Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2024
Online via Teams
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Members Present: Heather Albrecht, *Hennepin County*; Jill Amundson, *West Central Initiative*; Mitch Bergeson, *USGS*; Jeffrey Bloomquist, *USDA Risk Management Agency*; Ryan Bonney, *Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community*; David Brandt, *Washington County* and *MetroGIS*; Christy Christensen, *McLeod County*; Shana Crosson, *UMN Twin Cities*; Jessica Fendos, *LOGIS*; Kari Geurts, *MNIT DNR*; Len Kne, *UMN Twin Cities*; Britta Maddox, *Anoka County*; Tanya Mayer, *Metropolitan Council*; Victoria Reinhardt, *Ramsey County*; Cory Richter, *Ramsey County*; Gerry Sjerven, *Minnesota Power*; Stacey Stark, *UMN Duluth*; Benjamin Timerson, *MnDOT*; Dennis Tumberg, *City of Chanhassen*; Patrick Veraguth, *Douglas County*

Members Absent: Leanne Knott, *City of Red Wing*; Kendis Scharenbroich, *Pro-West & Associates Inc.*; Alison Slaats, *MnGeo*

Non-Members Present: Andrea Bergman, *MNIT DNR*; Curtis Carlson, *MnGeo*; Chris Cantey, *MN Legislative Coordinating Commission*; Will Craig, *UMN Twin Cities*; Dan Ross, *Ecopia AI*; David Sieberg, *Blue Earth County*; Todd Graham, *Metropolitan Council*; Jeremy Groskreutz, *ISG, Inc.*; Mark Kotz, *Private Citizen*; Terry Larson, *Esri*; Ryan Mattke, *UMN Twin Cities*; Rick Moore, *MNIT DNR*; Akiko Nakamura, *MnDOT*; Tom Paulson, *1Spatial, Inc.*; Pamela Jo Peters, *Unknown Organization*; Jesse Reinhardt, *Hennepin County*; Justin Roberts, *MnDOT*; Kiah Sagami, *Houston Engineering*; Jamie Schulz, *MNIT DNR*; Molly Shoberg, *MN DNR*; Megan Sisko, *MnGeo*; Abby Stamm, *MDH*; Alissa Stark, *MNIT DNR*; Ryan Stovern, *St. Louis County*; Steve Swazee, *Private Citizen*; Kory Thurnau, *MnGeo*; Kevin Trappe, *Beltrami County*; Jennifer Tworzyanski, *MN OSA*; Sean Vaughn, *MN DNR*; Sarah Voje, *EOR, Inc.*; Sally Wakefield, *MnGeo*

1. Call to Order

[Meeting presentation slides](#)

Chair Albrecht called the meeting to order and invited members to introduce themselves. Sally Wakefield is sitting in for Alison Slaats. Members clarified the voting process to be by consent, with objections communicated by speaking up. No response to a motion communicates consent.

- **Motion**: Approve today's agenda (Mayer / Brandt) – Motion passed
- **Motion**: Approve meeting minutes from 12/20/2023 (Crosson / Tumberg) – Motion passed

2. Review and Accept Committee Summaries / Year-End Reports

Chair Albrecht called for approval of the committee reports as reflected in the meeting packet.

Motion: Accept the submitted committee and workgroup reports (Reinhardt / Maddox) – Motion passed

Chair Albrecht invited committee and workgroup chairs to provide a brief highlight of 2023 accomplishments and / or plans for 2024, reminding attendees that this information is included in the meeting agenda packet as part of the committee and workgroup reports.

- (Sjerven) **3D Geomatics Committee** noted that they missed the call for reports so apologized and offered a verbal update. They are working to create and share lidar derivatives with the community. Regarding statewide lidar coverage, two areas are being flown this spring; it will take about 18 months from lidar data collection for this data to become available. The Committee is working closely with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) on the lidar data and shared that available next generation lidar data can be retrieved from the USGS National Map. More updates about timelines will be coming soon.

- (Kne) **Awards Committee** shared that there hasn't been much activity, as most activity comes late summer with the closing and evaluation of nominations for the Governor's Geospatial Certificate Award. Last year there were no nominations. The Committee explained its biggest challenge is getting the word out about the award to the community. Attendees were encouraged to nominate projects this year.

- (Swazee) **Emergency Preparedness** explained that they are extremely active and met all goals from the previous year. The committee has been following the work being done by SharedGeo for Gopher State One Call. SharedGeo reports that the Underground Utilities Mapping effort is $75k short to complete its effort with Gopher State One Call. Alison Slaats met with the COO of Gopher State One Call to share that MnGeo publishes opt-in datasets that could be a potential source of data for Gopher State One Call. The Committee believes that there could be an opportunity to discuss potential legislation related to the sharing of parcel data with Gopher State One Call. Swazee pointed to their report for more details about its activities and plans for 2024.

- (Chair Albrecht on behalf of Andra Matthews) **Outreach Committee** shared that their successes included outreach to 30+ counties to opt into statewide composites available on the Geospatial Commons (for parcels, address points, and road centerlines). The committee also hosted an open data panel discussion at the GIS/LIS Consortium Annual Conference and developed a StoryMap about the benefits of sharing parcel data. This could be used as a guide for sharing work accomplishments with the community.

- (Veraguth for Preston Dowell) **Parcels and Land Records Committee** highlighted its successful advocacy for funds from the legislature to support the Public Land Survey System (PLSS), securing $9.7M which will be discussed later in the meeting. The committee continues to work on standards for PLSS data.

- (Thurnau) **PLSS Preservation Committee** was stood up to guide the PLSS Grant Program (mentioned by Veraguth for $9.7M). The committee put out a Request for Proposal on February 1, for which 65 counties responded. Grants will be awarded and projects are to begin later in the year. More information about this will be provided later in the meeting.

- (Kotz) **Standards Committee** shared that in the past year it evaluated inconsistencies in language across the GAC standards and is working to resolve these. Long-term efforts include reviewing standards that

were approved by the previously named Governor's Council on Geographic Information and bring those into GAC format and update them as needed. As an example, the committee has been working with a subject matter expert on the Stream ID Standard for Minnesota. In the future, the committee hopes to create a standard for identifying watersheds. Committee Chair Kotz noted that he is retired now and willing to stay on as chair but also welcomes anyone to come forward who would like to take on this role, adding that he would support any necessary knowledge transfer. Council Chair Albrecht encouraged members to consider this, especially those GAC members who are looking for a way to participate.

- (Brandt) **Contributing to Nationwide and Commercial Assets (CANDO) Workgroup** highlighted that it met separately with Esri and Google to discuss sharing authoritative data with them on a statewide level, which is not yet common practice in the US. The workgroup's current focus is to share data with Esri through their Community Maps program. The group has been working with Alison Slaats to get the opt-in statewide address point data incorporated into the National Address Database – this dataset is expected to be incorporated into the National Address Database in April of this year. The workgroup is also in conversation with Gopher State One Call about sharing data with them.

3. GAC 2024 Workplan and 2023 Accomplishments

Chair Albrecht shared that the GAC 2024 Workplan and 2023 Accomplishments are in-progress and will be discussed at the next meeting, clarifying that these items are for the GAC as a whole and are different than the committee and workgroup workplans and accomplishments.

4. Review and Approve Outreach Committee Charter

Chair Albrecht (for Andra Bontrager) read the mission of the Outreach Committee and called for approval of the revised Outreach Committee Charter as included in the agenda packet.

Motion: Approve the revised Outreach Committee Charter (Mayer / Reinhardt) – Motion passed

5. K12 Workgroup formation and recruitment

Crosson presented an informal proposal to form a K12 Committee or Workgroup to focus on GIS in Minnesota K-12 education, specifically to promote connections between GIS professionals and the K-12 community. The group would help expose students to GIS to enhance their opportunities, which in turn would broaden the geospatial workforce in Minnesota.

Crosson shared some opportunities relevant for this to be an ideal time to establish this committee, including the new Minnesota Social Studies Standards that include using geospatial technologies to solve spatial problems. Crosson suggests that the proposed committee or workgroup could help teachers that haven't been exposed to GIS teach GIS, noting that this is a large makeup of teachers.

Crosson highlighted the current status of similar work being done throughout the state, noting that many organizations do work to connect with K-12 education on GIS and geography, including Esri, the Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education (MAGE), Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium, and UMN. On October 5, 2024, MAGE, UMN, and the GIS/LIS Consortium will be hosting GeoFest at the UMN Twin Cities Campus as a

collaborative alternative to the Consortium's long-held Educator Day at the GIS/LIS Annual Conference. Bloomquist also mentioned the geospatial community's participation at local schools on GIS Day.

The proposed K12 group includes Crosson and Terry Larson as Co-Chairs, with anyone interested in joining as members. Amundson expressed interest in joining. Crosson has several additional individuals interested in joining. Terry Larson introduced himself, as he is new to the GAC – he is a training consultant with Esri and serves as a liaison for Esri resources; he offered resources from Esri for this effort if it moves forward. Fendos noted that Crosson's participation on the GIS/LIS Consortium's K-12 Committee provides advantageous cross-pollination of resources across organizations.

Among confusion as to whether the proposal was asking for the formation of a committee or workgroup, Wakefield clarified that committees have long-term needs whereas workgroups have short-term objectives. Crosson was unsure whether to propose a committee or workgroup and looked to members to provide guidance. Attendees voiced that the goals and objectives seem appropriate for a committee. Swazee expressed his support for this proposal, noting its opportunity to support emergency preparedness due to current lack of training in schools. Reinhardt expressed excitement about the potential in this proposal.

Crosson, Larson, and others willing to participate will put together a formal proposal for the formation of a committee or workgroup and will bring this to the next GAC meeting for consideration.

See the meeting slides for more details about the proposal and shared information.

6. Priority Project Wrap Up

Vice Chair Maddox began discussion about finalizing this year's Priority Projects. Maddox began by reminding attendees that the priorities surveys went out last fall and that members have since organized incoming priority project ideas and existing priorities based on feedback provided by the community. The intent of this agenda item is to wrap-up this discussion and finalize the priorities for 2024. Maddox referred to the presentation slide deck for details on why the GAC creates priorities and briefly reviewed what that creation process looks like, noting that currently the GAC is at the point of discussing and adjusting priorities based on feedback. Please see the slides for more details.

Maddox referred members to the agenda packet for the list of priorities being proposed for 2024. On the presentation slides, she showed each priority's rankings, scores, owners, champions, committees, and active status. Maddox explained that priority rankings are unique to the committee responsible for that priority, which is why some rank numbers are repeated. Anyone interested in existing, new, or recruiting priorities should reach out to the priority owner or champion, associated committee lead, or the GAC Chair (Albrecht) or Vice Chair (Maddox) to get involved.

Maddox noted priorities that are on hold and being proposed for retirement (removal). These are also listed in the agenda packet. Statewide Future Planned Land Use was put on-hold due to the need for a standard first (in-progress). The NG9-1-1 Geospatial Forum was removed due to the Statewide Emergency Communications Board setting up an NG9-1-1 GIS Workgroup underneath its NG9-1-1 Committee, so the GAC will be relinquishing this initiative to that group. Many GAC volunteers participate on this newly developed SECB NG9-1-1 GIS Workgroup and they will provide the GAC updates as appropriate.

Maddox went on to explain that most of the priorities identified for retirement are those that keep recurring on the list due to being introduced in past priority surveys, yet year after year they rank low, with no activity seen. Committees would be welcome to return to these proposed priorities as time permits, or the community can reintroduce them in future priority project idea surveys to resurface them for priority consideration.

Maddox invited discussion about the proposed priorities for 2024, as well as those proposed for retirement. Upon questions from Richter:

- Albrecht clarified that GAC leadership is working on a 2024 Workplan for the GAC and that the future workflow of the priority projects survey is being formulated in that plan which will be presented at the next GAC meeting.

- Maddox clarified that retired priorities can be reintroduced by survey participants via the priorities feedback survey and that the GAC leadership team is discussing how this might look. GAC leadership is considering how best to sustainably move priorities forward in the long-term while effectively providing guidance for MnGeo.

  - Richter recommended considering a minimum rank score for a priority project idea to make it to the GAC priorities list. The GAC will take this into consideration as it continues to enhance the priorities process moving forward.

- Maddox confirmed that GAC leadership intends to document retired priorities so that they are not lost, but the details of this process has yet to be determined.

Maddox reiterated reasoning for the proposed retirements and clarified that if the GAC wishes to keep these priorities, then they will remain and invited feedback from attendees.

Motion: Retire the 10 GAC Priorities recommended for retirement (Richter / Stark) – Motion passed

Motion: Adopt the 2024 GAC Priorities as listed in the agenda packet (Richter / Reinhardt) – Motion passed

7. Break and Networking

8. Initiatives in Minnesota related to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Kne and Amundson introduced themselves to the group. Amundson offered some insight about the West Central Initiative (WCI), a philanthropic regional development organization. Kne then went on to explain what United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are, noting that the UMN and WCI are participating alongside several countries through the SDG Data Alliance to meet these SDGs. *SDGs are a set of 17 goals that the UN developed in 2015 to address topics such as poverty, hunger, equity, climate change, and quality in education.*

Kne expressed that while they've been working locally within Minnesota to reach these goals (by providing data and indicators of success), efforts are falling short to reach these goals and Kne put out a call for assistance from the GAC. He then provided a tour of the Esri-supported UMN SDG Hub Site on-screen for attendees, showing how users can look at indicator scores for specific counties to gauge how close they are to meeting SDG goals.

Amundson then showed how the WCI SDG Dashboard allows users to compare SDG progress across regions in Minnesota, with included capability to see what organizations are working toward these initiatives in an area. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network has created a statewide scorecard in which Minnesota is ranked #4 in the US.

Kne challenged attendees to help identify better indicators for SDG measurements that are Minnesota-specific, as current indicators were largely developed at a country-scale and not currently available in all counties. Amundson highlighted an exciting result of the UMN's efforts in this includes making recently available MPCA air quality data visible over time to better understand change in progress temporally.

The topic closed with discussion about the Vulnerability Index and a recommendation by Swazee to look into Center for Disease Control and Federal Emergency Management Agency's related work on refining such variables. Various resources related to this effort were shared in the chat – please reach out to Kne for these.

9. PLSS Update

Thurnau started the PLSS update by providing a summary of response to the recent PLSS Monument Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP; released February 1), noting that 65 counties responded to the RFP with a letter of intent, initiating 70 applications. The total anticipated funding to be requested is estimated to be $16.1M (well over the $9.1M in available funds). Response indicated that it would take responding counties an average of 20 years to remonument their entire county, with an average total cost of $210,000. Thurnau then reviewed next steps for the program – full applications are due April 5, which will then be reviewed by the PLSS Preservation Committee, with selected recipients to be announced in April and work to be approved and begin in May. Thurnau closed his update about the PLSS Monument Grant Program by summarizing recent outreach efforts.

Veraguth then provided a PLSS legislative update, explaining the legislative timeline and noting an estimated deficit in budget for the next year. The 2024 Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors Bill, which would make funding permanent at $10M per year, has been submitted to the House and Senate, neither of which have had a hearing for the bill. The committee is currently talking with tribal governments to see if they may be eligible for PLSS grants in the future.

Veraguth closed the PLSS update by thanking PLSS Monument Grant applicants. See the presentation slides for more information about these PLSS updates.

10. MnGeo Updates

Wakefield filled in for Slaats to provide updates from MnGeo. Wakefield opened by sharing that MnGeo applied and received about $1M in MNIT Technology Modernization Funding to update the now 10-years-old Minnesota Geospatial Commons. These funds must be spent in 1-year. This work will revive a past Commons upgrade discovery effort which didn't have funding to continue forward. Wakefield outlined the goals of this effort, which can be found in the presentation slides. MnGeo will be putting out a survey to get feedback from publishers and users to help redesign the Commons. Other outreach about this effort will likely be leveraged; MnGeo will use email and MnGeo's GIS Newsletter to communicate these developments.

Wakefield also provided an update on lidar data distribution and derivatives. MnGeo is working with other state agencies to create a new application ("MnTOPO 2") to share the new generation of statewide lidar data and derivatives (2021 - 2025 lidar data, whereas currently available first-generation lidar data in MnTOPO is from 2008 - 2012). While this application is being built, newly available lidar data can be found on the USGS National Map. Wakefield shared that the 3DGeo Committee is working on creating lidar derivatives from the new generation of lidar data and that they'll keep the community updated on this effort via MnGeo's GIS Newsletter.

See the meeting slides for more detailed information about these updates.

11.   MN GAC priority project and initiatives updates

Vice Chair Maddox invited priority project owners or champions to provide an update on the current list of priority projects. See the meeting slides for details on priority project and initiatives updates, where available.

- **Lidar Data** – Sjerven deferred their update time to others since lidar updates were provided earlier in the meeting.

- **Updated and Aligned Boundary Data** – Veraguth shared that the Boundary Alignment Subcommittee is looking at potentially addressing the two separate county boundary datasets maintained by MnDOT and MNDNR with the goal of having a single statewide county boundary dataset, but this will depend on their capacity amidst other PLSS work. Veraguth also shared that they are working on defining the Minnesota-Wisconsin river boundary.

- **Parcel Data** – Albrecht shared that 58 Minnesota counties are contributing to the opt-in statewide parcel dataset available on the Minnesota Geospatial Commons and that outreach to get more counties to opt in continues.

- **Road Centerline Data** – Albrecht shared that the opt-in statewide dataset was published to the Commons in 2023 and currently 31 counties have opted in to contribute. Efforts to reach out to counties asking them to opt-in continues.

- **Address Points Data** – Albrecht noted that this is also new to the Commons in 2023, with 32 counties opted in to contribute. Efforts to reach out to counties asking them to opt-in continues.

- **Open Foundational Data** – Brandt shared that this group also supports the effort of getting more data producers to opt into the statewide datasets on the Commons.

- **Remonumentation of All Section Corners** – Veraguth highlighted that this update was provided earlier and Maddox noted that this update is in the PLSS Preservation Committee report included in the agenda packet.

- **Underground Utilities Data Sharing Team** – Maddox referred attendees to the Emergency Preparedness Committee report included in the agenda packet. Swazee added that the development of related software will be done by the end of the year and that additional funding for this is sought.

- **Hydro-DEMs** – Vaughn highlighted that this work is active with several champions but remains unfunded. He noted his appreciation of this work's importance being recognized as a priority and hopes that funding can be found to further support it.

- **Culvert Data Standard** – Moore noted that the group has received feedback from various levels of government regarding the standard and that they'll be working with those partners and trying to get additional feedback. Next steps will be to determine which attributes to move forward.

- **Critical Infrastructure (CI) Data Workflow** – Stark shared that this year the CI Workgroup will be working to establish a process by which to identify datasets to be endorsed as best available, and that they may have some proposals coming to the Standards Committee this year.

- **Success Stories for Geospatial Technology** – Kne had no update and shared the next meeting date for this effort.

- **Geodata Archive Implementation** – Mattke shared that the Big Ten Geospatial Information Network is looking at creating a Big Ten Geospatial Data Archive, noting that lack of funding has been a barrier to standing up an archive in Minnesota. Mattke asked members to ponder for future discussion whether the Big Ten Geospatial Data Archive would meet Minnesota's needs for a geodata archive.

- **Statewide Imagery Program** – Albrecht shared that this is a new initiative that is actively recruiting. Wakefield, on behalf of this priority's owner / champion, shared that conversations about building funding for this are being investigated in coordination with MnGeo. Bloomquist offered to provide some insight on how this works in North Dakota.

- **Planned Land Use Data Standard** – No updates.

- **Statewide County Boundary Dataset** – Timerson reiterated that this work is being discussed among the Boundary Alignment Subcommittee and this effort continues.

- **Statewide Survey Records Inventory** – Veraguth shared that this may progress through the PLSS Monument Grant Program work.

- **More Fully Attributed Statewide Parcel Data** – Stark shared that the group has not yet met and encouraged anyone interested to reach out to her.

- **K-12 GIS Resources** – No updates besides the above K-12 agenda item.

Chair Albrecht shared that GAC members are welcome and encouraged to participate on GAC committees or workgroups, reminding members that participation is an expectation. She highlighted that the new priority projects are great opportunities for those still seeking ways to participate.

12.   Announcements or Other Business

Chair Albrecht invited any other announcements or discussion items.

Wakefield shared the SECB NG9-1-1 GIS Workgroup's recently released [questionnaire](#) to collect feedback about NG9-1-1 from GIS data producers. Christensen serves as a liaison between the GAC and SECB.

Richter noted various upcoming events for professional development and networking.

Swazee noted that the US National Grid was missing from the priority project updates slides. The lead of this initiative was not present to provide an update.

Veraguth highlighted the Meet Me at the Corner event happening later in the day.

Sjerven shared that planning is underway for the GIS/LIS Consortium Annual Conference in the fall, noting that abstract submissions are due May 15.

Member Bloomquist's organization (USDA Risk Management Agency Business Analytics Division) and Carlton State University in Texas will be receiving a SAG Award from Esri at the international Esri User Conference for their work in geospatial and data analytics – congratulations to the team!

13.   Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn (Amundson / Richter) – Motion passed

Next Quarterly GAC Meeting: *May 29, 2024, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM*