MnGeo State Government Geospatial Advisory Council
September 19, 2011
Meeting Notes

Participating

Members: David Arbeit, MnGeo; Mike Dolbow, Agriculture; Mary Emerson, Human Services; Jennifer Johnson, Corrections; Greg Klinkhammer, Employment and Economic Development; Tim Loesch, Natural Resources; Sean Mangan, Public Safety; John Paulson, Health; Craig Rhombs, Education; Dan Ross, Transportation; Tad Schindler, Pollution Control; Cindy Valentine, Labor and Industry.

Non-members: Laurie Beyer-Kropuenske, Administration; Chris Cialek, MnGeo; Dan Falbo, Esri; Brad Henry, University of Minnesota; John Hoshal, MnGeo; Mark Kotz, Met Council; Fred Logman, MnGeo; Carolyn Parnell, OET; Nancy Rader, MnGeo.

Arbeit called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves. Arbeit introduced Carolyn Parnell.

Welcome – Carolyn Parnell, State CIO

Parnell provided an overview of the legislatively mandated IT Consolidation Initiative which applies to agencies within the Executive Branch. The initiative represents a "sea change" for IT in Minnesota state government. The intent is to see what the state spends on IT and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of how IT is used to provide state services.

Implementation of this initiative will be done in a staged approach over several years. Two deadlines were mandated in the legislation:
- August 22: All state agency CIOs began reporting directly to the State CIO.
- October 3: All state agency IT staff will become part of a "virtual OET."

These changes only affect reporting relationships; service level agreements will allow staff to stay in their agencies and continue their business unchanged. Changes will come in the future, but only after careful planning. MnGeo will move from Administration to OET sometime before June 2013; this move seems to make sense to everyone involved.

On September 16, agency reports were due that provide the initial assessment of what activities and staff are considered part of IT. These reports are now being reviewed. GIS is definitely considered "in" IT.

Discussion followed:

What's "In" or "Out" of IT
Loesch: Many areas of spending are "gray areas" and it's not clear whether to include them as "IT expenses", e.g., is money spent on collecting air photos "IT" or is it "information that agencies need to do their work"? We'll need to develop good definitions of what's included and what's not, and then consistently adhere to the definitions.

Parnell: Data exchange is in-scope. Initially, the intent is to cast a wide net on what is considered IT. Doing this will help ensure that there's enough money to deliver services we're accustomed to. The definitions will be refined as the strategic planning process moves along and as agencies provide feedback.

Arbeit: It is expected that framework geospatial data resources such as elevation and imagery would be included since they are housed, managed and delivered via IT.

Ross: Many of Mn/DOT's resources are in federally funded projects, for example, road corridor photos.
Parnell: There will be provision for one-time spending. The goal is an accurate assessment of IT spending. If more money is needed to accomplish critical tasks, then this information will help us make the case.

Collaboration Opportunities
Parnell: There has not been a lot of IT collaboration to this point. The intent is that there will be much more going forward. We will be developing strategies over the coming years to improve collaboration.
Dolbow: Believes that the geospatial community has done a reasonable job of collaborating up to this point. The consolidation initiative should include opportunities to expand both formal and informal collaboration among the state's IT staff.
Parnell: Yes, this provides opportunities to be innovative and to explore the possibilities of more collaboration, e.g., "virtual teams" of GIS/IT staff to work on projects sharing knowledge and innovation opportunities.

Fears
Ross: Has heard the comment that "all our IT resources are going to go somewhere else."
Parnell: This would be a mis-step. Although there will be changes, there is no plan to take everyone's resources. The question is what is the common good? What standards and best practices will help us? The biggest issue is to retain state IT staff and to be able to replace them when current staff retire. Employees need to stay with their agency business. Any future changes need to be intentional and non-disruptive; it will likely take two years to get to a single IT budget.
Also, OET is not doing this planning alone. Many state IT staff are involved, a technical advisory group is being formed; business leaders are being consulted; and OET is keeping in close touch with the authors of the IT consolidation legislation. It will be important to demonstrate the benefits of the consolidation to the public since most of the benefits won't otherwise be visible.

Agencies are Different
Members briefly described the widely varying relationships between GIS and IT in their agencies. In some agencies, GIS is well integrated with IT; in others, there is hardly any GIS, or it is not well integrated with IT, or it is in silos and not considered an agency-wide activity.

GIO Changes
Arbeit made two announcements:
- The Geospatial Information Officer's position is now full-time! Previously, the position also included directing the Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis, which was comprised of MnGeo, the Environmental Quality Board, the State Demographic Center, and the State Archeologist.
- He is planning to retire early in 2012, and will make the transition to a new GIO as smooth as possible.

Updates
  a) **Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council** and **Committees/Workgroups** (Arbeit): The Statewide Council member list for the FY2012-13 term is still being determined; the list will be announced once the CIO approves it. Arbeit will meet with all committee and workgroup chairs to discuss their plans for the next year.
  b) **Orthophotos** (Cialek): See orthoimagery update. The imagery for 35 counties collected in 2011 is being reviewed: DNR is doing the high-level QA/QC; MnGeo is looking at sample areas in detail; Mn/DOT is conducting a horizontal positional accuracy assessment.

c) **Data Standards** (Cialek): Craig Finseth from OET is assisting the Standards Committee with reformatting existing GIS standards to follow a new OET template. The first task is to reformat the three standards already accepted as state standards. The next task will be to reformat standards that have been accepted by the GIS community but not yet approved as state standards, and then submit them to OET's Information/Data domain team and the Architecture Review Board for approval.

d) **Enterprise License Agreement** (Cialek): The current ELA contract with Esri expires at the end of FY12, so the ELA Steering Committee, representing 16 state agencies, is getting ready for negotiations. The committee will meet in October after the GIS/LIS Conference.

e) **GLO Field Notes Scanning** (Logman): The scanning and indexing portion of this project was completed by the June 30, 2011 deadline. Copies of the data are archived at the MN Historical Society, MnGeo, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The data will be available from BLM's website likely by November 2011.

f) **Geospatial Commons** (Logman): The pilot project to develop the Commons was completed. The next step is to develop a new mission and vision statement and a charter.

g) **Parcel Business Plan** (Logman): This project began in June 2011 when Pro-West & Associates, Inc. conducted a telephone survey of Minnesota's counties to assess the status of their parcel data: what is currently available; key staff; data distribution policies; and key systems that rely on parcel data such as property tax records.   An advisory committee is being assembled and a Statement of Work is being drafted. For more information, see the project webpage.

h) **Data Practices Act revisions** (Arbeit): At the council's September 21, 2010 meeting, Laurie Beyer-Kropuenske had discussed possible revisions to the Data Practices Act (see the *Data Practices Presentation and Discussion* section of the September notes). The Governor's Office approved the revisions in concept and will likely introduce them early in the next legislative session. Parnell noted that OET's technical advisory committee will include a county representative who can be involved in this issue.

i) **LiDAR data** (Loesch): All of the Minnesota River Basin data collected in 2010 is now available on DNR's FTP site. The Arrowhead and the north metro areas flown in 2011 will be delivered to DNR in blocks between now and January 2012. The south metro area will be collected this fall due to spring flooding; USGS granted $150,000 to increase the point density within the core urban areas to 8 points/meter. The Central Lakes region is scheduled to be collected Spring 2012. The Minnesota Legislature approved final funding for the LiDAR project. For more information and updates, see the Minnesota Elevation Mapping Project webpage.

Announcements
a) **Street Centerline Workshop** (Ross): On September 26, the Metropolitan Council will host a workshop to brainstorm improved ways to develop and maintain street centerline information. The focus will be on the Twin Cities metropolitan area; however, the issue is statewide, especially considering the pressing need for this information to support Next Generation 9-1-1.

b) **Google Presentation to State Agencies** (Arbeit): A number of Minnesota agencies have begun to explore their options for integrating Google's Geospatial Solutions into their GIS business processes. Rather than each agency learning about these applications piecemeal, Cialek and Loesch have organized an overview presentation from Google staff on September 15 to describe collaboration opportunities using Google Maps, Google Earth Enterprise and Google Earth Builder. All members of this council have been invited.

c) **IT Symposium** (Ross): The next State of Minnesota IT Symposium will be December 6-8. Mobile field data collection will be an area of emphasis.

Meeting adjourned. Meeting notes by Nancy Rader and Fred Logman.