

**2011 NSDI Cooperative Agreement Program**  
**Program Announcement Number 11HQPA0011**  
**Category 4: Fifty States Initiative – Business Plan Development and Implementation**

**Project Title:** *A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota*

Applicant Organization	Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) 300 Centennial Office Building 658 Cedar Street St. Paul, MN 55155		
Collaborating Organizations	<p>Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation – State agencies with current business needs for parcel data.</p> <p>MetroGIS<sup>1</sup> – MetroGIS has developed data sharing agreements with 7 urban counties and processes to integrate data into a common parcel database.</p> <p>Minnesota counties and organizations that work with them, including Pro-West &amp; Associates, a GIS firm with extensive experience developing and maintaining parcel data for Minnesota counties.</p> <p>Federal agencies through the USGS State Geospatial Liaison.</p>		
Internet Address	www.mngeo.state.mn.us		
Principal Investigator	David Arbeit (651) 201-2460 david.arbeit@state.mn.us		
Other Key Contacts	Fred Logman (651) 201-2495 fred.logman@state.mn.us	Christopher Cialek (651) 201-2481 chris.cialek@state.mn.us	
Previous NSDI CAP Participation	<b>Year</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Brief Title</b>
	2010	75,000	Minnesota Local Government Boundaries
	2008	50,000	Minnesota Structures Collaborative
	2007	0	NHD Stewardship
	2006	50,000	Implementing an Enterprise Strategy for Minnesota's SDI
	2005	50,000	WFS Services
	2004	30,000	Metadata Trainer and Outreach Assistance
	2003	40,000	Bringing Metadata Training to the Workplace
	2002	20,000	Training Metadata Trainers: Institutionalizing the NSDI
	2000	13,940	Metadata: Increasing Participation in the MN Clearinghouse
	1996	125,000	Assessing the Framework Model: Building on the Minnesota Commitment

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<sup>1</sup> The MetroGIS SDI serves the seven-county, Minneapolis-St. Paul (Minnesota) metropolitan area. It is a voluntary collaboration of local and regional governments, with partners in state and federal government, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and businesses. MetroGIS's purpose is to provide a regional forum through which widespread sharing of geospatial resources and regional solutions to geospatial information needs shared by its stakeholders are accomplished to solve real world problems. See [www.metrogis.org](http://www.metrogis.org).

**Project Summary** MnGeo, working collaboratively with stakeholders and with local governmental units through their statewide organizations, will develop a detailed business plan for managing and providing access to accurate and current parcel data for the entire state based upon maintained and authoritative local sources. The business plan will build upon two generations of strategic plans for an integrated Minnesota SDI that supports the NSDI and an integrated parcel data for the nation vision. It builds upon a successful strategy for sharing parcel data within the Minneapolis-St. Paul region and strategies suggested by Minnesota's Digital Cadastral Data Committee, which works with counties throughout the state and advises MnGeo. This project complements other data integration projects guided by MnGeo, which has statutory authority to coordinate GIS in Minnesota and is staffed with the skills, knowledge and experience to successfully meet the goals of this grant.

## **1. Project Scope**

The Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) will develop a business plan to guide implementation of a key goal of a Minnesota Spatial Data Infrastructure – public availability of parcel data for the entire state based upon the best available local sources of the data. This goal was initially established in *A Foundation for Coordinated GIS*, adopted in 2004.<sup>2</sup> Establishing a sustainable framework that provides reliable, accurate, and timely maintenance, publication, and statewide aggregation of parcel data remains a high priority. When fully implemented, it will comprise an essential element of Minnesota's SDI, an authoritative source for the NSDI and related programs – including *The National Map* and Geospatial One-Stop.

This project focuses explicitly upon the critical relationship between Minnesota's counties and the State. It will not only address technical issues concerning parcel data creation, maintenance and management, but also policies and practices that more generally affect effective data sharing and availability – not just for parcel data but also for other data fundamental to the NSDI vision – orthoimagery, LiDAR/elevation, etc. The business plan will emphasize the essential and ongoing role of Minnesota counties as primary producers and maintainers of parcel data. It will directly address the interests and concerns of these primary data producers, which range from the uneven capacity for digital parcel mapping around the state to cost-recovery, distribution fees, redistribution rights and liability. State laws about data access provide an additional layer of issues that the business plan will address.

There is a strong and growing consensus among Minnesota's GIS professionals about the need for accurate and accessible parcel data – using authoritative and maintained county data, documented using best practices for metadata, consistent with data content standards, and available for use through the Minnesota Spatial Data Clearinghouse. However, county practices follow policies established by 87 different County Boards and interpreted by staff and, in many cases, by attorneys. Some, especially those related to cost recovery and liability issues, restrict data access. The business plan project team will work directly with counties to document their

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<sup>2</sup> For details about the Minnesota SDI and *A Foundation for Coordinated GIS: Minnesota's Spatial Data Infrastructure*, see [www.gis.state.mn.us/MSDI/](http://www.gis.state.mn.us/MSDI/).

parcel mapping programs, focusing on data distribution policies and practices and technical limitations. Collaborating with stakeholders, the team will then recommend specific actions to address these issues -- including model agreements, policy guidelines, and legislative changes needed to achieve the parcel data availability and integration vision. Many of the project outcomes will translate to other data themes, notably strategies and agreements that provide for local-state integration of other SDI data.

Minnesota's commitment to this project's goal and the framework for achieving it were clearly stated in the 2004 strategic plan for Minnesota's SDI.<sup>3</sup>

The goal . . . is that all parcel data within Minnesota be maintained by primary producers, generally counties, in digital formats that can be assembled easily for multicounty and statewide applications. As of 2004, 57 of the state's 87 counties reported they had developed some digital parcel boundaries, but 38 had not completed the task and only 37 could link their boundaries to tax roll databases. Data accuracies vary greatly among counties.<sup>4</sup>

Although the principal producers of parcel data within Minnesota are its 87 counties, cities, state and federal governments, and tribal governments own considerable land. Collectively, federal agencies own and manage 3.4 million acres within Minnesota. With more than 5.6 million acres, the state is the third largest landowner in the nation. Completing a comprehensive statewide cadastral layer will require participation of all organizations owning land within Minnesota.

Few ongoing programs exist to assemble parcel data across county boundaries. An exception is a regional aggregation assembled for the seven metropolitan counties by MetroGIS. The MetroGIS project demonstrates the value of best management practices, technical standards, and organizational agreements when assembling a consistent parcel dataset from county sources.<sup>5</sup>

A more recent assessment, reflecting an informal update to a 2007 inventory of parcel programs, shows 75 of the state's 87 counties with some digital parcel boundaries, but that 25 had not completed the task and only 55 could link their boundaries to tax roll databases. Data accuracies vary greatly among counties.<sup>6</sup>

A second generation plan<sup>7</sup> -- developed with support from a 2006 CAP 50 States grant -- further emphasized the state's need for parcel data, especially within the departments of Natural Resources and Transportation. Each have secured limited access to parcel data from some counties, but neither has established formal or sustainable processes supporting statewide integration and public availability of the data. The Digital Cadastral Data Committee (DCDC)<sup>8</sup>,

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<sup>3</sup> *A Foundation for Coordinated GIS: Minnesota's Spatial Data Infrastructure* (2004), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> For more about the status of parcel mapping within Minnesota, see [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/SPMI/](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/SPMI/).

<sup>5</sup> See MetroGIS parcel data web page at [www.metrogis.org/data/info\\_needs/parcel\\_boundaries/index.shtml](http://www.metrogis.org/data/info_needs/parcel_boundaries/index.shtml).

<sup>6</sup> Data provided by Annette Theroux of ProWest & Associates, reflecting updates for counties that PWA works with.

<sup>7</sup> See [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/MSDI/dte/ProgramDesign\\_FinalFeb09\\_V21.pdf](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/MSDI/dte/ProgramDesign_FinalFeb09_V21.pdf), *A Program for Transformed GIS in the State of Minnesota*.

<sup>8</sup> See committee web site at [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/cadastral/](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/cadastral/).

comprised of representatives from local government, non-profits, business and state agencies, has been addressing mechanisms for more productive sharing of parcel data among counties and with the state. The Committee is working on a parcel data transfer standard, which it plans to recommend as a state standard.

This project will build on existing collaborations illustrated by the work of the DCDC, MetroGIS and state agencies to identify guidelines, protocols, procedures, agreements, technical resources and funding needed to establish enduring and sustainable processes for parcel data integration and access, conforming to applicable standards for data content and transfer. The plan will identify activities to ensure that state parcel data complies with the FGDC content standard, is routinely updated, and is accessible to *The National Map* (TNM) and Geospatial One-Stop (GOS) through MnGeo's Geographic Data Clearinghouse and web services.

The deliverable, an MSDI Parcel Data Business Plan, will provide a detailed roadmap for establishing and maintaining parcel data statewide, emphasizing Minnesota's 87 counties as the responsible governmental units for maintaining and managing most data. The plan will include the following elements:

- An assessment of business needs of counties for accurate parcel data, not only for the counties that maintain them but for other stakeholders – including municipal governments, state agencies, federal agencies, tribal governments, emergency responders, utilities, business, non-profit organizations, and educators.
- An assessment of existing tools to identify the status of parcel data development within the state, including Minnesota's Statewide Parcel Mapping Inventory<sup>9</sup>.
- An assessment of the MetroGIS strategy<sup>10</sup> for sharing parcel data within the 7-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area and its suitability for extension statewide.
- An assessment of Minnesota's Data Practices Act<sup>11</sup> to clarify legal requirements and obstacles to cost-free and liability-free access to county parcel data.
- An assessment of county parcel data relative to content standards required to integrate data into a statewide and national framework.
- Specifications for an enterprise architecture that supports statewide parcel data management, access, and distribution -- consistent with standards and guidelines established to support the NSDI.
- A model State-county agreement that supports data sharing and cost-free access to data and/or web services needed to support integration of data into a statewide dataset or service.

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<sup>9</sup> See [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/SPMI/index.html](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/SPMI/index.html).

<sup>10</sup> See [www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/index.shtml](http://www.metrogis.org/data/datasets/parcels/index.shtml).

<sup>11</sup> See [www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/pubs/dataprac.pdf](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/pubs/dataprac.pdf).

- A funding or cost-sharing strategy that ensures the long-term sustainability of a statewide parcel data framework.
- Communication of project activities through webinars, newsletters, regional and state GIS conferences and seminars, NSGIC events and other appropriate venues.

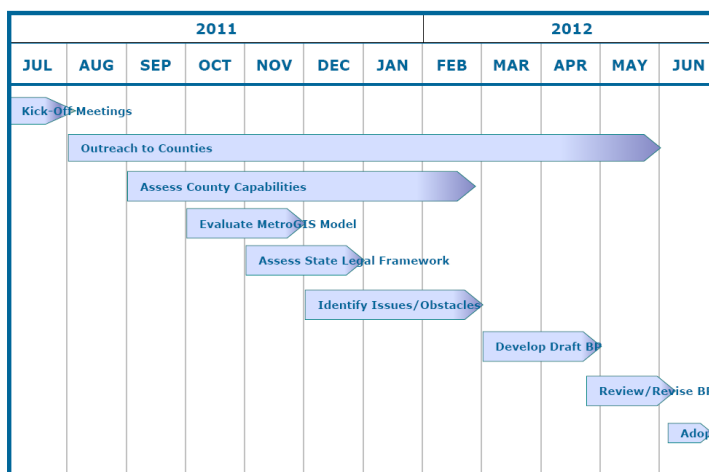
## 2. Project Plan and Management Capacity

The project plan is designed to reflect involvement of all communities with a stake in parcel data – ranging from data producers to organizations that value access to the data. The plan, if successfully designed, will adequately address concerns of stakeholders to have earned a high degree of buy-in that will facilitate its implementation. The project plan outlined herein follows a “high involvement” model that has repeatedly been key to successful collaboration projects in the past.

A. **Kick-Off Meetings.** Meetings of project team and advisors to refine scope of project and work plan. Because much of the work for this project will be performed by a contractor – to be selected using the State’s procurement process – these meetings are an important foundational element of the project.

B. **Outreach to Counties.** Outreach will take place throughout the project. Especially important will be site visits to a sample of the state’s 87 counties, selected to represent archetypes ranging from Have Data/Will Share to Have Data/Won’t Share and several variations in between. Other categories: Have Data/Will Provide for Fee, Have Data/Liability Constrained, etc. The specific categories will be established with input from advisory groups.

### Minnesota Statewide Parcel Business Plan



C. **Assess County Capabilities.** Mn/DOT and MnGeo/LMIC conducted statewide parcel mapping inventories in 2003, 2004 and 2007. The inventories not only covered the status of parcel mapping, but also policies about data access and distribution. Capabilities and attitudes about these issues have changed since 2007. This study will not fund a new inventory, but the status of county programs will be updated to provide adequate guidance for the business plan.

D. **Evaluate MetroGIS Model.** MetroGIS has designed and implemented a formal process, supported by a limited data sharing agreement, that results in quarterly compilations of parcel data from their original county sources for 7 metropolitan counties. Much of this process

may be suitable for a statewide program, but it will need adjusting based upon a review and evaluation. The project team, with advice from the Digital Cadastral Data Committee and other advisors, will conduct the evaluation.

- E. Assess State Data Practices.** The State's Data Practices Act (MS 13) includes provisions that require availability of public data, but ambiguity exists about how this applies to digital geospatial data. State law does provide for limited cost recovery for data that have "commercial value" but its application to geospatial data is not clear. MnGeo will work with the state's legal staff to assess these provisions and provide guidance to the plan. Legislative change may result.
- F. Identify Issues and Obstacles.** Based on earlier tasks and engagement with stakeholders and advisors, a working paper will be produced that clearly documents and ranks the issues and obstacles that must be addressed to fully achieve the statewide parcel data vision. This will guide the business plan.
- G. Develop Draft Business Plan.** The project team will prepare a draft business plan that identifies activities needed to fully implement a statewide parcel data program that supports the MSDI vision.
- H. Review, Revise and Adopt Business Plan.** The draft plan will be circulated among advisors and stakeholders for review. Feedback will be reported back to the community and, after another round of review with the project advisory team, the team will prepare a final business plan. It will be considered adopted when approved by the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council.

### **3. Skills and Capabilities**

The core MnGeo team responsible for this project brings a comprehensive range of relevant experience, skills and knowledge to the effort. The team will be supplemented by a contractor with extensive experience working with Minnesota county GIS programs and other stakeholders as well as other experienced collaborators and advisors.

**David Arbeit.** David is Minnesota's Chief Geospatial Information Officer and MnGeo director. From 1994 through 2009, David directed the Land Management Information Center, previously the State's GIS coordinating office. He is a past member of the URISA Board of Directors and an active member of NSGIC as Minnesota's state representative. David has a Ph.D. in planning from Cornell University and has worked both in academic and government settings for three decades, successfully managing numerous large projects involving both operational and research issues. He served as research director for planning programs at the University of Tennessee (1981-1983) and the Georgia Institute of Technology (1983-1985) and as GIS Manager for Austin, TX (1985-1992), with responsibilities that included parcel mapping for a region that included Travis County and extended into neighboring counties. He will serve as Principal Investigator. David was PI for Minnesota's 2006 Fifty States Initiative grant and several other successful CAP grants.

**Fred Logman.** Fred has an extensive background in IT and project management, strategic planning, business and process analysis as well as group facilitation and cooperative development within State and local government. Fred was a member of the Governor's Council on Geographic Information for many years, chairing it for four, and helped develop and implement the strategic plan that informed MnGeo's creation. He currently supports MnGeo's GIS coordination functions. Fred was Ramsey County's CIO from 2001 to 2006 and Executive Director of the Minnesota County Computer Consortium from 1989 to 2001. He will work as coordinator for this project.

**Chris Cialek.** Chris leads MnGeo's Data Clearinghouse and Coordination Team. He actively promotes NSDI concepts in Minnesota, established and manages the Minnesota Geospatial Data Clearinghouse, created and supported Minnesota's metadata training programs, has chaired the Governor's Council on Geographic Information Standards Committee, has been active in NSGIC, has managed several major state/federal data cooperatives, and served as PI on five successful CAP grant projects. Chris currently manages statewide data acquisitions that involve county collaborations for orthoimagery and LiDAR, relationships that will be leveraged for this project.

#### **4. Commitment to Effort**

Minnesota's commitment to this effort is strong, enduring, and extends to a broad range of partners who will actively contribute to the Minnesota Parcel Data Business Plan. Endorsement letters for partners are either attached or forthcoming.

**MnGeo.** MnGeo has been a constant and vigorous advocate for the NSDI and coordinated, authoritative, reliable, and efficient processes to create, manage, and integrate framework data, including parcels. MnGeo succeeds the Land Management Information Center, which served as Minnesota's center for GIS data development, coordination, distribution, and management for more than 30 years. In 2009, MnGeo was established as the state's geospatial information office with responsibility for coordinating and promoting collaborative geospatial technology. This project is central to MnGeo's mission: *Improving services statewide through the coordinated, affordable, reliable and effective use of GIS.*

The following represent the enduring nature of MnGeo's commitment to this effort.

- For more than a decade, LMIC and MnGeo have developed and promoted metadata standards and provided training and documentation tools.<sup>12</sup>
- MnGeo continues to monitor metadata use and promote compliance to standards.<sup>13</sup>
- MnGeo has developed and implemented web tools to document and "broker" available geospatial services developed by public and private organizations to those that can consume the services as alternatives to developing their own.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/meta.html](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/chouse/meta.html).

<sup>13</sup> See [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/standards/index.html](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/standards/index.html).

<sup>14</sup> See [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/GeoServiceFinder](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/GeoServiceFinder).



- Through the Minnesota Geographic Data Clearinghouse, MnGeo hosts and provides access to data sets that have been developed by organizations throughout the state.
- MnGeo maintains a variety of services that promote and support web mapping and data delivery, including critical framework data. Clearinghouse applications already serve *The National Map* and feed other applications based on a Service Oriented Architecture model adopted by the MN Governor's Council on Geographic Information in 2005.<sup>15</sup>
  - MnGeo hosts the state's imagery web mapping service, which delivers over 1,000,000 images each month.
  - WMS and WFS provide over 60 web mapping services that function as "shared services" for state and federal agencies, local governments, and other organizations.

Minnesota's process for developing, reviewing and adopting best practices and technology standards are guided by a governance structure managed by the State's Office of Enterprise Technology. MnGeo's director, the State's GIO, represents the geospatial community on the Enterprise Architecture Review Board, where he can advocate for best practices and standards involving business processes, applications, data and technology needed to support the recommendations derived from this project.

**MetroGIS.** As an original sponsor and long-time supporter of the MetroGIS SDI, MnGeo has advised and helped develop processes and agreements with metropolitan counties to provide parcel data and compile a unified aggregated regional parcel data set. The processes and agreements cannot be directly translated into a solution for the remaining 80 counties, which vary widely in character and capacity, but will provide a foundation for a statewide parcel data business plan.

**Department of Transportation.** MnDOT manages rights-of-way throughout the state. MnDOT has developed an internet based data access system, now implemented through specific agreements with several counties, though access is limited to MnDOT. The MnDOT experience and relationships with county staff will contribute to the success of this project.

**Department of Natural Resources.** The DNR is among the largest land holders in the Nation and has made a substantial investment in developing an inventory system for property it owns. The DNR has negotiated agreements and made informal arrangements with a number of counties that provides it with access to local parcel data, but without rights to redistribute the data. The DNR experience and relationships with county staff will contribute to the success of this project.

**Digital Cadastral Data Committee.** The Digital Cadastral Data Committee (formerly the Land Records Modernization Committee) works to promote research, education, implementation, and distribution of statewide guidelines surrounding the digital mapping of cadastral-related data and to promote and facilitate the development and sharing of data throughout the state, region, and nation.<sup>16</sup> DCDC members represent counties throughout the

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://server.admin.state.mn.us/resource.html?Id=17091>.

<sup>16</sup> For more details about the DCDC, see [www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/cadastral/](http://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/cadastral/).



state, state agencies, business and non-profit organizations. The DCDC will advise MnGeo and serve as liaison to stakeholders within its member communities.

**Clay County.** Clay County, comprising the Minnesota portion of the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area and including both urban and rural areas, will participate as a project collaborator and advisor. Mark Sloan, county GIS Coordinator, has implemented a policy of open access to parcel data and is a well-respected advocate for data sharing among western Minnesota counties.

**Pro-West & Associates.** PWA has provided GIS consulting and data management services since 1987 and is among the Upper Midwest's longest-established private firms devoted to helping public and private entities benefit from GIS. PWA has created the data sharing application used by Mn/DOT for cadastral and right-of-way data sharing with local governments and has developed parcel mapping data and applications for several Minnesota counties. The experience and relationships established by Annette Theroux, PWA's President, will be an exceptional asset that she brings to the project as project advisor.

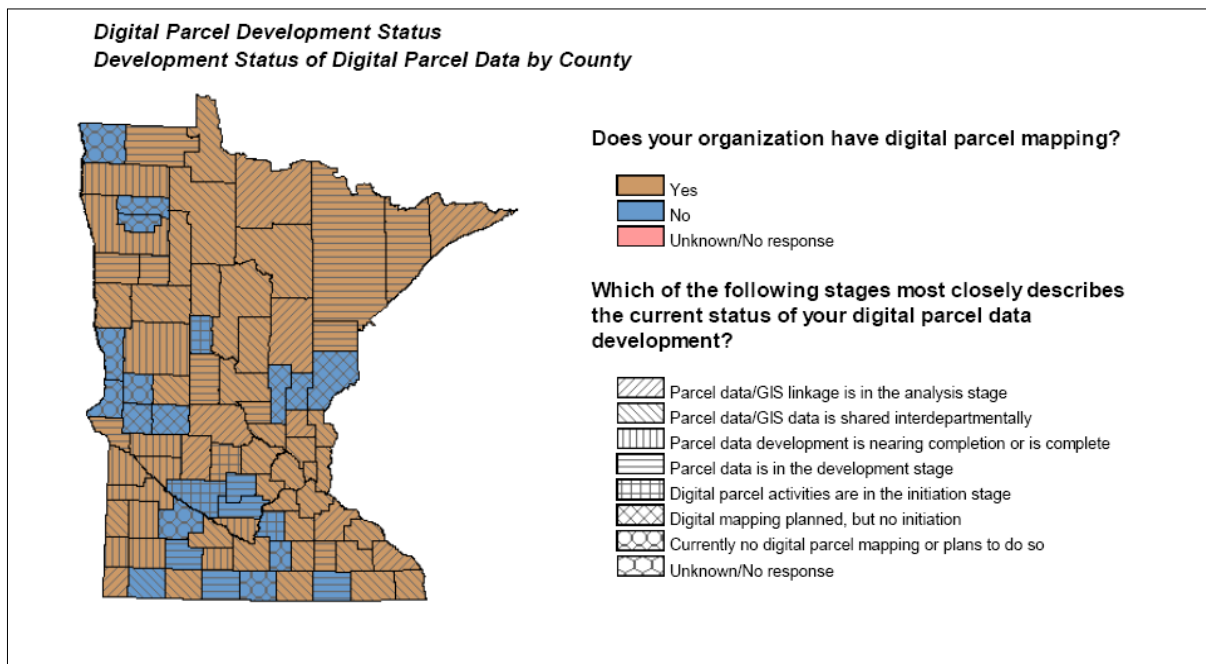
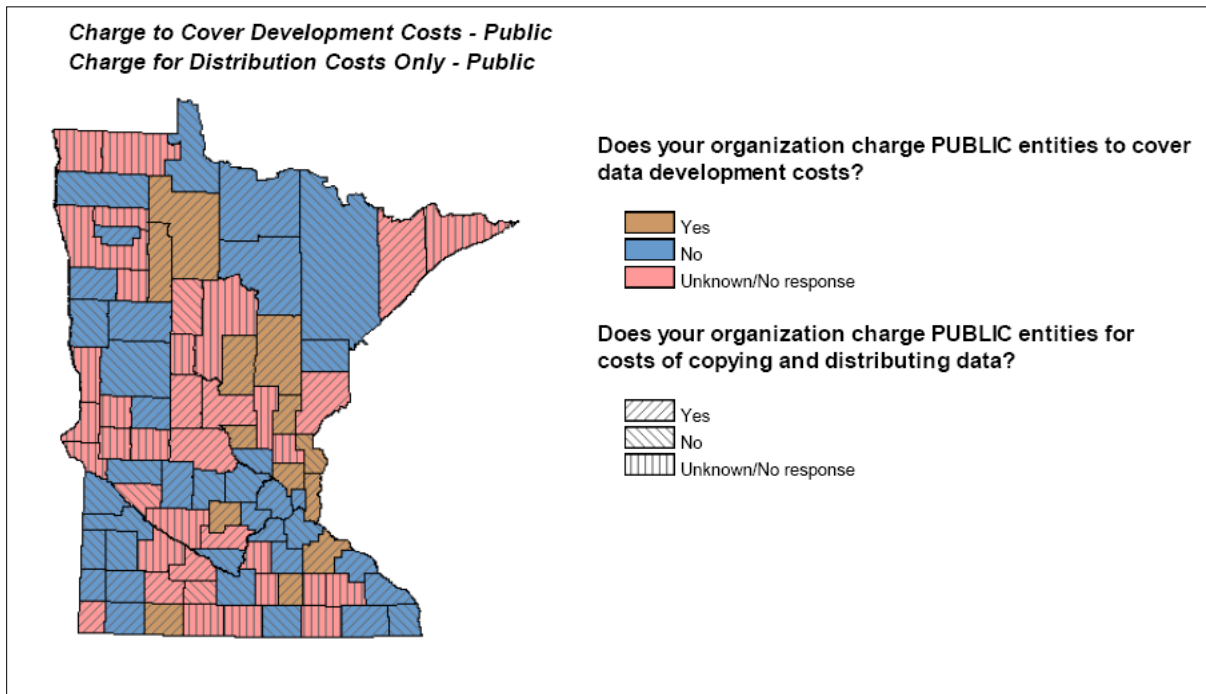
In addition, the project team will report regularly to and receive advice from the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council and State Government Geospatial Advisory Council. The USGS State Geospatial Liaison is a member of the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council.

## **5. Budget**

The total grant request is \$40,000. This will be supplemented by almost \$30,000 of matching non-federal contributions, representing close to 75% of the grant amount. MnGeo is not requesting funding for Indirect Costs. The request represents less than 4% of MnGeo's annual appropriation and about 2% of its total budget.

## **ATTACHMENT A: MINNESOTA'S COUNTY MAPPING PROGRAMS - 2007**

Minnesota periodically inventories the State's 87 counties about the status of their parcel mapping programs. Capacities vary greatly around the state, with significant differences between "Have" and "Have Not" counties. Data distribution and cost recovery policies also vary greatly. These maps illustrate results from the 2007 survey. Progress has been made since, but local policies regarding costs and redistribution rights still present major obstacles to availability.





## United States Department of the Interior

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
2280 Woodale Dr.  
Mounds View, MN 55112  
763-783-3100

January 3, 2011

Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I support the application for the 2011 National Spatial Data Infrastructure Cooperative Agreement Program (Program Announcement # 11HQPA0011) being submitted on behalf of the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo). The proposal deals with Business Plan Development in Minnesota and supports NSDI goals and principles.

Their proposal, "A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota," supports an important component of the Minnesota Spatial Data Infrastructure – public availability of statewide parcel data based on the best available local sources. Parcel data continues to be a primary framework data layer for local units of government, in addition to State and Federal agencies.

MnGeo has proven leadership in their role as a spatial data clearinghouse for the state and has a long history of coordination in the geospatial community. The MnGeo office has a strong background in the development of statewide data sets, geospatial services and data standards. This project builds on numerous previous and current activities that support NSDI efforts and holds great potential to advance partnerships and collaboration for a variety of users.

As the USGS Geospatial Liaison for Minnesota, I support the efforts of MnGeo for the proposal submitted. If I can provide any additional information regarding issues directly applicable to this proposal or related activities, please contact me at 763-783-3207 or [rwenc1@usgs.gov](mailto:rwenc1@usgs.gov).

Sincerely,

Ronald A. Wenc1  
USGS Geospatial Liaison  
2280 Woodale Drive  
Mounds View, MN 55112



# Victoria A. Reinhardt

BOARD OF RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT 7

DARREN E. TOBOLT  
ASSISTANT TO COMMISSIONER  
Darren.Tobolt@Co.Ramsey.MN.Us

January 4, 2011

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Victoria.Reinhardt@Co.Ramsey.MN.Us

Mr. Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I am writing to you as chair of Minnesota's Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council. At our meeting on December 29, 2010, the Council reviewed and enthusiastically endorsed by formal motion the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office's (MnGeo) application for a 2011 National Spatial Data Infrastructure Cooperative Agreements Program (CAP) grant. The proposal is to develop a business plan to guide the implementation strategy for managing and providing access to accurate and current parcel data for the entire state, based upon maintained and authoritative local sources. Having a detailed plan will help establish the parcel layer for Minnesota and The National Map.

Developing a statewide parcel layer has proven to be a difficult task for Minnesota, even though we have been working on this issue for many years. Parcel data needs to come from Minnesota's 87 counties, which are the authoritative source. As in most states, counties have greatly varying levels of technical ability and capacity and many different policies regarding the sharing, distribution, and use of their data. Some counties charge for available data while others provide it free on-line. The proposed project will investigate and document the existing environment and develop strategies to address the varied circumstances, so that a statewide parcel layer can become publicly available and be maintained.

I am also currently the Chair for the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, and past Chair of the MetroGIS Policy Board. In addition to the Advisory Council, I personally endorse this grant application and support the project.

Thank you for considering this nomination. Please contact me if you have any questions about our support for this important proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria A. Reinhardt".

Victoria A. Reinhardt, Chair  
Minnesota Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

**Minnesota's First Home Rule County**

printed on recycled paper with a minimum of 10% post consumer content



Mr. Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

January 4, 2011

Dear Mr. Robinson:

As co-chairs of The Minnesota Digital Cadastral Data Committee (DCDC) we wholly endorse the grant being sought by MnGeo to develop "*A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota*" (Category 4, Announcement Number 11HQPA0011)

The DCDC is a group of GIS professionals from across the state of Minnesota, interested in promoting the development, use and sharing of digital parcel data. Committee membership is comprised of a broad cross-section of data producers and consumers, government, academia, private and non-profit interests from across the state and includes a healthy balance of urban and rural interests. The bulk of our members represent county interests that are eager to forge a common and consistent approach to statewide parcel data sharing and distribution that will meet their business needs. This group has been working together for some time toward this common goal. The mission of the committee is:

*to promote research, education, implementation, and distribution of statewide guidelines surrounding the digital mapping of cadastral-related data and we work to promote and facilitate the development and sharing of data throughout the state, region, and nation.*

Most recently, the committee has been working towards the development and adoption of a statewide digital parcel data transfer standard modeled on a current successful regional standard that has been in place for nearly a decade. We believe that this developing standard would serve as a critical component to a statewide business plan for parcel data.

To this end we offer our full support and endorsement of the grant proposal, and the committee is poised to serve as advisors and facilitators in this effort.

Sincerely,

MnGeo Digital Cadastral Data Committee Co-chairs -

Sally Wakefield,



Executive Director  
1000 Friends of Minnesota

Curtis Carlson,



GIS Coordinator  
Northstar MLS

# ***MetroGIS***

*Cooperation, Coordination, Sharing Geographic Data*

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January 4, 2011

Mr. Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192  
Dear Mr. Robinson,

I am writing in support of the CAP grant request from the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) to develop a business plan for facilitating public availability of parcel data for the State of Minnesota.

As Chairperson of the MetroGIS Policy Board, I am excited about MnGeo's grant application. In particular, I am excited about MnGeo's intent to leverage the regional parcel data solution that MetroGIS implemented over a decade ago for the seven-county Minneapolis - St. Paul metropolitan area. A statewide parcel data solution that is interoperable with Twin Cities metropolitan area solution has been a goal of MetroGIS for some time, as business information needs of numerous MetroGIS stakeholders, which involve access to parcel data, do not stop at the boundaries of the seven-county region.

Finally, I believe that it is important to note that MetroGIS modeled its parcel data and other regional data solutions to shared information needs after NSDI principles. The technical and organizational components of MetroGIS's parcel data solution are documented in a [regional policy statement](#). This policy statement not only sets forth agreed upon standards for normalizing parcel data across our seven-county region (parcel geography and 66 attributes commonly used by numerous government and other interests that serve the region) it is in line with the seven NSDI Framework Functions. The policy statement also documents organizational roles and responsibilities necessary to sustain the solution, as well as documents the organizations that have agreed to perform these critical custodial responsibilities.

It is my intent to seek formal endorsement of this grant proposal from the full MetroGIS Policy Board at the Board's next meeting on January 19, 2011. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either me ([terryschn@gwest.net](mailto:terryschn@gwest.net) / 612-720-7667) or Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator ([randy.johnson@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:randy.johnson@metc.state.mn.us) / 651-602-1638).

Sincerely,

Terry Schneider  
Chair, MetroGIS Policy Board

Cc: David Arbeit, MGIO, MnGeo  
Randall Johnson, MetroGIS Staff Coordinator



# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Twin Cities Campus

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January 3, 2011

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590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Milo:

I am writing in support of MnGeo's CAP proposal, Category 4. Their goal is to develop *A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota*. I have two basic points: this is a very important issue and MnGeo is well positioned to both develop the business plan and, ultimately, implement it.

Parcels are essential to the NSDI. The Cadastre is one of the seven Framework Themes; the only reason it has been limited to public lands was the lack of free and complete access to local government parcel data. My 1980 doctoral dissertation, *Monitoring Minnesota's Land Using Public Records*, used parcel data to track land use change, found that data more effective than air photo interpretation, and provided the bonus of pinpointing local investments. Such work was being endorsed by the National Research Council (NRC) which was producing its *Need for a Multipurpose Cadastre* the same year. I served on the 2007 NRC committee that produced *National Land Parcel Data*; a report that showed the value of parcel data to all levels of government and presented a vision of how to get there. That report has been endorsed by NGAC. States appear to be in a better position than the federal government for advancing the parcel dataset component of the Cadastre Framework Theme. NSGIC is very interested in *Parcels for the Nation* and acknowledges the role that states need to play.

Minnesota is in a unique situation to move forward on parcels. MetroGIS has addressed many of the issues of access to commercialized parcel data within our seven most populous counties by restricting free access under license to other governmental bodies plus academia; there remains the problem of broader public access. The MnGeo proposal talks about the work of our state departments of Transportation (DOT) and Natural Resources (DNR) in gaining limited access to county parcel data. The DOT project is especially intriguing because it harvests the county data in its native format and delivers it in standard format to DOT regardless of which county(s) are being queried; this project was a hit at the 2010 NSGIC Conference in Minneapolis. The technical work was accomplished by ProWest and Associates, the firm doing the work on this CAP proposal. I can endorse Annette Theroux and her company because I worked with her on a Statewide Parcel Map study that won the Partnership Award from the University's Center for Transportation Studies in 2004.

MnGeo has identified critical elements of a business plan for moving Minnesota forward on this important dataset. I fully endorse their proposal. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,



William J. Craig  
Associate Director and  
Immediate Past President of NSGIC

# Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road • St. Paul, MN • 55155-40



Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

January 11, 2011

Dear Mr. Robinson:

As GIS Manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) and an advocate for all citizens of the state, I heartily support the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office's (MnGEO) application for the 2011 national Spatial Data Infrastructure Cooperative Agreement Program (Program Announcement (#11HQPA0011)). Their proposal, "*A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota*" addresses the needs of an essential component of the Minnesota Spatial Data Infrastructure – spatial data representing the framework and identity of ownership across the state.

Staff at the MNDNR manages the natural, cultural and recreational resources on nearly three million acres of public land on behalf of the citizens of Minnesota. These same staff work collectively with private landowners across the state on wise use and best management practices for a variety of purposes. Having ready access to reliably accurate and up-to-date information about land ownership saves time and money.

As an advocate for the staff at the MNDNR I support this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Loesch', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Tim Loesch  
GIS Unit Supervisor  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
651-259-5475  
Tim.loesch@state.mn.us





**Minnesota Department of Transportation**

Office of Land Management – Mail Stop 630  
395 John Ireland Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Office Tel: 651-366-3504

Fax: 651-366-3450

Email: [richard.morey@state.mn.us](mailto:richard.morey@state.mn.us)

Date: 4 January 2011

Mr. Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Center  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA, 20192

RE: Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) CAP Grant Proposal

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I support MnGeo's CAP Grant proposal for "A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Integration for Minnesota."

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Office of Land Management, in partnership with Mn/DOT's Office of Transportation Data Analysis and Office of State Aid, has been working on developing a means to share cadastral data with local government. MnGeo's proposal meshes very well with the long-range goal of creating both the business case and a protocol for data sharing between state agencies and local government. This will eliminate the need for duplicative efforts that can result in contradictory data as well as needlessly use resources that can be directed to meeting other critical needs. The net result is more efficient, more effective, and more transparent government.

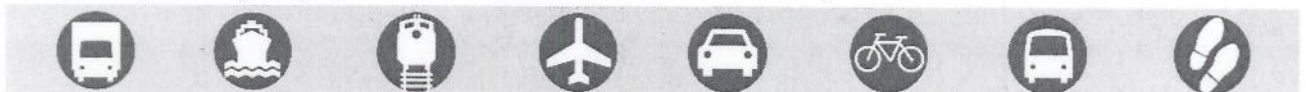
I look forward to sharing the results of Mn/DOT's experience with MnGeo as they move forward on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RM', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard Morey, LS  
Assistant Director, Surveying and Mapping  
Office of Land Management

An Equal Opportunity Employer





January 4, 2011

Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Center  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Sir:

This is a letter of support for the project entitled: "A Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota."

As the GIS Coordinator at Clay County, I have been working hard for many years to advocate for the free exchange of data between organizations. In our area, we have an agreement in place to exchange data with our neighboring county in an adjacent state. We have found this data exchange to be beneficial to all parties involved, especially for use with emergency response activities. This experience has motivated us to actively promote additional data exchange opportunities.

With 87 County governments being the creators of parcel data in our state, it becomes very challenging for exchange of data to take place. Many barriers exist, and there is a real need for coordination, specifications, and model agreements to make data exchange possible. MnGeo's project should be the catalyst needed to initiate viable data exchange between organizations.

The proposed project would be greatly beneficial to all government organizations across our state. While it is primarily county government that creates the parcel data; city, state, and federal organizations would greatly benefit.

Please consider funding the project "A business plan of statewide parcel data integration for Minnesota." This project will benefit all geospatial consumers that do business in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Mark Sloan, GISP  
Clay County, MN



# Pro-West & Associates, Inc.

PO Box 812 - Walker, MN 56484 - 8239 State 371 NW

Phone: (218 )547-3374 - Fax: (218) 547-3375 - [www.prowestgis.com](http://www.prowestgis.com)

January 3, 2011

Mr. Milo Robinson  
Federal Geographic Data Committee  
590 National Center  
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Mr. Robinson,

I am writing in support of the CAP grant request from the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) to develop a business plan for facilitating public availability of parcel data for the State of Minnesota.

My company, Pro-West & Associates, Inc., has worked with local government in Minnesota for over two decades to develop digital parcel data, link tax parcel databases and imaged documents, and create internal and public facing interfaces for data accessibility. We understand the technical and institutional issues involved with land records systems, and the complexity of maintaining and managing those systems.

As past chair for the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium and past co-chair for the Data Committee of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information, I have had the opportunity to develop relationships with professionals from both state and local government throughout Minnesota, and work with organizations to share data that meets the business needs of multiple levels of government. It is my belief that the *MSDI Parcel Data Business Plan* proposed in MnGeo's CAP grant request would leverage the relationships that currently exist and facilitate parcel data availability for the entire state.

I support MnGeo in developing a plan to bridge the practices and policies that affect parcel data important to the Minnesota Spatial Data Infrastructure. I am committed to participating in plan development as an advisor for county parcel data programs and as an advocate for data sharing.

Sincerely,

Annette Theroux  
President & CEO

Information  
and  
Technology  
Integration  
Specialists

GIS  
Consulting

Data  
Integration

Internet  
Mapping

Application  
Design

Training  
and Support

Aerial  
Photography