

Public Review Comments and Responses for the Proposed Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council PLSS Point Data Standard V0.4

The Standards Committee of the Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC) held a 90-day public review period ending February 27, 2026, for proposed version 0.4 of the PLSS Point Data Standard. Below is a table showing the comments received and responses approved by the Standards Committee on 5/4/2026. Responses include changes to the standard and other actions.

Preface:

GAC data standards seek to improve data sharing by reducing incompatibilities during data acquisition, processing and dissemination. These standards are not intended to define internal data capture or storage specifications for producers, nor does the GAC mandate their use. However, organizations within Minnesota are encouraged to adopt these standards to facilitate data exchange and aggregation.

Based on many comments, this standard will be edited to more clearly describe that the points and associated data contained within this standard are to be a **summarization of the most current corner certificate on file for the associated PLSS point.**

#	Comment	Submitter	Standards Committee Response
	Section 1. General Elements		
1	1.1 Local Point Identifier: Could this be Global ID?	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	Yes. Each organization can determine what to use as an identifier.
2	1.2 BLM Designation: For counties without this currently designated, can there be a tool or script created to assign these? If not, change to Optional	Mark Sloan, Clay County Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Jared Baloun, Jackson County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	The GAC Parcels and Land Records Committee is working on adoption guidelines for this standard and will make available a spreadsheet cross reference table between the BLM designation for corners and other popular corner descriptions.
3	1.2 BLM Designation: Mandatory field that we do not have in our data. High level of effort. Could be a lot of work depending on whether we can figure out a way to calc these values in batches.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	See response above.
4	1.3 Corner Category: Mandatory field that we do not have in our data. Medium level of effort. Would take a bit of time, but we could populate this.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.

5	1.4 Corner Type: I noticed a small error in the CornerType domain list. The code and value for Ammended Monument should be spelled Amended Monument.	Brett Forbes, Sherburne County	This will be corrected. Good catch.
6	1.4 Corner Type: Domains differ from what is currently in our data.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
7	1.4 Corner Type: Would need to convert our values to match the domain. Level of effort low.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
8	1.5 Corner Status: How to keep current? Monuments can be obliterated soon after occupying. Our current Status data is unique to our needs to help track our remonumentation efforts and does not match the domains.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	Edit standard to clarify that the data contained within the standard is to be a summarization of the most current corner certificate on file for the associated PLSS point. Within the context of this standard, the data would only be updated when a new corner certificate is created.
9	1.6 Corner Alias Name: Change to Optional. 3.1-3.6 are all elements of this and can be generated from those values if populated. For some counties, this may be covered with 1.1 or 1.2. Also, is 22 characters enough?	Mark Sloan, Clay County Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	We feel it is important for every corner within this standard to have a logical, human understandable name based on local conventions. Data maintainers can choose what that is. For this reason, we feel this should be a mandatory field. Increase field width to 40 characters.
10	1.6 Corner Alias Name: We should be able to use our Name or Index Number field for this	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.
11	1.7 Additional Alias Name: We should be able to use our Name or Index Number field for this	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.
12	1.9 Surveyor Category: Don't have but wouldn't be too hard to calc.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.
13	1.10 Surveyor Identification: Change to Optional. This information is available on recorded corner certificates and should be referenced accordingly. There is no current business need to populate this element, and implementation would require significant resources.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	Because the standard is intended to be a summarization of the most current corner certificate on file for the associated PLSS point, we feel this data element should be mandatory in the standard. An organization that has no business need to capture this data may choose to not to comply with the standard for this data element.
14	1.10 Surveyor Identification: Change to Optional. No business need & would require heavy lift to populate. Document contains this detail and should be referenced.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above

15	1.10 Surveyor Identification: *We have name and number separated. Doesn't it make more sense to parse this out so there's one field for RLS No. and one field for Name?	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Because these items are typically reported together, we feel there is value in having them combined in a shared or aggregated dataset. We understand that data maintainers would likely store them separately in their local database.
16	1.14 Project Name: How is the project name determined? Internally by GIS? By the Surveyor?	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County	This is up to each organization to determine. If a project name is listed on the corner certificate, that should be used.
17	1.16 Filing Date: What's the guidance if there are multiple documents?	Mark Sloan, Clay County Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Jared Baloun, Jackson County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	Use date for the most current corner certificate.
18	Can we add a field for the corner location in the Section. This could be Optional. We have the BLM designation, but you would need a chart to find which corner it is. I have added it to my data, and it makes it easier to sort data.	Pat Veraguth, Douglas and Grant Counties	Elements 1.6 and 1.7 can be used for this purpose.
Section 2. Coordinate Elements			
19	2.1 Northing and 2.2 Easting: Change to Optional. Some counties do not use their county coords, but rather the Lat/Long (2.8 & 2.9) so this data element is not documented on recorded corner certificates and therefore cannot be populated from existing recorded survey records. Also, some counties do not want to share this specific data publicly.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	Change the coordinates section to require northing and easting OR latitude and longitude. Local data sharing practices are outside the scope of this standard. It is understood that each organization will determine its own practices.
20	2.1 Northing and 2.2 Easting: Change to Optional. Some counties do not use their county coords, but rather the Lat/Long (2.8 & 2.9). Also, some counties do not want to share this specific data publicly.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above.
21	2.4 Coordinate Units: Mandatory field we do not have. Would not be hard to calc.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.
22	2.5 Coordinate System: Mandatory field we do not have. Would not be hard to calc.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.

23	2.6 Observation Date: Change to Optional. What's the guidance on multiple documents? Most recent? Would you accept YEAR or DATE?	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	Because the standard is intended to be a summarization of the most current corner certificate on file for the associated PLSS point, we feel this field should be mandatory. The standard specifies this data element as a date field. If a data producer only has a year available and not month and day, a local convention could be created to denote that, like using the first day of the year.
24	2.6 Observation Date: Change to Optional. Change date to YEAR.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above.
25	2.6 Observation Date: Mandatory field we do not have. We only track the date of the last recorded cert, not the date someone visited the monument. Is this supposed to be updated any time we get a new COS that indicates that a surveyor found the monument? Also, it seems like this field doesn't belong in the "Coordinate Elements" section of the schema. Maybe should be Element # 1.17?	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	See response above. Update description in standard to say: "Date of the last verifiable and documented visit to the monument <u>in which coordinates were determined.</u> "
26	2.7 Collection Method: Change to Optional. This information is available on recorded corner certificates and should be referenced accordingly. There is no current business need to populate this element, and implementation would require significant resources.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	Because the standard is intended to be a summarization of the most current corner certificate on file for the associated PLSS point, we feel this data element should be mandatory in the standard. An organization that has no business need to capture this data may choose to not to comply with the standard for this data element.
27	2.7 Collection Method: Change to Optional. No business need & would require heavy lift to populate. The document contains this detail which should be referenced instead of GIS having to research every doc.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above.
28	2.7 Collection Method: Would need to convert our values to match the domain.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
29	2.8 Longitude and 2.9 Latitude: Change to Optional. Some counties do not use Lat/Long, but rather the Northing & Easting (2.1 & 2.2) so this data element is not documented on recorded corner certificates and therefore cannot be populated from existing recorded survey records. Also, some counties do not want to share this specific data publicly.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	Change the coordinates section to require northing and easting OR latitude and longitude. Local data sharing practices are outside the scope of this standard. It is understood that each organization will determine its own practices.

30	2.8 Longitude and 2.9 Latitude: Change to Optional. Some counties do not use Lat/Long, but rather the Northing & Easting (2.1 & 2.2). Also, some counties do not want to share this specific data publicly.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above.
31	2.8 Longitude and 2.9 Latitude: Mandatory field we do not have. We would need to add and calc this field, which wouldn't be too hard.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.
32	2.10 Horizontal Datum: Mandatory field we do not have. If this is the same for all points, it wouldn't be hard to calc. If it varies, then it would be hard to calc.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	It should be the same across the dataset
33	2.12 Horizontal Accuracy: Change to Optional. This data element is not documented on recorded corner certificates and therefore cannot be populated from existing recorded survey records.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	Where this data is not recorded on a corner certificate, the value "Unknown" may be used.
34	2.12 Horizontal Accuracy: Change to Optional.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above.
35	2.12 Horizontal Accuracy: We would need to convert our values to match the domain.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
Section 3. PLSS Elements			
36	3.1 Township, 3.2 township Direction, 3.3 Range and 3.6 Section: Guidance needed on how to handle border monuments.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Jared Baloun, Jackson County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	Update standard to include the following language at the beginning of the PLSS Elements section: "It is up to each organization to determine a local referencing convention for which township, range, section they want to use to denote a corner. Different counties may use different conventions. It is desirable to be consistent within a county. Note: If a corner certificate uses a different referencing convention for the corner than is used by the county, it is expected that these PLSS elements will use the county convention."
37	3.2 Township Direction: What if the map attribute does not match the certificate information? (ex: west of Sect 1 vs. east of Sect 2)	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County	See comment above.
Section 4. Monument Elements			

38	4.2 Monument Photo: Some counties use a related table utilizing the Global ID	Mark Sloan, Clay County Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Jared Baloun, Jackson County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
39	4.4 Monument Type and 4.5 Cap Type: Domains differ from what is currently in our data.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
40	4.4 Monument Type: Would need to convert our values to match the domain.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Understood. Thank you for this insight.
41	4.4 Monument Type: Domain should have option for None. Staff described scenarios where we have a cert but the surveyor didn't set a monument.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Use the value "Calculated" in this scenario. Update standard to add "Calculated" to the list of examples.
42	4.5 Cap Type: Currently is captured in our Monument Type field (e.g. "Iron Pipe with Plug")		We intentionally broke them apart to make sure that there were not infinite monument types
43	Consider adding an optional field that indicates monument depth below the ground. This gives a surveyor an idea how far down to dig from the surface in the field to expose the monument.	Mark Sloan, Clay County Jared Baloun, Jackson County	This can be captured in 4.9 Monument Notes
44	Consider adding ground to monument depth as optional due to not all data being filled in. This gives surveyor an idea how far down to dig or utilize to calculate dig depth from surface in the field.	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County Christy Christensen, McLeod County	See response above.
45	Think about adding field for year monument was originally set (we have this and find it helpful - makes it easy to show a map of when all the original monuments were set, which is pretty interesting)	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	While this sounds like interesting local data to capture, we do not feel it is within the context of this standard.
Section 5. Reference Elements			
46	5.2 Certificate URL: What's the guidance if there are multiple documents?	Chelsey Bagent, Swift County	The intention of this standard is to capture a summary of the most current corner certificate. We understand that data producers may store data for multiple corner certificates for a corner, which would appear within the context of this standard as multiple records.
47	5.4 Data Authority: Mandatory field that we do not have. Would not be hard to add and calc.	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	Thank you for this insight.

48	I do not see anywhere for a Recorded Document Number. In Douglas County we do not record corner certs anymore. They are filed in our office, but it would be good for other counties without a full time County Surveyor.	Pat Veraguth, Douglas and Grant Counties	This is intended to go in element 5.1 Reference File Name. We updated the description of that element for clarity.
49	I would like to add an optional choice for a Statement of Evidence (SOE) URL. I have a SOE word file for every corner in the county. We add to these files every day. It is a good place to find current information on a corner.	Pat Veraguth, Douglas and Grant Counties	That could be added by a local data producer.
50	Think about adding field for recorded document number (we have this but it isn't populated for all records yet)	Kevin Trappe, Beltrami County	This is intended to go in element 5.1 Reference File Name. We updated the description of that element for clarity.
General Comments			
51	<p>Our primary recommendation is that only data elements explicitly documented on a recorded corner certificate be designated as mandatory within the standard. The recorded corner certificate serves as the official and authoritative record for PLSS corner information. Requiring mandatory inclusion of elements not contained within the recorded corner certificate would necessitate interpretation, supplemental research, or independent data creation beyond the documented survey record. In our view, mandatory fields should align strictly with information formally recorded and preserved in the official corner certificate.</p> <p>For data elements not included on recorded corner certificates, we recommend classification as Optional unless a clear statutory or operational business requirement justifies mandatory inclusion. Expanding mandatory requirements beyond the official record would impose significant resource demands for data backfill, validation, and long-term maintenance without a corresponding business need.</p>	Mark Sloan, Clay County	<p>Agreed. Note the domains for some fields include the value "Unknown" to accommodate situations where a corner certificate does not include the information. We have added these values to the examples in the standard to make that more apparent.</p> <p>We want to stress that GAC standards are tools intended to help the MN geospatial community support data transfer and aggregation, including describing the specifications of such shared or aggregated datasets. There are no compliance requirements associated with any GAC standards. It is understood that local data producers will choose if and how they want to capture, store and export any data described in GAC standards based on their own business needs. We added a sentence to the compliance language in the standard to help clarify this.</p>

<p>52</p>	<p>I recommend that only data elements that are explicitly documented on a recorded corner certificate be identified as required fields within the standard. The recorded corner certificate constitutes the official and authoritative record for PLSS corner information. Requiring mandatory inclusion of data elements that are not contained within the recorded corner certificate would necessitate interpretation, supplemental research, or independent data creation beyond the documented survey record. Required fields should be limited to information that is formally recorded and preserved on the corner certificate.</p> <p>For data elements not included on recorded corner certificates, I recommend classification as Optional unless a clear statutory or operational business need supports mandatory inclusion. Expanding required data elements beyond the official record would result in substantial resource impacts related to historical data population, verification, and ongoing maintenance without a corresponding business justification.</p>	<p>Jared Baloun, Jackson County</p>	<p>See response above.</p>
<p>53</p>	<p>I have been looking forward to adopting and promoting a standard for PLSS points. Having 100% of McLeod County corners completed, I wanted to be that “first county” to adopt the standard. Unfortunately, after reviewing the proposed standard, I will not be able to be that first county, and I doubt I will be able to adopt this anytime soon. The primary reason is that it does not meet our business needs.</p> <p>Of the 48 proposed components, there are only 7 of them needing to be modified from mandatory to optional.</p> <p>I did reach out to local surveyors who agreed with me. I then discussed this with a few counties who also agree and are hopeful the 7 will be changed to optional.</p>	<p>Christy Christensen, McLeod County</p>	<p>See response above.</p>

<p>54</p>	<p>Cass County GIS and Surveyor’s office have taken the time to review the proposed MN PLSS Point Data Standards. Similar to what other counties have expressed, Cass wants to adopt the standard but after looking at it, feel they won’t be able to do so due to the mandatory requirements of a few fields.</p> <p>It is my understanding that Clay County was kind enough to aggregate the comments and provide them in a separate email, please accept this as confirmation that our agency is in agreement with their submission.</p> <p>Of the 48 proposed components, we are only asking that 7 of them be modified from mandatory to optional.</p>	<p>Jessica Watts, Cass County</p>	<p>See response above.</p>
	<p>Several counties provided tables showing their current PLSS point databases for reference. These were useful references but are not included here.</p>		

Comments and responses approved at GAC Standards Committee Meeting May 4, 2026