MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council
September 23, 2015 Meeting Minutes
Blazing Star Room, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees
Members: Brad Anderson, City of Moorhead; Robert Bigelow, Bolton & Menck, Inc.; Jeffrey Bloomquist, Farm Service Agency; David Brandt, Washington County; Scott Freburg, Dept. of Education; Kari Geurts, MN.IT @ Dept. of Natural Resources; Blaine Hackett, Flat Rock Geographics; Andrew King-Scribbins, Hennepin County; Len Kne, University of Minnesota; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Philipp Nagel, Sibley County; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Cory Richter, City of St. Paul; Dan Ross, MnGeo; Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Alison Slaats, MN.IT @ Agriculture and Board of Animal Health; Kody Thurnau, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy; Michelle Trager, Rice County.

Non-Members: James Bunning, MnGeo; Chris Buse, MN.IT; Will Craig; Brad Henry, University of Minnesota; Adam Iten, MnGeo; Mike Koutnik, Esri; Tim Loesch, MN.IT @ DNR; Susanne Maeder, MnGeo; Geoff Maas, MetroGIS; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Hal Watson, MN.IT @ DNR; Ron Wencl, U.S. Geological Survey

Welcome
Ross called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves. Since it was the first meeting of a new council term, each member summarized what they hoped to bring to the council and what they hoped to get out of participating.

Minutes of June 24, 2015 Meeting
The June 24, 2015 council meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

New Council Leadership Team (slides 5-6)
Ross announced that, based on member input, the council will be transitioning from a more informal meeting structure led by MnGeo to a more formal structure directed by a new council leadership team in consultation with MnGeo. The team will meet between council meetings to set the next agenda and the overall direction for the council. He thanked members for the very strong response to his request for volunteers for the team. Team members were selected to include a variety of sectors and perspectives.

At their first meeting on September 18, the team elected Kotz as chair and Brandt as vice-chair. The remaining members are Hackett, Reinhardt and Trager.

Many other leadership opportunities will be available. For example, Geurts and Slaats have already begun an effort to increase communication and engagement with state agencies.

Purpose of New Leadership Team (slides 7-10)
Kotz gave an overview of the roles of the chair, vice chair and leadership team members as well as the purpose of the leadership team. The team will:
- Set the council agenda and direction (with input from council members, committees and workgroups, and the broader community)
- Identify and discuss other strategic opportunities
- Coordinate with committees and workgroups

The leadership team will not make key decisions on its own; rather it will get information ready for the full council to decide. The team's goal is to make the council more autonomous and active than it has been in the past several years.

Clarifying the Mission and Role of the Council ([slides](#) 11-19)

Kotz reviewed the mission of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Geographic Information (GCGI), which preceded this council and was active from 1993-2009. The GCGI actively provided leadership and direction and made recommendations. When the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council formed in 2009, its mission was to advise MnGeo, and it was led and directed by MnGeo. The enabling legislation, however, allows for a more self-directed role that would coordinate for the broader geospatial community.

The leadership team discussed adding the highlighted, underlined phrase to the council's current mission:

> *Advise, support and make recommendations to MnGeo ==and act as a coordinating body for the Minnesota geospatial community,== for improving services statewide through the coordinated, affordable, reliable, and effective use of geospatial technology.*

They also added examples of the type of work the council could take on as a coordinating body:

- setting and endorsing standards
- defining policy requirements and driving policy decisions
- representing the geospatial community
- advocating for project priorities

Kotz then asked members to discuss whether this revision of the mission is heading in the right direction.

Member discussion:

- MnGeo can only do so much. If the council became more active and brought in more players, more could be done.
- This change would make it clear that members really do need to communicate with their sectors, not just exchange ideas at quarterly meetings.
- The council's input has helped set MnGeo's priorities for the projects it coordinates. Projects such as statewide parcels, open data, and NG9-1-1 cannot be accomplished without partners.
- The private sector benefits greatly from GIS products available from government; LiDAR is an important example. Although it's sometimes a challenge to share information between competing private sector businesses, many businesses do share back to the community and there is increasing advocacy for them to share more.
- What does "coordinating" mean? Each member should think about how this group's work could affect what they do in their job.
- Communication:
    - Need better ways to communicate. How do we get feedback? How do we learn about all the good GIS being done?
    - "Responsibility to communicate" should be added to the examples of work.
    - MN GIS/LIS Consortium is also debating how to communicate better. It uses e-announcements, a blog, Linked-In, Facebook and Twitter since no single channel reaches everyone.

- What is the council's relationship with regional GIS user groups?
- We need to reach not just "GIS people" but non-GISers who use GIS (often without realizing that they are using GIS or GIS-derived products).
- Would "advocate" include a role to advocate about the power of GIS to policymakers and other groups?
- Local organizations might be more receptive to suggestions / directions / standards coming from a council representing the broader geospatial community rather than from "State Government telling us what to do."

ACTION ITEM: The leadership team will review this feedback and propose specific changes to be discussed at the council's next meeting, providing adequate time for members to review beforehand.

Role of Committees and Workgroups (slides 20-25)
Kotz reviewed the list of existing committees and workgroups:

Committees and Subcommittees:
- Parcels and Land Records
- Digital Elevation
  - LiDAR Research and Education
- Emergency Preparedness
- Hydrography
- Outreach (inactive)
- Standards (active as needed)

Workgroups
- Geocoding (currently inactive)
- Geospatial Commons (now an operational program)
- Metadata (active as part of the Commons operations)

Are new ones needed? For example, "Free and Open GIS Data"?

Kotz then asked who committees and workgroups report to? It's unclear whether it is to MnGeo, the council, the State Geospatial Technical Committee or a combination of these groups. The reporting connection(s) need to be clarified.

Member discussion:
- What are we asking committees and workgroups to do? If they are to report to the council, what do they report and how are we going to use this information?
- Most initiatives are driven by state agencies.
- As representatives of the broader geospatial community, the council, committees and workgroups can more effectively advocate at the Legislature for priorities involving funding than can state agencies, including MnGeo.
- In the past, the Governor's Council helped communicate information from committees and workgroups with a wider audience and helped get support for priorities such as LiDAR data collection.

See handout for current status report from the committees and workgroups.

ACTION ITEM: The leadership team will review this feedback and propose clearer direction on reporting relationships to be discussed at the council's next meeting, providing adequate time for members to review beforehand.

Legislative Update (slides 27-35)
Three major items from 2015 legislation were reported on:

1. Buffer strips along public waterways: Loesch explained that the final legislation specified that buffer requirements would apply to the following:
   (1) for all public waters, the more restrictive of:
      (i) a 50-foot average width, 30-foot minimum width, continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation; or
      (ii) the state shoreland standards and criteria adopted by the commissioner under section 103F.211; and
   (2) for public drainage systems established under chapter 103E, a 16.5-foot minimum width continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation on ditches within the benefited area of public drainage systems.
(He then noted that if a public water is also a public ditch, it remains to be resolved which category applies.)

Since policy issues are still being discussed, Loesch said he could only talk about technical mapping issues for this project. The legislation specifies that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will provide mapping that identifies the waterways that will need buffers; however, they will **not** be creating or mapping the buffer boundaries. The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will be responsible for working with soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and landowners to determine and implement the actual buffers, including providing guidance and monitoring compliance.

DNR has maintained a digital version of the Public Waters Inventory for many years, so that data will be used to identify public waters. Public drainage systems, however, will be more challenging to map. DNR does not manage these systems; they are managed by local authorities. DNR intends to work with these local authorities to identify public ditches and their benefited areas. The information available from the local authorities varies widely. Some authorities don't have any records or they no longer maintain public ditches. Some have lost institutional knowledge over time.

The project timeline is short. Public waters are supposed to be mapped by January 2016. The public ditches will take longer because of the time needed to work with the local authorities. There will be review and comment periods on the results.

Discussion:
   • This issue has been discussed at meetings of the Association of Minnesota Counties. By and large, counties will be willing partners in trying to provide needed information where it is available.
   • Farm Service Agency staff are preparing for a possible surge in applications for conservation programs from land owners who are looking for programs to help cover expenses to create or maintain buffer vegetation. FSA is working now to identify farms that could be eligible for these programs.

- The Center for Environmental Advocacy has been mapping vegetation buffers around watercourses in parts of Minnesota for several years. However, it's important to remember that vegetative buffers that currently happen to exist on the landscape are NOT the same as the legislatively mandated buffer areas.
- DNR staff are aware of the Drainage Record Modernization project (described in the priority project handout, pp. 1-2); however, the database template and guidelines are not scheduled to be available in time for use in the immediate needs of the buffer project.
- Many people will want the data that is used to create the maps. They will also want to see the buffers on a map.

2. Parks and Trails: Legislation supported three related parks and trails efforts, which are described in more detail in the April 1, 2015 council meeting minutes (p. 1-2). Planning to move all three efforts forward is in process.

3. Next Generation 9-1-1: See next section for more details.

Preparing for the 2016 Legislative Session
Ross said that there is a small window of opportunity to suggest new legislative proposals to the Governor's Office for the 2016 session.

Member discussion:
- Will LiDAR be flown again? On a regular schedule?

ACTION ITEM: If members have any suggested legislative proposals, inform Ross ASAP.

Update on Major Initiatives (slides 36-50)
See handout for descriptions and status of each of MnGeo's main priority projects (all projects are done in partnership with other organizations): Master Services Contract for Aerial Imagery; Drainage Record Modernization; Geospatial Commons; NG9-1-1; Parcels, Street Centerline and Address Point Collection; Street Centerlines.

Next Generation 9-1-1
Iten provided an update on the NG9-1-1 project coordinated by MnGeo and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS), described more fully in the June 24, 2015 council meeting minutes (p. 2-3).
- **PSAP GIS survey** to assess the status of GIS data and software at every public safety answering point (PSAP) has a 90% return so far. The summary report of results is now online at the Emergency Communication Networks (ECN) website.
- **Initial GIS data collection** has begun, with 77 datasets received so far. Street centerlines with address ranges and address points are being collected from the Metro and Northeast region pilot areas. PSAP boundaries and emergency service boundaries (fire, law enforcement and emergency medical services) are being collected from all regions of the state.
- **Initial GIS data assessment and preparation** has begun. MnGeo is inventorying the data, mapping local vs. NENA (National Emergency Number Association) schemas, developing workflows and a data repository, documenting the Metropolitan Emergency Service Board's current 9-1-1 GIS data preparation processes, and planning for data from the NE region. Data accuracy is mission-critical; the data must be correct before it is put into the NG9-1-1 system.

The [FirstNet](#) project also needs the public safety entity boundaries for reporting purposes; they are advocating for dedication of prioritized bandwidth for emergency response use.

- **Minnesota NG9-1-1 GIS standards** are being developed to align with NENA standards. The NG9-1-1 GIS Standards Workgroup is currently writing a high-level requirements document, which will be followed by the full detailed standards. These documents will be reviewed and approved by the following groups: NG9-1-1 GIS Subcommittee; NG9-1-1 Committee; Statewide Emergency Communications Board; this council; MN.IT.
- **Communication plan** is being developed which will include updates at future meetings of this council.

See the slides for updates on these other projects:
Aerial Imagery Master Services Contract
Address Points
Parcels (also see [Parcels and Land Records Committee May 25, 2015 minutes](#))
Minnesota Geospatial Commons

Member Discussion:
- Any effort to work on improving PLS datasets? There are many ongoing discussions since many groups, including the U.S. Census Bureau, need PLS for different reasons and it is inter-related with many other layers such as parcel boundaries and local government boundaries. PLS data collected at the local level is usually the most accurate.
- What are the use levels for the Commons? Web statistics are being collected.

Conference Updates ([slides](#) 51-55)

FOSS4G
Hackett provided several big take-aways from the [2015 FOSS4G](#) (Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial) international conference that he attended in Seoul, South Korea, September 14-19. Approximately 500 people attended, and many presentations are available on the website. In addition to the following sites, there was much activity around MapServer, GeoServer, PostGIS and QGIS:
- [GeoForAll](#): Effort to make it possible for students in developing countries to get a geospatial education
- [Internet of Things – SensorThings API](#): OGC standard to provide an open and unified way to interconnect Internet of Things devices, data and apps over the Web
- [OpenAerialMap](#): Distributed commons for searching and hosting free imagery
- [OpenDroneMap](#): Open source toolkit for processing civilian drone imagery

Minnesota GIS/LIS Conference
Sjerven, chair of this year's [conference](#), October 7-9, 2015, reported that nearly 500 people have registered to-date. Jack Dangermond, President of Esri, will be the featured keynote speaker on Thursday. On Wednesday, workshops will be held both for GIS professionals and for K-12 teachers; attendees of both types of workshops will share lunch and evening networking; this can encourage GIS professionals to volunteer to become geo-mentors for a nearby K-12 school.

The Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA) will have a booth at the conference; Sjerven encouraged everyone to take the opportunity to speak with them. On a related note, the Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council (WIGICC) dissolved in August 2015, with many of its

functions to be handled by the WLIA and by the newly created Land Information Council. See WIGICC Dissolves article for more information.

North Dakota GIS Users Conference
Anderson announced that the conference will be held September 28-29, 2015 in Fargo, ND.

NACIS
The North American Cartographic Information Society's annual meeting will be in Minneapolis on October 14-17, 2015.

LaCrosse GIS Conference – May 2016
Trager reported that this event is being planned "to explore mid-level and above GIS manager (city, county, state) emerging and hot button issues which typically do not receive in-depth consideration at either state or local events." It will be a joint event hosted by the Geospatial Information & Technology Association; the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing – Western Great Lakes Region; Illinois GIS Association; Iowa Geographic Information Council; MN GIS/LIS Consortium; Wisconsin Land Information Association; and SharedGeo.

Next Meetings
The council's next meetings will be:
   December 2, 2015
   March 2, 2016
   June 1, 2016
All meetings will be in the Blazing Star Room, Ground Floor, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

Meeting adjourned. Minutes by Nancy Rader.