Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

March 28, 2018

Blazing Star Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Office Building

658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Scott Abel, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians; Brad Anderson, City of Moorhead; David Bendickson, Minnesota National Guard; Andra Bontrager, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy; David Brandt, Washington County; Preston Dowell, St. Louis County; Scott Freburg, MNIT @ Dept. of Education; Madeleine Kerr, University of Minnesota School of Nursing; Len Kne, University of Minnesota; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; Philipp Nagel, City of Waseca; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Cory Richter, City of Blaine; Dan Ross, MnGeo; Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Ryan Stovern, St. Louis County**;** Benjamin Timerson, Minnesota Department of Transportation; Brandon Tourtelotte, Eagle View Technologies.

Members Absent: Jeffrey Bloomquist, USDA Risk Management Agency; Kari Geurts, MNIT @ Natural Resources; Chris Mavis, Hennepin County; Ben Richason, St. Cloud State University.

Non-Members Present: Will Craig, retired; Mike Dolbow, MnGeo; Brad Henry, Minnesota 2020; Mike Koutnik, Esri; Geoff Maas, MetroGIS; Ryan Mattke, University of Minnesota Libraries; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Chris Sanocki, USGS; Alison Slaats, MnGeo; Sean Vaughn, MN.IT @ Natural Resources; Clayton Watercott, Metropolitan Council; Hal Watson, MN.IT @ Natural Resources.

References

This meeting included references to the following resources:
- Slides
- Agenda Packet
- Parcel Standard

Call to order (Chair)

Kotz called the meeting to order, and attendees introduced themselves.

Kotz called for **approval of the agenda**. Approval was moved by Richter, seconded by Dowell, and **approved unanimously.**

Kotz called for a **review** of the meeting minutes from 12/6/2017. Approval was moved by Brandt, seconded by Richter, and **approved unanimously**.

Review and approval of Standards Committee revised charter

See page 2 and page 24 of Agenda Packet

Maas noted that the Standards Committee has been very active of late, and thought it best to modify their Charter reflecting recent activities and work. He said the Charter is a living document and they are open to recommendations. **Stovern moved to approve the Charter**. Timerson noted a repeating paragraph to remove. Reinhardt seconded the motion. **Members voted unanimously in favor**.

Review/approve committee and GAC work plans

See page 6 of Agenda Packet

Kotz asked for discussion or comments on committee work plans. **Reinhardt moved to approve all the committee work plans**. Bontrager seconded the motion. **Members voted unanimously in favor.**

Kotz called for review of the GAC work plan on page 24. This work plan was drafted by Brandt and Kotz, and reviewed by the leadership team. Key recommendations include:
- launching a group for policies and procedures on archiving
- increasing outreach efforts and defining the GAC priorities each year
- approving a statewide parcel standard

Dowell moved to approve the Council work plan, and Stovern seconded. **Members voted unanimously in favor**.

Request for approval of Parcel Data Transfer Standard and update to Address Point Standard

See page 27 of Agenda Packet

Maas started with the Address Point Standard update. He reviewed how a minor revision to version 1.1 solves an issue surrounding attributes that use the domain of "Yes, No, Unknown" by standardizing their width. Kotz added that we need to know how significant a change must be to require an approval from the GAC. Maas noted the Standards Committee will attempt to answer that question.

Vaughn asked for an example of a usage of that attribute domain, and Maas responded the presence of a garage. **Kotz called for an approval of the requested change to the Address Point Standard**. Bontrager moved, and Richter seconded. **Members voted unanimously in favor**.

Maas moved on to a proposal for the Parcel Data Transfer Standard. The standard contains 90 attributes spread across six categories: Identification, Address, Area, Tax & Survey, Ownership, and Public Land Survey System. He reviewed slides covering a history of the development of the standard. The current version is just the latest revision of a standard that has been in development for almost two decades. Within the past year, the standard was "frozen" until the Address Point standard was finished, due to the many common elements. A final 30 day public review was completed last month, resulting in minor tweaks and refinements. The Standards and Parcels & Land Records Committees have approved the standard currently under consideration by the GAC. Maas reminded the Council that such standards do not get "cast in stone", and can be refined over time.

Kotz asked for questions and comments. Vaughn asked why one of the review periods was so long. Brandt noted that the committee was trying to align the standard with the Department of Revenue's "[PRISM](#)" system. Kotz added that the standard wasn't really under review, it was paused to see if the standard could be aligned with PRISM. Ross noted that there were about 14 or 15 elements in common at first, but commonalities have grown since then. The

two collection efforts (Revenue and MnGeo's) have not aligned yet, but the hope is to do that at some point. Maas noted that the first round of standards reviews are typically a minimum of 60 days.

Vaughn noted that the hDEM Standard he is working on is revealing a lot of questions about standards. The biggest question in terms of governance is, where is the "entity" where these standards are "hosted"? What is the governing body behind the standards? Kotz responded that the GAC has no authority to enforce a standard on anyone, but is uniquely positioned to obtain approvals from the geospatial community. Then, specific organizations can choose to adopt a standard. One such organization might be the State of Minnesota. Ross noted that if the State adopts a standard via the Geospatial Technical Committee, it'll be signed by the MNIT Commissioner, and then end up on the MNIT website. (It's typically linked from the MnGeo website as well.)

Sjerven asked, if a funding request is made, can the work be tied to a standard? Ross added that it can be done in that way – contracts can even be written to say "abide by a standard if it exists". Maas noted that the Standards Committee's responsibility is primarily about documenting the standard and gathering feedback, so that it can be a resource for the professional community.

Ross noted that GAC approval is an important step, because state agencies want to know if a standard has been reviewed by the community first. Vaughn noted that these efforts are being scrutinized at the DNR more and more recently, especially as the growth in use of parcel data occurs.

Kotz called for a motion to approve the Minnesota Parcel Data Transfer Standard. Stovern motioned and Brandt seconded. **The motion passed unanimously.** Maas thanked the work of the Committees.

Policy and procedure for archiving geospatial data

Kotz introduced Mattke, noting that there are a lot of opportunities to create value by defining archiving policies and procedures. Mattke noted that the conversation started around 2013, when he learned that MetroGIS had parcel data posted back to 2002 and asked how long it would be available. He last talked to the GAC about three years ago, and used his slides for a review and progress report.

Ross added that this issue was on our list of priorities two years ago. He'd like to see a workgroup come together and create a master plan for creating policies and procedures for archiving geospatial data in Minnesota. We could pursue a grant to fund it, but we would need the workgroup to buy in to that. Mattke said that some kind of master plan along with a pilot implementation would be worthwhile.

Bendickson asked how much data storage would be required and how that might drive the funding. Mattke responded that staff time might actually be a bigger driver of funding requirements. Bendickson noted that the University's Polar Geospatial Center probably has good ideas on this, and Mattke responded that his group does work together with the Polar Geospatial Center. Bendickson added that if we want a snapshot of data sets very frequently, the data storage will add up. Mattke responded that the imagery data will be the biggest driver of storage needs, but that is at least somewhat more predictable. We also need to resolve who the host would be for such an archive.

Dowell asked if archiving applications that use the data might need to also be archived. For example, his county has a specific application for accessing digital survey information. Mattke said that a similar request is often made when people want to archive their research project. When they do that, his team documents the platform as best as they can, but also archive the data as well. Often software itself doesn't survive more than 3 to 5 years, so making sure that the data is archived in a format that will be reusable is the key driver.

Koutnik asked about a way to provide data via services instead of serving downloadable data, which could allow people to query how the data changes over time. Mattke responded that the Big Ten geospatial data project is going into a new grant cycle that will investigate preserving data from all the member institutions, and that might be supported by delivering data via services. A good example of an application that utilized services was NorthStar Mapper, which allowed a lot of people to be able to view data, even if they didn't have GIS software or skills.

Bontrager asked if Mattke was looking for standardized data to be archived, and what was the difference between Minnesota's needs and the Big Ten effort? Mattke replied that the Big Ten effort is more about discovery of data and providing access, and that the Minnesota archiving effort would be a deeper dive focused on Minnesota. The requiring of standards might mean some loss of participation, but we'd probably be starting from a good place given our commitments to metadata in the past.

Kne noted that we should form a workgroup, but that we should also make sure we look at the policies before we jump to procedures. Richter agreed, saying we do need a bit of knowledge about the end game, but if we first look at policies around what is archived and how often, we have to know that those decisions are often driven by the amount of funding available and legal opinions. In her past experience, those decisions were very difficult because of funding constraints. It is great to create some best practices, but a realistic knowledge of funding constraints should guide us. Oftentimes it just comes down to "who is going to pay for it" on the funding side, and "did we create it" on the legal side.

Mattke replied that coming up with a policy and a plan will drive how much funding might be required. Developing a plan can help us understand the needs first; just as understanding legal and licensing issues are important.

Kotz said that the questions being asked are the right questions, and that a good next step would be to form a workgroup that can recommend answers to those questions, driving creation of a plan on next steps. He noted that a workgroup is usually intended to have a more limited time span. He asked for volunteers and Bendickson, Bontrager, Kne, Kotz, Koutnik, Maas, Mattke, Ross, Timerson, and Watson raised their hands.

Action Item: Mattke to form a workgroup of the interested members to define policies and procedures.

Web Emergency Operations Center (WebEOC) update

Bendickson provided an update to the Council, reviewing his slides. WebEOC is a system that has been adopted by Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), and this presentation is primarily an informational item. This platform has become much more widely adopted than prior platforms for emergency operations collaboration. The system allows for different incidents to be scoped against specific local areas according to needs, and users can log in to multiple incidents. He noted that the lead, Jacob Beauregard, is the WebEOC program manager, and can field further questions.

NAIP imagery licensing update

Ross noted that we had introduced this concept at the last meeting about NAIP's potential move to a licensing model for their imagery, and away from free and open data. He presented slides on how planned federal cost shares have fallen short in past years. The discussions are still taking place at the federal level. Several states also discussed the concepts at the NSGIC meeting in Salt Lake City. If a licensing model happened, MnGeo wouldn't be able to offer the imagery the way we have in the past.

Watson asked who would do such a licensing, and if a state license would allow sharing with local governments. Ross replied that such questions would be answered at an upcoming National Imagery Summit on May 22-23 in Washington, D.C. Reinhardt noted, if it's really just a funding issue, hopefully it could be reasonable for a state to pay a fee to then allow others in a state to use it. Ross replied that it is a funding issue, and that federal partners have been committing funds, but then the timing of fund transfers hasn't been stable. Reinhardt noted that timing is crucial in places where the weather has an impact, and Ross agreed, noting that NAIP in 2017 started in April and finished in November. Ross concluded that he learned at NSGIC about an insurance company coalition that flies the nation on a regular basis, which might be a good way to provide an alternative. Reinhardt asked if a MetroGIS representative would be attending the Summit, and Kotz replied it hasn't been discussed yet. Vaughn asked if a list of comments and concerns should be relayed, and Ross said such feedback should be sent to him.

Action Item: Members should send feedback about NAIP licensing to Ross.

Sector reports

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Abel introduced himself to the Council. He has been with Red Lake since 2007. The tribe owns 40,000 acres of land and water. It is a sovereign nation, where the land is held in common (meaning there is no parcel data available). He has good contacts with representatives from other tribes, particularly in the Northern half of the state. He noted that small tribes would be lucky if they have one GIS person, and that most have a person who wears many hats as part of their job. They rely heavily on the free NAIP imagery, and a license for that imagery would be a big burden to them. They get Esri licenses through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Some of the projects in Red Lake include wildfire suppression through prescribed burns, golden wing warbler habitat management, mapping of wolf movement tracking, forestry work, and mapping the upper and lower Red Lake. He partners with the FBI when necessary.

For needs, Abel would like to see peak fall color aerial imagery, and they may do some acquisition this fall, partnering with adjacent counties. Ross suggested a connection with Dennis Kepler at DNR Resource Assessment, and Abel said they have been in contact. Reinhardt followed that the importance of NAIP imagery to the tribes should also be communicated to FSA. She noted that GIS work makes a big difference in policy making, and that increased voices from our community are really important. Ross asked if Abel knew about a national tribal nations organization for GIS, and Abel noted that he has met the lead but has limited capacity to collaborate outside his organization. Ross asked how the GAC could help Abel more. Abel replied that the LiDAR and leaf-off aerial imagery collections were valuable partnerships.

Brandt presented for his sector, Regional/MetroGIS, as the vice chair of the MetroGIS Coordinating Committee. He has been involved with MetroGIS since its inception. It has a Policy Board that provides overarching direction to the Coordinating Committee, which implements technical work through workgroups and Committees. Maas is the staff person who assists with and/or leads those efforts as necessary.

Brandt noted that MetroGIS is very similar to the GAC. They go through a prioritization exercise every year, and try to align their priorities with statewide priorities whenever possible. For example, they have piloted an address editing tool that complements the address standard by providing an online tool to manage that data. They are now working on a tool to aggregate data, run QA/QC on it, and share it, which they are piloting with centerline data. What is done at the GAC often gets worked on at MetroGIS, and there are a lot of members and guests who are on both groups.

Ross noted that Minnesota is very lucky to have MetroGIS and the contributions they make. Brandt added that the metro county managers meet every month, noting that once standards are adopted at a state level, they adjust their data products to meet those standards. Reinhardt added that she has been the MetroGIS Policy Board chair in the past, which led to her being able to testify in Congress at one point. Maas added that there are many interested groups in the metro that are willing to come to the table to engage on this work, and MetroGIS is dependent on that level of collaboration. He also noted that there is no "wall" around the metro region, and that MetroGIS is not any kind of "closed forum", since they can learn from other viewpoints and by sharing different definitions of problems.

Reinhardt added that bringing so many different types of organizations together was a very new concept when it first started, and funding from the Metropolitan Council was scrutinized at one point. When that scrutiny was finished, the Council felt the effort was not only crucial, but should be extended statewide. Brandt added that when they first looked at parcel data, the technical folks just looked at the technical challenges, but then the true obstacle was funding and legal issues around license agreements (this was back when the parcel data was being sold).

Brandt closed by noting that a Metro Stormwater Geodata Summit will be taking place at the Hennepin County Public Works Facility on April 17th from 9 am to 12 pm.

Governor's commendation award

Rader reviewed her slides, reminding the GAC that the Governor's Commendation Award exists for activities that exemplify the use of GIS to improve services in Minnesota. The criteria are similar to the driving goals of the Council. The standards are fairly high and thus an award is not given every year. The deadline for nominations this year is May 29. Nominations are delivered to MnGeo but the decision is made by a committee of GAC members. If an award is granted, it is presented at the fall GIS/LIS Conference. She asked members to consider projects that might be worthy of nomination. There is more information, including examples of successful nominations on the MnGeo website. She called for volunteers to evaluate any nominations that might come in, and Bontrager, Brandt, Nagel, Richter, and Stovern raised their hands. Reinhardt said that there are so many amazing things happening in the community, and encouraged folks to nominate projects. Bontrager asked if committee members could submit nominations, and Kotz replied that anyone could make a nomination.

Craig said that awards are not to say someone or some project is better than another, but to inspire other individuals and projects to aspire to similar heights. Brandt and Ross noted that NSGIC extended their deadline for awards on excellence in GIS.

Action Item: Members to submit nominations of worthy projects.

Legislative update and MPA update

Dolbow noted that the Master Purchasing Agreement expired in February, but that he and Ross have been working with the Department of Administration and Esri to acquire an extension and/or broker a new agreement. The agreement allows local governments to buy Esri software off a Cooperative Purchasing Venture, and for state agencies to buy software that is not subject to the Enterprise Licensing Agreement (ELA).

Ross discussed a few legislative items on the state and federal levels, detailed on his slide. Kotz asked about the Geospatial Data Act, and Ross said that the only movement right now is seeking additional cosponsors. Richter noted that law enforcement has already been using a lot of spatial products on opioid usage.

Updates on MN GAC Priority Projects and Initiatives

See page 30 of Agenda Packet

Kotz called for updates from priority owners:

- Kne reported that a survey of cities on free and open data just got wrapped up. The data is collected but has not been processed. The barriers appear to be similar to what has been seen in counties – not technological barriers, but policies and procedures.
- Dolbow relayed the information on his slide about sustaining the WMS imagery service, calling for a volunteer to lead that effort. He also relayed information about improvements that have been made and are being investigated.
- Ross noted that the Street Centerline Data initiative is moving forward, and that he is working on convincing DPS that releasing address point data is a good idea. For centerlines, we are collecting information from counties and from MnDOT, and putting those together will get us to a statewide authoritative layer.
- Dolbow relayed state efforts to aggregate parcel data from 86 counties (Mahnomen does not currently have data other than from the White Earth Band of Ojibwe). He noted that it's not shareable beyond state agencies because of counties that don't make their data free and open. He added that passing the parcel standard is just the first step in a long process to creating a complete layer, since many counties can not fill in dozens of the attributes in the standard with data. Stovern added that St. Louis County hopes to have all 90 columns in the standard filled out within the next few weeks. Ross noted that MnGeo wants to ask open data counties if MnGeo can publish an aggregate of all the open data counties. Brandt suggested a metadata layer that reports the level of completion around the standard to go along with that.
- Dowell provided an update of the boundary data effort. They are working with a test area of PLSS corner data in the Arrowhead, providing the data to the BLM to see what changes they would make to match their information. Once that data comes back, the local surveyors might better understand the level of effort involved in updated boundaries. A statewide remonumenting of all PLSS corners has been envisioned by Pat Veraguth, Douglas County Surveyor. He is also conducting a pilot project remonumenting PLSS corners in a township in the Northwest via an LCCMR grant. Once done, his group would be seeking GAC support for another LCCMR proposal to do this work statewide. Long term, a recommended guideline for PLSS corner data is needed. Stovern added that PLSS data is often stored and managed very differently across the state's 87 counties. Kotz replied that the GAC can vote to approve a letter of support for the LCCMR proposal. Ross replied that a letter should be delivered as soon as possible. **Dowell motioned that the Council authorize a letter of support for an LCCMR project on statewide remonumentation of PLSS corners**, and Reinhardt seconded. Dowell offered to draft the letter. **The motion passed unanimously**. Ross noted that he will create a letter from his office as well. Kotz asked Dowell to keep us aware of the timing. **Action Items: Dowell to draft a letter of recommendation for Kotz to sign and deliver. Ross to draft a letter of recommendation from MnGeo.**
- Richter reported that the workgroup on the Damage Assessment Data Standard has been working with the WebEOC, and that more updates will be provided at the Emergency Preparedness Committee meeting tomorrow.
- Sjerven noted that the 3DGeo Committee is looking for a June meeting on LiDAR data and related standards. There are currently two workgroups tackling hydrography and infrastructure elements. They are

looking for individuals to help their committee understand how it relates to the GAC, and how the committee itself is organized.

- Ross noted that Minnesota-focused basemap services are continuing to be developed internally for state agencies, and discussions continue on what would be needed to open those services up to other organizations.
- With regards to parks and trails, Ross asked Slaats for an update. Slaats noted that there is no standard, and Ross added that bringing various data points into a standard was essentially impossible, so the recent project for the DNR was completed with the best attempt possible. As a result, right now the data is more like a "mashup" than a standard.

3D Nation Elevation Requirements and Benefits Study

Ross relayed information on his slide about how critical uses of elevation data are being studied as part of a nationwide survey. The USGS is attempting to understand the needs of various non-federal organizations in order to scope the 3DEP program. They are looking to identify participants that can be part of this study and fill out the survey. Ross asked if folks were available to participate in a very in-depth survey.

Vaughn added that when we say "elevation data", we're often talking about LiDAR data, but so many users are often using the derived products and thus think LiDAR data isn't in their domain. Nevertheless, we need many users commenting on such needs. Sjerven noted that the 3D Geomatics Committee is trying to compile this list of participants, and that effort is within their scope of work. He encouraged members to send him names of particular participants, and Ross reiterated that those ideas should go to Sjerven. Sjerven said it's OK to learn about duplicates, and that's better than missing out on someone.

Action Item: Members to send names of parties interested in responding to survey on elevation data to Sjerven.

Announcements or other business

Kotz asked if an additional 15 minutes was acceptable, and members agreed. Additional announcements:
- Brandt relayed that Washington County has completed their address point data set for Next Generation 911 and would be happy to share their approach with others if there is any interest.
- Kne noted that GIS/LIS Spring Workshops are announced and details are available on the GIS/LIS website.
- Tourtelotte noted that the UM GeoCon conference is coming up in May in LaCrosse, WI. More information is available at umgeocon.org.
- Stovern added that the Fall Conference Call for Abstracts is open, with a deadline of May 11. He added that each location of the Spring Workshops will have networking events following the workshops. Ross added that NSGIC is likely to request Minnesota to present in one of their 90 minute sessions. The NSGIC conference goes for a whole week, sharing the DECC location and days with the GIS/LIS conference later in the week.
- Stovern added that user group information will come out soon for the Conference.
- Bontrager asked Sjerven to send her information about 3D Geomatics, and said that she keeps a Google group active for nonprofit GIS users.
- Dowell said that he is chairing the MSPS annual meeting in February of 2019, and if members are interested in presenting, that conference would have a welcoming audience.

- Richter noted that the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) is keeping many local governments busy these days.
- Anderson noted that he co-authored an article with ProWest for the Esri local government publication. He asked what the cost of the NSGIC conference would be, and Ross noted that attendees will be allowed to attend across events, but will have to eat at the event they register for.
- Kotz noted the recently completed address points editor application is available for organizations to use by contacting him or Maas.
- Watson noted that the DNR has recently piloted a project around uses of drone flights at the DNR. A series of case studies will be used to provide recommendations to the DNR commissioner on future use of drones.
- Koutnik noted that an ArcGIS Online update is coming in April. He added that a letter in support of the Digital Coast initiative is likely to come from Esri. He asked Dowell about clarification on the PLSS efforts.
- Maas noted that another MetroGIS project on communication around use cases for Address Point data is ongoing.

Adjourn

Kotz adjourned the meeting at 2:12.