

MEETING MINUTES

COUNTY-CITY GIS COMMITTEE

Meeting Date and Time:
06-05-01 @ 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Type: Special, Guests and Committee Members

Meeting Location:
Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:
DeKalb County:
Stump, Brad – GIS Coordinator

City of Auburn:
Schweitzer, Chris – GIS/MIS Manager

Others Present:
Steuben County Visitors
Grile,

Meeting Minutes By:
Chris Schweitzer

Items Discussed

1. *Steuben County Visit*

- 1.1. Steuben County visited the County-City GIS in an effort to learn from another organization's GIS implementation experiences. Chris and Brad welcomed the visitors to Auburn and the group introduced themselves. After introductions, the group proceeded to discuss several important topics, including:
 - 1.1.1. Overview/Background/GIS Initiatives of Steuben County
 - 1.1.2. Overview/Background/GIS Efforts of DeKalb County/City of Auburn/County-City GIS
 - 1.1.3. Organizational Issues/Highlights/Discussion
 - 1.1.4. Technical Issues/Highlights/Discussion

1.2. Overview/Background Steuben County

- 1.2.1. Steuben County stated that Federal legislation requires E-911 systems to meet specific technical requirements by January 2002. In an effort to meet these requirements, the County is seeking the development and implementation of a Countywide street and address database. However, in preparing this database, the County wishes to benefit other Departments in the process.

The County stated it was in the preliminary stages of GIS implementation, and was researching and learning from other communities. They had just visited Huntington County in the AM.

1.3. Overview/Background of DeKalb County/City of Auburn/County-City GIS

- 1.3.1. Brad provided an overview of DeKalb County's efforts toward GIS prior to the County-City partnership. Brad noted that the County currently experiences duplication of efforts, a lack of connectivity among PC resources/info, and a lack of data sharing due to limited knowledge of these existing resources. Brad further noted that four County departments began discussing GIS in 1996, and established communications with cities and towns, but no formal action was taken at that time.
- 1.3.2. Chris explained the City's path leading up to the County-City GIS projects. The topics covered included: 1) Pre-2000 IT/Workflow Environment; 2) Pre-1997 Computer Committee and IT Report; 3) 1997 Building, Planning and Development's report; 4) 1998 Information Technology Master Plan.
 - 1.3.2.1. Chris explained that the City of Auburn, prior to January 2000, was experiencing the same IT and information issues as many communities were; duplication of effort, decentralized management of systems; incompatible platforms; etc.
 - 1.3.2.2. Each department was set to fend for themselves, but was guided by a three-person Computer committee that oversaw the purchasing of all computer equipment. The City had an IT needs assessment report developed by a professional network consultant in 1995, but no formal action was taken.
 - 1.3.2.3. In 1997, the Department of Building, Planning and Development put together a needs assessment report addressing the department's permit tracking requirements. However, the report also briefly addressed connectivity of the entire City, and the use of GIS. This report initiated discussions among City officials, and later that year the Mayor obtained Spectrum Engineering to facilitate a comprehensive planning and implementation project that addressed the City's IT needs.
 - 1.3.2.4. Spectrum organized the City into a Policy Committee and Technical Committee; the Policy committee was comprised of community leaders from each of the major sectors (health, business, education, industry, local government, etc) and was charged with identifying goals

and objectives for the community from an Information Technology perspective. Some of these goals included reducing waste; improving customer service; improving communications; improving data integrity/accuracy/usability for decision support. The Technical Committee was comprised of representatives from each of the departments and from Council and BOW, and was charged with defining solutions to fulfill the goals and objectives of the Policy committee. The resulting product of over 1 year of education and planning was the Information Technology Master Plan published on September 15, 1998. The plan addressed networking/computing/training, utility/civil accounting, telephony enhancements, and GIS. The plan received funding through a municipal bond valued at \$2.65 million. The project continues to be implemented today.

GIS, then, was an outgrowth/extension of management information systems for the City. There was a strong feeling of "TEAM" the City had experienced and there were many benefits of that environment, as it was the City that took COMPLETE ownership of the project and had a complete understanding of what solutions would work and why.

- 1.3.3. Chris and Brad explained that it was in August of 1998 that both and County and City sat down and formerly started talking about GIS together. Both sides agreed that a strong effective framework for communication and decision-making had to be established. The group formed the County-City GIS Committee, and spent the first few meetings educating members on GIS benefits, costs, concepts, issues, etc. Representatives from both sides include policy makers and dept reps. The current members of the Committee include:

DeKalb County
Damerell, Bruce – Technical Resource Coordinator, Data Processing
Gerig, Mike – County Councilman
Reymann, Sarah – Soil and Water Conservation Service
Miles, Connie – County Commissioners
Strong, Mark – County Surveyor
Rowe, Sally – Building Commissioner, Plan Commission
Stump, Brad – GIS Coordinator

City of Auburn
Bruns, Steve – City Civil Engineer
Boswell, Mike – City Councilman
Tuttle, Stuart – Electric Superintendent
Lochner, Dave – WPC Superintendent
Berndt, Craig – Administrator, Dept of Building, Planning, and Development
Schweitzer, Chris – GIS/MIS Manager

City of Butler
Schweitzer, Amy – City Planner

City of Garrett
Bingham, Steve – Planner

The Committee acts as a decision support group to the Cities' and County's decision-making bodies (Council, Commissioners, BOW) and has many goals, including sharing in data creation/maintenance costs; sharing knowledge/data; GIS education; mitigating duplication of efforts; facilitating joint-decision making, etc.

The committee has spearheaded many projects including:

- 1.3.3.1. *Connectivity*. The City of Auburn provides network services (Gigabit Ethernet between County buildings). The City owns the network down to/including the switch. The City also provides hardware/software and services for the GIS database. An Inter-Local Agreement spells out the terms and conditions of the project. Both the County and City have Database Administrators that jointly manage the GIS database.
- 1.3.3.2. *Landbase Mapping Project (Underway)*. The first project jointly pursued by the County and City, the Landbase Mapping Project began in February 1999, with aerial photography in April of the same year. A general Memorandum of understanding set the tone for the data sharing partnership, while a specific Inter-Local Agreement was executed for the Landbase project. The County and City share common features and split common feature and accuracy level costs 50/50. Higher accuracy and additional features were paid entirely by the party desiring such additional features and accuracy. Participating communities have saved over \$110,000 through collaborating and sharing in the capital investment, and anticipate saving an indefinite amount of money through shared maintenance of the database.
- 1.3.3.3. *Cadastral Mapping Project (Underway)*. Likely the most widely used dataset among both the County and cities, this project is currently in the database design and pilot project phases. The County and participating Cities have developed and signed an Inter-Local Agreement. The

County will maintain the data, and the participating cities will have access to said data. Participating communities estimate that over \$220,000 will be saved by partnering in this project. More importantly, the County and City will save day-to-day *maintenance costs and greatly improve the integrity of the cadastral database.*

- 1.3.3.4. *Utility (City of Auburn, Planned).* The City of Auburn will begin detail planning of electric, water, and wastewater utility conversion in approximately 12 months.
 - 1.3.3.5. *In-House Projects (Zoning, Airport Zones, Addressing, etc).* The City and County have already began to create datasets in house, including addresses, parks, and airport zones. The Committee noted that the exchange of data between the Committee and a local engineer resulted in the Committee obtaining, free of charge, the Airport's Imaginary Surfaces. The group noted that this type of data/knowledge exchange is the essence of GIS and partnerships.
 - 1.3.3.6. *ArcGIS Beta Program.* The Committee has been an ArcGIS beta site for the recent ArcGIS 8.1 release. This program allowed CoCiGIS to have input into the development of ArcGIS. Exciting stuff!!!
 - 1.3.3.7. *GIS Day 1999, 2000.* The Committee participated in the first every GIS Day in 1999, educating over 100 children and adults. The Committee also participated in GIS 2000- traveling to a local elementary school and hosting an openhouse = and discussing GIS with over 100 children
 - 1.3.3.8. *DFIRM.* The County and City are working with FEMA to obtain an updated Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map. The City and County are providing ASPRS class 1 accurate contours and other land data for its creation.
 - 1.3.3.9. *Other.* The Committee also has a strong education effort through the Intranet and Internet web sites, regular presentations, and publishing meeting minutes.
- 1.4. Organizational Issues/Highlights/Discussion
- 1.4.1. Throughout the afternoon and by giving an overview of each others experiences, the group identified some key organizational issues/components that need to be addressed:
 - 1.4.1.1. Communication/Decision Making Framework.
 - 1.4.1.2. Trust between participants MUST exist – among jurisdictions and within jurisdictions.
 - 1.4.1.3. Frequent meetings, Intranet, Presentations, Spread the Word!!!
 - 1.4.1.4. Framework for effective education
 - 1.4.1.5. Need buy-in/participation by ALL levels of organization (admin, policy, users, etc)
 - 1.4.1.6. Inter-Local Agreements
 - 1.4.1.7. Champions that continue to drive the project/cooperation/education
 - 1.4.1.8. If your gonna do it....DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME...this means PLANNING
 - 1.4.1.9. Set goals, acknowledge achievements
 - 1.4.1.10. Empower users to do more...make them part of decision making process
 - 1.4.1.11. OWN and KNOW the project intimately....use consultants selectively
 - 1.4.2. Steuben County also inquired about the value of the needs assessment. Chris and Brad concurred the needs assessment was most valuable as an awareness activity that helps to raise support and discussion for the project.
 - 1.4.3. Visitors inquired about staffing organization and integration with an IT department. Chris and Brad concurred that the enterprise GIS model requires a strong GIS leadership role in the organization – typically a GIS Professional. His/her job is to facilitate the creation, access, distribution and use of corporate databases in a collaborate environment. "GIS Department" staff then, are generally composed of one or a few professionals, while the owners of the data in departments together comprise the enterprise.
Chris and Brad noted the importance of strong leadership, not only by a jurisdiction's GIS Professional, but also by community leaders. The existence of a "cheerleader" or "champion" is crucial to the success of this complex, long-term project. Constant education is also important.
 - 1.4.4. Visitors inquired about the existence with an IT Department. Brad noted that DeKalb County has a separate Data Processing Department, while the City has an integrated GIS/MIS Department.
 - 1.4.5. County visitors then inquired about selection methodology. Chris and Brad were emphatic about the incredible value of Qualifications-Based Selection (RFQ). This process aims to select solutions based on the merits of qualifications – NOT cost. It has proven to identify solutions that have a lower total cost of ownership. The CoCiGIS generally did not recommend the use of BIDS for RFPs, although there are scenarios where RFPs are more appropriate.
 - 1.4.6. Steuben County noted that funding was an issue discussed. The County noted that most data conversion dollars expended thus far was funded by Assessor monies and the general fund. The City project was being funded by a bond as part of its Information Technology Master Plan. Steuben County noted it may use E-911 and CEDIT monies.
- 1.5. Technical Issues/Highlights/Discussion
- 1.5.1. Chris and Brad noted that selecting good technology had allowed the CoCiGIS to focus on problem-solving and decision support instead of worrying about whether the software worked or not. CoCiGIS had noted the following goals of software/hardware implementation:
 - 1.5.1.1. Scalable, widely used/supported, integratable, usable, easily administered, etc
 - 1.5.1.2. Support from Software Vendor

1.5.2. Chris and Brad noted that ESRI had proven, through a Request for Qualifications and 8 months of hands on experience, to be the best solution. Brad noted that Chris came from an Intergraph MGE/Microstation background, but despite his experiences and initial bias towards MGE/Microstation, ESRI products and support quickly turned him around, and proved to be superior to that of any other Enterprise GIS solution available. Chris noted that it was not simply because of ESRI products the Committee selected ESRI, but for all their characteristics that make them the company they are today: quality products, stress on communication, quality education opportunities, advocacy for success, commitment to the client. Chris presented the ESRI ArcGIS 8 platform as the County and City were using it in a collaborative environment.

1.5.2.1. Multi-User Database (ArcSDE, Full client-server RDBMS, versioning, security, etc). The County and City have implemented a true Client-Server database that contains both the spatial and attribute data. ESRI's new Geodatabase data model is being used to take full advantage of validation rules, versioning, multi-user access, etc.

1.5.2.2. Editing Environment (ArcInfo, ArcEditor). The County and City each have a few seats of ArcInfo 8 and use it to edit the database.

1.5.2.3. Viewing/Analysis (ArcView, ArcIMS). Chris and Brad explained that viewing and analysis of the data residing on the ArcSDE server are accessed by end user via ArcView and ArcIMS (internet/intranet mapping via a browser).

1.5.2.4. The group noted the 3 new applications in ArcGIS 8: ArcMap, ArcToolbox and ArcCatalog, as the group navigated the County-City GIS database. ArcGIS has full support of CAD. CAD users can export features to CAD formats, while GIS users can read CAD data straight up with no conversion. However, the County and City STRONGLY encouraged the group to standardize on a platform and then exploit the functionality of the ESRI products. They noted not only the benefit of centralized support and maintenance and compatibility among platforms, but more importantly, the knowledge transfer that occurs among users who use like systems - INVALUABLE.

1.6. Facility Tour

1.6.1. After nearly two hours of great discussion, the group took a quick tour of City hall and the IT/GIS infrastructure. The group toured the Communications room where the City's servers and central switching devices reside. The group explained how all City buildings and a majority of County structures were connected with Gigabit Ethernet over Single Mode fiber. The City is using Cisco switch/router/hub devices and managing them with HP Openview network node manager. The group then walked down to the City Council Chambers. The Council Chambers serves many roles in addition to a public meeting place, including a 12 PC Training Lab and Conference Room. Proudly, the County and City are sharing the training lab to lower education costs and facilitate cooperation and a team environment among County and City employees.

1.7. Conclusions

1.7.1. Both sides were very appreciative of the others' insight and experiences. The groups acknowledge the challenge of successful GIS implementation, but agreed that having the right framework, people and technology in place helps communities reach their goals of improved services.

Action Items

- ?? City of Auburn to forward CD of information to Steuben County containing sample agreements, presentations, etc.
- ?? County-City GIS always welcomes Steuben County in discussing issues.

Upcoming Meetings

- ?? 06-07-01 City Hall Second Floor Conference Room