MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council
March 12, 2014 Meeting Minutes
Room 302, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

Members: Jeff Bloomquist, Farm Service Agency; David Brandt, Washington County; Will Craig, University of Minnesota; Kari Geurts, Dept. of Natural Resources; Andrew King-Scribbins, Hennepin County; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Chad Martini, Stearns County; Trisha Stefanski, Dept. of Transportation; Joshua Pankratz, Mayo Clinic; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Ben Richason, St. Cloud State University; Cory Richter, City of St. Paul; Dan Ross, MnGeo; Dawn Sherk, White Earth Nation (via WebEx); Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Kody Thurnau, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy; Tim Wotzka, Itasca County.

Non-Members: Chris Buse, MN.IT; Chris Cialek, MnGeo; John Hoshal, MnGeo; Al Kean, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Geoff Maas, Metropolitan Council; Carolyn Parnell, MN.IT; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Ron Wencl, U.S. Geological Survey

Welcome

Ross called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves.

Minutes of January 10, 2014 Meeting

The January 10, 2014 council meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Council Member Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations (slides 4-7)

Kotz reviewed the council's mission and guiding principles approved at the January 10, 2014 meeting. He then reviewed the following proposed roles, responsibilities and expectations for members that had been drafted by six members (Craig, Geurts, Hackett, Kotz, Reinhardt and Sjerven) and circulated by email for comment before the meeting:

- Support the Council's mission
- Prepare for and be active in Council meetings
- Be an ambassador representing your sector stakeholders and other stakeholders with whom you are connected (e.g. professional groups)
  - Speak for stakeholders at Council meetings
  - Carry Council news and proposals back to stakeholders
  - Collect stakeholder views on complex issues, either from individuals or existing umbrella organizations

MOTION: Accept the proposed roles, responsibilities and expectations for members of the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council (Kotz/Craig). Motion passed without dissent.

ACTION ITEM: Rader will update the council's webpage with the revised mission, guiding principles, and roles, responsibilities and expectations.

Legislative Update (slides 8-11)

Ross described a proposal that could be submitted as an initiative in the 2015 legislative session to redirect a portion of the Recorders Fee that the **State** receives (not the portion that the counties

receive) from the general fund to a state fund set up for the advancement of geospatial data, technology, and activities to improve services to the broader geospatial community. He listed possible ideas of what the money could be used for and a high-level budget:

Develop and sustain programs for foundational standardized statewide layers
- Statewide Street Centerlines and Address Ranges: 2 year program, then ongoing maintenance
- Statewide Aerial Imagery collect 1/5th of the state: ongoing
- Statewide Addresses: initial collect/standardization, then ongoing maintenance
- Hydrography (surface water): 2 year effort to standardize and align agency data
- Elevation/LiDAR
    - Additional collect (e.g., areas of older data)
    - Statewide hydro-conditioning: 2 years
- Statewide parcel data: 2 years, then ongoing maintenance
- Municipal boundaries from parcels: initial development, then ongoing
- Statewide geodetic layer – control point inventory: 2 years, then ongoing maintenance
- Statewide Public Land Survey update

Data Access Tools and Services
- Complete the build-out of the Minnesota Geospatial Commons
- Open up to partners (training and access)

Ross then asked: Do members support the basic idea of this proposal? If so, how could the council get behind this effort and help to shape it?

Member discussion:
- Members expressed support for the general idea. Much discussion and engagement with the geospatial community will be needed to develop the details.
- Tackling all of these items would be a huge task. Are the ideas listed in priority order? No. The council could help to determine priorities.
- Suggestion to put the highest priority on data that is most related to land parcel registration (addresses and address ranges) since this is the source of the funds.
- Are "Address Ranges" and "Statewide Addresses" different enough to be listed in two categories? Yes, they come from different sources. An address range is associated with a street centerline, while Statewide Addresses would be comprised of points based on parcel centroid, building rooftop or property access point. Currently, there's a national level discussion about whether it should be required, not optional, to attach address ranges to street centerlines.
- Are precursor efforts needed before some of these layers are proposed (e.g., support or software provided to counties that do not yet have complete digital parcels)? Each layer will have to be investigated further to determine its status and what it would take to implement.
- Where is the money going now? To the General Fund; it is not allocated to specific projects. We would need to promote the value of this proposal to compete successfully for this use.
- If the proposal is changed to include any use of the portion of fees currently allocated to the counties, it will be very controversial.
  Opinions expressed **in favor** of considering using a portion of the funds currently allocated to counties:
    - The data would benefit counties as well as the state.

- A nominal contribution would show "good faith" to legislators that all were contributing.
- Counties already obtain a significant portion of the Recorder Fee ($35.50)

Opinions expressed **against** considering using a portion of the funds currently allocated to counties:
- This would be a very bad idea politically ("don't mess with our funds"). If it were pursued, county recorders, county GIS staff and the Association of Minnesota Counties would not support this proposal.
- County budgets are very tight already and counties have fewer options than the state does to find other sources of funds.
- Many counties are already using part of their portion of the funds to support technology and parcel data development. All counties are providing in-kind work to develop and maintain parcel information along with other county geospatial data.

- This discussion should not devolve into local government vs. state government. Instead, we need to solve problems together with solutions for all, while being aware of local needs. It's about relationships and trust.
- Legislators look favorably on ideas that use an enterprise approach to develop products at reduced cost to be shared by all.
- The size of this fund varies greatly between counties since it depends on the number of real estate transactions. Also note that not all GIS departments receive money from the county recorders fee.
- Should some of the money be redirected to the counties that have the fewest resources?
- Other models that could provide ideas:
  - MetroGIS, especially how this organization worked for many years to bring people with very disparate views together. Their model relies on local governments contributing data rather than money.
  - The Wisconsin Land Information Program which allocates some money to counties and some to the state to support a grant program for counties. For more information, see the 2013 WLIP Report as well as the article Wisconsin 2013-2015 biennial budget bill invests in geospatial programs.
- Suggestions of materials and arguments to support the idea:
  - Return on investment examples.
  - Document how the counties are currently using their portion of the funds and how they are contributing in-kind services.
  - Start with phrase "I care because". E.g., "I care because I need data from neighboring areas for many purposes: police, fire, planning, school districts, watersheds…" and "I need data in a common format." These ideas are needed to address those who may respond that "I have the data I need already."
  - Example of the current challenge of doing multi-county health research requiring addresses and other foundational layers – time and money spent finding, acquiring, standardizing and geocoding data could be spent instead on the actual research.
  - Sustainable funding will help planning – example of Washington County ensuring a reliable schedule of air photos by setting aside funds in advance.
- Suggestion to create a survey so that members ask their sectors the same questions. What input do we want?
- Existing legislation doesn't include hiring employees – could this be changed? What is the policy for the state portion?

- Should the proposal consider including a governing body?

Commissioner Parnell felt that the improving state budget situation makes it an appropriate time for this proposal and offered her support. It is beholden on the geospatial community to make the case that Minnesota has been underinvesting in geospatial and that this proposal would provide significant value.

Eight members volunteered to help develop the proposal: David Brandt, Kari Geurts, Andrew King-Scribbins, Mark Kotz, Chad Martini, Gerry Sjerven, Kody Thurnau, Tim Wotzka

ACTION ITEM: Ross and the volunteer group will determine next steps to develop this proposal.

Committee and Workgroup Update ([slides](#) 12-13)
Ross reported that the Geospatial Technical Committee had approved the proposed charters and workplans for the three committees discussed by this council at the January 10, 2014 meeting: Emergency Preparedness (EPC), Parcels and Land Records, and Standards. EPC will be changing its format to include more educational and outreach webinars.

The Standards Committee is seeking a new chair. Kotz has served as chair for a number of years but due to new job responsibilities, he is stepping down, although he will continue to be a committee member. The chair needs to be interested in data and standards and be good at administering processes. The chair and committee members assist groups proposing a new standard to finalize the proposal, coordinate the public review process within the geospatial community, and take standards through state government's final review and approval processes. The committee likely will be more active than it has been over the past several years, finding more opportunities to engage with groups to see what standards may be most needed.

ACTION ITEM: Anyone interested in serving as Standards Committee chair, or finding out more about the position, is encouraged to contact Kotz or Rader.

Update on Open Data Sharing Initiative ([slides](#) 14-15)
Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator, reported that three Twin Cities metro counties recently adopted policies for free and open data: Ramsey County (2/11/14, 9:00 a.m.); Hennepin County (2/11/14, 2:00 p.m.); Dakota County (3/11/14). He noted that Randy Knippel (Dakota County) had compiled a report for the county board that could serve as a resource for other counties (p. 37 of [Dakota County board meeting materials](#)). The remaining four metro counties are discussing the topic. *[Note: Carver has since opened up their geospatial data.]*

Maas then presented a map (slide 15) that shows the current status of free and open data policies statewide. Reinhardt noted that for this proposal to be successful at a county, a champion is needed who can explain GIS and the value of the policy in plain language.

For more information on the initiative, see Maas' [presentation](#) from the January 10, 2014 council meeting as well as the [MetroGIS Free & Open Data Resource Page](#).

Geospatial Commons Governance ([slides](#) 16-27)
Kotz summarized the work to date on developing governance policies for the Minnesota Geospatial Commons; a more detailed handout for internal discussion was distributed to members for their review. This document has also been presented to the Geospatial Technical Committee.

Guiding principles for Commons governance:
- Governance covers all resources (data, services, apps, etc.)
- Resources should be documented well enough for others to determine fitness for their use
- The Commons should be a professional site – no anonymous content
- Assumes "published" resources are free and open

Member comments:
- Could tutorials be housed on the site? Yes, as well as documents and CSV format files.
- Will filenames be standardized? No policy for that now.
- How long will historic data be kept? Right now, it would be up to the publisher. The Commons team will be meeting soon with staff from the University of Minnesota's U-Spatial project and from the Minnesota Historical Society to start discussing archiving issues.
- Suggestion to provide ways (such as a survey) to collect information from users on the value of the Commons, for example that an organization saved X amount of time and money by finding what they needed in one place. Think about how we would prove that the Commons is worthwhile.

ACTION ITEM: Committee members should send any further comments on the Minnesota Geospatial Commons governance document to Kotz and Rader.

LCCMR Recommended Projects
The LCCMR's (Legislative-Citizen Committee on Minnesota Resources) FY2015 recommendations for legislative funding include two projects that focus on foundational geospatial data (see complete list of recommendations [here](#)).

- Al Kean, Chief Engineer at the Board of Water and Soil Resources and project PI, gave an overview of the [Drainage Records Modernization and Statewide GIS Database](#) proposal ([slides](#) 30-43). The project goal is to improve access to data on public drainage systems in order to enhance water management modeling and planning, and to update the Drainage Records Modernization Guidelines. He emphasized that drainages that are included in the Chapter 103E Drainage Law are best described as "publicly administered private drainage systems" (they are not publicly owned).

- Ross then reviewed several [slides](#) (44-47) summarizing the [Mapping Landscapes for Better Land and Water Management](#) project. More detail is planned for the next council meeting.

Member Sector Reports
Three council members gave brief reports on selected projects from their sector. See the slides for details.

- **Gerry Sjerven**, [Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium](#) ([slides](#) 49-61)

- **Will Craig**, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), University of Minnesota (slides 62-79)
  GIS was pioneered at the University of Minnesota (CURA) and transferred to state government in 1977 as LMIC, now MnGeo. GIS is flourishing at the UofM today, with dozens of researchers and activities, all connected through a new U-Spatial effort. A professional Master of GIScience degree is available as well as graduate and undergraduate minors in GIS. CURA supports a Community GIS program that provides a mapping and analysis resource to community organizations. That program is connected with similar operations in 35 metro areas across the country called the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.

- **Chad Martini**, Stearns County (slides 80-90)
  Stearns County has an existing FLEX ArcGIS Server project that the county Environmental Services Department uses for viewing GIS-based land use restrictions. Because of various limitations related to mobile devices, it is necessary to move existing functionality into a JavaScript code base. Stearns County also maintains tables and GIS geometry representing parcel history. This project will include functionality to display parcel history to the user on desktop and tablet devices.

MnGeo Priority Projects and Initiatives (slides 91-102)
See slides and handout for descriptions and status of each of MnGeo's main priority projects (all projects are done in partnership with other organizations): Addresses; Air Photos; ArcGIS Online; Geospatial Commons; LiDAR; Hydrography; Parcels; Street Centerlines.

Governor's Commendation Award Committee (slides 103-104)
The Governor's Geospatial Commendation award is given for activities that exemplify a commitment to coordinated, affordable, reliable and effective use of GIS to improve services within Minnesota. Details and past winners are listed on the award webpage. This year's deadline for nominations is June 30, 2014.

Members of the award committee review the nominations and recommend those that meet the criteria to the CGIO. Four council members volunteered to serve on this year's committee: Will Craig, Cory Richter, Jeff Bloomquist and John Mackiewicz.

ACTION ITEM: The committee, Ross and Rader will revise the award criteria as needed to be consistent with the Council's updated guiding principles.

Future Meetings
The council's next meeting will be Wednesday June 18, 2014 in the Ladyslipper Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

ACTION ITEM: Rader will schedule the council's fall and winter quarterly meetings.

Meeting adjourned. Minutes by Nancy Rader.