

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2019

Blazing Star Room, Centennial Office Building

658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Timothy Baker, University of Minnesota, Crookston; Jeff Bloomquist, USDA Risk Management Agency; David Brandt, Washington County; Kari Geurts, MNIT Natural Resources; Renee Huset, City of St. Paul; Len Kne, University of Minnesota; Leanne Knott, City of Red Wing; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; Chris Mavis, Hennepin County; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Cory Richter, City of Blaine; Dan Ross, MnGeo; Soren Rundquist, Environmental Working Group; Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Alex Steele, Minnehaha Watershed District; Ryan Stovern, St. Louis County; Harvey Thorleifson, University of Minnesota; Kory Thurnau, USDA Forest Service; Benjamin Timerson, Minnesota Department of Transportation; Brandon Tourtelotte, Pro-West and Associates; Patrick Veraguth, Douglas County.

Members Absent:

Non-Members Present: Will Craig, retired; Rachel Koch, Minnesota Department of Revenue; Mike Koutnik, retired; John Lawton, MNIT Natural Resources; Ryan Mattke, U of M; Chad Nunemacher, Houston Engineering; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Mike Petesch, Minnesota Department of Transportation; Mike Robinson, Minnesota Department of Transportation; Chris Sanocki, USGS; Alison Slaats, MnGeo; Sandi Stroud, MnGeo; Sean Vaughn, MNIT Natural Resources; Clayton Watercott, Metropolitan Council; Sandy Yassin, Minnesota Department of Transportation.

References

This meeting included references to the following resources:

- [Slides](#)
- [Agenda Packet](#)
- [GAC priorities spreadsheet](#)

Call to Order

Kotz opened the meeting. The members and attendees introduced themselves. The agenda was approved. The [September 4, 2019 meeting minutes](#) were approved.

Review and Accept Committee Summaries

Motion: Accept the committee summaries included in the meeting packet (Ross/Stovern). Passed unanimously.

Action Item: Kotz will contact committee and workgroup chairs, asking the groups to prepare their 2019 list of accomplishments and 2020 workplans for review and acceptance at the March 11 GAC meeting.

Vote on New Leader Positions

The following members were nominated to serve on the GAC Leadership Team for a two-year term:

- Chair: Mark Kotz
- Vice Chair: Cory Richter
- Leadership Team Members:
Jeff Bloomquist, David Brandt, Len Kne, Chris Mavis, Ryan Stovern, Victoria Reinhardt

Motion: Approve the nominated slate for the leadership team (Huset/Knott). Passed unanimously.

GAC Presentations at GIS/LIS Conference

Members agreed that the conference was well-run again this year, with many worthwhile sessions.

Discussion of Request from MNIT Commissioner

Ross reviewed the request from the Minnesota IT Services Commissioner, Tarek Tomes, initially discussed at the GAC's last meeting (9/4/19), summarized as:

“What can this advisory body in its work with the geospatial community do to bring together data to improve the outcomes of Minnesotans in the priority areas identified in Governor Walz’s One Minnesota Plan?”

See the meeting slides for the mission, vision and building blocks of the One Minnesota Plan.

Main points made during the discussion:

- The Commissioner’s office and agency commissioners need to be involved (Reinhardt)
- This is an opportunity to let agency commissioners know that the GAC exists and what we do (Vaughn)
- Ask agency commissioners what their top issues are and what they need to make the right decisions (instead of starting by telling them what we have) (Reinhardt)
- The priorities are cross-sectional, not just within agencies (Ross)
- Data quality is very important; agency subject matter experts can help assess the quality of data that already exists (Stroud)
- This effort could help ensure that more people use the same, authoritative data (Stroud)
- Who will champion this effort? How will we include expertise that’s not already involved with the GAC? (Sjerven)
- Need to be mindful of priorities, business needs and likelihood of success, keeping expectations realistic for a voluntary body such as the GAC (Kotz)
- The Governor has already asked agencies to look at what they are doing in relation to the One Minnesota Plan (Ross)
- A small group should discuss this idea further and bring their recommendations back to the GAC (Kotz)

Action: The following people volunteered to form a group to develop a response to the Commissioner’s request, which likely would include a high-level description of what we already have and next steps:

Victoria Reinhardt (chair), Renee Huset (vice chair), Tim Baker, Will Craig, Len Kne, Mike Koutnik, Chris Mavis, Ryan Stovern, Sandi Stroud, Brandon Tourtelotte

Approve Archiving Implementation Workgroup

Mattke presented the mission statement of the proposed Archiving Implementation Workgroup: “Define and facilitate the implementation of an archive for Minnesota geospatial data by building on the work of the Archiving Workgroup.”

The Archiving Implementation Workgroup’s proposed charter and work plan are in the agenda packet. A list of proposed members and work areas of the group are listed on the slides. Mattke noted that Shawn Rounds, State Archivist at the Minnesota Historical Society, is also interested in being involved.

Motion: Sunset the Archiving Workgroup. Form the Archiving Implementation Workgroup, approving its charter and work plan (Brandt/Richter). Passed unanimously.

Parks and Trails Data Standard – Status Update

Brandt provided an overview of efforts to develop a parks and trails data standard and dataset. Initial efforts involved county managers meeting with DNR to discuss parks and trails of regional significance only. In 2016, metro counties expanded the effort to include all metro parks and trails; they built on work already done by Hennepin County. Source materials for the data are of widely varying format and quality; it would be a very large effort to pull them together into a single dataset. This data, although important, is of lower priority when compared with the development of data needed for NG911. A statewide standard would be the first step. Brandt provided links to the MetroGIS [Version 1.2 of the standard](#) and to [a schema validation tool](#).

Stroud: Currently, there is no active work at the state level to further develop this standard, although MnGeo could promote an existing standard.

Ross: The [Minnesota Great Outdoors project](#) involved disparate data sources. There was insufficient time to standardize the parks and trails data for that project, but now there are discussions about possible next steps.

Kotz: A need such as this one, which may rank lower overall compared to other GAC priorities, can still move ahead if a champion exists and there are staff with a strong business need who can provide sufficient resources for the effort. The GAC Standards Committee would welcome a group to propose a parks and trails standard.

Mike Petesch, MnDOT’s Pedestrian and Bicyclist Data Coordinator, and Sandy Yassin, who produces the Minnesota State Bicycle Map and is developing MnDOT’s standard for trails, indicated their strong interest in this topic. They volunteered to help with the effort to develop a proposed standard.

MN Geospatial Priorities Survey Results and GAC Priorities

Kotz reviewed the process to identify proposed projects and initiatives, survey the Minnesota geospatial community, assess the value and likelihood of success of each project and initiative, and then decide on the GAC's 2020 priorities. He reviewed the survey results shown on the slides.

GAC members then discussed and adjusted the priorities.

- Slaats was added as the current owner of the parcels and the image service improvements items
- Stroud was added as the current owner of the road centerline data and the address point data items
- Basemap Services: Stroud said that this item needs a workgroup to define the need and to make it stakeholder driven.
- Inventory of MN GeoData Assets: Thorleifson advocated for this item, noting the usefulness of other inventory efforts such as NRCS's status of soil mapping. Ross mentioned that NSGIC will soon publish a report on the status of states' foundational geospatial data, and Timerson noted the status map of free and open Minnesota county data.
- Underground Utilities Data Forum: Koutnik advocated for this item, given the importance of this data to public health and safety. The private sector could participate. Brandt noted that fiber mapping was a big issue for counties.
- Culvert Data: Vaughn volunteered to find a champion for this item.
- Stroud asked whether there were committees that were connected with road centerlines or address points. Further discussion is needed in this area.

The priority order at the end of the discussion is below. See the [full spreadsheet](#) for details.

Motion: Approve 2020 priorities for the GAC (Geurts/Stovern). Passed unanimously.

Project or Initiative Name	Status	Do in '20	GAC Rank
Free and Open Data	Active		1
Updated & Aligned Boundary Data	Active		2
Geodata Archive Implementation	Active		3
Parcel Data	Active		4
Image Service Improvements	Active		5
Hydro-DEMs	Active		6
Road Centerline Data	Active		7
LiDAR Data	Active		8
EM Damage Assess Data Standard	Active		9
Address Point Data	Active		10
U.S. National Grid Materials	Active		11
Parks and Trails Data Standard	Active		12
NG9-1-1 Geospatial Forum			13
Underground Utilities Data Forum			14
Basemap Services	Active		15
Unmanned Systems Metadata Guide			16
Inventory of MN GeoData Assets			17
Critical Infrastructure Data Custodian			18
Culvert Data Standard			19

Retiring Items from the Priority List

Kotz asked whether items should be retired from the GAC priority list when they go to maintenance mode.

Currently, there are no criteria for when that should happen. The following points were made during the discussion:

- Projects should have a start and end (Lawton)
- Could divide the priorities into two lists, one for “projects” and one more less actionable “initiatives” (Koutnik)
- There should be some measure of success (Richter)
- The GAC can work toward making its items more actionable (Kotz)

Updates on MN GAC Priority Projects and Initiatives

Kotz asked for updates on the GAC's 2019 priorities:

GAC Rank	Project or Initiative Name	Status	Project Owner	Champ
1	All public geospatial data in MN to be free and open to everyone	Active	Kari Geurts	Ross
2	Assurance that the MnGeo imagery service will be maintained and improved via a sustainable funding model, including policies on what layers are added and removed over time. Evaluate improvements such as Web Mercator, tiling, downloading options, and increased refresh frequency.	Active	Mike Dolbow	Ross
3	Updated and aligned boundary data from authoritative sources	Active	Preston Dowell	Ross
4	Statewide publicly available parcel data	Active	Mike Dolbow	Kotz
5	A policy and procedures for archiving and preserving historical geospatial data	Active	Ryan Mattke	many
6	Statewide publicly available road centerline data (including a data standard)	Active	Norman Anderson	Ross
7	New Lidar data acquisition across Minnesota for use in developing new derived products guided by committee developed standards	Active	Gerry Sjerven	Ross
8	Statewide publicly available address points data	Active	Norman Anderson	Ross
9	MN focused basemap services	Active	Sonia Dickerson	Ross
10	A parks and trails data standard	Active	Jim Bunning	Ross
11	An emergency management damage assessment data standard to provide an accepted specification to support a request for State or Federal assistance after a disaster	Active	Anderson/Richter	
12	Accurate hydro-DEMs (hDEM) that serve modern flood modeling and hydro-terrain analysis tools, and the development of more accurate watercourses and watersheds	Active	Sean Vaughn	

- #1 (Geurts): Metrics and next steps are needed. Other committees and workgroups should also work this topic into their work plans, as appropriate.

- #2 (Slaats): The imagery sustainability committee will meet in January. They need to discuss issues about whether imagery should be archived in uncompressed format and will do outreach for more local imagery.
- #3 (Stovern): The Parcels and Land Records Committee is re-organizing as it includes more participation from the surveying community.
- #4 (Slaats): 30 counties currently have free and open policies for their parcel data.
- #5: Covered earlier in the meeting.
- #6 (Stroud): The NG911 team has been working with counties on aggregating their data to create statewide centerlines. The centerlines are being incorporated into internal geocoders.
- #7: Will be covered later in the meeting.
- #8 (Stroud): The NG911 team is doing a business rule exercise with local providers to agree that this data will be free and open.
- #9: Covered earlier in the meeting.
- #10: Covered earlier in the meeting.
- #11 (Richter): The informal review of the proposed standard is done; 3 comments were received and have been reviewed. The next step is to submit the proposed standard to the GAC Standards Committee.
- #12 (Vaughn): Rick Moore is leading a 3DGeo subgroup that is collecting breachline datasets that represent culverts, which are needed to help create hDEMs. The group is developing a template for building a database of breachlines. BWSR may have some funding to help aggregate the data.

Draft Statewide Lidar Acquisition Plan – What is the GAC Role?

Sjerven provided an update on the 3DGeo Committee’s Data Acquisition team’s recent activities, summarized in the slides. The [Minnesota State Lidar Plan draft](#) is published on the GAC website, along with a [Story Map](#). The group submitted a funding request to USGS through a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) in November for the North East region.

The regions outlined on the Lidar acquisition areas (LAA) and blocks (LAB) maps are an attempt to align boundaries with watersheds, while recognizing that the boundaries of counties and of past acquisition areas are also important.

The outreach meeting in northeast Minnesota was very well-attended. More outreach is planned, e.g., to regional user groups. A goal is to ensure that the audience is wider than state agencies.

Stroud: MnGeo is working with MNIT Communications to create materials that have targeted messages for different technical and policy audiences.

Action item: Kotz will send a link to the lidar plan to GAC members, asking for their feedback on the GAC’s role.

Legislative Update and US Survey Foot

Ross let members know that the federal Digital Coast Act is going to be part of a larger package of about 10 bills, and a vote or action on that bill is expected soon.

Thorleifson noted that provisions of the Geospatial Data Act are being implemented, such as revising the FGDC and NGAC charters, and providing reports to Congress.

Ross reviewed his slides on the US survey foot which will be phased out as part of the modernization of the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) in 2022. From this point forward, the international foot will be simply called the foot. This change will affect statewide data slightly. He referred members to a [National Institute of Standards and Technology website](#) for additional information.

Mavis noted that data producers need to specify in their metadata which foot measurement was used so that there isn't confusion in future.

Announcements or Other Business

- **Thorleifson:** The [Minnesota Geological Survey](#) is discussing the long-term future of their printed products as they transition to providing more digital databases and 3D geology products. MGS will be hosting the [Geological Mapping Forum](#) April 7-9, 2020.
- **Steele:** The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District will host the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts' [2020 Summer Tour](#), June 24-26.
- **Mavis:** The Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors will hold their [2020 annual meeting](#) in Duluth, February 19-21.
- **Stovern:** Elections for MN GIS/LIS Consortium board members end this week. The Consortium has also added a board position to represent the surveyor community, appointing Chris Mavis to initially serve in that role.
- **Veraguth:** MnGeo, the Minnesota Association of County Surveyors and the Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors are discussing the possibility of adding a land surveyor position at MnGeo, to work on improving the public land survey data in different counties. MnGeo will work with surveyors to develop a position description. The proposal would have to go to the legislature for funding in the 2022-23 biennium.
- **Reinhardt:** The [Association of Minnesota Counties](#) has adopted their annual platform of priorities.
- **Kne:** The University of Minnesota's ArcGIS Online account has nearly 11,000 student accounts!
- **Huset:** The St. Paul Water Department is working with the fire department to publish an online map showing fire hydrants that need volunteers to keep the hydrants clear of snow through the winter.
- **Timerson:** Registration opens in early January for the [AASHTO GIS-T conference](#), which will be held April 14-17, 2020 in Minneapolis; the call for papers has closed. Also, MnDOT is working on a GIS maturity model for their agency.
- **Geurts:** MnDOT, MN Dept. of Revenue and MnGeo held GIS Day events in November. In January, the State Agency GIS Collaborative will define their 2020 goals, taking the GAC's priorities into account.
- **Richter:** The proposed draft of the Metro Stormwater Data Standard is available for informal review right now until February 2020; go to the [MetroGIS project page](#). Several municipalities are holding educational workshops for the 2020 Census, including the City of Blaine; anyone interested in partnering, talk with Richter. The MN Chapter of the [Institute of Asset Management](#) met Dec. 5th; anyone interested in attending future meetings, contact Richter. The Emergency Preparedness Committee meets Dec. 19. Members of the [Metro Hospital Compact](#) are interested in staying informed of GAC activities after being contacted during the priority survey.

- **Knott:** Goodhue County has submitted a [BAA for 3DEP](#) (Broad Agency Announcement for the 3D Elevation Program) proposal to help fund a proof-of-concept for high-density lidar data collection.
- **Kotz:** Geoff Maas has taken a position with Ramsey County, leaving the position of MetroGIS coordinator.