. (Brandt)
     - **COMPLETE:** Add Koukol to leadership meetings (Mayer)
     - **COMPLETE:** remind Brandt to put out descriptions about work required of volunteers for these Projects. (Mayer)

Motion to approve 6/4/2025 minutes: Koukol *Second:* Sjostrom *Motion Carried*

4) Introductions *(Brandt)*

- Attendees introduced themselves, representing a broad cross-section of regional and local government agencies, academic institutions, non-profit and consulting firms. The Chair expressed appreciation for in-person attendance today.

5) Future of MetroGIS Discussion – a guided discussion of purpose and continuance *(Brandt/Kotz)*

See the meeting slides linked above.

- Introduction to the discussion *(Brandt)*
  - Brandt outlined the primary discussion objective: to assess the current state and future direction of MetroGIS. Where are we at? Where do we want to see things go? This will include an introduction, a presentation on the Metropolitan Council's role, a historical overview of MetroGIS, followed by review of the recent MetroGIS survey results, a facilitated needs assessment exercise, discussion of current and proposed projects, and identification of next steps.
  - Mayer provided an overview of the Metropolitan Council regional organization, its history and the evolution of GIS and MetroGIS at the Met Council. (see slides)
  - Brandt provided an overview of the MetroGIS collaborative, its history and relationship with Metropolitan Council. (see slides)

- Survey Summary *(Kotz)*
  - Key findings from the January 2025 survey of MetroGIS CC members reviewed. (see slides)
  - Kotz prefaced that there were a few key findings that are relevant to the topics we're talking about today. About half of the Coordinating Committee responded, so it's not a full picture. However, it's a valuable partial picture, at least of the thoughts back in January about how it is going with Metro GIS and what you need for MetroGIS. Kotz pulled out some of the highlights of the survey just to refresh our minds.
    - Most of you said you are regular attendees of the Coordinating Committee meetings.
    - Most said you would like three meetings a year with at least one of those in person.
    - Most of you said you're users of regional datasets.
    - 37%, well under half, said your needs are very well met or are very satisfied with MetroGIS. Closer to half, 43% said their needs are somewhat well met, or you are somewhat satisfied with Metro GIS. 18% were neutral and there was nobody who had a negative response. Clearly there's room for improvement here.
    - The survey did is asked about the specific metrics, projects and datasets that are being worked on or thought about right now. There were 2 additional new projects identified in the survey that will be added to the list today.
    - One of the survey questions is critical for today. "Would you have time to lead or participate in any current or new projects or efforts." Half the people had a response that was in what I'll call in the "Noish" category. 31% had a response in the sort of "Yesish". That is really kind of an eye-opening thing.

        - Very much related to that was: "What would help to dedicate more time to MetroGIS?" Almost 90% of the respondents said specific efforts that can be directly tied to my organization's business needs.
    - Based on those broad results, the next step is a quick and dirty needs assessment. It will not necessarily drive what we do in MetroGIS. It's going to be kind of a touchstone.

- MetroGIS 2025 Work Plan and Project Needs *(Kotz)*
    - See slides for project descriptions
    - A mini-needs assessment exercise was conducted on the current 8 MetroGIS projects, and 2 clearly identifiable projects from the recent MetroGIS member survey. Members were to raise their hand for each project if there was either a Need or a Benefit to their organization. 1 person per organization was counted. A need as defined as a clear business use case for their organization. A benefit was defined as the organization would benefit from the project. Each item was described, discussed, and voted on. Results will inform prioritization and future project planning efforts.

Project	Need	Benefit	Total
Regional Data Provisioning	18	0	**18**
Metro Park and Trail Data Standard	9	9	**18**
New Regional Data Sharing Agreements	5	11	**16**
MetroGIS Operational Guidelines + Procedures	1	9	**10**
External Platform Publishing	6	11	**17**
Metro Regional Data Viewer	1	4	**5**
Metro Stormwater Geodata Project	7	8	**15**
Metro Food Resources Web Map and Dataset	5	11	**16**
Regional Building Footprint Dataset	8	4	**12**
Presentation materials that can be used to present GIS to non-GIS partners, and elected officials	3	9	**12**

- 3 Scenarios *(Mortensen)*
    - As a precursor to the exercise with membership, Mortensen provided an overview of the 3 scenarios that are possible for the MetroGIS Collaborative following this meeting.
        - **Full MetroGIS -** Continue MetroGIS and ramp up to 2019 support levels – Met Council leadership, MetroGIS CC member participation, continued Met Council responsibilities and Met Council to help lead new projects/support volunteers.
        - **MetroGIS Maintenance Mode -** Scaled-back MetroGIS – meetings, data sharing agreements, current regional dataset support, website, no new projects
        - **MetroGIS Ends -** Dissolve MetroGIS – Met Council retain some responsibilities, State (MnGeo) assume some responsibilities, disband support of remaining efforts, communications, etc.

- Pros, Cons and Requirements of each Scenario *(Kotz)*

Scenario	Pro	Con	Requirements
Full MetroGIS	• Take on new projects • Dedicated staff (allowing members to focus on their business items) • Staff member to help conduct prioritization • Budget for external resources to conduct project work • Serve as a proof of concept/incubator for state-wide initiatives • More collaboration creates better data • Volume/complexity of data is increasing • Staffing crunches at the state may be helped by metro support • Create focal point for regional level needs • Agnostic staff member • Coordinator with energy helps push the projects forward • Reduce duplication of effort – learning from each other • Creation of regional datasets/standards for new data • Capacity to update processes for keeping data and viewer applications available • New MetroGIS staff would allow current staff to return to their regular work • Having a person making a specific ask is more effective than relying on good will and knowing it is needed. • Potential modernization and enhancements to websites, tools, and processes	• Cost to Met. Council • Need for prioritization • Additional work for members to complete projects	• Funding • Funding for Full time dedicated staff person for MetroGIS • Hiring Staff person • Met. Council technical resources • Maintaining support at Met. Council throughout the organization • Active participation of Council Member organizations and other volunteers (staff outside of MetroGIS Coordinating Committee • Clear roles and responsibilities of committee members, team participants, etc.

Scenario	Pro	Con	Requirements
MetroGIS Maintenance Mode	• Better than nothing • Allows existing efforts to continue • No additional costs • Member driven opportunities to undertake new projects • Flexible member roles/responsibilities driven by their interest/need • Keeps the lights on for future reversion to full mode • Basic regional datasets continue	• Projects move slowly (speed of volunteers), which may be not at all • No regional architecture to host regional projects • No funding for new projects • No personal identity/single voice • Lack of a more defined direction • Risk of loss of energy and interest in the MetroGIS concept over time • Lack of clear distinction between MetroGIS and MnGeo	• Multiple Met. Council staff need to take on various parts of MetroGIS Maintenance • Clear roles and responsibilities • Continued participation and engagement of members • Volunteer leadership which has the capacity to keep the organization going in addition to their regular responsibilities/activities. • Funding for Met. Council staff

Scenario	Pro	Con	Requirements
MetroGIS Ends	• None? • Less requirements on member time • Elimination of real or perceived overlap • Returned resources to Met. Council (mixed result) • Potential for increased participation in other organizations (MCGISA, GAC, etc.)	• Met. Council needs to find regional-scale data, and it may require funding if aggregated data goes away, reverting to pre-MetroGIS needs • Decentralized data collection; loss of standardization • It is harder for all regional agencies to gather their data sets • Loss easily accessible combined regional data • MnGeo may not have resources to serve as centralized function • Limits data • Duplication of effort • Downstream efforts may accumulate to County or State or other agencies to standardize, collect regional data • Lack of Pros for Full Model • Exposes a lack of value in the coordination and collection of regional data • Loss of a model for regional data sharing • Risks the diminishment of the importance of GIS in public perception • Core datasets are likely to degrade over time due to lack of validations on submission • A ROI would show a loss of value • Use of the data drops, diminishing the value of the collected data, reducing the value the public gets out of tax dollars • Loss of community – regular communication enabling work done outside of official channels. • Loss of MetroGIS website and resources	• Definition of what would need to transfer to other organizations (MnGeo, Met. Council, County staff, others) – including timelines and processes of updates • Decommission the website

- Reactions, Recap and Next Steps *(Kotz) (Brandt)*
  - The quick needs assessment exercise conducted revealed:
    - Some projects scored unexpectedly low despite perceived importance.
    - Others scored higher than anticipated, suggesting misalignment between scoring and actual value.
    - Need to clarify which projects should be prioritized and conduct deeper analysis.
    - A Coordinator will be required to manage this prioritization process
  - The group expressed broad support for reinstating the full Metro GIS model, to fund a full-time MetroGIS coordinator position, fund projects and support the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee activities.

Motion: The MetroGIS Coordinating Committee supports Metropolitan Council in staffing full-time resources dedicated to leading MetroGIS activities, including the prioritization and management of projects and maintenance of regional GIS activities.

First: Sapletal *Second:* Fendos *Morion Carried.*

- Mortensen reported on a timeline for possible restoration of MetroGIS Coordinator. Met Council leadership has approved the position and the process of hiring a full-time MetroGIS Coordinator has started. Hoping for some time in the first half of 2026. Although, it's not guaranteed until it is filled! This meeting's outcome was important for Met Council's support of the program!

6) Lightning Round Update *(Group)*

- **Henry, UMN** – Lead Service Pipe Project identified as a key cross-boundary initiative, addressing some of the items discussed today.
- **Read, MMCD** – Pilot project underway on cloud-optimized GeoTIFFs in Dakota and Anoka Counties. MMD would like to work with others to take it to the next phase.
- **Fendos, LOGIS** – 11.5 infrastructure upgraded – able to do deep learning
- **Sapletal, Dakota County** – Since our Esri viewer app for our photo-time comparison is deprecated, Sapletal (with buddy AI Co-Pilot) wrote an open-layers solution to replace it. Reach out if you're interested in the code.
- **Mortensen, M., Metropolitan Council** – The Council is in the process of a new asset management system implementation (Hexagon). Please let her know if your organization has any experience with Hexagon and integration with ArcGIS.
- **McDonald, City of Bloomington** – Recently migrated everyone at the city to ArcPro now.
- **Mortensen, J., City of Shoreview** – AGOL collaboration fyi - custom roles do not work.
- **Wiringa, UMN/U-Spatial** – The University is official off pf ArcMap! They are hiring for remote sensing focused position now.
- **Tinklenberg, SRF** – Maintaining a lot of collaborations in ArcGIS Online and in the process of converting current licensed users to named users accounts. Some who just dabble in GIS may drop off.
- **Reinhardt, Hennepin County** – Currently upgrading to ArcGIS 11.5. Cyclomedia is capturing last of Hennepin County centerlines and regional trails. Access/use of that data is through licensing.

- **Oslin, MESB** – Thank you for not disbanding MetroGIS.
- **Wakefield / Slaats, MnGeo** – MN GAC priorities survey is underway for the 2026-27 term – please fill that out; MnGeo is transitioning the Geocommons to a new platform. There will be a series of information sessions. Our first priority is to transition existing publishers to the new platform. There are a few different ways to collaborate, so if you are a publisher, watch for an invite.
- **Flores Castillo, MnDOT Metro –** is the new Metro District GIS Coordinator and will take over for Sjostrom on MetroGIS
- **Sjostrom, MnDOT** – working on transition from concurrent to named user licensing with a lot of users. MnDot is almost done with ArcPro transition. Sjostrom has moved to a new asset management role and is introducing Flores Castillo to MetroGIS.
- **Murphy, Metropolitan Council** – Continue to navigate the ArcGIS Pro latency with on-prem / Azure. Interested if anyone else is experiencing and has solutions for this issue.
- **Koukol, Ramsey County** – Just hired a new GIS tech lead from University of Utah. Ramsey County is still removing ArcMap and migrating to Pro. Their Portal is almost ready.
- **Brandt, Washington County** – MN GIS/LIS Who's Who presentation differentiating MCGISA, MnGeo, the GAC, MetroGIS, MnGeo, Met Council, etc. These are complementary and overlapping. As we move forward, we can make it clear where this group fits in with what the efforts are from those other groups that are out there. It is important to make sure we're not duplicating our effort too much, but we're complimenting each other.

7) Adjourn

Motions to adjourn. First: Wiringa *Second:* Koukol *Motion Carried.*
3:00pm

Next meeting
February 18, 2026

Acting-Chair, Dave Brandt
Acting-Vice-Chair, Matt Koukol
Met Council staff support, Tanya Mayer

ACTION ITEMS

- **ACTION:** Review outcomes of the mini-needs assessment and draft next steps for 2026. (MetroGIS Leadership Team)