

## Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting

May 21, 2025

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Heather Albrecht, *Hennepin County*; Mitch Bergeson, *USGS*; Ryan Bonney, *Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community*; David Brandt, *MetroGIS | Washington County*; Christy Christensen, *McLeod County*; Shana Crosson, *UMN Twin Cities*; Kari Geurts, *MNIT DNR*; Jessica Fendos, *LOGIS*; Leanne Knott, *MN GIS/LIS Consortium | 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*; Dennis Tumberg, *City of Chanhassen*; Patrick Veraguth, *Douglas County*

**Members Absent:** Jill Amundson, *West Central Initiative*; Jeffrey Bloomquist, *USDA Risk Management Agency*; Len Kne, *UMN Twin Cities*; Gerry Sjerven, *Minnesota Power*; Stacey Stark, *UMN Duluth*

**Non-Members Present:** Christopher Beal, *USDA*; Deb Bergeron, *MNIT DNR*; Lynn Boergerhoff, *HOA Leadership Network*; Andrea Borich, *MPCA*; Curtis Carlson, *MnGeo*; Randall Cutting, *ERM*; Elizabeth Clausen, *MESB*; Jennifer Corcoran, *MN DNR*; Preston Dowell, *St. Louis County*; Jason Ewert, *MNIT MPCA*; Diana Flores Castillo, *MnDOT*; Matthew Goodman, *St. Louis County*; Michael Ginsbach, *MPCA*; Quentin Ikuta, *National Indian Carbon Coalition*; Mark Kotz, *GAC Standards Committee Chair*; Mike Koutnik, *Michael A. Koutnik Consulting*; Linse Lahti, *MN DNR*; Patrick Landisch, *MDOR*; Nick Linell, *Alight*; Andrew Lundgren, *St. Louis County*; Steven Moe, *Polk County*; Rick Moore, *MNIT DNR*; Akiko Nakamura, *MnDOT*; John Navin, *MN DNR*; James Olson, *MNIT DNR*; Jessica Orlando, *NEMAC*; Michelle Pasko, *MnDOT*; Nancy Rader, *Private Citizen*; Jesse Reinhardt, *Hennepin County*; Nate Rose, *Crow Wing County*; Dan Ross, *Private Citizen*; Kiah Sagami, *Houston Engineering*; Joe Sapletal, *Dakota County*; Dustin Schmieg, *TEKsystems*; David Sieberg, *Blue Earth County*; Megan Sisko, *MnGeo*; Dan Sjoblom, *Alliant Engineering, Inc.*; Lucas Spaete, *MN DNR*; Abby Stamm, *MDH*; Alissa Stark, *MNIT DNR*; Joel Stevens, *Techwave*; Ryan Stovern, *St. Louis County*; John Studtmann, *City of Minneapolis*; Steve Swazee, *SharedGeo | GAC EPC Chair*; Kory Thurnau, *MnGeo*; Kevin Trappe, *Beltrami County*; Alec Trenda, *Hennepin County*; Sarah Voje, *Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.*; Sally Wakefield, *MnGeo*; Peter Wiringa, *UMN Twin Cities*

### Meeting Options

- **Virtual:** Online via Microsoft Teams
- **In-person:** Room 2000 (Skjeggstad), [Stassen Building](#), 600 N Robert Street, Saint Paul, MN

### Meeting Materials

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

## 1. Call to Order

Chair Albrecht called the meeting to order and Sally Wakefield reviewed in-person meeting logistics. Attendees were reminded that the meeting will be transcribed (but not recorded) by Microsoft Teams to assist with the minutes, and that attendees should refrain from sharing private information.

Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC) members and in-person guests introduced themselves verbally, and additional virtual attendees placed their name and organization in the Teams chat. During member introductions, vacancies were noted for the Greater Minnesota City (1), Twin Cities metro county (1), and State Government (1) seats.

Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) staff supporting the meeting: Sally Wakefield and Megan Sisko.

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 / Maddox) – Motion passed

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

- **Motion:** Approve last meeting minutes (from 3/5/2025) (Mayer / Knott) – Motion passed

## 2. Committee Term Highlights

Chair Albrecht noted that committees submitted end of term reports which include achievements from the past term and work plan for the next term. Albrecht invited committee chairs to provide a summary of these items to attendees. The following committees shared highlights:

- **Awards** – Committee member Ryan Stovern noted recent updates to award criteria and that the committee is exploring ways to get more nominations.
- **Contributing to Nationwide and Commercial Data Assets (CANDO)** – Committee Chair David Brandt shared that the committee is having conversations with Apple, Google, Esri, and TomTom. Apple, Google, and Esri are pulling Minnesota-provided data (e.g., public statewide address points) from the National Address Database to update their data and products. Several counties are also providing data through the Esri Community Maps program and/or to Google. They are testing the sharing of two county datasets with Esri to see if it is feasible to similarly share public statewide datasets. The committee will continue to work with Esri, TomTom, and Google but is not currently working with Apple.
- **Data Endorsement** – Committee Co-Chair Kevin Trappe shared strength and progress of the new committee which now has over 10 members. The committee has reviewed materials from other states, the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), and others to help inform the endorsement process. A first draft, testing, refinement, and finalized process is expected by the end of the two-year term.
- **Emergency Preparedness** – Committee Chair Steve Swazee explained the precursor for founding the committee, noted the importance of outreach to its success, and highlighted its three priorities:
  - *Critical Infrastructure (CI) Assessment:* how CI datasets can be endorsed and made readily available; goal for the next term is to get the first statewide CI dataset endorsed – this will be dependent on the Data Endorsement Committee process for endorsed datasets

- *Underground Utility Mapping*: collaborative effort with Gopher State One Call; guiding development of FuzionView (est. release June 2025) and Field Data Collect (est. release Fall 2025) – release of these two programs may lead to the retirement of this effort
- *US National Grid*: spurred development of the US National Grid Institute; this effort may be retired in the coming term

Swazee also highlighted other committee efforts such as a geospatial resource guide for disasters, and ideas for future work.

- **K-12** – Committee Chair Shana Crosson highlighted the committee’s work in shaping its focus. Since its establishment in 2024 the committee has attended several outreach events and has been partnering with the Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education (MAGE) and the Minnesota GIS/LIS K-12 Committee. In the coming term the committee plans to identify and create geospatial resources for schools, connecting with schools to discover what they need. Crosson noted that MAGE will be hosting the Minnesota Student Digital Mapping Competition in 2025, taking over this effort from Esri. Crosson also shared that the committee is **seeking a Vice Chair** and welcomes new members.
- **Outreach** – Committee Chair Jessica Fendos summarized the work of the committee which meets the first Tuesday of each month, highlighting its mission to connect the community with the council and its committees and noting its great progress on the GAC Hub Site. The committee is **seeking chairs** for the Success Stories Workgroup and Open Data Subcommittee. Fendos explored opportunities for the GAC to interact with the community and reviewed progress of the Open Data Subcommittee’s mission to expand the number of counties opting in to participate in the public statewide foundational datasets. Fendos closed with review of the committee’s work plan for the coming term, highlighting publishing of the GAC Hub Sites by the end of 2025 and potential creation a GAC Annual Report.
- **Parcels and Land Records** – Committee Chair Preston Dowell reviewed the structure of the committee and its two major initiatives, each of which are a GAC priority and has a related subcommittee:
  - *Updated and aligned boundary data*: facilitating collaborative alignment at the MN-WI border; related to this effort, the committee has been working with the Standards Committee to develop and establish a Cadastral Point Data Standard for PLSS corners and other monuments
  - *Remonumentation of all original federal Section Corners*: coordinating with the PLSS Preservation Committee to establish a long-term PLSS Monument Grant Program and get PLSS monuments established statewide; legislation for a long-term PLSS grant program was submitted to the Minnesota House and Senate
- **PLSS Preservation** – Committee Chair Kory Thurnau reviewed the origin of the committee and its purpose to support the PLSS Monument Grant Program. The committee awarded \$9.1 million in PLSS Monument Grant funds to 34 counties, supporting the GAC’s priority for remonumentation of all original federal section corners. The committee is continually monitoring and reimbursing funds to counties as work progresses, with \$3 million disbursed so far – counties are reporting an average of about 51% completion. The committee developed and distributed a survey to the Minnesota county associations to progress the Statewide Survey Records Inventory GAC priority.

- **Standards** – Committee Vice Chair Curt Carlson highlighted the committee’s efforts to increase clarity and consistency across the GAC’s standards and templates, making minor modifications to existing standards. The committee collaborated with the Parcels and Land Records Committee on the Cadastral Point Data Standard to prepare it for Standards Committee review and reached out to subject matter experts of the Lake and Wetland Basin ID Standard to transition the standard into GAC format. Both efforts will be the focus of the next term. Anyone interested in joining the committee is encouraged to reach out to committee leadership. Chair Albrecht thanked the committee for its efforts, noting that the CANDO Committee business partners have praised Minnesota’s geospatial standards.

Chair Albrecht pointed attendees to the term reports and work plans within the agenda packet for more details about the committee’s recent achievements and coming efforts, then invited discussion on the presentations.

Alison Slaats thanked committee chairs and volunteers for their work, expressing appreciation for the extensive amount of work being done on behalf of Minnesotans.

### 3. Review and accept Committee Term Reports and Work Plans

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

- **Motion:** Approve the committee reports (Maddox / Richter) – Motion passed

### 4. Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium Updates

Chair Albrecht called for the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium and MnGeo updates be moved up in the agenda since the meeting was ahead of schedule. There were no objections to this change.

Leanne Knott provided an overview of the Consortium, highlighting its mission to develop and support the GIS/LIS community in Minnesota. Knott noted that Carla Coates has been designated as the GIS/LIS - GAC liaison on the GIS/LIS board. Knott reviewed a potential change to a fee-based membership and mentioned that the Consortium is seeking conference booth exchanges with the MN Society of Professional Surveyors, Iowa, and MidAmerica GIS Consortium (which includes ND, SD, IA, Kansas, NE, IL, MO, AK, OK). Knott also shared that the Consortium board chair is seeking to improve coordination with MnGeo and is considering seeking a lobbyist to help advocate for GIS funding in Minnesota. The Consortium’s Annual Conference is October 1-3 in Duluth – the abstract deadline has been extended to May 30, and there is also a need for conference workshop instructors and vendors. Consortium Award nominations are due May 30, and Spring Workshops were held May 15.

### 5. Minnesota Geospatial Information Office Updates

Slaats provided updates for ongoing work at MnGeo:

- **PLSS Monument Grant program** – Slaats reiterated work mentioned by Kory Thurnau during the PLSS Preservation Committee highlights, noting that 33% of funds have been distributed thus far. Corner certificates and quarterly reports are being filed by the counties, and field visits are being completed.
- **PLSS Remonumentation Legislation Subcommittee** – Slaats referred to highlights shared by Preston Dowell, reiterating that the submitted legislation for long-term PLSS funding doesn’t look likely to be

passed but is still possible. Slaats explained that alternative funding mechanisms are being sought, such as a fee-based program rather than one-time funding.

- **Geospatial Commons Modernization** – Progress continues with the goal of moving to a more web-based service model rather than file-downloading. The project has been approved for a 1-year extension to March 2026. The updated Commons will be delivered in phases, with minimum viable products being delivered in August 2025, November 2025, February 2026, and March 2026. Current publishers can expect to hear from MnGeo to discuss different avenues of participation.
- **National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP)** – Natural color and infrared 2023 NAIP imagery is now available in the [Minnesota Geospatial Image Service](#). The next statewide NAIP imagery should be flown this summer. Slaats thanked Minnesota's federal partners for continuing this great resource.
- **Government-Owned Lands Dataset** – The [Government-Owned Lands](#) data is now available on the Minnesota Geospatial Commons. This opt-in parcels data subset will be derived each quarter following the quarterly parcel update. Slaats asked counties to review this dataset and notify MnGeo of any opportunities for enhancement. MnGeo can then update its automated process to optimize the data.

Last, Slaats mentioned upcoming guidance from Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) for the GAC. Slaats explained that since the GAC is appointed by the MNIT commissioner and supported by MnGeo, the GAC is, by extension, obligated to abide by MNIT policies, including those governing Open Meeting Law. Over the next few months MNIT and MnGeo will be sharing guidelines for the GAC to fulfill these obligations. Slaats reviewed some of the topics that will be covered in this guidance:

- If GAC or GAC-related meetings are recorded, an appropriate Tennesen Warning needs to be provided
- All GAC and GAC-related materials should be stored on MNIT-hosted websites and document sites (e.g., SharePoint or Teams)
- All GAC and GAC-related meetings may be required to be hosted by MnGeo – more details to come
- Other topics including communication guidance, accessibility, and more

Once this guidance is finalized, MNIT legal counsel will be invited to address the GAC about these topics. GAC members and committee chairs should expect communications about these guidelines as MnGeo learns more.

## 6. Break and Networking

Chair Albrecht put the meeting on break, asking attendees to return at 12:50 PM.

## 7. GAC Member Representation Discussion

Chair Albrecht reconvened the meeting and reviewed the status of upcoming GAC term membership:

- GAC member appointments of the current term will end on June 30th and the next term (Fiscal Year 2026/27) will begin July 1
- Applications for next term appointments soft-closed on March 28, however, applications will remain open until positions are filled
- Applications submitted thus far are under review and there are currently more applicants than there are seats available

Chair Albrecht explained that some candidates are not aligned with current seat allocations, so she asked for discussion about potential to introduce flexibility into GAC member sector representation. The intent of this flexibility would be to provide more opportunities for willing participants to be seated on the GAC.

To begin the conversation, Chair Albrecht invited Alison Slaats to provide an overview of GAC member representation over the years. Slaats shared that MnGeo was authorized by SF 2082, passed into law May 2009. The first GAC meeting was January 2010. Since that time there have been eight 2-year terms of the GAC.

Slaats showed a table of membership representation over the years, highlighting the following:

- Except for 1 term, the number of appointed (voting) members has remained steady at 23, plus one non-appointed (non-voting) member, Minnesota's Chief Geospatial Information Officer (MnGeo Director)
- Changes in the number of seats occurred across the following sectors:
  - **At-Large** started at 3 the first term then went up to 4, and back down to 3 in FY2020 (reallocated to add a Surveyor seat)
  - **K-12 Education** was briefly unfilled, thought to be removed, then reinstated
  - **Federal Government** dropped from 2 seats to 1 for two terms
  - **State Government** started at 3 seats then dropped to 2 in FY2014
  - **Surveyor** seat was added in FY2020
- Other changes in sector representation included:
  - **Higher Education** was originally named "MNSCU" and "UMN"
  - **Federal Government** was originally named "USGS" and "Other"
  - **Regional Government, Metro** was originally named "Metropolitan Council"

Slaats shared the advantages of At-Large seats, noting opportunity for worthy candidates from a filled sector to still participate, and to potentially include additional sectors. Slaats shared that MnGeo has received requests to expand sector representation to include additional sectors such as NG911 or emergency response, and in return Slaats investigated the composition of other state's geographic information councils.

Slaats shared results from a National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) survey conducted by their Council of Councils workgroup. This included a graph showing the varying seat numbers of state geographic information councils across the US, with the GAC's numbers being comparable to most other states. Slaats then reviewed a graph of the number of councils with certain types of sector representation, noting sectors represented in other state councils that are not represented in Minnesota:

- |               |                    |                           |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| • Public      | • Public Utilities | • Public Safety Answering |
| • Legislative | • Elections        | Points (PSAPs)            |
| • Assessors   | • Real Estate      |                           |

Slaats recognized the advantage of broadening sector representation on the GAC but noted that doing so could risk losing At-Large or other sector seats, unless more seats are added or some sort of flexibility is added for those sectors with more than one designated seat.

Chair Albrecht asked GAC members for feedback on whether GAC member seats should be adjusted to allow flexibility and/or broaden sector representation for the coming term, potentially opening opportunity for current quality applicants to become members – Albrecht proposed three options for consideration:

### **Option 1: Flex second sector seat**

- Keep membership at 23
- For sector categories with more than 1 seat available (excluding At-Large), change designation to at least 1 but not more than 2
- E.g. unfilled seats (after 1 filled seat) from these sectors would be added to At-Large:
  - State Government
  - Federal Government
  - Business
  - Higher Education

### **Option 2: Add GAC member seats**

- Increase the number of GAC seats available from 23
  - Add additional At-Large seats or seats for another sector
- Benefits of adding At-Large:
  - Ability for membership sector to fluctuate with trends in GIS
  - Flexibility needed to prevent mismatch between applications and seats

### **Option 3: No change**

- Hold number of seats at 23, keeping sector representation same
- Continue to recruit for open seats that currently have no applicants

Albrecht shared that any membership changes would be recommended to the MNIT Commissioner for approval and invited discussion.

Multiple members expressed interest in Option 1 to flex extra seats (Richter, Mayer, Bergeson, Tumberg, Geurts) to cater to changing needs over time and help ensure all 23 seats are filled. Previous GAC Chair Mark Kotz also expressed support for this, noting the value of being able to appoint additional At-Large seats as needed. However, members also expressed the importance of maintaining representation from each sector and to recruit for those sectors that are difficult to fill, such as the various seats dedicated for Greater Minnesota. Jennifer Corcoran proposed the idea of alternates where an alternate is not a voting member unless the primary is absent, allowing additional participation without expanding the number of members.

During discussion, Slaats provided some background into the initial reasoning for the number of seats and chosen sector representation. Chair Albrecht and Slaats recognized that flexing seats has been done casually in the past and that they're looking to formalize this for future reference.

Chair Albrecht indicated that members could choose Option 1 and 2, both adding and flexing seats. Tanya Mayer expressed interest in adding two additional At-Large seats, raising the total number of At-large seats from three to five, noting that this doesn't mean that all these seats must be filled each term if there is no need or enough quality applicants to do so. Kotz noted that historically there have not been ties in GAC voting, so not to let the potential for a tie determine the total seat number.

Members clarified that there are no rules about how long a member can serve, however any member seeking reappointment must reapply to the GAC for the new term and be selected by the MNIT Commissioner. Slaats



offered that adding seats could support sector reappointments while welcoming newcomers, recognizing that it takes a while to learn how best to serve as a member, adding value to reappointments.

Members offered various additional ideas:

- Mentorships for newcomers to help recruit for seats and familiarize potential applicants with the GAC
- Adding a GAC member seat for an Emerging Professional

Cory Richter motioned for a decision regarding GAC membership which received no opposition:

- **Motion:** Add two more At-Large seats and build in the flexibility for the designated seats that have at least two spots. If the second one remains unfilled, that becomes At-Large (Richter / Maddox) – Motion passed

Kevin Trappe summarized past barriers to Greater Minnesota participation on the GAC and recent resolutions to overcome these barriers, noting that more outreach may lead to more Greater Minnesota interest.

Chair Albrecht noted that recruitment effort resulted in a last-minute applicant for Great Minnesota City, however, the GAC is still lacking an applicant for Greater Minnesota Regional Government. Recognizing the difficulty to fill this position, Albrecht posed broadening the seat's definition to include other types of organizations. Attendees considered the prevalence of these regional government organizations in Greater Minnesota. Sally Wakefield introduced the [Minnesota Association of Development Organizations](#) and highlighted that one of its member organizations, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, has a representative on the Arrowhead Geospatial Collaborative. Wakefield indicated that there could be opportunity to learn or recruit from these organizations, noting that historically these organizations did do GIS for Greater Minnesota before local support for GIS was more prevalent.

Mike Koutnik highlighted that a change in definition would require a change in the representative category. Mark Kotz offered "Regional Collaborative" rather than "Regional Government" and pointed out that there are several regional organizations in Greater Minnesota to recruit from. Soil and watershed districts, and parks were offered as a potential qualifying organizations if the definition were updated. Megan Sisko suggested that if the Greater Minnesota Regional Government seat is modified in name and definition, that the Twin Cities Metro counterpart seat also be updated. Kotz offered that this may not be necessary since the reason to update the Greater Minnesota seat is due to difficulty filling the position, but this has not been an issue for the Twin Cities Metro Regional Government seat.

Chair Albrecht recommended continuing the Greater Minnesota Regional Government seat at the September meeting and continued onto the next agenda item.

## 8. Executive Team Updates

Chair Albrecht reviewed some of the term accomplishments of the GAC (external to accomplishments of committees and workgroups), including establishment of the K-12 and Data Endorsement Committees and Executive Team, and reestablishment of the Archiving Committee. See the presentation slides for all highlighted accomplishments.



Albrecht also reviewed the status of Executive Team Goals from the past year and intent of these goals:

- Priority project alignment with GAC 2-year term – **Complete**
- Alignment of priorities with committees – **Complete**
- Committee and workgroup reporting improvements – **Complete**
- 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 – **Included in FY2026/27 work plan**

Albrecht reviewed plans for the upcoming term, including shifting focus from Executive Team updates to committee presentations during meetings, and maintaining progress made in the current term goals.

See the GAC Term Report and Work Plan in the agenda packet for the full list GAC achievements and goals.

### **Review and accept GAC Term Report and Work Plan**

Chair Albrecht called for a motion to approve the GAC Term Report and Work Plan which received no opposition.

- **Motion:** Approve the GAC Term Report and Work Plan – Maddox / Tumberg – Motion passed

### **Upcoming events**

Chair Albrecht highlighted two upcoming GAC events:

- **GAC Member Orientation:** Wednesday, September 3, 10 AM - 2 PM
- **First GAC quarterly public meeting of the new term:** Wednesday, September 10, 11 AM - 2 PM

Vice Chair Maddox announced that the next Priority Project Survey will be this fall. Maddox encouraged GAC members to reach out to their sector to gather sector priority ideas for submission, noting the importance of being specific in submissions so the GAC and community can understand the proposed priority. Maddox also recommended that members plan how they will encourage their sector to vote on submitted priorities.

## **9. Round Robin / Announcements**

Chair Albrecht skipped this agenda item since the meeting was over time.

## **10. Adjourn**

Chair Albrecht adjourned the meeting at 2:01 PM.

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

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**Next Quarterly GAC Meeting:** September 10, 2025, 11 AM - 2 PM (*hybrid*)

**Minutes prepared by:** Megan Sisko