

MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

December 29, 2010 Meeting Notes

Blazing Star Room, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

Members: Brad Anderson, City of Moorhead (by video); David Arbeit, MnGeo; Will Craig, University of Minnesota; Rebecca Foster, City of Edina; Rick Gelbmann, Metropolitan Council; Brian Huberty, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Haila Maze, City of Minneapolis; Robert McMaster, University of Minnesota; Tim Ogg, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Mark Olsen, Pollution Control Agency; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Terry Schneider, MetroGIS; Rick Schute, Minnesota National Guard; Gary Swenson, Hennepin County; Mark Thomas, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; and Ron Wencil, U.S. Geological Survey.

Non-Members: Chris Cialek, MnGeo; Mike Dolbow, MN Dept. of Agriculture; Craig Erickson, MN National Guard; Tianpeng Gao, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China; Pete Jenkins, MN Dept. of Transportation; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; Fred Logman, MnGeo; Liesa Miller, MN Dept. of Transportation; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Tom Walkington, Hamline University.

Welcome

Chair Victoria Reinhardt called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves.

Notes of June 30, 2010 Meeting

Motion by Craig with second by Mackiewicz to approve the [notes](#) for the September 29, 2010, Council meeting. There was no discussion and the motion carried.

State Government Geospatial Advisory Council (Rebecca Foster)

Most of the State Government Council's November 9 meeting was spent discussing standards. The GIS community has worked for years to develop and promote geospatial standards, and when the Information Policy Council existed, there was a process whereby the IPC approved them as State of Minnesota standards. That process disappeared when the IPC was dissolved. Now, as the Office of Enterprise Technology is developing its processes for enterprise architecture, under a State CIO, we need to work with OET on how best to re-establish a process to develop and approve state standards. This will also be an opportunity to educate the larger IT community about geospatial standards.

See the 11/9 [meeting notes](#) for details.

Presentation: Partnerships (Pete Jenkins), [presentation slides](#)

Pete Jenkins, from the Photogrammetric Unit of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, described several areas in which Mn/DOT has developed partnerships to accomplish work that benefits the entire GIS community and Minnesota's citizens.

1. Geodetic Control Densification: Geodetic Control is the critical base layer on which many other datasets rely to establish their positional accuracy. Mn/DOT has established partnerships with the counties in order to establish and improve the accuracy of the geodetic control layer. Ongoing work is needed not only to increase the number (density) of control points but also to adjust for rising mean sea level (since the changing level affects the geoid model of the earth's surface on which the geodetic control is based). The county builds or sets the geodetic monuments; Mn/DOT and the counties perform the field data acquisition together; Mn/DOT then performs blue booking, submits the results to the National Geodetic Survey for incorporation into their national database and handles database

management. No money is exchanged for any of this work. Several maps in the presentation slides illustrate that, thanks to this partnership, Minnesota has a much denser network of control points than almost any other state.

2. Orthoimagery Projects: Mn/DOT and 72 Minnesota counties have worked together to establish control points to assess the positional accuracy of orthoimagery projects. The Farm Service Agency uses them to monitor contractor compliance for [NAIP imagery](#), and they also have been used for the State's [springtime leaf-off orthophoto flights](#). QA/QC using the control points helps develop the imagery accuracy statement so users know the proper level of data use and performance expectation. Having the control points helped Minnesota be selected over other states for additional NAIP flights in 2009 and 2010.

3. LiDAR: Control points are also being used in the [on-going project to collect LiDAR data statewide](#). In addition to Mn/DOT, counties, cities, mining companies and the U.S. Forest Service are also participating.

Jenkins summarized the benefits of partnerships: Reduced project costs and long-term benefits since results are re-used in many projects; geographic distribution of costs; gain by all levels of governments (federal through local) from each others' work; increased confidence by local partners since they do part of the work.

He concluded with lessons learned: Meet with partners face-to-face; clarify the roles of the partners; emphasize the bid process (if there is cost sharing); plan early since budgets for state and local governments are on different cycles; and ensure that local participants feel that their involvement is significant and that the final product meets or exceeds their expectations.

Arbeit noted that Jenkins' approach to working with partners is an excellent model for how we can engage partners in other topical areas.

Presentation: Geocoding Workgroup (Mike Dolbow), [presentation slides](#)

The Geocoding Workgroup was formed in response both to a widespread need for geocoding, and 2010 state legislation that mandated that "all geospatial data conform to an approved state geocode model." To date, the workgroup has written a charter, established milestones, documented "ideal" service requirements, and drafted a document on potential benefits. For more information, including the service requirements document, see the [Geocoding Workgroup](#) webpage.

Planned next steps are to identify potential solutions with an RFI, assess the costs of potential solutions (including the data that the solution requires), recommend a solution to be acquired or developed, and report back to both advisory councils.

In response to Dolbow's discussion questions: Members confirmed that they all had a need to geocode, and Gelbmann said that the Metropolitan Council was paying for a geocoding solution. Members raised a number of issues concerning the idea of contributing data to a statewide solution, and some possible ways to make that work:

- Some organizations would want to share, and others would not. Suggestions: emphasize the benefits of sharing and the improved outcomes with higher quality data; groups that have experience with maintaining high quality support data for geocoding could share their experience or expertise with others who are newer to the process.

- Would “voluntary” sharing become “mandatory” sharing?
- Would someone contributing less accurate data need to improve the quality to match data from others?
- How can a geocoder ensure that input addresses are formatted well enough so that geocoding results are usable and reliable? Would an enterprise system have a mechanism to validate addresses on entry?
 - Kotz mentioned the metro address points dataset, maintained by local address authorities, that would be a source of free validation data.
 - The [national address data standard](#) is in the final stages of approval; this would help guide any efforts to develop a state standard for formatting addresses.
 - Craig suggested contacting Gordon Chinander at the MN Emergency Services Board about 9-1-1 addresses.
 - Arbeit said that a state geocode model must specify an address standard.
 - St. Louis County is developing a parcel point database.
 - Craig noted the ongoing frustration that address data collected by the U.S. Census (at a cost of \$444 million for the 2010 effort) is considered non-public and no state or local government can access or use it.
- Mackiewicz emphasized that updates need to get to first responders.
- Gelbmann asked: Would batch processing be offered? How much error to allow, especially if the processing is unsupervised? Dolbow responded that the geocoding service host could reserve the right to schedule and deal with batch processing; it wouldn't just be an unsupervised open option. There is no easy answer; geocoding education is needed.

CAP Grant Proposal: Business Case for Parcels (David Arbeit)

The submission deadline for this year's [Cooperative Agreement Program grants](#) from the Federal Geographic Data Committee is January 6, 2011. One of Minnesota's potential grant applications, metadata training for nonprofit organizations, will not be pursued this year since Alison Slaats, who would have led the project, is leaving 1000 Friends of Minnesota for another position. The remaining Minnesota proposal is from MnGeo for Category 4: “Business Plan Development and Implementation”.

Arbeit distributed a near-final draft of a proposal to develop a [statewide business plan for parcel integration in Minnesota](#) [Note: this link is to the final proposal as submitted]. MnGeo would submit the grant on behalf of a partnership of other Minnesota agencies and stakeholders. The plan would build on existing efforts: the Digital Cadastral Data Committee's work to extend the use of MetroGIS's standard for parcel data exchange beyond the Twin Cities metro to counties statewide; DNR's work to acquire county data and integrate it for use within the department; Mn/DOT's pilot program to directly access parcel data from participating counties; ProWest & Associates, Inc.'s work with a number of counties to develop their parcel data. A statewide business plan would look for ways to resolve thorny issues of liability, funding, and ongoing maintenance. In this category, grant amounts are up to \$40,000 and required state matches will be in the form of in-kind staff time. Arbeit asked whether council members supported the proposal; whether they had suggested changes; and whether they had comments on Pro-West's possible role as a contractor on the project.

Council members were very supportive of the proposal, feeling strongly that the time has come for a concerted effort to lay the groundwork for an integrated statewide parcel data layer. Craig noted a 2007 report from the National Research Council titled [National Land Parcel Data: A Vision for the Future](#) that underscores the high priority of this data. Members also emphasized the critical importance of data maintenance so that the integrated layer remains current. Members confirmed Pro-West's strong

background and engagement in this area. It will be necessary to issue an RFP for the work, but members hoped that the RFP process would not take up too much of the project budget.

Motion: The Council will write a letter of support for the FGDC CAP grant proposal, “A *Business Plan for Statewide Parcel Data Integration for Minnesota*”. (Craig/Schneider). The motion carried.

Action Item: Logman will draft a letter of support for the CAP grant proposal for Reinhardt to revise and sign on behalf of the council.

Year in Review (David Arbeit)

Arbeit distributed a handout: [MnGeo’s Year in Review, 2010 Highlights](#). He reported that there is no word yet on who will be appointed Commissioner of Administration or Chief Information Officer. He also noted that the upcoming redistricting project (which MnGeo is not directly involved in) will highlight the role of GIS in government operations. Arbeit also reported that the recommendation to extend both the Statewide and State Government Geospatial Advisory Councils until June 2015 will be moving through the legislative process.

Proposed Outreach / Communication Committee: In response to the agenda question about what MnGeo and the Council could be doing differently, Will Craig noted that the former Minnesota Governor’s Council on Geographic Information had an Outreach Committee which ended when that council sunsetted. He suggested that there is an ongoing need for outreach, especially to legislators and other policymakers, and that a similar committee be formed. The emphasis would be on collecting and presenting stories to policymakers about the value of GIS to Minnesota citizens. Schneider added that the stories should emphasize how we make things happen for the larger community, especially in the areas of better government efficiency, collaboration, and jobs. Reinhardt said that legislators need to understand what’s involved in producing this information, and connect GIS to real-life issues. Maze noted that she’s been asked, “Why is the city spending money on GIS when everything’s on Google?”

Craig volunteered to draft a charter to start the committee. Mackiewicz, Schneider, Kotz and Rader volunteered to be on the committee, and Huberty also indicated that he would support the committee’s activities.

Action item: Craig will draft a charter for the proposed Communications / Outreach Committee.

Information Items

MnSCU Mathematical Software Licenses for High Schools: Thomas announced a new opportunity that allows Minnesota high schools to acquire access to mathematical software from Maplesoft. This opportunity was made possible by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities via a Carl D. Perkins grant. It allows Minnesota high schools to download and use, cost-free, five floating licenses of Maplesoft - Maple 14. Information on this offering is available [online](#).

WLIA Meeting in Madison: Wencl reported that he was planning to attend the [WLIA](#) (Wisconsin Land Information Association) annual conference in Madison in mid-February to participate in sessions on elevation data. There will also be a panel on state GIS and coordination; Arbeit and Reinhardt have been invited to be on the panel. Arbeit may be able to accept the invitation; if not, Reinhardt will notify the council to ask whether any other member would be able to participate.

Letter on Strategic Planning for Remote Sensing Imagery: Huberty asserted that ongoing collection of remote sensing imagery, especially for emergency response and natural resource applications, is a fundamental need for the U.S., and that there is no federal plan to fund remote sensing needs as they arise. He proposed that the council write a letter to the Federal Office of Science and Technology to describe the problem and suggest how to work to resolve it. Reinhardt requested that he draft a letter for the council's review.

Action item: *Huberty will draft a letter to the Federal Office of Science and Technology on the need for a federal plan to fund remote sensing.*

2011 Spring Imagery: Cialek reported that the RFP for collection of 2011 spring imagery closes on January 3, 2011. For details, see the [spring air photo website](#).

CTU Update: Craig requested an update on the CTU project, an effort to develop and maintain a city, township and unorganized territory boundary file for Minnesota; the project is partly funded by a [2010 CAP grant](#). Cialek responded that MnGeo has developed procedures to readily update the file as boundary annexations occur; the [statewide file is free online](#). To help develop partnerships with local stakeholders who could potentially use and contribute to the dataset, the project team will convene a meeting with the Association of Minnesota Counties, the League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Association of Townships, and several state agencies that are involved in CTU updates.

BAS meeting? Wencil said that the U.S. Census had been planning to hold a Boundary and Annexation Survey meeting in Minnesota; BAS is used to update information about the legal boundaries and names of all governmental units in the United States. Was the meeting ever held? [*note: according to the [BAS workshop webpage](#), the meeting was held December 9, 2010*]

Project Updates: See the [project updates handout](#)

Committees and Workgroups: See the [committees and workgroups handout](#).

Future Meetings

2011: Meetings are scheduled for March 31, June 30, September 29, and December 29 (fifth Thursdays of those months). The March and September meetings will be in the Blazing Star Room, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul from 1:00 – 4:00 pm; locations for the June and December meetings are TBD.

The meeting was adjourned.

Summary of Action Items:

- Logman will draft a letter of support for the parcel business plan CAP grant proposal for Reinhardt to revise and sign on behalf of the council.
- Craig will draft a charter for the proposed Outreach / Communications Committee.
- Huberty will draft a letter to the Federal Office of Science and Technology on the need for a federal plan to fund remote sensing.

Notes by Nancy Rader and Fred Logman.