

June 30, 2022

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council
c/o Alison Slaats, Chief GIO
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office
658 Cedar St., Room 300
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members:

It is my great honor to nominate the Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications, also known as the Minnesota “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps, for a 2022 Governor’s Geospatial Commendation. These tools have proven critical to Minnesota’s overall response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The maps have been viewed 39,615,358 times from Dec. 29, 2020 – May 31, 2022 by Minnesotan’s seeking COVID-19 vaccines and testing in the state.

The Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications allow vaccine and testing providers to easily add, modify, and remove their own vaccination and testing locations from the maps using a simple form. For the public user the tools transparently assist with finding conveniently located sites that meet their specific needs. The applications include filters for location, dates of site operation, vaccine and testing types, availability of access accommodations, and availability of appointments. These tools also made it easy for COVID-19 response staff at MDH to process and quality-check changes to sites submitted by providers.

These applications allowed MDH to promote testing and vaccination sites that were low or no barrier sites to ensure that everyone had access to these life-saving resources. The tools also allowed our testing and vaccination provider partners and our response operations staff to highlight their sites as having specific accessibility accommodations to members of vulnerable communities. The accommodation options included ASL service, accessible parking, language interpreting service, privacy accommodations, and transportation support.

The Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications were a key resource during the entire MN pandemic response. It was clear that this was a foundational tool for the whole State response as it was developed, improved, and maintained by several cross-functional teams including The Metropolitan Council, MDH, MMB, MNIT Enterprise Web Team, MNIT MnGeo, Met Council IS Department, MNIT MDH, and the COVID response communications teams. The success of this project has been a prime example of how teams from across the State of MN enterprise come together in a short timeframe to meet a critical need.

Recently, MDH has started a new project with MnGeo and MNIT MDH to further enhance these tools and expand the scope to include more routine vaccines. This further indicates the power and importance of these applications for public health education and outreach.

This nomination also includes additional letters of nomination and support from the following individuals and organizations:

1. Merone Melekin, Deputy Director, COVID-19 Response, MDH
2. Christopher D. Elvrum, Assistant Division Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response, MDH
3. Mike Umbleby, RPh, Vice President of Business Optimization and Integration, Walgreens
4. Terri Dressen, Director, Communications, Regional Administration, Metropolitan Council
5. Mike Dolbow, GIS Coordinator, Web Team, Minnesota IT Services partnering with Minnesota Department of Education

Thank you for considering my nomination for the Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications, also known as the Minnesota “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps, for a 2022 Governor’s Geospatial Commendation.

Sincerely,

Chris Brueske
Chief Data Strategist
Office of Data Strategy and Interoperability
Minnesota Department of Health
651.274.9244
chris.brueske@state.mn.us
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Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications

1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

We nominate the “Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications” project for a Governor’s Geospatial Commendation. These two websites, created rapidly by cross-agency teams during the height of the pandemic crisis, provided life-saving information about testing and vaccination locations to the general public. These projects exemplify two of the award goals: Sharing of geospatial data, expertise and technology; and exemplary use of geospatial technology that effects positive change and/or improves the quality of life in Minnesota. The main project work was done between April 2020 and February 2021, with on-going maintenance.

The sites:

- [Find Testing Locations](#)
- [Find Vaccine Locations](#)

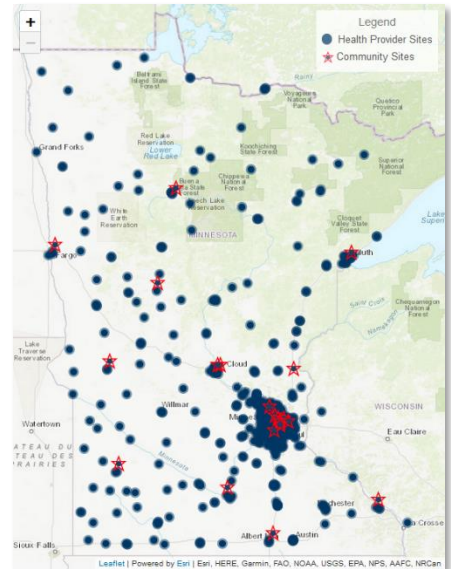


Figure 1: Testing location web map

2 BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was critical that Minnesota state government provide general information about the pandemic and about the developing action plan to the public. Communication of information needed to be centralized and easily accessible. A website was one way to disseminate this life-saving information to a large audience.

Once COVID-19 tests became available, an interactive web application was needed so that the public could find accurate information regarding COVID-19 testing providers, locations, and test types. Website features needed to be familiar to most internet users.

Although it was still early in the pandemic, other states had already launched COVID-19 testing location and information websites which could serve as a model. The Minnesota Governor’s Office requested the development of a web application that emulated one provided by the New Mexico Department of Health.

A key feature was a simple, interactive map to ensure the public could see where they were located in proximity to testing sites to help plan their trip to the testing location. Also, to ensure that all Minnesotans could use the website, it was critical that the website meet accessibility standards and be mobile friendly.

3 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STAGES

The Find Testing Locations web mapping application was developed in two iterations (April 2020 and December 2020); the Find Vaccine Locations application was launched in February 2021.

3.1. FIRST TESTING LOCATIONS WEBSITE

In April 2020, to address the urgent need for COVID-19 testing, the MN COVID-19 Response team reached out to Metropolitan Council GIS staff to develop, host, and maintain the testing location map and facility information provided by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

The initial site was created and launched quickly by Met Council, in conjunction with Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) web application developers and was focused on accessibility. Because of the urgent timeline, the initial data collection and update effort involved Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) staff contacting testing providers and populating an Excel spreadsheet.

The spreadsheet testing location information was used to populate the interactive map and testing site info card for the public to search. Over the next six months, the number of testing sites grew exponentially, the requirements for information about those sites expanded, and it became increasingly clear that this web mapping application was going to be a long-term need for Minnesota's COVID-19 response.

3.2. SECOND TESTING LOCATIONS WEBSITE

In late fall 2020, the Metropolitan Council recommended it was in the State's best interest to move the data and application to the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo). With help from the COVID-19 Response team, a project was initiated with MnGeo for hosting and continued maintenance and enhancement of the site with the goal of hand-off in December 2020.

With the help of Met Council, requirements were gathered to make the move. Several major enhancements were also planned. One enhancement was to automate the flow of provider data to the map. That included developing an interactive form for the providers to use as well as mechanisms to vet the contents of the forms before the information was allowed to go into the production database. Information on testing sites organized by the State Emergency Operations Center collected using an internal tool also needed to be integrated into the webpage. A second enhancement was to add new filters that would allow users to pare down results by options such as geographic area, type of test, and hours of operation; these filters would provide a better, easier user experience.

The pressure was high since there were only 30 days to complete the project. Since the project involved several technologies as well as communication to the public, staff with varied expertise participated. The cross-agency team came together and gave their highest effort to successfully meet the deadline.

3.3. VACCINE FINDER WEBSITE

As the new testing finder website was being built, the team was aware that vaccines would soon become available and would require a separate but similar web map application. With this in mind, they designed the testing locations solution so that it could be quickly repurposed to create a vaccine site. As anticipated, the next

urgent request after the testing site was completed was the “Find My Vaccine” site. The team was able to create the vaccine website in a matter of days using the same code base with few modifications.

The second testing site was delivered on time on December 29, 2020. Just over a month later, on February 1, 2021, the vaccine finder site launched. Both sites remain operational and are actively maintained. The most recent changes went live June 22, 2022, when vaccines became available for children ages 6 months to 5 years.

4 PROJECT IMPACT

This project clearly demonstrates support of two Geospatial Advisory Council goals:

4.1. SHARING OF GEOSPATIAL DATA, EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY

Staff from MNIT, the Governor’s Office, the Metropolitan Council, DHS, and MDH came together early in the COVID-19 pandemic to develop an application that met the needs of Minnesotans for life-saving information in a period of crisis. A tremendous amount of trust was quickly developed between the cross-agency team, because each member brought their specific, expert skills to the project, such as graphic design, web programming, data development and management, and industry outreach to develop a working solution in a very short time. It is noteworthy that this cooperation involved multiple state agencies that do not typically work together, especially on geospatial projects.

After the initial testing site was developed, realizing the need for citizen COVID testing information would continue for the foreseeable future, staff at MnGeo and the Metropolitan Council worked together to identify a more sustainable model and transfer responsibility of the application to an agency better equipped to support and enhance the site over the long term.

4.2. EXEMPLARY USE OF GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY THAT EFFECTS POSITIVE CHANGE AND/OR IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN MINNESOTA

In a global pandemic of unknown duration and severity, with every aspect of citizen lives affected, it was critical to use geospatial technology to provide the public with accurate, current and accessible information so they could find out where to get tested and vaccinated. The testing and vaccination application encompassed hundreds of private and state-sponsored sites to have the most comprehensive testing and vaccination information for Minnesota’s citizens.

All versions of the applications adhered to web accessibility standards and could be easily used on mobile phones so that the information could reach as broad a public as possible. The second testing site and the vaccine site allowed providers to directly input updated information so that the sites could efficiently compile, vet, and disseminate the most current information gathered from the source.

Another significant aspect of the project was working with non-geospatial professionals to deliver effective, integrated geospatial solutions. This can be a model for future projects when only a component of the application is geospatial rather than the entire application.

4.2.A Search Options:

The applications are designed to be as easy as possible for the public to use. Citizens can choose filtering options (Figure 2) to focus the search results on sites that will most closely meet their needs. Some filters are by location; others are by type. A date filter ensures a site will be open on the desired day.

To search by location, only a zip code or city name is needed; an optional distance buffer can rule out locations that are too far away.

Filtering by type allows people to focus on a particular patient age group, vaccine option, site type (community site or health provider site) or scheduling type (appointment or walk-in). To search by age, the user can type in either years or months; the application code then translates that into the number of years, looks up which vaccine options are available to a patient of that age (this is complicated since not all types of clinics are approved to administer vaccines to younger patients), and filters the list of vaccination sites to include only those that would serve that patient.

The *Accommodations Available* filter returns sites that offer specific accommodations options such as language interpretation, accessible parking and transportation support. This helps ensure that not only is the web application accessible to as many people as possible, but the testing or vaccine site itself will also be accessible.

The screenshot shows a grid of filter options for the vaccine finder application. The filters are organized into three columns and three rows. The first column includes 'Zip Code or City' (text input), 'Miles From Location' (dropdown menu), and 'Date' (text input). The second column includes 'Patient Age' (text input), 'Vaccine Options' (dropdown menu), and 'Site Type' (dropdown menu). The third column includes 'Accommodations Available' (list box) and 'Scheduling Type' (dropdown menu). The 'Accommodations Available' list box is expanded, showing options like 'ASL Service Support', 'Accessible parking', 'Drive-thru', and 'Indoor'. The 'Scheduling Type' dropdown menu is set to 'Any'.

Figure 2: Filter options in the vaccine finder application

The search results are presented both on the map and via text cards. On the map, the most important information about a site is summarized in a pop-up window (Figure 3), plus a “See more details below” link that jumps to the corresponding text card (Figure 4) for more information. Navigation is by simple panning and +/- zooming options that are familiar to the public.

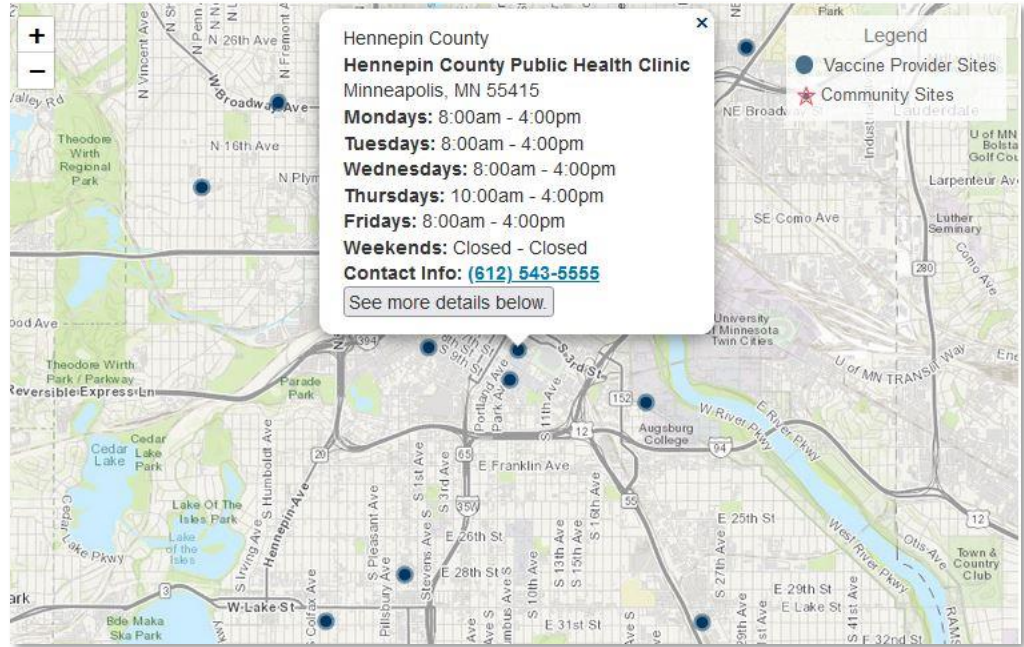


Figure 3: Pop-up window on the vaccine finder map

Hennepin County
Hennepin County Public Health Clinic

[Directions](#)

Minneapolis, MN 55415
[\(612\) 543-5555](tel:6125435555)

Distance: 7.97 miles

Hours of Operation

- **Mondays:** 8:00am – 4:00pm
- **Tuesdays:** 8:00am – 4:00pm
- **Wednesdays:** 8:00am – 4:00pm
- **Thursdays:** 10:00am – 4:00pm
- **Fridays:** 8:00am – 4:00pm
- **Weekends:** Closed
- Please update hours so ending at 4 p.m. M-F

Vaccine Options

- Moderna (age 18+)
- Pfizer (age 12+)
- Pfizer (age 5-11)
- Parental consent needed for ages under 18

Accommodations

- Language Line/Interpreting Service Support
- Privacy Screens/Rooms
- Indoor

Scheduling

- Appointments
- Walk-Ins

Figure 4: Text card from the vaccine finder site, including links to directions and provider site phone number

There currently are 474 active testing locations and 876 active vaccination sites tracked by the tools. The exact number varies as expiring locations remove their information and new partners add their information.

4.3. QUANTITATIVE IMPACT:

4.3.A Impact on Testing in Minnesota

Figure 5 shows agreement over time in the number of hits on the “Find My Test” website, the number of COVID-19 tests done, and the number of positive cases. It is reasonable to conclude that the increased traffic on the website raised awareness of available testing resources, which then led to increased testing volume. The corresponding increase in positive cases demonstrates that the tests were being provided to communities being impacted by COVID-19 exposure.

Easy access to community COVID-19 testing was especially critical during this period because at-home tests were not readily available and pandemic trends were variable due to the emergence of the delta and omicron variants. Having an easy-to-use, accurate, complete, and accessible tool available made it much easier for concerned residents to connect with testing resources and get the information they needed to protect their health and the well-being of their communities.

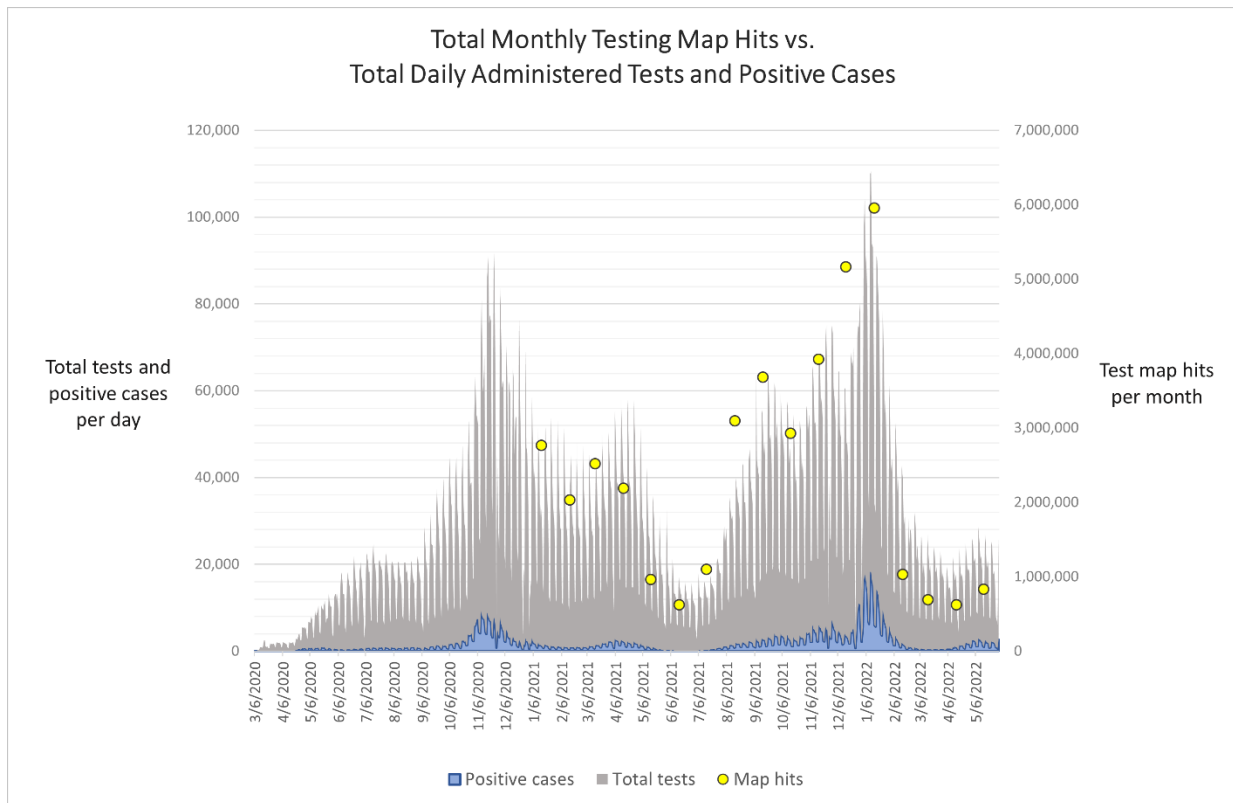


Figure 5: Testing 1/1/21-1/1/22

Table 1 shows the number of hits to the Testing Map for two date ranges and then total for the full time period. The peak number of hits for the site was 450,000 hits per day (5 hits/second average for the day) in early January 2022.

Table 1 Testing Map Hits

Date range	Total hits	Average hits per day
Dec. 29, 2020 – Nov. 30, 2021	25,569,290	76,000
Dec. 1, 2021 – May 31, 2022	14,046,058	77,600
Total: Dec. 29, 2020 – May 31, 2022	39,615,358	76,500

4.3.B Impact on Vaccination

Figure 6 shows agreement over time in the number of hits on the “Find My Vaccine” website and the number of doses administered. As with testing, it is reasonable to conclude that the information on the website helped Minnesota residents connect with available COVID-19 vaccines. In early 2021 when vaccine supply was extremely limited, it was critical that targeted populations know when and where to get their potentially life-saving dose. Given the extraordinary amount of misinformation that was spread about COVID-19 and its vaccine, concerned residents needed to have accurate, complete sources for making decisions. The “Find My Vaccine” tool made it easy to efficiently connect with the nearest vaccine provider. The regular updating helped ensure that information on the site could be trusted. Minnesota has consistently scored above neighboring states for vaccination rates.

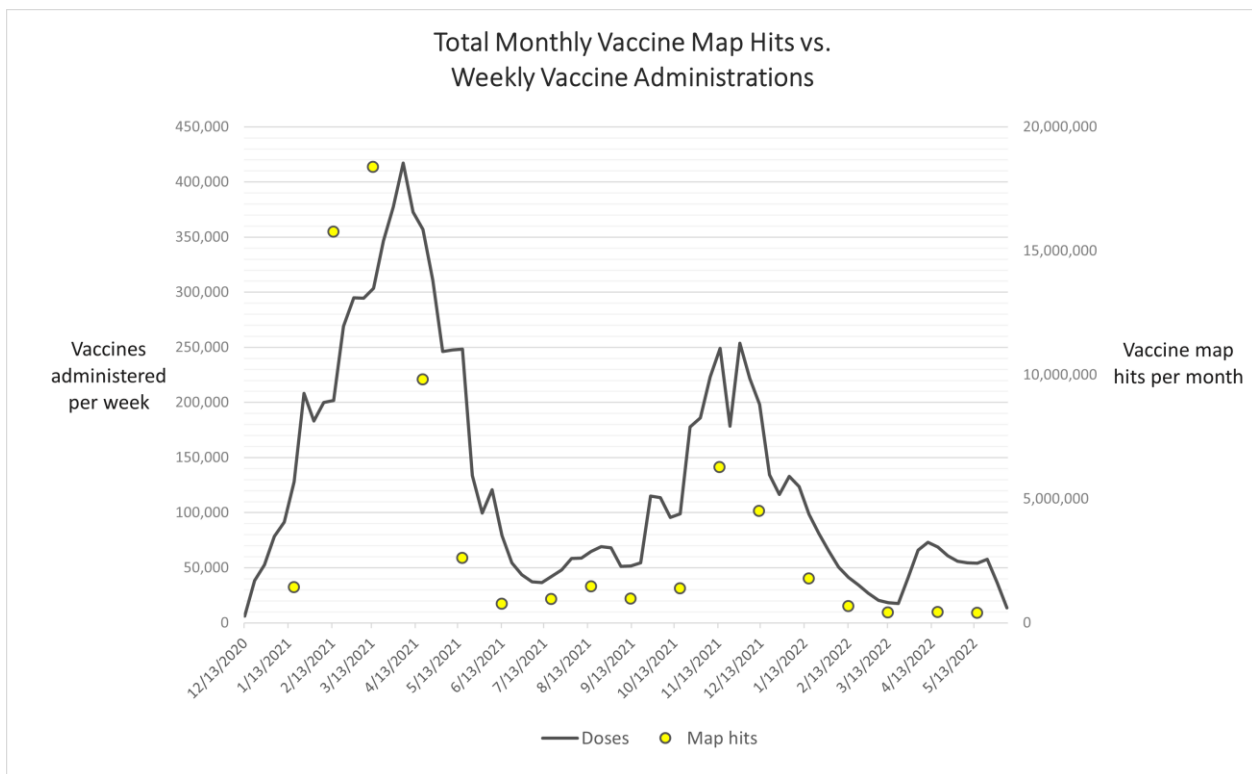


Figure 6: Vaccine 1/1/21 – 1/1/22

Table 2 shows the number of hits to the Vaccine Finder Map for two date ranges and then total for the full time period. The peak was 2.3 million hits per day (26 hits/second average for the day) when availability of the vaccine for ages 18-65 was announced.

Table 2 Vaccine Map Hits

Date range	Total hits	Average hits per day
Jan. 31, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021	62,142,144	186,000
Jan. 1, 2022 – May 31, 2022	3,584,259	24,000
Total: Dec. 29, 2020 – May 31, 2022	65,726,403	135,500

4.3.C Impact on Public Health

Robust, state-wide testing is critical to tracking the spread of the global pandemic in Minnesota, identifying risk factors and vulnerabilities, and ensuring that residents have the information they need to protect themselves and their communities. The testing supported by the “Find My Test” tool helped MDH identify high-risk areas (gyms, bars, restaurants) and populations (long-term care, immunocompromised), track when mitigation measures could be reasonably relaxed, provide recommendations on a wide range of issues/conditions, and respond to many, many public inquiries from across the state. Testing also identified positive cases, who were then contacted individually for case investigation and contact tracing to help slow the spread of the virus.

Raising awareness of the benefits of vaccination must be coupled with information on where/how to get a dose to be effective. Therefore the “Find My Vaccine” tool was an essential part of Minnesota’s aggressive vaccination campaign that undoubtedly reduced the spread of COVID-19 and saved many lives.

The tools also likely contributed to Minnesota regularly out-performing neighboring and comparable states in public health metrics such as vaccines administered, testing rates, percent positive test rates, demographic analysis, equity resources, and consistency with CDC recommendations.

4.4. QUALITATIVE IMPACT:

COVID-19 mitigation efforts need to enhance citizen confidence and reduce overall community stress in addition to directly responding to infection consequences. While it is difficult to quantify success in some areas of the pandemic response, the “Find My” tools contributed to the Minnesota effort by:

- Inspiring overall confidence in the competence of the state response effort through the effective use of modern technology
- Demonstrating responsiveness to critical needs by quickly connecting people with the resources they need
- Reducing frustration with bureaucracy by ensuring the application is based on the best available data and has minimal down time
- Showing cooperation between agencies/organizations that reflects the high priority given to the COVID-19 response
- Facilitating the creation of data needed to track the course of the pandemic and provide milestones for increasing/decreasing restrictions
- The sites were used in planning for the demobilization of the State Emergency Operations Center to map distances between testing sites to estimate how far a person would have to drive to get a test. This information drove the placement of future testing locations.
- The “Find My” websites also connected visitors to a wealth of critical information on COVID-19, including the most current restrictions and guidelines, links to other resources, background on related topics, and recommendations on how to protect yourself and others.

4.5. QUALITATIVE IMPACT: LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Letters from these stakeholders are provided at the end of this nomination:

1. Merone Melekin, Deputy Director, COVID-19 Response, MDH
2. Christopher D. Elvrum, Assistant Division Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response, MDH
3. Mike Umbleby, RPh, Vice President of Business Optimization and Integration, Walgreens
4. Terri Dressen, Director, Communications, Regional Administration, Metropolitan Council
5. Mike Dolbow, GIS Coordinator, Web Team, Minnesota IT Services partnering with Minnesota Department of Education

5 CONCLUSION

Everyone loves a map! That’s why the “Find My” mapping tools have been so effective. They have helped Minnesotans find the two most critical resources to protect themselves from the global COVID-19 pandemic:

- 1) Where to find a test, so they know if they have COVID-19
- 2) Where to find a vaccine, so they can avoid getting COVID-19 in the first place

Specifically, they have:

- Provided an easy-to-use, accurate, and reliable tool for Minnesotans to get what they needed most during a very stressful period;
- Helped vulnerable populations by meeting all accessibility standards and listing directions to the site, accommodations available, hours of operation, and who is eligible for services at that spot;
- Helped hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and community facilities connect their resources with those who need them the most;
- Worked, as shown by the matching trends in web hits, tests provided, and vaccines given. In this case, “worked” means saved lives across the state.

6 NAME OF THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT SHOULD RECEIVE THE AWARD

- Metropolitan Council
- Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo)
- MNIT partnering with Department of Revenue
- MNIT Application Development
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
- MNIT partnering with MDH

7 LETTERS OF SUPPORT

7.1 Letter from Merone Melekin, Deputy Director, COVID-19 Response, MDH



June 30, 2022

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council
c/o Alison Slaats, Chief GIO
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office
658 Cedar St., Room 300
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members:

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of support for the Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications, also known as the Minnesota “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps, for the 2022 Governor’s Geospatial Commendation.

The “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps provided low barrier access to public health resources to the many communities across the State of Minnesota. The programs allowed the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota State Agencies, Healthcare providers and partners, and over 200 community partners to promote low or no barrier testing and vaccination sites to ensure equal access and opportunity to every corner of the State with an emphasis on our most vulnerable communities.

The tools were monumental in the rollout for vaccines for new eligible age groups such as Under 6, 5-11, 12-17 and 18+. It served as a direct and easy resource for parents, guardians, and families to access a vaccine based on their location and identifiable criteria such as age and type of vaccine. The tools were used in promotion through regular scheduled social media, email, text message and by our partners outlets in the community. The tools were also used with key community stakeholders as a trusted resource to gain access to the important healthcare needs.

The “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” provided critical information to users when determining a location for a vaccine or test including availability for ASL service, accessible parking, language interpreting service, privacy accommodations, and transportation support. The accessibility accommodations were critical to members of vulnerable communities.

Overall, the “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps and web applications have played a critical role within the Covid Response to promote equity and ensure access to Minnesotans during Covid-19 Response. It is with great confidence that I offer my highest level of support in the nomination of the “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps, for the 2022 Governor’s Geospatial Commendation.

Sincerely,

Merone Melekin
Vaccine Outreach Director
Covid-19 Response
Minnesota Department of Health
Merone.Melekin@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

7.2 Letter from Christopher D. Elvrum, Assistant Division Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response, MDH



June 30, 2022

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council
c/o Alison Slaats, Chief GIO
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office
658 Cedar St., Room 300
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members:

It is my great honor to nominate the Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications, also known as the Minnesota “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps, for a 2022 Governor’s Geospatial Commendation.

The Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications allow vaccine and testing providers to easily add, modify, and remove their own vaccination and testing locations from the maps using a simple form. For the public user the tools transparently assist with finding conveniently located sites that meet their specific needs.

These applications allowed MDH to promote testing and vaccination sites that were low or no barrier sites to ensure that everyone had access to these life-saving resources. In addition, the tool became an invaluable resource internally to MDH as it allowed MDH to assess access to testing options for both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals throughout the state. This information was critical for informing MDH in decision-making for the need for state testing sites based on access to other testing in the community.

Thank you for considering my nomination for the Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications, also known as the Minnesota “Find my Vaccine” and “Find my Test” maps, for a 2022 Governor’s Geospatial Commendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christopher D. Elvrum'.

Christopher D. Elvrum
Assistant Division Director, Emergency Preparedness and Response
Minnesota Department of Health

chris.elvrum@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

7.3 Letter from Mike Umbleby, RPh, Vice President of Business Optimization and Integration, Walgreens



Walgreen Co.
200 Wilmot Rd
Deerfield, IL 60015
Walgreens.com

June 30, 2022

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council
C/O Alison Slaats, Chief GIO
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office
658 Cedar St., Room 300
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Council Members,

It's with great pleasure that I write to you today in support of the Minnesota COVID-19 Testing Locations and Vaccine Finder Web Mapping Applications – also known as the Minnesota Find My Vaccine and Find My Test maps – for the 2022 Governor's Geospatial Commendation nomination. These key resources continue to support patients in accessing care, including at Walgreens.

Walgreens is committed to delivering a high level of care and to be there for our patients when they need us most. Walgreens has administered over 31M COVID-19 tests and over 67M vaccines and this would not be possible without resources like Find My Vaccine and Find My Test. These applications have been vital to support Minnesotans through the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring access to care is easier to find while also meeting their specific needs. In Minnesota alone, we have been able to administer roughly 1M vaccines and over 600K tests.

Partnering with the Minnesota Department of Health has been a great collaboration supported by their commitment to serving the needs of the community and being proactive with solutions like Find My Vaccine and Find My Test. We look forward to our continued partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Umbleby'.

Mike Umbleby, RPh | Vice President of Business Optimization and Integration

Member of Walgreens Boots Alliance

7.4 Letter from Terri Dresen, Director, Communications, Regional Administration, Metropolitan Council



June 14, 2022

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council
c/o Alison Slaats, Chief Geographic Information Officer, and Director, MnGeo
Minnesota Geospatial Information Office
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Support letter for the Governor's Geospatial Commendation Award

Dear Council Members,

As the COVID-19 Pandemic quickly spread across the nation and Minnesota, Governor Tim Walz quickly mobilized a command center to manage the global crisis at the state level. One of the first things being mobilized was testing sites across the state, along with education information to help contain the spread of the deadly virus.

In an effort to get this critical information to the masses, the Governor's office requested a website that would allow people to see where they can get tested, and health information needed to stay safe. The website needed to be built in 48 hours. Typically, it would take weeks to build a digital site of this magnitude, and MNIT was already overwhelmed with all the other COVID sites that needed to be built for the Minnesota Department of Health. The IS team at Met Council stepped up and offered to do this work under an unprecedented timeline.

The first thing the team did was quickly research to see what websites were out there across the United States. These developers were able to take "best of practice" pages that were well designed and emulate similar pages for Minnesota. This team worked straight through the weekend, and the site was launched by Monday afternoon. MNIT was extremely grateful for the support of the Met Council IS team.

This is a great example of how the Met Council is a partner during challenging times. For our IS team, this was not their typical work, but they were committed to the bigger cause, keeping Minnesotans safe during frightening times. For these reasons, we support this nomination for a Governor's Geospatial Commendation Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terri Dresen".

Terri Dresen
Director, Communications | Regional Administration

Metropolitan Council (Regional Office & Environmental Services)
390 Robert Street North, Saint Paul, MN 55101-1805
P 651.602.1000 | F 651.602.1550 | TTY 651.291.0904
metro council.org

An Equal Opportunity Employer

7.5 Letter from Mike Dolbow, GIS Coordinator, Web Team, Minnesota IT Services partnering with Minnesota Department of Education

At the start of the pandemic, it was clear that intra-agency collaboration was going to be the glue holding things together for the state's response. MnGeo quickly collaborated with multiple parties to launch a COVID-19 Testing Site "Finder" site, then later complemented that with a Vaccine Finder, showing tremendous foresight and agility. Early on, I had a customer that wanted testing sites pulled into an existing interactive map, and MnGeo helped me use the service created by the Metropolitan Council team for that purpose. Later, the Council team warned me that the service was transitioning to MnGeo during an upgrade, and several individuals assisted me with managing that change. And I understand this was all driven by information gathered by the Department of Health, in cooperation with the Department of Public Safety, as well as the Governor's Office. When you look at the current "Finder" applications, it's clear that they are not "just another mapping app": they are more accessible, and they strike a balance between usability and important details. I am confident that countless citizens benefited from the collaborations that made these maps possible, and highly recommend this project for a Governor's Geospatial Commendation.

- *Mike Dolbow, GIS Coordinator | Web Team, Minnesota IT Services partnering with Minnesota Department of Education*