Minnesota Geospatial Commons
Test Implementation
Status Report

Overview

In the spring of 2010, sponsors from DNR, Met. Council, Mn/DOT and MnGeo approved a project plan to create a test bed version of the Minnesota Geospatial Commons. This report is intended to

- bring sponsors up-to-date on the project
- outline conclusions and recommendations
- receive feedback
- request approval to move to the next phase

The Vision for the Geospatial Commons

The Minnesota geospatial community has access to an impressive number of shared geospatial datasets and a growing number of web services. These valuable resources are distributed through multiple data download sites developed and managed by individual agencies. No one web location exists through which all available data and web services can be found. There exists in Minnesota a significant opportunity to collaboratively develop such a single location through which a broad spectrum of stakeholders can find and share geospatial resources. (See project plan for more info.)

What Have We Done? Major Tasks Completed

The following major tasks have been completed by the workgroup.

- ✓ Surveyed geospatial stakeholder community about needs – 540 responses
- ✓ Defined and prioritized needed functions of the Commons
- ✓ Installed test implementation using ESRI Geoportal Extension 9.3 – hosted by MnGeo
- ✓ Convened a multi-sector group to define the high level design of the Commons
- ✓ Implemented many of the high priority functions (those requiring minimal customization)
- ✓ Supplied test metadata from multiple agencies
- ✓ Completed a Web Services Requirements report on documentation needs and trustworthiness of web services
- ✓ Tested operational Commons site and made revisions
- ✓ Notified geospatial community of project status and provided link to test site

Conclusions of the Workgroup

- No perfect portal software product exists.
- The Esri product is the best choice for the MN Geospatial Commons.
- Significant customization will likely be needed to achieve some of the desired functions.
- Some lower priority functions may be too costly to implement directly within the Commons, given insufficient benefits. Linking to external sites or tools may be an appropriate workaround.
- Opportunities exist to connect the Commons in a fairly direct way to state agency geospatial data resources.
- It is very possible that a production Geospatial Commons could eliminate the need for individual agencies to maintain their own data distribution sites. This could save significant staff time and other maintenance costs. It is too soon to know with certainty to what degree this can be realized, but it is a major goal of the workgroup.
- The Commons would dovetail with State of Minnesota and federal efforts to enhance public access to government data which would help to make geospatial data more visible to a wider audience.

Recommendations

The workgroup is proposing the creation of a production Minnesota Geospatial Commons. We believe that the value the Commons will bring to the sponsoring agencies alone makes it a very appealing project. But a detailed project plan with staff commitments and a budget must first be created before a final assessment of the worthiness of this project can be made. The Geospatial Commons workgroup is prepared to develop such a project plan to include the following:

1. Project team: existing Geospatial Commons workgroup – will ask for more help
2. Project manager: existing project manager/workgroup chair is willing to continue
3. Dedicated developer resources: the project cannot be successful without this
4. Budget: amount to be determined
5. Host organization = MnGeo
6. Staff support for ongoing management once developed
7. Governance strategy: who controls the commons and how is it governed once it is created.

Next Steps – Sponsor Input Needed

Before moving forward to create a draft project plan, the Workgroup requires input and feedback from the project sponsors.

- ➢ **Are we on the right track?**
- ➢ **What else do sponsors want to know about the test bed project?**
- ➢ **What information would be needed to make a decision about approving a project to develop a production Commons?**
- ➢ **Should we move forward, yes or no?**

More Information

- Geospatial Commons project plan
- Geospatial Commons test implementation site
- List of prioritized functions
- Survey results
- Results of testing existing implementation
- Rationale for using Esri Geoportal Extension
- Web Services Requirements report
- MN Open Data website
- OET's 1/15/11 report to the legislature on enhancing public access

Project Team

Executive Sponsors: Commit resources & advocate for project
- David Arbeit, Minnesota CGIO, MnGeo
- Dave Hinrichs, CIO Metropolitan Council
- Kathy Hofstedt, CIO Mn/DOT
- Robert Maki, CIO Minnesota DNR

Project Owners: Ensure adequate resources are available and track project status
- Chris Cialek; MnGeo
- Rick Gelbmann, Metropolitan Council
- Tim Loesch, Minnesota DNR
- Dan Ross, Mn/DOT

Project Manager: Lead the planning and execution of the project, chair workgroup
- Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council, 651-602-1644, mark.kotz@metc.state.mn.us

Project Workgroup: Plan and design the Commons, advise Implementation Workgroup

- Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council (Chair)
- Chris Cialek, MnGeo
- Jim Dickerson, MnGeo
- Jessica Deegan, Met. Council / Housing Finance
- Jessica Fendos, DEED
- Josh Gumm, Scott County
- Lesley Kadish, MN Historical Society
- Susanne Maeder, MnGeo
- Charlie McCarty, Mn/DOT
- Chris Pouliot, DNR
- Nancy Rader, MnGeo
- Dan Ross, Mn/DOT
- Hal Watson, DNR
- Paul Weinberger, Mn/DOT