

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2024

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Members Present: Heather Albrecht, *Hennepin County*; Jill Amundson, *West Central Initiative*; Mitch Bergeson, *USGS*; Jeffrey Bloomquist, *USDA Risk Management Agency*; Ryan Bonney, *Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community*; David Brandt, *Washington County and MetroGIS*; Christy Christensen, *McLeod County*; Shana Crosson, *UMN Twin Cities*; Kari Geurts, *MNIT DNR*; Jessica Fendos, *LOGIS*; Len Kne, *UMN Twin Cities*; Leanne Knott, *City of Red Wing*; Britta Maddox, *Anoka County*; Tanya Mayer, *Metropolitan Council*; Victoria Reinhardt, *Ramsey County*; Kendis Scharenbroich, *Pro-West & Associates Inc.*; Gerry Sjerven, *Minnesota Power*; Alison Slaats, *MnGeo*; Benjamin Timerson, *MnDOT*; Dennis Tumberg, *City of Chanhassen*; Patrick Veraguth, *Douglas County*

Members Absent: Kari Geurts, *MNIT DNR*; Cory Richter, *Ramsey County*; Stacey Stark, *UMN Duluth*

Non-Members Present: Elorm Agbolosoo, *MnGeo*; Norman Anderson, *MnGeo*; Randall Baranczyk, *Unknown*; Andrea Bergman, *MNIT DNR*; Andrea Borich, *MPCA*; Curtis Carlson, *MnGeo*; Peter Castro, *MN Children, Youth and Families*; Jennifer Corcoran, *MN DNR*; Randall Cutting, *Environmental Resources Management*; Bill Dando, *MNIT Health*; Adam Derringer, *Ayers Associates*; Jason Ewert, *MNIT PCA*; Casey Farrell, *MSA Professional Services, Inc.*; Michael Ginsbach, *MPCA*; Jon Gustafson, *Geospatial World*; Karl Hahn, *MN Revenue*; Randy Knippel, *Dakota County*; Mike Koutnik, citizen; Linse Lahti, *DNR*; Patrick Landisch, *Minnesota Department of Revenue*; Billie Lebold, *Emergency Communications Network, Department of Public Safety*; Andrew Lundgren, *Saint Louis County*; Ryan Mattke, *UMN Twin Cities*; Rick Moore, *MNIT DNR*; Akiko Nakamura, *MnDOT*; Tom Paulson, *1Spatial, Inc.*; Nancy Rader, *Retired*; Justin Roberts, *MNIT DOT*; Chris Ross, *Scott County*; Kiah Sagami, *Houston Engineering*; Dustin Schmieg, *TEK Systems*; Jamie Schulz, *MNIT DNR*; Molly Shoberg, *MN DNR*; Lucas Spaete Shoberg, *MN DNR*; Matthew Tabaka, *U-Spatial*; Kory Thurnau, *MnGeo*; Jennifer Tworzynski, *Minnesota office of the State Archaeologist*; Sally Wakefield, *MnGeo*; Clayton Watercott, *Metro Transit*;

Meeting Options

- **Virtual:** Online via Microsoft Teams
- **In-person:** Conference Room 7, [Bandana Square](#), 1021 Bandana Blvd E, Saint Paul, MN

Meeting Materials

- [Agenda packet](#)
- [Presentation slides](#)

1. Call to order

Chair Albrecht called the meeting to order, calling attention to the Tennessen notice reminding guests that the meeting was being recorded for transcription purposes only. In-person guests then introduced themselves, with online guests introducing themselves in the Teams chat. Albrecht then reviewed the agenda and called for approval of the agenda and the last meeting minutes.

- **Motion:** Approve the agenda (Mayer / Brandt) – Motion passed
- **Motion:** Approve last meeting minutes (from 3/20/2024) (Knott / Reinhardt) – Motion passed

2. Review and accept Committee and Workgroup Reports

Chair Albrecht called for approval of the committee and workgroup reports as reflected in the [meeting agenda packet](#). She called attention to GAC related presentations planned for the GIS/LIS Consortium Annual Conference in October.

- **Motion:** Approve the committee reports (Meyer / Reinhardt) – Motion passed

3. Community Mapping Expo for Minnesota Non-Profits Update

Jessica Fendos walked members through an overview of the event held on August 21st at the LOGIS office in Golden Valley. The event was promoted through multiple venues. 41 individuals representing 30 non-profit organizations participated. In addition, 28 individuals representing government and education attended. Presentation topics included:

- About MnGeo and Data Sharing - Alison Slaats, State GIO
- Serving the Community - GIS for Nonprofit and Government Collaboration, Jarod Fox, and Ariana Kim, Esri
- Helping Communities Thrive with GIS - Jessica Fendos, LOGIS
- Mapping Anti-Displacement and Housing Opportunities along the Blue Line Extension - Jeff Matson, CURA
- Research to Action – John Vaughn, Fresh Energy
- Live Examples of Nonprofit GIS Use – Jill Amundson, West Central Initiative

She then shared a [Story Map](#) overviewing highlights from the presentations. Takeaway includes challenges include funding, data awareness and access to accessible data. Wakefield added that she was impressed by the number of people who attended onsite.

Shana Crosson asked if participants mentioned GIS skills as a barrier. Fendos responded that many do not have dedicated GIS staff but apply GIS in their other roles. There was a question about outreach and Fendos said she did a lot of cold calling, promotion in newsletters, groups she is part of an existing list of nonprofit organizations. Registrations were managed via Survey 123. Esri is following up with participants to offer training and other resources. Mike Koutnik shared his experience working with nonprofits.

4. CANDO Workgroup Update

David Brandt provided an overview of this workgroup's efforts so far. The full name of the group is Contributing to Nationwide and Commercial Data Assets Workgroup and the mission is to share local authoritative data with nationwide and commercial assets. To date they have contacted Apple, Esri, Google, Here and TomTom. They also plan to investigate the relationships between these organizations and Open Street Maps. The group is currently focusing on Esri and reported recent changes in the Community Maps program. Esri is now working exclusively with TomTom for their street centerline data. Brandt reported on a demonstration project Washington and Ramsey counties are working through with Esri to test the new process. Esri accessed the street centerline data from the Minnesota Geospatial Commons and compared it with existing data, working through the differences directly with Brandt. Over 7000 discrepancies were found originally and that is down to just over 200. Changes are already showing up in Esri products and Open Street Map. The procedure for other counties to participate is not yet determined.

Continued work includes investigating Open Data License options, continue to work through Esri/TomTom process and promote statewide centerlines and address points.

Tanya Mayer added that the Metropolitan Council continues to work through the former Community Maps data process that updates only the Topographic Basemap. This process will update data throughout that system. In the meanwhile, users might recognize a difference in accuracy between basemaps.

5. MnGeo Update

Alison Slaats reported on 4 items –

Geospatial Commons Modernization

The [Minnesota Geospatial Commons](#) is Minnesota's GIS data clearinghouse. There are over 1000 resources available on the commons and 46 publishers currently contribute data. The site is about 10 years old. MnGeo applied for and received funds to update this site. The goal of the modernization efforts is to provide more web services and overall improvement of user and publisher experience.

Both a technical visionary and Executive steering teams have been formed and to advise the project. In July the tech visionary team finalized the proposed technical solution, and the Executive team approved a charter, scope, and architecture solution. Currently the team is working to define staff resources for application development including agency partners and vendors.

The project is using an agile approach and is working to develop project elements including features and user stories, identify dependencies and estimate resource needs and ongoing costs. The development space will include ArcGIS Online Azure and Esri Hub.

MnTOPO 2

MnGeo, in partnership with the GAC 3DGeo committee, is building out MnTOPO 2 to share MN lidar data and derivatives. Work on creating derivative products have been delayed due to complications working in the Azure cloud, both those efforts are now progressing. In the short term, completed lidar data is available on the [USGS](#)

[National Map](#). Slaats could not provide an estimated timeline for completion at this time but will continue to provide updates at these meetings.

The development system for storage and ArcGIS Enterprise has been completed. Due to data size considerations, virtual desktops were required to create products in place. Consultation with Esri on optimized storage and access have been completed and work is in progress for defining products for three Lidar Acquisition Blocks (LABS)

- Missouri River/Big Sioux
- Lower Mississippi/Southeast MN
- Central Mississippi

First deliverables being worked on include 1k tile lidar Digital Elevation Models (DEMS) in Cloud Optimized GeoTiff (COGTIFF) format.

DEM Mosaic dataset for the 3 LABS will be complete by October 2024 and ready for testing in the dev environment. We hope to have a statewide 0.5 DEM Image Service available for testing by partners/stakeholders by November 2024. Additional Image services related to derived products will be created once the data products are in place.

Derivatives being planned initially include DEMs in more resolutions, contours, hillshades and hydrographic position index (HSP). Other future derived products include digital survey model (DSM), hydro breaklines, lidar point cloud times and normalized digital surface model (nDSM). There are currently no steward/creators identified to develop 3D buildings and building footprints.

The process for creating seamless, authoritative statewide datasets for remaining LABS will be in place with the system production environment dependent on satisfactory results for the initial group of 3 LABS.

Slaats shared a schedule with many dates yet to be determined but progress will continue to be reported here.

There were questions about acquisition dates and a status map is available here:

https://www.mngeo.state.mn.us/committee/3dgeo/acquisition/MN_LAB_Statewide_Map_Lidar_Status.pdf

There was another question regarding work being done by counties and if that work could be shared with the state if the county is willing to share. Slaats responded that she isn't yet ready to commit to that but would like to have that conversation.

PLSS Monument Grant Program

Last year MnGeo was awarded \$9.1M plus administrative costs by the legislature to pass funds to counties for PLSS remonumentation. As of May, all funds have been committed. 34 counties were awarded funds totaling \$9,118,000. 29 counties that applied were not awarded representing \$6.4M in unmet requests. Awards followed the metrics defined by the [PLSS Preservation Committee](#). More information can be found on the [Minnesota PLSS Dashboard](#). Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) published a [story on the PLSS program](#) and the [Detroit Lakes Newspaper](#) highlighted Becker County's PLSS project. First quarterly reports show that about 10% of work has been performed and reimbursements are being processed. Lessons learned are being documented as the project progresses.

There is a subcommittee working on additional legislative funding and discussions to include tribal governments in any new legislations are underway. The PLSS Remonumentation Legislation Subcommittee works under the [Parcel and Land Records Committee](#). Contact Pat Veraguth for further information or to become involved.

Governor at Esri User Conference

Slaats reported on Governor Walz’s presentation at the Esri User Conference in San Diego, CA in July. The [full presentation](#) and a clip of [key highlights](#) are available online. You can view the [Executive Map Portfolio](#) Walz demonstrated and read about the event in a [MNIT Blog Post](#). Walz insisted on managing his own demo, which shows he is comfortable navigating maps hands-on. His presentation demonstrated the tie between policy, how GIS is supporting data driven decisions and the One Minnesota plan. Other states are now expressing interest in replicated the portfolio.

6. Data endorsement process proposal

Slaats spoke to the creating of a data endorsement process for statewide datasets. This idea was proposed by the EPC, but Slaats thought it would be more appropriate at the GAC level rather than under a committee. A workgroup charter is included in the agenda packet and speaks to the benefits, objectives, deliverables, and initial participants. The benefits of this effort would result in identifying the “best available” dataset by category and reinforce the value of development for data producers. It would also lead to redundancy and bring increased visibility to the data. Previous efforts around data review processes in Minnesota and other states will be consulted and key process steps will be defined. The process and datasets would need to be sustainable and identified on the Geospatial Commons. Meetings would occur monthly with deliverables likely by August 2025

Commissioner Reinhardt added that this effort would result in reduced confusion for the larger community of users, investors, and policy makers. Sjerven asked if similar datasets would still be allowed to be published on the Commons and Slaats confirmed that all datasets continue to be welcome on the Commons. Concerns about how datasets would be identified for endorsement was also discussed.

- **Motion:** Create a new GAC data endorsement workgroup and accept the proposed workgroup charter (Brand / Sjerven) – Motion passed

7. Break and networking

8. Executive Team update and recommendations

Chair Albrecht introduced operations recommendations being put forth by the Executive Team. She reminded members that this year represents transitions in council leadership and staff, and both are working together to streamline operations and increase efficiency, especially in relation to member requests around committee organization and reporting. At the last meeting the GAC authorized the creation of an executive team comprising the chair, vice chair, secretary, GIO and MnGeo staff. Albrecht reported on the next steps in the process, encouraging discussion and inviting feedback. She presented the following mission and goals.

- a. Executive Team membership and mission

Mission: The Executive Team of the MN Geospatial Advisory Council supports the functions of the GAC. The Executive Team authors the GAC workplan and aligns the activities of the GAC to adhere to the plan. The Executive Team supports the GAC by organizing the quarterly public meetings, gathering feedback from the GIS community through the priority surveys, and ensuring the committee work supports the priorities.

Executive Team Goals:

- Increase duration of priority project work to align with full GAC term
- Align GAC committees and priority projects
- Improve committee and workgroup reporting
- Increased participation of GAC committee and sectors in meetings
- Replace GAC website and committee pages with Esri Hub
- Additional GAC member support for committees
- Ease transition of GAC membership and leadership between terms

She also discussed moving to a 2-year cycle for administering and establishing GAC priorities. This change will better align with GAC terms and accommodate a longer cycle between surveys to advance priority projects. Moving forward, priority projects will be nested under GAC committees to simplify tracking and reporting. She shared a first cut at aligning priorities with the existing committee structure, adding that adjustments to the committee structure may be needed to realize full alignment. Committees do not need to be specific to a priority but may serve other GAC mission needs; therefore, there may be committees that exist in addition to those working on community priorities.

b. Operational improvements

Albrecht presented the following steps to streamline and simplify GAC operations, describing each effort and adding that this is a work in progress. If members support this direction, the executive team will come back with more details at the next meeting. Members registered general support for moving forward with these improvements.

- Priority project reporting will be rolled up into committee report to eliminate redundant reporting requests.
- Each committee will present at (a minimum of) one quarterly GAC meeting during each 2-year term/cycle
- Priority project updates will be included in agenda packets (as part of committee reports), presentations will be on request.
- Some of the meeting time previously allotted to priority project updates will be allocated to sector report
- Round robin updates will be reinstated at the end of each meeting for any GAC member or guests to make an industry relevant announcement.
- Transition the GAC web presence to Esri Hub, each committee will have a Hub that links to the main GAC Hub. Committees will manage their own sites and hub licenses would be provided by MnGeo.
- Include (or add) a GAC member as Vice-Chair for each committee. That role would support implement alignment improvements as discussed (reporting, Hub development), This could be a good role for new members to engage.

There was also discussion about succession planning and the need for leadership recruitment. Sjerven suggested that expanding the number of at large members could help support this direction.

Mike Koutnik added that there are conversations happening in Wisconsin around land records information sharing and redacted records. He suggested the GAC stay aware of any changes that might occur around records sharing. Mayer added that the EPC discussed sensitive information in parcel records and ascertained that sensitive information is removed at the county level. There is currently no method to redact from previous dataset publications. Commissioner Reinhardt added that although people can go through the process to have personal information expunged (i.e. felonies) that information may already have been shared and may still exist in previous records.

Albrecht shared a slide of committees that currently have a GAC membership in a leadership position and discussion ensued around this recommendation. Members expressed support that each committee include an appointed member in a leadership position, but suggested it not be limited to the vice-chair position (could be the chair, or co-chairs) and committees can decide leadership structure, but must ensure one leader is also an appointed member. This recommendation will be brought back to the group at the next meeting to further discuss how it would be implemented.

Final recommendations include:

- Each term, the Executive Team will host an orientation for new and returning members outside of a regular scheduled meeting to discuss the coming term and roles (before first meeting)
- The Executive team will host a gathering of committee chairs to align priorities across committees, membership, and the GIS community. (Following first meeting so leaders will have been identified for the coming year.)

Overall, these changes are being proposed to improve GAC structure and improve alignment within the GAC and with MnGeo and MNIT (the GAC appointing authority).

9. Mid-term priority projects check-in (Maddox)

Priority project slides were reviewed and provided updates were shared. Priority project leaders were invited to comment on their reports.

10. Round Robin / Announcements (All)

Leanne Knott reminded the group that the GIS/LIS State Conference would be happening soon and hoped everyone would be able to attend.

Brandt added that County IT leadership would be meeting at the same time in Duluth and there might be some crossover.

Slaats announced that she and Chair Albrecht would be attending the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) soon and that they were looking forward to meeting with, and learning from, other state councils and GIO's.

Mattke announced that this year's 2024 Spatial Forum and Borchert Lecture is scheduled for November 18th from 1-5 PM. Maggie Cawley, the Executive Director for OpenStreet Map US and Chair of the National Geospatial Advisory Committee will be the keynote speaker.

Crosson announced that The University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Study is hosting an event called "Thinking Spatially" on October 11th and focuses on environmental justice and the Mississippi River.

Carlson shared that the Standards Committee will be meeting at the end of October.

The next meeting of the GAC will be held on December 18th, 2024, from 10AM – Noon

11. **Adjourn* (Albrecht)**

Chair Albrecht adjourned the meeting at 2:00 PM.

- **Motion:** To adjourn (Brandt /Timerson) – Motion passed

Next Quarterly GAC Meeting: December 18, 2024, 10:00 AM – Noon (online only)

Minutes prepared by: Sally Wakefield