

**MIDDLESEX GEOGRAPHY NETWORK
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**October 4, 2006 Minutes
Councilor's Lounge, Middlesex County Building 9:00 A.M.**

ATTENDANCE

Present

Ron Reymer, Lucan Biddulph

Jason Gilliland, UWO

Mike Barnier, Middlesex Centre

Jim McConnell, Middlesex Centre

Janneke Newitt, Southwest Middlesex

Paul Hicks, Strathroy Caradoc

Chris Durand, SCRCA

Jay Brown, County of Middlesex

Durk Vanderwerff, County of Middlesex

Sara Rayat, County of Middlesex

Laura Marles, County of Middlesex

Regrets

Martin Healy, Fanshawe College

Mark Harris, Strathroy Caradoc

Dave Armstrong, Thames Centre

Dave Goddard, County of Middlesex

HISTORY OF THE MIDDLESEX GEOGRAPHY NETWORK (MGN)

S. Rayat provided a brief history of the Middlesex Geography Network project. The Middlesex Geography Network was established in 2005 to provide an opportunity for existing and future GIS users in Middlesex County to move forward with GIS in a coordinated and integrated manner.

The MGN has elevated the level of GIS available to each user, as compared to what could be obtained individually by building upon the partner's existing GIS data, integrating existing layers and creating new layers.

It has aided in the creation of partnerships among GIS users in Middlesex County that help to establish common data standards and has created a common GIS infrastructure to facilitate the sharing of geographic information among the partners.

Implementation of the Middlesex Geography Network was made possible by funding from both the Bell Canada Community Development Fund, and the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources Geosmart fund.

The Bell Canada Community Development Fund is aimed at supporting economic programs in Ontario communities. The County received funding through this program to enhance the economic development components of the County web page.

The Province of Ontario Geosmart funding program's goal was to invest in projects that use GIS to support local economic development, improve local government efficiency and increase access to land information over the internet.

In addition to this funding, each partner in the Middlesex Geography Network provided either cash or in-kind contributions.

In the initial MGN implementation, the County was able to purchase a variety of software and hardware, as well as purchase and develop a number of new data layers:

Software

- ArcView GIS License
- AutoCAD Map Upgrade
- 1 MAPublisher License
- 2 Adobe Illustrator Upgrades
- 1 Visual Basic License
- Pathfinder Office v3.0 (GPS)
- Terrasync (GPS)

Hardware

- 1 Plotter
- 2 GIS Workstations
- 2 Trimble GeoXT handheld GPS units (with external antennas)

Data

- Aerial photography Mosaic
- Address Points, Churches, Schools, Arenas, Libraries and other community information layers.

The County provides for maintenance of the MGN in the following areas:

- Annual fee to Teranet for Parcel Fabric data
- Annual maintenance to the City of London for the public and internal Mapping applications.
- GPS Support (setting up units for data collection, GPS training to partners using the units, processing of data once collection has been completed).
- Quarterly compilation of the municipal assessment data used on the public and internal mapping applications.

- Maintenance of all data layers currently provided on the public and internal mapping applications.
- Provision of training and technical support to users of the public and internal applications.
- Maintenance of the Address and Single Line Road Network (SLRN) layers for the public and internal applications, as well as for Emergency Services Dispatch.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE MGN APPLICATIONS

S. Rayat provided a demonstration of the 3 MGN applications that were launched last year:

- Public Interactive Mapping System (MiddlesexMap),
- Public Economic Development Application
- Internal Planning Review Application

PURPOSE OF THE TAC

S. Rayat provided an outline of the purpose of the Technical Advisory Committee.

The purpose of the MGN Technical Advisory Committee is to:

- Provide input into the design and functionality of MGN applications.
- To supply technical support in the creation of MGN systems and data.
- To provide feedback on the utilization of MGN applications from various stakeholders and end-user groups.
- To promote the utilization of the MGN amongst municipal partners and private stakeholders.
- To make recommendations on the long term maintenance of MGN systems, applications and data.
- To review and approve project implementation reports.

FUTURE OF THE MGN

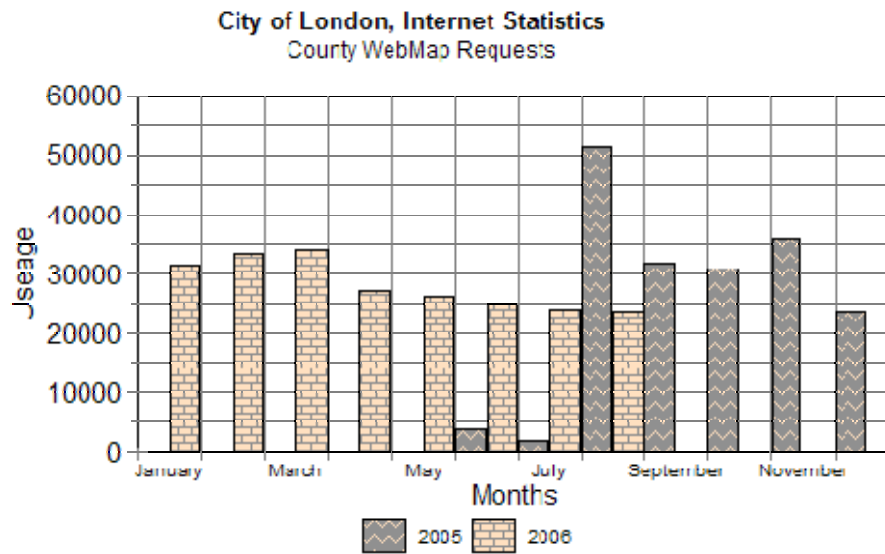
L. Marles provided a review of the existing applications with the purpose of determining where improvements might need to be made, as well as discussed possibilities for future data and application development.

Public MiddlesexMap Application

Over the last year about 24 emails have been received from the public regarding the public MiddlesexMap application. Five of these emails were simply to compliment the system and express appreciation for making the mapping available online. There were 8 emails to request some assistance in using the

application. Ten emails were received that contained general mapping questions, (i.e. the date that the aerial photography was taken, where to find other mapping information such as hydrants or zoning, etc.)

Usage of MiddlesexMap has gone down over the past few months, as can be seen from the chart provided below. The City of London, who hosts the MGN applications, has also reported a decline in usage of their CityMap application. They have speculated that the decline in usage might have to do with bandwidth issues that have caused the system to run a bit slower than normal. They are in the process of fixing the problem.



Internal Planning Review Application

There are currently 37 users of the internal application. These users were each sent a feedback questionnaire regarding the application, of which 15 completed questionnaires were returned. The results of the questionnaire are as follows:

Q1: How often do you use the Middlesex Geography Network?

- Daily – 8 People
- 2 to 4 Times Per Week – 2 People
- Once a Week – 3 People
- Once a Month – 2 People
- Never – 0 People

Q2: What is your comfort level in using the application?

- High – 9 People
- Medium – 6 People
- Low – 0 People

Q3: What do you use the Middlesex Geography Network for?

- Address and Location Searches – 15 People
- Parcel Identify – 12 People
- Location Map Generation – 11 People
- Notification Area Map Generation – 8 People
- Mailing Labels Generation – 8 People
- Other Uses – 6 People
 - Viewing aerial photography, wetlands, vegetation cover and other information relevant to the review of development applications
 - Viewing aerial photography against assessment parcels
 - Report generation
 - Information requests
 - MDS spatial analysis

Q4: What data layers would you like to see added to the public or internal applications?

- Zoning – 6 Public, 10 Internal
- Official Plan – 6 Public, 10 Internal
- Infrastructure – 12 Internal
- Roadwork – 11 Internal, 1 Public
- Soil Classification – 3 Public, 6 Internal
- Floodplains – 2 Public, 7 Internal
- Archaeological Potential – 1 Public, 4 Internal
- Historical Data – 1 Public, 3 Internal
- Other
 - Updated aerial photography, parcel size descriptions and utilities were suggested.

Discussion

The committee was in agreement that a Construction or Road Work layer on the public application would not be feasible at the local level, but that a County Road Roadwork layer might be helpful.

C. Durand noted that they have Soil Classification data available for the St. Clair watershed. He also noted that their new floodplain and erosion control mapping is still being developed. The preferred method for the Conservation Authority to make these data layers available to the MGN would be either through Web Mapping Services that could link directly to the Conservation Authority's data or through their own online mapping system. The SCRCA has partnered with 5 other conservation authorities to develop an online mapping system that will feature different levels of access to information. It is expected to be launched in November; however, it will not cover all of Middlesex County.

J. Gilliland had a number of suggestions for additions to the public version of MiddlesexMap. These included:

- A historical or “country tour” layer
 - J. Brown informed the Committee of the Heritage Trail Sign project. This is a network of interpretive signs located at historic sites throughout the County. Once all of the signs have been put in to place, their locations will be added as a layer to MiddlesexMap.
 - A “Country Tour” layer might also be an opportunity for residents to submit photographs of various places of interest throughout the County. These photographs could then be viewed by clicking on location points directly from the map.
- Accessible Places layer
 - A layer that shows the location of businesses and places within the County that are accessible to residents or visitors with disabilities.
- Alternative website for visually impaired
 - A separate site that might include highlights from the main website, using larger icons and bolder text for the visually impaired.

J. McConnell suggested adding a municipal drainage layer to the public version of MiddlesexMap. This information should mostly be already available in digital form (AutoCAD). C. Durand added that the conservation authority also has a drainage layer that includes some tile drainage. The watershed layer should be added to the public map to be viewed along with any drainage data.

D. Vanderwerff asked C. Durand about the possibility of creating a general polygon layer that shows all Conservation Authority regulated areas. C. Durand would need to check back at his office to determine if such a layer would be feasible.

Future Applications

There is an Internal Addressing Application currently under development. This application is intended for municipal staff to check, verify and assign municipal addresses in an automated way. It will help to ensure consistent and accurate emergency addressing data across the entire County. This data can then be relayed to Emergency Response agencies as it is compiled. The Addressing application is expected to be complete by January and training will be set up for users at that time.

Discussion

There were no further comments from the committee regarding possible new applications to be developed.

Future Data Layers

This year the County participated in the Southwestern Ontario Ortho-photography (SWOOP) project. This is a partnership among a number of organizations across Southwestern Ontario to obtain updated ortho-photography. The images were captured this passed Spring and the final product should be delivered by the end of the year. Because of the number of partners involved in sharing the cost of this project, the cost to the County worked out to only \$9000.

There are now two GPS units available to be loaned by municipalities for any sort of data collection project. The County used the units over the summer to collect information in the County managed woodlots such as trails, heritage trees and sign inventories. Strathroy Caradoc has also expressed interest in using the units to carry out service mapping in their parks.

Discussion

M. Barnier informed the Committee that Middlesex Centre is currently working on a pilot project in Ilderton to collect infrastructure mapping. IBI has been contracted to carry out the work. He expects the pilot to be completed this year and has offered to demonstrate its findings at the next Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

D. Vanderwerff mentioned that the City of London has an application for viewing infrastructure drawings in which a general polygon layer is linked to scanned drawings for viewing.

J. Newitt suggested that municipal drain data would be a priority for Southwest Middlesex.

P. Hicks had a few suggestions for additions to the Internal Applications:

- Add more information to the parcel information, i.e. area of the parcel
- Aerial photography in colour
- Add a snapping function so that when using the measure tool the user can snap to the parcel for a more accurate measurement.

M. Barnier noted that zoning data would need to be standardized across the County. He also mentioned that Middlesex Centre is working towards having their zoning layer in GIS format for November.

Outreach

There has been some discussion about the possibility of doing some outreach regarding the MGN. This would involve going out to meetings of various stakeholder organizations and providing demos of the applications and perhaps

getting some feedback as to what could be added to the MGN to assist these groups in their every day jobs. Attending meetings for a CBO Association as well as the Fire Chiefs Association had been suggested. The committee was asked for further suggestions.

Discussion

J. McConnell informed that there is a CBO organization called the Ontario Building Official's Association (OBOA). All CBO's for Middlesex County are members, as well as some from Perth and Huron Counties.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee will be held in February, 2007.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.