Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2025

10:00 AM - 12:00 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*; 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*; Cory Richter, *Ramsey County*; Kendis Scharenbroich, *Pro-West & Associates, Inc.*; Alison Slaats, *MnGeo*; Stacey Stark, *UMN Duluth*; Dennis Tumberg, *City of Chanhassen*; Patrick Veraguth, *Douglas County*

Members Absent: Gerry Sjerven, *Minnesota Power*; Shana Crosson, *UMN Twin Cities*

Non-Members Present: Jennifer Adade, *Hennepin County*; Norman Anderson, *MnGeo*; Jared Baloun, *Jackson County*; Andrea Bergman, *MNIT DNR*; Jon Beyeler, *MN DNR*; Patrick Brown, *Dunwoody College*; Andrea Borich, *MPCA*; Chris Cantey, *MN LCC*; Curtis Carlson, *MnGeo*; Randall Cutting, *ERM*; David Chase, *North Memorial Health Ambulance*; Michelle Clasen, *Washington County*; Carla Coates, *Ramsey County*; Jennifer Corcoran, *MN DNR*; Jason Ewert, *MNIT MPCA*; Casey Farrell, *MSA Professional Services, Inc.*; Karl Hahn, *MDOR*; Michael Ginsbach, *MPCA*; Eric Kopras, *City of Woodbury*; Mark Kotz, *GAC Standards Committee Chair*; Maxim Kroll, *MPCA*; Patrick Landisch, *MDOR*; Andrew Lundgren, *St. Louis County*; Karen Majewicz, *UMN Twin Cities*; Ryan Mattke, *UMN Twin Cities*; Reddy Mekala, *DHS*; Steven Moe, *Polk County*; Rick Moore, *MNIT DNR*; Evelyn Moran, *Great River Greening*; Akiko Nakamura, *MnDOT*; Jessica Orlando, *NEMAC*; Pamela Oslin, *MESB*; Michelle Pasko, *MnDOT*; Tom Paulson, *1Spatial*; Oforiwaa Pee, *UMN Twin Cities*; Marisa Peterson, *MnDOT*; Hannah Pfeffer, *MN DNR*; Valquiria Quirino, *MPCA*; Nancy Rader, *Private Citizen*; Jesse Reinhardt, *Hennepin County*; Justin Roberts, *MnDOT*; Nate Rose, *Crow Wing County*; Dan Ross, *Private Citizen*; Kiah Sagami, *Houston Engineering*; Joe Sapletal, *Dakota County*; Dustin Schmieg, *TEKsystems*; Paul Senne, RESPEC; Molly Shoberg, *MN DNR*; David Sieberg, *Blue Earth County*; Megan Sisko, *MnGeo*; John Slusarczyk, *Anoka County*; Lucas Spaete, *MN DNR*; Abby Stamm, *MDH*; John Studtmann, *City of Minneapolis*; Matt Taran, *City of Burnsville*; Ryan Theel, *USFWS*; Kory Thurnau, *MnGeo*; Denise Tingstad, *City of Maple Grove*; Kevin Trappe, *Beltrami County*; Mike True, *Watonwan County*; Jennifer Tworzyanski, *MN ADM*; Sean Vaughn, *MNIT DNR*; Clayton Watercott, *Metro Transit;* Ace Wesselmann*, MN DEED*; Colleen Wilson, *UMN Twin Cities*; Pete Wiringa, *UMN Twin Cities*; Besiem Yemiru, *Blue Earth County*

Meeting Options

- **Virtual:** Online via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Materials

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

1.   Call to order

Chair Albrecht called the meeting to order, noting that the meeting will be transcribed (but not recorded) by Microsoft Teams to assist with the minutes, and reminded everyone not to share any private information. The transcription was then started.

- **Motion:** Call the meeting to order (Mayer / Richter) – Motion passed

Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC) members introduced themselves verbally, and additional attendees placed their name and organization in the Teams chat. During member introductions, vacancies were noted for the Greater Minnesota City and Twin Cities metro county representatives. State Government representative member, Kari Geurts, shared that GAC member Ben Timerson is retiring so his seat is now vacant. Geurts highlighted Timerson's 8 years of service on the GAC and co-chairing of the State Agency GIS Collaborative; Chair Albrecht joined in thanking Timerson for his service to the GAC and contributions to the GIS community.

Chair Albrecht introduced Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) staff providing support during the meeting: Megan Sisko and Curt Carlson.

Mid-rollcall, an AI bot joined the meeting chat to take notes and Megan Sisko asked that this bot be removed; Michelle Clasen deactivated the bot.

Chair Albrecht reviewed the mission of the GAC and the day's agenda, then called for approval of the agenda.

- **Motion:** Approve the agenda (Brandt / Tumberg) – Motion passed

Chair Albrecht invited adjustments to the previous meeting minutes and after no comments called for approval.

- **Motion:** Approve last meeting minutes (from 12/18/2024) (Maddox / Richter) – Motion passed

2.   Review and accept Committee Reports

Chair Albrecht reviewed highlights from the committee reports (slide 12) – see full reports in the agenda packet.

Chair Albrecht called for approval of the committee reports as reflected in the meeting agenda packet.

- **Motion:** Approve the committee reports (Mayer / Brandt) – Motion passed

3.   3D Geomatics Committee Lidar Data Processing Update

Chair Albrecht introduced Sean Vaughn and Rick Moore to provide the lidar update (slides 15-42).

Vaughn briefly explained the structure of the 3D Geomatics Committee and its mission to make lidar data available statewide. Vaughn explained that the focus of the presentation would be the creation of a seamless statewide Digital Elevation Model (DEM) from the recent lidar data collection (referred to as "second generation lidar data").

Vaughn reviewed the current status of the recent statewide lidar data collection, noting that acquisition took place in 2020-2024 – while a majority of the data for Minnesota is currently available online from the [US Geological Survey](#) (USGS), some data is still in review. Vaughn explained the partnership between the GAC 3D Geomatics Committee and USGS, and the purpose of the [USGS 3D Elevation Program](#) (3DEP) to facilitate systematic collection of high-resolution lidar data nationwide. Vaughn highlighted the status of this effort across the US and the many requirements that must be met for the data to be 3DEP-certified.

Vaughn explained the State of Minnesota's process and roles for the collection and creation of 3DEP deliverables which includes a 0.5-meter DEM and then derivatives from that DEM (contours, hillshade, HPI, etc.; see slide 19 for details). Vaughn reviewed the data architecture, resolution, and 100-meter overlap requirements for acquisition, after which Rick Moore explained the overlap process, and protocols for resolving overlap discrepancies across acquisitions, focusing on two examples: a river and a lake.

Vaughn closed the presentation by noting that this effort – an estimated $30 million value – will help avoid duplication of work across the state for these data products, while also helping ensure the data's integrity.

Chair Albrecht thanked the presenters and invited attendees to put questions in the chat so the meeting could move onto the next presentation.

Vaughn shared via chat that testing is currently being completed on the first compilation of the statewide 0.5-meter lidar-derived DEM, comprising the Missouri-Big Sioux, Central Mississippi, and Lower Mississippi lidar acquisition blocks. Parts of the statewide DEM will be released as it becomes available rather than waiting to release it once coverage is available statewide. Meanwhile, preparation for the creation of DEM-derived products is underway, and MnGeo continues to develop MnTOPO-2 – the application that will serve the second generation lidar data and derivatives for Minnesota to the public. There are no release dates at this time.

4.   Outreach Committee Update and Charter Amendment

Chair Albrecht turned the meeting over to Jessica Fendos to present on the Outreach Committee (slides 43-50).

Jessica Fendos provided an update on recent activities of the revived Outreach Committee, noting several new members and explaining the roles and structure of the committee which contains the Open Data Subcommittee and Success Stories Workgroup. The Open Data Subcommittee, which meets every 6 weeks, is looking for a co-chair. The Outreach Committee meets the first Tuesday of every month.

Fendos reviewed the committee's updated mission statement and objectives for GAC member approval. Committee Mission: To connect the community with the council and its committees by providing strategic communication resources that advance priorities and values. See the agenda packet for the full charter.

Fendos summarized current committee priorities and recent progress, noting focus on open data outreach and development of the GAC Hub site. At the time, 55 counties were opting in to have their data included in the publicly available statewide parcel dataset, 46 for address points (and emergency service zones), and 45 for road centerlines. These data are refreshed quarterly on the Geospatial Commons.

To close the presentation, Fendos showed the draft GAC and committee Hub Sites on-screen.

Chair Albrecht invited conversation about the Outreach Committee charter amendment; there was no response.

- **Motion:** Approve amended Outreach Committee Charter (Maddox / Tumberg) – Motion passed

5.   Review and approve Archiving Committee Charter

Chair Albrecht noted that presentations will continue through the break to finish agenda items by noon then invited Ryan Mattke to present about the Archiving Committee (slides 53-60).

Mattke began the presentation by pointing to past archiving efforts of previous GAC workgroups and explained the context of establishing the Archiving Committee now, highlighting the need to preserve land use data for Minnesota by coordinating previous work with current opportunity. Mattke reviewed the objectives and deliverables of the committee, as well as the mission which was chosen based on feedback at the last GAC meeting. See the complete proposed charter and work plan in the agenda packet.

The committee is seeking charter approval from the GAC after which it will convene meetings. The committee is also seeking more members, especially representation from MnGeo, tribal government, county government, and other sectors, noting that it already has sufficient university sector representation.

Chair Albrecht invited questions for Mattke about the committee and the proposed charter as shown in the agenda packet. After no response, Albrecht called for a motion to approve the charter.

- **Motion:** Approve the Archiving Committee Charter (Brandt / Richter) – Motion passed

Chair Albrecht invited discussion about the Archiving Committee Work Plan as shown in the agenda packet. After no response, Albrecht called for a motion to approve the work plan.

- **Motion:** Approve the Archiving Committee Work Plan (Maddox / Richter) – Motion passed

6.   Governor's Certificate Award Announcement

Chair Albrecht called on Len Kne to provide the Governor's Certificate Award Announcement (no slides).

Kne (Awards Committee co-chair with Phil Nagel) invited everyone to submit a project for the Governor's Certificate Award, highlighting that an award hasn't been given out for a few years due to lack of nominations.

Deadlines for nomination:

- **First draft of nomination packet:** June 1
  - Awards Committee will review within 7 days and provide feedback; the committee serves to help nominations see success; rarely has it suggested that a project might be too early to nominate
- **Final draft of nomination packet:** June 30

Kne reviewed the criteria for the award and explained the Awards Committee structure and membership, then shared that they're always looking for additional members.

Awards will be issued at the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium Conference in the fall.

7.   Break

Chair Albrecht skipped the break since the meeting was behind schedule.

8.   MN GIS/LIS Consortium Updates

Chair Albrecht introduced Leanne Knott, the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium liaison on the GAC, to provide updates from the Consortium (slides 65-73).

Knott provided an overview of the Consortium, its mission statement, and board, highlighting its priority to connect professionals statewide, largely by hosting events such as their annual conference. Consortium Mission: "To develop and support the GIS/LIS community in Minnesota for the benefit of our people and contributors."

Upcoming events include Spring Workshops on May 15 at the University of Minnesota (with a networking event nearby immediately following the workshops) and Annual Conference October 1-3 (likely to be relocated to Duluth). Knott pointed to the Consortium's GeoPEPS Hub Site for students and emerging professionals, and reviewed the Consortium's four awards that are presented each year at the annual conference. **Nominations for GIS/LIS Consortium awards open in May – see the GIS/LIS Awards page for more information.**

Knott explained the history of the GAC - GIS/LIS Consortium Ex-officio position on the Consortium Board – once chosen by the Consortium, this board member then applies to serve as the GIS/LIS representative member of the GAC to serve as a liaison between the two organizations. Knott provided more details about the application process and requirements for the role. Carla Coates is the Consortium's GAC liaison board member for 2025-2027. Coates will still need to apply for GAC membership to serve in this role on the GAC.

Knott highlighted a **need for instructors for the Spring Workshops** – contact Eric Myott for more information about the workshops or to express interest in being an instructor.

Chair Albrecht encouraged everyone to consider nominating for the awards and instructing a workshop.

9.   GAC Member Appointments

Chair Albrecht introduced the next two-year GAC member term (Fiscal Years 2026/27) which will run July 2025 - June 2027. All seats will be open for application. Albrecht reviewed the GAC's Guiding Principles and invited anyone that is interested in these values to apply.

Albrecht reviewed GAC member obligations, including attending a member orientation on September 3, 10 AM - 2 PM. The orientation will explain the role of a GAC member, what to expect, and resources for being successful. Additionally, members are to be active in quarterly council meetings, serve as an ambassador to their sector, and abide by Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) guidelines and policies (including a MNIT-created guide for councils which will be presented at the member orientation). See slide 77 for more details.

Albrecht reviewed the GAC member representative categories and process for applying to become a member. **Applications open March 7** on the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State's GAC application page – a cover letter and resume should be included in each submission. **The application period closes March 28.** However, vacant seats will remain open for application until filled. Members are appointed by MNIT Commissioner Tarek Tomes. Selected and non-selected applicants will be notified prior to the start of the new term (July 1, 2025).

The first official meeting of the new term is September 10, which is hybrid. Albrecht reminded current GAC members that if they are interested in continuing to serve as a member that they must reapply.

Contact MnGeo with questions about applying for GAC membership and see slides 75-79 for more information.

10.   Executive Team Updates

Chair Albrecht detailed the Executive Team membership: GAC Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary, as well as Minnesota's Chief Geospatial Information Officer, and administrative support for the GAC from MnGeo (currently: Heather Albrecht, Britta Maddox, Tanya Mayer, Alison Slaats, Sally Wakefield, and Megan Sisko).

Albrecht reviewed the status of each Executive Team goal (derived from the 2024 GAC Work Plan):

- **Priority project alignment with GAC 2-year term** – **Complete**
- **Alignment of priorities with committees** – **In Progress**
- **Committee and workgroup reporting improvements** – **In Progress**
- **Transition GAC web presence to an Esri Hub Site** – **In Progress**
- **Additional GAC member support for committees** – **In Progress**
- **Smoother transitioning of GAC membership and leadership between terms** – **In Progress**
- **Increased GAC committee and sector meeting participation** – **Future Phase (not yet started)**

Albrecht noted that improvements to committee reporting are still in progress and noted the following changes:

- **Work plans** for the next two-year term will be due at the end of term May meeting – these should reflect plans for the entire term; after term priorities are decided at the first FY December GAC meeting, amendments to committee work plans may be submitted for approval at the first FY March meeting
- A **midterm summary of committee accomplishments** will be due at the first FY May meeting
- An **end-of-term report** will be due at the second FY May meeting, summarizing accomplishments across the term and including a work plan for the next two-year term

For the current term, an end-of-term report should be submitted for GAC acceptance at the **May 2025 meeting**, comprising of a summary of term accomplishments and work plan for the next two-year term. The Council and Executive Team will also follow this reporting scheme.

Chair Albrecht shared that there will be a FY2026/27 term retreat in addition to quarterly GAC meetings, and reiterated the introduction of a GAC member term orientation:

- **New Term GAC Member Orientation:** September 3, 10 AM - 2 PM *(in-person)*
- **Committee-Leadership Retreat:** October 22, 10 AM - 2 PM *(in-person)*
  - Includes the Executive Team and committee chairs to align priorities across the committees, GAC membership, and the GIS community

Chair Albrecht closed the update by encouraging everyone to apply to become a GAC member in the next term, noting desire to fill all representative seats. See slides 81-85 for more information.

11.   MnGeo Updates

Alison Slaats shared updates from the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (slides 86-91), with the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) Monument Grant program update provided by Kory Thurnau:

- **PLSS Monument Grant program –** Projects are on average about 37% complete with all on or ahead of schedule; so far, about 28% of the awarded $9.1 million has been reimbursed to counties. Much work is anticipated this spring. Related, there has been much outreach by the GAC PLSS Remonumentation

Legislation Subcommittee and Minnesota Society of Professional Land Surveyors (MSPS) lobbyist, Phil Raines. The subcommittee is monitoring two bills that propose additional funding for the PLSS (SF 1233 and HF 1478). *Upcoming event:* Surveyor's Day at the Capitol in the Governor's Dining Room, March 17, 12 PM - 4 PM (includes presentation and lunch).

- **Geospatial Commons Modernization** – Progress continues, and an extension has been requested to extend work an additional year, to March 2026. Evaluation of the proposed extension will occur in April.

- **Government-Owned Lands Dataset** – This dataset will be derived each quarter following the quarterly parcel update – the dataset's first release is expected in the second quarter of 2025.

Last, Slaats shared about the MNIT 2024 Annual Report which was released in January; the report highlights the GAC and how geospatial technology is key to the work that MNIT does.

12.   Round Robin / Announcements

Chair Albrecht invited attendees to share any other items with the group or ask questions for the presenters.

Cory Richter shared that it's Public Women in Construction Week and in May will be National Public Works Week.

Pat Veraguth shared that he and Alison Slaats will be presenting at the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Survey Tech Conference on March 12, and the following week is National Surveyor Week.

Abby Stamm asked how to learn more about the Commons Modernization effort – Alison Slaats will follow-up.

Chair Albrecht recapped a few calls for community action from earlier in the meeting:

- **Open Data Subcommittee** of the Outreach Committee seeks a new co-chair; this person would help support the subcommittee goal of connecting with local governments about opting in to have their parcel, address point, road centerline, and emergency service zone data included in the statewide dataset that is shared on the Commons.

- **Archiving Committee** seeks a GAC member to serve in a leadership role on the committee; the committee also seeks more members to fill gaps in sector representation.

Jason Ewert shared that the MNIT Office of Accessibility has updated its accessibility guidelines for interactive web maps. MNIT is also working on publishing WCAG 2.1 guidance.

13.   Adjourn

Chair Albrecht adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.

- **Motion:** To adjourn (Mayer / Maddox) – Motion passed

_____

Next Quarterly GAC Meeting: May 21, 2025, 11 AM - 2 PM *(hybrid)*

Minutes prepared by: Megan Sisko