

GAC Sector Report: State Government

Sector Review

Geospatial data, technology and staff are key to the work of Minnesota State Government Agencies. Broadly, as a sector, our GIS work is to collect, create, maintain, analyze and communicate about spatial data to support legislative mandates that support clean air, water, recreation and all the other services of government.

While it is difficult to measure perfectly the use of GIS and geospatial by State Agencies, one available metric is the Enterprise License Agreement with Esri that includes 19 agencies. In addition to Esri software, other spatially-enabled software products are used for mapping, analysis, web development and data storage including Tableau and Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial (FOSS4G) such as QGIS, PostgreSQL, Mapserver and Leaflet. To measure the number of GIS users in the sector, we can again use the Esri ELA under which several thousand ArcGIS desktop licenses are installed, but we know thousands *more* use spatial data as part of their work.

Some State Government agencies have their own GIS team, with the largest at DNR, DOT and PCA. Several agencies have a couple of dedicated GIS staff and some are supported by MnGeo. MnGeo is a centralized resource for the sector and supports geospatial work in many ways including software licensing, data collection, aggregation and distribution. With the consolidation of IT into MN.IT at the State, MnGeo is able to offer even more opportunities for sharing GIS resources where appropriate, such as support of GIS web services, hosting of the Geospatial Commons and related components such as the GDRS, a GIS data management system.

How can GAC's mission benefit your sector?

With so many functions of State Government relying upon GIS and geospatial data, all of the GAC Mission's guiding principles are relevant to the sector. The principle to "promote geospatial information as a shared public resource," is important and has led to the creation of the Commons as well as continued growth of State Agency-created datasets included in the Commons. Additionally, the principle of "support the establishment and use of geospatial standards and best practices," is important to the sector because it provides guidance in how to create, maintain and document data so that it can be effectively and reliably used for decision-making.

What is the benefit of the GAC for the sector?

The GAC provides many benefits to the State Government sector. The State Government sector relies heavily upon data from the other sectors of the GAC including parcels, streets and addresses. So having GAC as a formal channel of communication with these sectors is important. Also GAC Committee work

helps the sector. For example the Outreach Committee's work on parcel data will be beneficial to the sector as open data makes State Government work easier to conduct.

The Digital Elevation and Hydrography Committees continue to provide a forum for consensus on acquiring, using and share data, such as LiDAR.

Overall, the GAC provides a coordination point for people in the sector to work with, learn from and contribute to the work being done by other sectors.

What is your strategy for communicating with your sector about the GAC?

To communicate with the sector about work at the GAC, we do the following:

- We summarize the topics presented at GAC meetings into a newsletter, the GAC Yak. We distribute the GAC Yak to GIS users in the sector who are on the internal State GIS email list (~900 people). We also share the GAC Yak on Yammer, a social networking tool used at the State.
- Before each GAC meeting, we contact Agency GIS Points of Contact to solicit input for the meeting.
- We chair a State Agency GIS "Collaboration Group" whose mission is to plan, promote, and facilitate State agency communication and collaboration for State employees interested in geospatial topics and technology.

For more information, GAC State Government Contacts

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