MEETING MINUTES
COUNTY-CITY GIS COMMITTEE

Meeting Date and Time:
10-23-00 @ 12:30 to 3:00 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:
Yoder, Norm – Mayor
Schweitzer, Chris – GIS/MIS Manager
Bruns, Steve – City Engineer
Boswell, Mike – City Council
Fuller, Rebecca – Clerk Treasurer
Kretz, Marla – Mayor's Assistant
Wolff, Dave – Purchasing Agent

Others Present:
City of Anderson Visitors
Donoho, Tom – Superintendent, Anderson Municipal Light and Power
Grile, Darren – Network Administrator, Anderson Municipal Light and Power
Schlagel, Sam – Technician, Anderson Municipal Light and Power
Yelton, Joyceann – Assistant Planning Director, City of Anderson IS
Stafford, Pam – IS Coordinator, City Planning
Barclay, Stan – CAD, City Engineering
Hall, Jeff – CAD, Water Department
Richardson, John – CAD, County Council of Governments

Meeting Minutes By:
Chris Schweitzer

Items Discussed

1. *City of Anderson Visit*
   - 1.1. The City of Anderson visited in an effort to learn from another community's implementation experiences. Chris and Brad welcomed the 8 visitors to Auburn and the group introduced themselves. (NOTE: Please see the 10-23-00 .ppt presentation for a complete outline given at the meeting). After introductions, Chris suggested the group follow an agenda (shown on the screen) that would help them accomplish what they wanted to achieve in the limited amount of time they had. The group agreed that they should discuss the following topics:
     - 1.1.1. Overview/Background of City of Anderson
     - 1.1.2. Overview/Background of DeKalb County/City of Auburn/County-City GIS
     - 1.1.3. Organizational Issues/Highlights/Discussion
     - 1.1.4. Technical Issues/Highlights/Discussion
     - 1.1.5. Take a walk around…tour facilities

   - 1.2. Overview/Background of City of Anderson
     - 1.2.1. Darren and the group noted that the City of Anderson and Madison County have had automated mapping for some time. The group pointed out, however, that this mapping was done in a decentralized manner, each department maintaining their own systems/data/platforms. This scenario has proven somewhat problematic, as their desire to share data is there, but burdened by having to translate data among systems. The group also noted that network connectivity among all City departments has been in place for a long time, but that the differing platforms made it difficult to take full advantage of this network connectivity.

     - 1.2.2. The group stated that despite their legacy GIS databases and systems, a recent storm water runoff project was requiring that all GIS users revisit the opportunity for more collaborative efforts. Everyone agreed that it did not matter what project was the catalyst for collaboration, but that there existed such a project.

   - 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 the County and City of Anderson 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.

Chris noted that GIS, then, was an outgrowth/extension of management information systems for the City. Marla pointed out the strong feeling of "TEAM" the City had experienced and noted the 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 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 sp earheaded 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. The City and County saved over $30,000 each by 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 planning stages. The County and City are drafting an Inter-Local Agreement. The County will maintain the data, and the participating cities will have access to said data. The County and City will save over $50,000 each 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 since August. This program allows the City and County to have input into the design of the upcoming ArcGIS 8.1 release. 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 has plans to host another open house and travel to a local elementary school for the 2000 GIS Day.

1.3.3.8. *Other*. The Committee also has a strong education effort through the Intranet and Internet web sites, regular presentations, and publishing meeting minutes.

1.3.4. Mayor Yoder lead discussion on the need for County and City governments to work together, and how GIS has helped to facilitate cooperation at other non-technical levels. He noted that the City of Auburn represents nearly 28 percent of the revenue generated by the County, and that making citizens pay twice for the same services would not make sense. He stated he is pleased to see the accomplishments of the County-City GIS Committee, and hopes they and other cooperative efforts continue.

1.3.5. Mike Boswell noted that the standardizing of the software, on both an MIS and GIS level, has greatly paid off in terms of administration AND user productivity. Mike said his experience with his installing and providing support to networks indicated that planning and implementation of homogeneous products has a much lower total cost of ownership, and users get much more out of their systems.

1.3.6. Rick Ring (City Councilman, through email submitted before the meeting), submitted the following testimony:
"As both a Council and Plan Commission member, we have been able to obtain a wealth of accurate information before making decisions. While the information was available prior to the implementation of GIS, it was a lengthy process to compile in a format usable by the plan commission or council. In addition, with information being kept by so many different departments, important information was sometimes omitted or could not be obtained when needed. I believe GIS has been the single most important project by the city during my twelve years on the Council."

1.4. Organizational Issues/Highlights/Discussion

1.4.1. Throughout the afternoon and by giv ing 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.
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

1.5. Technical Issues/Highlights/Discussion

1.5.1. Chris noted that Darren requested some discussion on the software and platforms the County and City were using. Chris 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 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, ArcInfo Editor). The County and City each have a few seats of ArcInfo 8 and use it to edit the database. John (County) mentioned he had not used ArcInfo 8 much, but that it looked neat. Chris explained that the County and City had not used Workstation ArcInfo for much other than specific tasks not yet supported by Desktop ArcGIS.
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 used via ArcView and ArcIMS (internet/intranet mapping via a browser).
1.5.2.4. The group discussed for some time the 3 new applications in ArcGIS 8: ArcMap, ArcToolbox and ArcCatalog, as the group navigated the County-City GIS database. Questions regarding compatibility between CAD and GIS were raised, and Brad and Chris noted that 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 tw o 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. The group played with the SMART Board (Interactive White Board) and discussed what they had learned over the last two hours.

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 Anderson containing sample agreements, presentations, etc.
- County-City GIS always welcomes the City of Anderson and Madison County in discussing issues.

Upcoming Meetings

- 11-02-00 City Hall Second Floor Conference Room