



RAMSEY COUNTY GIS USER GROUP

An alliance of communities sharing Geographical Information Systems

Monthly Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2008

Location: Shoreview City Hall, 4600 Victoria St. N

1. Welcome & Introductions

Jolinda Stapleton - Roseville	Deb Jones – Falcon Heights
Mike Goodnature - Ramsey Conservation Dist	John Jacobson – Ramsey County PR&R
Carrie Mack- Ramsey Washington WD	Matt Baker – City of Shoreview
Curt Peterson - Ramsey County Public Works	Meghan Beakman – City of Arden Hills
Ger Pha – City of St. Paul	Mark Andrle – City of New Brighton
Liesa Miller – MnDOT Metro	Jim Engfer – City of St. Paul
Steve Lorbach – St. Paul Regional Water	Kevin Byrne – St. Mary’s U/ MCAD

Meeting was called to order by Jolinda Stapleton

2. Additions or Corrections to the Agenda – A motion was made to move the Feature Topic (Item 4) to the end of meeting. Motion approved, agenda item 4 is hereby moved to follow item 7 and remaining topics adjusted accordingly.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes - No suggestions, changes or comments. Approved by consensus

4. Continuing Topics

a. Review formalized mission statement – Discuss the following draft:

Ramsey County GIS User Group Mission Statement: The cooperative sharing, development, and promotion of GIS data and technology throughout Ramsey County to benefit its government agencies, citizens and business partners.

Report: Very little feedback from the group to date, so Jolinda researched mission statements, gave examples of, and drafted the above version. Group discussion during the meeting resulted in 2 additional draft mission statements. These will be reviewed by select group volunteers and a second draft will be created for the August meeting. Curt suggested a review the User Group archives to see if other versions exist. If so, this

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should be used to 1) build on a new mission statement, and 2) see if we are/have accomplished the goals set up by the group in previous years.

b Pictometry Update – Jolinda

Review: John Jacobson from Ramsey County updated the group on the status of the flight. Pictometry deliverables were originally scheduled to be available in June. Due to poor spring weather keeping planes grounded until late April and national flooding disasters in Iowa requiring their staff help, the project was delayed

Report: Dean Larson, regional sales rep for Pictometry, emailed Jolinda the link and password to assess an online Pictometry service. She reports that it is similar to the EFS but with some limited functions. At this time the internet Pictometry service is only in a trial version so final pricing is not available. The Group discussed concerns that the large files of the imagery may make it difficult to use over the internet.

Pictometry has technical person in the Midwest so system administration training can be done as well as user training. Currently instructors are booked until September, but the issue should be brought up again at August and/or September meetings to finalize this. Training may take place during a RCGISUG meeting as part of the topic based meeting structured discussed in previous months.

c. Enterprise GIS Small Group –

Review: The Enterprise GIS Workgroup determined that it was important to get a letter to Ramsey County around the time the new GIS coordinator was hired rather than waiting until a more formal proposal document could be completed. The letter was created and reviewed by the workgroup and sent to Mary Mahoney CIO of Ramsey Co.

Report: Jolinda received an email from Ramsey County saying that they are going to repost the advertisement for the GIS Manager position because a suitable candidate had not yet been found. Jolinda will contact Mary to verify she received the letter sent by the User Group.

5. New Topics

a. CivExplorer update -

Review: The User Group is interested in exploring the possibility of incorporating a link to Microsoft Virtual Earth imagery to their CivXplorer application. Hennepin County is

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using a similar format on their online mapping application (go to <http://gis.co.hennepin.mn.us/HCPropertyMap/> and in the result tab, select "Click for Oblique Aerials") Jolinda wrote to Allied Info (previously PlanSight) in June to ask about increasing the functionality to include oblique imagery. Suzanne from Allied Info responded saying they are not planning on doing any upgrades to CivXplorer. Depending on the cost, the question was raised if the User Group would be interested in purchasing this upgrade.

Report: If the User Group wished to have Suzanne create a customized upgrade for the new functionality on our existing CivXplorer application she estimated that that it would cost could be an additional \$2500-\$5000. Group discussion leaned toward not obtaining this extra functionality because it was not cost-effective considering users can easily go to another site for oblique imagery.

Suzanne from Allied Info said they have a new CivExplorer product, currently in beta testing, that has a link to available obliques. A pilot project completed for Portage, MI was completed by Allied Info and available to look at. Jolinda presented this site to the group. The product was built with map server (open source), not ESRI server, which may have disadvantages regarding connectivity but would not require any ESRI software to run the site. It visually resembles the current User Group mapping program and includes the ability to create annotation including point, polygons or text. When the new version is available, we can get a price estimate from Suzanne on the option of upgrading to the CivXplorer application.

b. ArcGIS Explorer Web – Mike - May be of interest to view WMS through;
<http://www.esri.com/software/arcexplorer/about/arcexplorer-web.html>

c. Continuing list for topic-based meetings – discuss presenters and schedule

Review: The idea for utilizing the User Group meeting as a training and knowledge sharing time was brought up at the April Officers meeting. To begin this process, members were asked to think of topics they would like to see or that they could present to the group. A list was created at the June meeting and priorities assigned to the top three. These should commence in August meetings. See item 7 for this month's topic "Web Mapping Services (WMS) and other web-based tools"

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d. Website updates - Jolinda: Updates are completed on the Metro Inet and on the website. Annotation updates are usually available at six month intervals, but due to a technical error they were not available as of the meeting. This problem will be resolved when after she returns to the office on July 14th.

6. Ramsey County Data Updates - Curt Peterson - The monthly update was given to Jolinda and the FTP site has been updated including new TLG street data. Major updates include parcels, pedestrian bike paths and trails. Half sections are now available on County Surveyor website (www.co.ramsey.mn.us/cs). These are updated quarterly (current as of June 30th) and posted on the website along with survey data, and benchmark PDF's. Also available on this site are monument certificates including locations, ties to section corners, lineage of events, etc. Scans will be available soon. Curt gave a demonstration of the site.

Regarding the Transit for Livable Communities project, Jody Youngers has volunteered to have Parks and Rec work on the pedestrian layer. Funding is available for a 2 month internship to help complete this. If you know of a GIS student or other potential candidate for this internship, please contact Curt.

7. Feature Topic: Web Mapping Services (WMS) and other web-based tools –

Connecting to WMS is a way to link directly to information from various organizations without having to download spatial information (and subsequent updates) to your own server, taking up significant data storage space. Because many of these are free, they are especially helpful to non-profit agencies or those starting a new GIS program without any data.

Jolinda gave a demonstration on how to link to various ArcWMS or ArcIMS servers through ArcMap. These directions and link information to several WMS's are also available on a handout she created. (To request this handout, please contact Carrie Mack (carrie.mack@rwmwd.org))

8. Community Announcements, Reports & Other Business

a. Drive to Excellence – Drive to Excellence is a program set up under Governor Pawlenty to define primary goals for the fiscal year. One of these goals was working



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towards an Enterprise GIS. The description given on the program website

(www.excellence.state.mn.us) states:

Enterprise Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

There is currently no state agency assigned with the responsibility for coordinating GIS across state government. This project is focused on implementing an enterprise GIS organizational and governance framework.

Anticipated benefits include improved state GIS coordination and accountability, opportunities for consolidated software and equipment investments, standardization and more.

To date, LMIC has been working to fulfill this need at some capacity.

Jolinda was invited to attend planning meeting on June 6th. This meeting brought many groups together (counties, Excel energy, user groups) asking what their needs are. Many sources stated that statewide data could not be used at their agency due to inaccuracies. General feedback was that organizations are willing to share and obtain information if there was a regulated source for management and distribution, preferably a centrally located WMS service. For more information on this specific project, go to www.gis.state.mn.us/committee/MSDI/dte.htm

b. Curt - Roseville, Falcon Heights and part of Arden Hills have completed their pathway trails layer and adopted the county data schema. Last week Roseville provided updates to the county data. Transit for LivableCommunities is looking for infrastructure improvements or connectivity between ped/bike systems and transit corridors.

c. ArcView 9.3 is out and will be mailed out soon. Jolinda reviewed a 10 minute tutorial on what is new with the release and she recommended members review it.

d. 2008 foreclosure data will be posted on the User Group ftp site (under associated data set (ACS) data). The County is looking at getting the information on their website or ftp site for retrieval. Previous year's data can be obtained by sending a request to Stephen Baker. Users should carefully assess the results for inaccuracies (see report on this from item 8a in the April 6, 2008 meeting minutes).

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e. Republican National Convention – James Engfer - Gordy Chinander has been asked by the USSS (Secret Service) to ensure that the Multi Agency Communication Center(MACC) get up to date GIS datasets. Gordy will also be in the MACC during the RNC but he cannot be there 24 hours a day for the 4 day event. He was asking for Qualified GIS volunteers to take a shift at the MACC. If you have further questions about assisting, please contact Gordy directly at gchinander@mn-mesb.org.

8. Agenda for August 2008 meeting

Jolinda will out of town at the ESRI User Conference in San Diego. Mike Goodnature will preside over the August meeting in her absence. Joel Koepp may present his topic-based discussion about KML data if time permits.

10. Adjournment –Meeting adjourned at 3:56

Next meeting will be on Thursday August 7, 2008, 2:00 p.m. at Shoreview City Hall.

Minutes submitted by Carrie Mack, Secretary.