MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council
September 24, 2014 Meeting Minutes
Blazing Star Room, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

Members: David Brandt, Washington County; Kari Geurts, Dept. of Natural Resources; Blaine Hackett, Flat Rock Geographics; Andrew King-Scribbins, Hennepin County; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Chad Martini, Stearns County; Joshua Pankratz, Mayo Clinic (via WebEx); Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Ben Richason, St. Cloud State University (via WebEx); Cory Richter, City of St. Paul; Dan Ross, MnGeo; Dawn Sherk, White Earth Nation; Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Trisha Stefanski, Dept. of Transportation; Kody Thurnau, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy; Michelle Trager, Rice County; Tim Wotzka, Itasca County.

Non-Members: Chris Cialek, MnGeo; Will Craig, University of Minnesota (retired); Mike Dolbow, MnGeo; Brad Henry, University of Minnesota; John Hoshal, MnGeo; Len Kne, University of Minnesota; Geoff Maas, MetroGIS; Susanne Maeder, MnGeo; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Ron Wencl, U.S. Geological Survey

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Welcome

Ross called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves. Len Kne, attending as a guest representing the University of Minneosta, briefly described his work with the UofM's U-Spatial initiative. U-Spatial supports spatial activities across campus and acts as an "internal GIS consultant", providing a help desk; training in GIS, remote sensing and LiDAR (although not full GIS classes which are covered by departments); and some consulting on research grants that require GIS expertise.

Currently, the council has vacancies for a representative for each of the following five sectors:
- Federal agency
- K-12 education organization
- Non-metro city
- Non-metro regional government
- University of Minnesota

These vacancies will be advertised through the Office of the Secretary of State's Open Appointments process.

Minutes of June 18, 2014 Meeting (slides 5-6)

The June 18, 2014 council meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

General Fund Proposal Update

Members continued discussing an initiative proposal for the 2015 legislative session to support the advancement of geospatial data, technology, and activities to improve services to the broader geospatial community. The initial proposal was to redirect a portion of the recorders fee; it is now changed to request an appropriation directly from the State's general fund. See the March 12, 2014 minutes (pp. 1-4) for the initial proposal and discussion.

Member discussion:
- The proposal needs to be discussed with the Association of Minnesota Counties as soon as possible to catch any red flags. AMC's support is critical.

- Coordinate this proposal with Minnesota's federal delegation. Data is needed at federal level, and the federal government provides funding for some of this data (Census, centerlines, LiDAR…). Federal representatives could help the governor and state legislators understand this need and let them know that there is federal buy-in.
- Need to make absolutely clear that this is not a Big Brother unfunded mandate for locals. Even if it turns out there is no money for local efforts, these statewide layers will help local organizations do their jobs.
- Emphasize sustainable funding so that people don't think, "If we just had good data, we'd be done." Sustainable, predictable funding is important for all data, but particularly for imagery.
- Some layers will require ongoing funding for periodic new collects (e.g., imagery, LiDAR) whereas others have high upfront costs (e.g., parcels) yet once the process is in place, the ongoing maintenance costs will be relatively low.
- Maryland and Indiana are cited as other examples of states that have ongoing funding for foundational data.
- For the Minnesota Geospatial Commons program priority: Describe what "ongoing support" involves, why it's critical, and why our regular budget is not sufficient. The Commons demonstrates efficiency since it is replacing four other sites. Data from the Commons will be more authoritative than data from other sites.
- For the street centerline/addresses priority: The Twin Cities metro address points effort is well underway. Could build on this to expand beyond the metro.
- Example of the drawbacks of current piecemeal parcel data: Gopher State One Call collects data from counties for its purposes – is this data available to others?
- For LiDAR priority: Add MnTOPO use statistics. Link to Governor's Commendation award nomination for reasons why this has worked so well and what the data has been used for. Reference the new federal "3DEP" plan.
- For hydrography and groundwater priority: Stormwater data is becoming a big need with the increase in major storms.

ACTION ITEMS:
- Rader will add these member comments to the proposal draft ASAP and email the revised document to council members for any additional input.
- Ross will work with MN.IT's legislative liaison to discuss the proposal with the Association of Minnesota Counties, to finalize the proposal and to answer any questions that arise as it is evaluated by MN.IT and the Governor's Office.

Hexagon Geospatial ELA Proposal (slides 7-9)
Ross asked for feedback on a proposal from Hexagon Geospatial (a division of Intergraph Corporation) for a statewide enterprise license agreement (ELA) which would include State of Minnesota agencies, local governments and accredited colleges and universities within the state. Slide 8 shows a list of products that would be included, such as ERDAS IMAGINE GIS software. The proposal is for an initial 3-year term for $1,000,000/year.

Member discussion
- Several members indicated that their organization uses ERDAS IMAGINE or Microsurvey.
- Most organizations that currently use Esri GIS software would not switch to Hexagon products, but might consider using both if a Hexagon product was a better tool for certain purposes.

- Have other states agreed to Hexagon ELAs? Ross said that at least three states were seriously considering it.

NSGIC National Update ([slides](#) 10-12)
Ross summarized key topics from the annual meeting of the National States Geographic Information Council on September 14-18, 2014. He noted that Geoff Maas and William (Bill) Johnson, the GIO from New York State, had presented on [Free and Open Public Geospatial Data](#); NSGIC's GIS Inventory (formerly RAMONA) would be harvesting from catalog services; and a new workgroup on climate issues will be forming. In addition, Ross had presented on the [Minnesota Geospatial Commons](#) and [State Broadband Initiative survey results](#). For the full agenda and links to conference materials, see the [conference archive](#).

He also provided two handouts:
- [Top three accomplishments](#) for each state for 2014.
  Minnesota's were:
    - MN Geospatial Commons now public ([gisdata.mn.gov](#))
    - Statewide aerial imagery 5-year update complete
    - Multiple implementations of online web mapping and data collection sites for state agencies
- [Agenda topics for the state caucus](#) from a survey of the state representatives.
  Minnesota's were:
    - Continuing to build toward statewide and national databases
    - How can NSGIC help to open the door for collaborative multistate and/or federal opportunities?
    - Finding ways to engage our local partners in NSGIC activities and programs could really help build stronger state programs

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ArcGIS Online at Hennepin County ([slides](#) 13-21)
King-Scribbins described Hennepin County's increasing use of ArcGIS Online (AGOL) to meet county staff's business needs to provide services to the public. Initially, different departments started their own AGOL sites. After extensive discussion, staff decided to create a single, coordinated, standardized AGOL site for the county. Each department has a site administrator so that departments retain control of their maps. When ready for publication, maps are sent to the full administrative group for approval. Reviews are done quickly, typically within a day. This process maintains quality, communication and ownership.

He showed several examples of AGOL maps available on different topics. The data underlying a [map of public swimming beaches and closures](#) is updated by a non-GIS staff person who uses an Excel spreadsheet; the map is updated via scripts. An [election results map](#) has a live link for updated information during elections. A [road construction map](#) can link to photos of area conditions. A [Torrens document status tracking application](#) allows the public to check the approval status of their documents online; this has nearly eliminated the flood of phone calls that county staff would receive each day at 10:00 a.m. when the status is updated.

To date, the AGOL sites are primarily internal, but a next step is to develop a public map portal on AGOL.

Member Sector Report – Metropolitan Council ([slides](#) 24-55)
Kotz provided an overview of GIS at the Metropolitan Council. The Council is the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the seven county Twin Cities metropolitan region, including operating region-wide transit and waste water treatment systems. The Council has a central GIS team of nine people supporting geospatial technology and users throughout the agency. Examples of the use of geospatial technology include the MetroTransit trip planner, mobile inspection applications, and a growing number of internal and external interactive mapping applications. The Council is also a strong supporter of geospatial collaboration in the region and state, including sponsoring the MetroGIS collaborative and operating the MetroGIS DataFinder website.

Member Sector Report – Department of Natural Resources ([slides](#) 56-76)
Geurts selected six projects to illustrate geospatial activities at the MNDNR:
- Forestry Division's Stand Exam application
- Ecological Services Division's MNDNR Permitting and Reporting System (MPARS)
- Lands and Minerals Division's Land Records System
- Data Governance Project (department-wide)
- National Wetlands Inventory update
- MNTOPO project

For details and links and contacts for more information, see the slides.

Geocoding Project and Discussion ([slides](#) 77-78)
Dolbow briefly reviewed the pros and cons of current options for geocoding services. The most recent one is a service created by MnGeo; since one of its data sources is a licensed dataset from the private sector; therefore, it can only be made available to State agencies. Dolbow asked for feedback on whether members felt it was a high priority to provide this type of service to others outside of state government.

MnGeo Priority Projects and Initiatives ([slides](#) 79-88)
See slides and [handout](#) for descriptions and status of each of MnGeo's main priority projects (all projects are done in partnership with other organizations): Addresses; Air Photos; ArcGIS Online; Drainage Records Modernization; Statewide Parcels; Geospatial Commons; Statewide Centerlines.

Data Sharing Initiatives ([slides](#) 89-93)
Free and Open Data Initiative update: Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator, submitted an updated map showing that in the Twin Cities metro area, Anoka and Carver counties have joined Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey counties in adopting policies for free and open data, and that Scott and Washington counties are reviewing such a policy. For more information on the initiative, see Maas' [presentation](#) from the January 10, 2014 council meeting as well as the [MetroGIS Free & Open Data Resource Page](#).

Data sharing agreements: Ross reported that he will be emailing a letter soon to each of the county GIS contacts, informing them of the developing Minnesota Geospatial Commons and asking them about the possibility of the counties sharing parcel, address and centerline data with the State. In October, there will be a meeting with the Department of Revenue's [PRISM project](#) to continue coordinating efforts to collect standard attributes for parcel data. He also noted that in Bill Johnson's part of the NSGIC presentation with Geoff Maas on open data, Bill emphasized that a compelling argument for open data is to support business development. Federal legislation concerning open data is being developed at the

federal level, sponsored by a senator from Idaho. NSGIC is developing talking points to support this legislation; Ross will ask council members for input on these.

Announcement
Hackett announced that videos from the 2014 FOSS4G (Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial) annual meeting held September 8-13 in Portland, Oregon, are now online.

Future Meetings
ACTION ITEM: Rader will schedule the council's quarterly meetings for the rest of the fiscal year. [Done: January 28, April 1, June 24, 2015, Blazing Star Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155]

Meeting adjourned. Minutes by Nancy Rader.