

# Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council

## Parcel and Land Records Committee

### Proposed PLSS Point Standard

#### **Background:**

The Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC) acts as a coordinating body for the Minnesota geospatial community. It represents a cross-section of organizations that include counties, cities, universities, business, nonprofit organizations, federal and state agencies, tribal government, surveyors and other stakeholder groups that benefit from geospatial technology.

The Parcels and Land Records Committee (PLRC) of the GAC works to promote research, education, implementation, and distribution of statewide guidelines surrounding the digital mapping of cadastral-related data; works to promote and facilitate the development and sharing of data throughout the state, region, and nation; and advises the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo).

Over the past 4 years the PLRC has been working on numerous initiatives to enhance digital mapping of cadastral data. These efforts have focused around promoting open parcel data, remonumentation of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) and alignment of geospatial boundary data.

The monuments of the PLSS are the foundational dataset on which geospatial is built. The PLRC has been working with the Arrowhead Geospatial Collaborative to develop a PLSS Point Standard Data. The PLRC wishes to bring this PLSS Point Standard to the GAC Standards committee for adoption and publication.

The use of community-wide standards is sometimes controversial. Short-term costs may be incurred, benefits may be unclear and organizations may be reluctant to change long-standing ways of doing business. In the long-run, however, standards cut costs, reduce repetitious data collection and make inter-organizational communication more efficient.

The purpose of the PLSS Point Standard is to facilitate the sharing of PLSS point data across organizational boundaries and allow MnGeo to compile and publish a dataset of certified PLSS points. The need for developing a PLSS Point Standard has become urgent with the passage of the PLSS Monumentation Grant Program. MnGeo will be compiling PLSS corner data generated from this grant program, but without a defined PLSS Point Standard, the data submitted will be difficult to compile and publish into a cohesive dataset.

#### **Proposal:**

The PLRC wishes to develop a PLSS Point Standard to be reviewed, approved and maintained by the GAC. To ensure that this standard is successful, the participation of the land surveyors that develop and maintain the PLSS is crucial. The PLRC is asking that the members of the Minnesota Association of County Surveyors (MACS) and Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors (MSPS) review the proposed PLSS Point standard and provide feedback to the PLRC.

The proposed PLSS Point Standard and associated domains can be reviewed this [excel spreadsheet](#).

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### Description of the Standard:

The proposed PLSS point Standard has been developed utilizing ArcGIS Pro software and ArcGIS feature classes.

The proposed PLSS Point Standard is organized by grouping “General Information”, “Coordinate Information”, “PLSS Information”, “Monument Information” and “Reference Information”. Within these groupings, the field name, alias description and related domain.

- Field
  - Denotes the name of the field in the database or feature class.
- Alias
  - The plain english name of the field.
- Description
  - A brief description of what the data in the field consists of.
- Required
  - Denotes whether the field is required.
- Domain
  - Name of the associated domain
    - Note: Domains are defined values that restrict the end user from entering data that is not defined in the domain.
- Typical Domain Description
  - Example of values within the domain. See Domain detail for a complete list of domain values.
- Domain Notes
  - Notes on how to utilize/modify the domain.

### Review Process

The PLRC requests that you review the proposed PLSS Point Standard. When reviewing, please keep the following in mind:

- The GAC and MnGeo do not have the authority to mandate standards. The standards are intended to be voluntary, but if they are adopted by someone, they should ultimately improve workflows and inter-organizational coordination.
- MnGeo is required to aggregate data and provide data to various state agencies. This standard should facilitate that goal.
- PLSS Monument Grants may require the use of this standard for required geospatial deliverables.
- If you do not have an existing database of PLSS corners, would this standard be helpful to get you started on the development of a PLSS dataset?
- If you already have an existing database, could your data be translated into this standard?

Please review the proposed standard and provide comments and questions to Preston Dowell, [dowellp@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:dowellp@stlouiscountymn.gov), 218-742-9824 prior to January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024. He will compile comments and questions for a round table forum discussion at the MSPS Annual Meeting on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.