



RAMSEY COUNTY GIS USER GROUP

An alliance of communities sharing Geographical Information Systems

Meeting Minutes
October 7, 2010
Shoreview City Hall, 4600 Victoria St N

1. Introductions

Carrie Mack, Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District
Steve Lorbach, Saint Paul Water
Matt Koukol, Ramsey County
Ger Pha, City of Saint Paul
Joel Koeppe, City of Roseville
Jolinda Stapleton, City of Roseville
Curt Peterson, Ramsey County
John Jacobson, Ramsey County
Stephen Baker, Ramsey County
Liesa Miller, MnDOT
Mark Andrie, City of New Brighton
Melissa Baker, Capitol Region Watershed District
Kristine Jenson, VLAWMO
Matt Baker, City of Shoreview
Mike Goodnature, Ramsey Conservation District
Deb Jones, City of Falcon Heights
Connie Bernardy, Active Living Ramsey Communities
Chad Bergo, City of Maplewood
Bjorn Gangeness, District Energy of St. Paul

The meeting was called to order by Carrie Mack, Chair of the User Group at 2:04 PM.

2. September 2010 minutes

The September 2010 meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

3. User Group Membership Request from District Energy of St. Paul

Carrie Mack introduced Bjorn Gangeness of District Energy St. Paul to give the group some background about his organization. District Energy is a nonprofit (instead of shareholder owned) utility formed in 1983 by a group of building owners and managers, the City of St. Paul, nonprofit groups, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Energy to serve St. Paul's downtown.

They are considering expanding their service area west along University Avenue in conjunction with the Central Corridor light rail project, and possibly capturing waste heat energy from the Rock-Tenn facility. They have been doing initial market research and plan to use ESRI software and the User Group's data to get more in depth.

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Vice Chair

Matt Baker
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Secretary

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Chad Bergo noted that he ran a query of the population in the census tracts served by District Energy and came up with a quote of approximately \$2,900 for their annual dues.

Bjorn was still unsure about what kinds of data or projects they will be doing that could be shared back to the User Group, because they don't have any GIS software yet. For the time being they are using a CAD product to work with the data they've received so far.

Curt Peterson clarified that there is no pricing difference from the normal rate for nonprofits buying data on a per-parcel basis. User Group membership is a much better option because members get data updates and the full set of data offerings: parcels, physical features, aerial imagery.

Chad Bergo moved, Jan Vanderwall seconded, that the User Group accept District Energy of St. Paul's membership request as a paying affiliate.

All members were in favor. The motion was approved.

Mike Goodnature asked if there was a document that showed all available data products that members can access. Curt Peterson will supply a chart to Joel Koepp for distribution to the group.

4. User Group Mapping Application Workgroup: Matt Koukol

Matt Koukol gave a Powerpoint presentation on his ideas for moving forward with a redesigned online mapping application. He summarized the background of the existing ArcIMS application, its support and maintenance by the City of Roseville, and its long-term unsustainability.

Ramsey County now has a working ArcGIS Server installation and is ready to start publishing maps and services. He suggested forming a small workgroup to identify application needs and priority data layers to be included, as well as determining map presentation and the look/feel of the user interface. The workgroup would meet separately from the main Users Group and report back periodically.

He demonstrated a proof-of-concept ArcGIS Server web application that is serving the County's half section maps. Right now it's using the out-of-the-box web ADF, but will be developed in Silverlight eventually. There is a possibility that they will serve multiple applications that accommodate a number of different workflows, and streamlining the number of data layers offered. The goal is to have map and feature services, zip and ship functionality, and tools/analysis beyond basic services like mailing labels.

Joel Koepp asked if the group might do a survey to figure out which layers in the current application are being used the least, so they could be moved off the primary application to something else. Mike Goodnature asked if there was a way to do this programmatically from server logs (answer: not with the existing setup).

Jan Vanderwall opined that with the capabilities of the new ArcGIS Server system, there shouldn't be any technical limitations to just putting in all the map layers the group offers now, because every layer is probably being used by at least a few people. Mike and Jolinda thought that any application should prioritize the data layers that get used the most. Stephen Baker and John Jacobson thought that even within just the Records &

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Revenue department at the County there would be different preferences for what an application that serves their needs would look like.

Matt Koukol thought that perhaps they could develop two versions of the application that a user can switch between: a "lite" version with just the basic layers and functions, and an "advanced" version. Jan Vanderwall added a third possibility, a User Group version with the capability of doing basic editing.

Joel Koepp suggested multiple lightweight applications (possibly Department-specific) that would be optimized for certain workflows or themes: Parcels/Property info, Watersheds, Parks and Rec. Mike Goodnature confirmed that other counties are already doing things like this. Curt Peterson liked the idea of starting with a parcel viewer application first and adding services over time. Matt Koukol noted that he has no developers on staff yet, but should be getting some resources through the Active Living project that is ongoing.

Matt Koukol summarized the discussion, and will try to find around 6 people to agree to join the workgroup. He will also develop a survey to gauge usage of all the data layers the Group currently has.

5. Ramsey County Updates: Curt Peterson and Matt Koukol

Curt Peterson asked if the User Group could in the future assume responsibility for maintaining the aerial imagery collection contract, due to some past problems getting it taken care of smoothly among the County's legal department. Jolinda Stapleton said that it might be problematic, since the User Group has no attorney on retainer to do contract reviews.

Matt Koukol said the Group might consider budgeting and setting fees on the basis of the schedule for data collection. One option would be to do aerial imagery every 2 years and planimetric updates every 4 years (i.e., every other aerial flight). Stephen Baker announced that the County has recently hired a new purchasing manager to streamline the process of completing projects, bids, and contracts. He suggested that in the future the Pictometry AccuPlus product might allow for simultaneous acquisition of the oblique imagery, standard imagery, and planimetric feature updates.

Matt Koukol said that the fee structure could be done as 2 high fee years followed by 2 low fee years, or have it averaged for the entire 4 year cost.

The self-hosted Pictometry deployment at Ramsey County has been delayed. The goal is to have it available by the end of the year. There will be no limit on simultaneous user connections or seat licenses.

Updated PDF half section maps are nearly ready, and the ArcGIS Server application to view them is available but not quite ready to be publicly linked.

6. Community Announcements

Jolinda announced that the ArcIMS online mapping application has been updated for the month, and that all the new Ramsey County data is on the network for cities that are part of Roseville's Metro-Inet.

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Jan Vanderwall is attending a major conference on school busing. A main topic will be the use of GPS in school buses to allow for real time vehicle location in web applications. Roseville Area Schools is going to be doing a major upgrade of their bus routing software soon.

Connie Bernardy introduced her office's new Minnesota GreenCorps member, Sarah Curtner. Sarah is a Humphrey Institute graduate and will be working on Active Living's Multimodal Transportation Initiative. Active Living has other internships available through the end of June. There are options to work 20 hours per week or full-time Monday through Thursday.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:37 PM.

Minutes submitted by Joel Koepp, Secretary

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