



RAMSEY COUNTY GIS USER GROUP

An alliance of communities sharing Geographical Information Systems

Meeting Minutes
2:00 – 4:00 PM, February 4, 2010
Shoreview City Hall, 4600 Victoria St N

1. Introductions

Carrie Mack, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District
Matt Baker, City of Shoreview
Steven Hack, SEH Inc
Melissa Baker, Capitol Region Watershed District
Ger Pha, City of Saint Paul
Mike Goodnature, Ramsey Conservation District
Jan Vanderwall, Roseville School District
Steve Lorbach, St. Paul Regional Water Services
Mark Andrie, City of New Brighton
Connie Bernardy, Active Living Ramsey Communities
Chad Bergo, City of Maplewood
Curt Peterson, Ramsey County
Jolinda Stapleton, City of Roseville
Joel Koeppe, City of Roseville/City of North St Paul
Stephen Baker, Ramsey County

The meeting was called to order by Carrie Mack, Chair of the User Group

2. Feature Topic: Anoka County ArcGIS/GeoPRIME Parcel Viewer Application: Brian Fischer and Jeremy Moore, Houston Engineering Inc

Brian Fischer started out with a brief overview of Houston Engineering and their business. He has spent the last couple years involved in open source application development, but recently has been doing more and more with ESRI products again.

They were approached by John Slusarczyk from Anoka County, who was looking for a new parcel viewing web application. Both GeoMOOSE (open source) and ArcGIS Server were evaluated, keeping the following goals in mind: Anoka wanted to keep doing their data maintenance in ArcSDE, and they needed a solution with minimal programming knowledge required. Based on these needs, Houston recommended using ArcGIS Server with the FLEX API (based on Adobe Flash technology).

Houston and Anoka County considered the goals of the application in terms of data to be delivered to users, the target audience, functionality, available budget and software, and organizational knowledge. Instead of an elaborate printed report, they opted for a half-day session with department heads to do the needs assessment, which cut down on costs and left more of the budget available to put into the actual application.

Houston Engineering selected GeoPRIME as the product to use for the FLEX-based ArcGIS Server application. GeoPRIME is a wizard-based tool for publishing web applications, which allows non-programmers to easily and

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quickly deploy new data and functionality. The Javascript API was not chosen in part because it has cross-browser compatibility issues.

Some of the features Anoka County wanted to incorporate in the application were a Google Maps-style feel, automatic display or hiding of different layers appropriate to the zoom level, survey benchmarks, and the ability to change transparency of layers. The core functionality of the parcel search uses the ability to search by PIN, address, or feature name and automatically selects and zooms to the result. Future features will include an identify tool, a mechanism for users to provide feedback or notify staff of errors, mailing labels, a comparable property search tool, output of PDF maps, and external links to Google/Bing for maps and aerials.

Houston Engineering is a reseller of GeoDecision products (including the GeoPRIME application in the demonstration). Anoka County was the 4th county to deploy GeoPRIME in a public application. The cost was approximately \$10,000, which included professional support and full source code for all tools and widgets.

3. Agenda and January 2010 minutes

The minutes from the January meeting were approved with no changes.

4. API for Future Ramsey County Mapping Application

Matt Baker asked the group if anyone else would have the need for or interest in an API (application programming interface) for a future County mapping application that would allow a user to pass in a PIN or other search term by URL. Matt will start a User Group wishlist of these kind of items so the County can consider them in future application development.

A discussion of the User Group's ESRI licenses started. Chad Bergo proposed transferring the User Group's ArcGIS Server license to Roseville if they had any use for it, since there was no prospect of the User Group using it in the near future and it would save the group money. Jan Vanderwall, Jolinda Stapleton, and Curt Peterson discussed the merits of continuing to pay the licensing fees in case there turned out to be a need or desire to use it.

Jolinda and Joel were not sure they would be able to demonstrate any ability to use it before the license payment was due (end of March 2010). In the end the group decided to just let the license expire.

5. 2010 MnGEO Orthoimagery Discussion

Curt Peterson noted that Ramsey County does not have the budget to participate in MnGEO's 2010 aerial photography project, but that the User Group could consider contributing some money if it wanted to participate. He didn't anticipate that the photography would show many changes from 2009 due to the slower pace of construction, and that the resolution of the images would probably be poorer than the most recent County flight. Jan Vanderwall suggested that the Group has plenty of imagery already, and that financial restraint would be appropriate. Joel Koeppe said he would contact Chris Cialek at MnGEO for more information on the details of the imagery project.

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6. GIS Enterprise Update

Curt had no news on the state of Ramsey County's enterprise GIS system, nor any developments on the filling of the County GIS Manager position. He told the Group about the County Parks Department's project on creating a county-wide parks and rec facilities application that could provide multi-modal routing (walking, biking, bus). Curt handed out copies of the data model developed so far, and encouraged cities to participate if possible with the collection of facility data in their communities. The data model is based off a National Recreation and Parks Association schema with some additional fields added by County staff. It is meant to capture all types of features: point, polygon, and line.

Joel Koepp suggested that this data model might be something to bring to the Governor's Council Standards Committee if it gathers momentum.

7. Ramsey County Updates: Curt Peterson

Curt announced that all of the 2009 aerial photography had been successfully loaded into the ArcSDE database. They are still waiting on Kucera to deliver the final, corrected physical feature data, but might be receiving an updated DEM of the County from the project.

Jolinda informed Group members who are still waiting to receive the 2009 imagery that the discs are still being routed around to the different organizations.

8. Community Announcements

Joel Koepp briefly mentioned some recent developments from the MetroGIS Address Workgroup. MetroGIS is ready to start accepting address point datasets for the testing phase of the project to collect and distribute a metro-wide database of addresses. For the time being, most communities can share their address data via the MetroGIS FTP site, and access will be limited to organizations that qualify for access to the 7 county parcel dataset. In the future there may be some communities who wish to make their address data freely available without restriction.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 PM.

Minutes submitted by Joel Koepp, Secretary

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