

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2023

Hybrid – In person and online via Teams

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Heather Albrecht, Hennepin County; Jill Amundson, West Central Initiative; David Brandt, Washington County; Ryan Bonney, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community; Christy Christensen, McLeod County; Shana Crosson, University of Minnesota; Jessica Fendos, LOGIS; Kari Geurts, MNIT Department of Natural Resources; Leanne Knott, City of Red Wing; Britta Maddox, Anoka County; Tanya Mayer, Metropolitan Council; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Cory Richter, Ramsey County; Kendis Scharenbroich, Pro-West & Associates Inc.; Gerry Sjerven, Minnesota Power; Alison Slaats, MnGeo; Stacey Stark, University of Minnesota; Benjamin Timerson, Department of Transportation; Dennis Tumberg, City of Chanhassen; Patrick Veraguth, Douglas County

Members Absent: Mitch Bergeson, USGS; Jeff Bloomquist, USDA Risk Management Agency; Len Kne, University of Minnesota

1. Call to Order

[Meeting presentation slides](#)

Richter welcomed GAC members and guests, and members introduced themselves.

- **Motion:** Approve today's agenda (Brandt/Maddox) – Motion passed
- **Motion:** Approve meeting minutes from 5/24/2023 (Brandt/Albrecht) – Motion passed

2. Review and Accept Committee Reports and GAC 2023 Workplan (All)

Richter referred members to the committee reports included in the agenda packet, noting they are intended to be a brief overview of committee activity. She noted the following highlights from the committee reports:

- There were no submissions for the Governor's Commendation this year, so this committee did not meet. However, they were still active working on their hub site and additional PR around the awards.
- Emergency Preparedness Committee is quite busy, and their efforts will be covered during the priority project portion of the meeting.
- The Foundational Data Workgroup has been busy over the summer. More than 20 counties they have contacted have agreed to share their data online via the Geospatial Commons.

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

2a. PLSS Preservation Committee Charter Revision (Veraguth)

Veraguth explained that although a committee charter was approved at the May meeting, an update was now needed. Since then, a MNIT Attorney has advised that the committee drop the voting membership requirement, allowing anyone who is interested in reviewing applications to do so. Those members will be required to sign a conflict-of-interest form. He added that this committee is fast-paced and anyone who is interested in participating to contact him directly. Members will be expected to serve for 2 years. This change simplifies the membership process. An updated charter was submitted for approval.

Motion: Accept the updated PLSS Preservation Committee Charter as presented (Veraguth/Brandt) – Motion passed

3. Welcome returning and new GAC appointees (Richter/Slaats)

Cory reminded the group that the council is kicking off a new two-year term and have a combination of new and returning members. As such, she reviewed some basics about the GAC. She spoke to the benefit of having broad sector representation, she then reviewed the council's mission and guiding principles, adding that the guiding principles can be updated by the council as the work evolves.

GAC Mission: The Council 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.

Guiding Principles:

- Promote effective investments in geospatial information.
- Promote geospatial information as a shared public resource.
- Support the establishment and use of geospatial standards and best practices.
- Champion collaboration among geospatial practitioners and related stakeholders
- Educate and inform policymakers about the value and use fo geospatial technology.
- Provide a forum for ideas and issues to be shared and acted upon by the geospatial community.
- Encourage all council sectors to contribute to the state geospatial infrastructure.
- Encourage all council members to communicate outcomes with relevant stakeholders.
- Encourage geospatial education at all levels.
- Advocate for fee and open geospatial data

She then offered examples for new members of the types of efforts the GAC undertakes. She added that the GAC is shaped by each new council and encouraged new members to work to shape the council during their time as members.

Examples of Coordination:

- Advising, supporting, and making recommendations to MnGeo
- Creating, endorsing and advocating for standards
- Defining policy requirements and driving policy decisions
- Representing the geospatial community
- Advocating for project priorities

Finally, Cory reminded members of a new to-do items.

1. Review and return the Oath of Office
2. Review and submit profile updates.
3. Verify you have access to SharePoint.
4. Add important dates to your calendar.
5. Join a committee, workgroup, or project team!

Cory reiterated that the work is really done at the committee and workgroup level and the GAC relies on the work of those groups to get things done. She encouraged members to get involved.

4. The GAC & MnGeo Relationship (MnGeo)

Cory invited Alison to explain the relationship between MnGeo and the GAC.

Alison shared the [statute](#) that defines MnGeo’s role as the state’s central coordinating office for GIS, housed at Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) agency. The creation of the council and its role in guiding MnGeo is also described in the statute. Alison spoke to how MnGeo looks to the GAC to guide the work of that office. She reminded members that they represent a sector of the geospatial community and urged them to think about how they will connect with their sector to share and gather information from others in that sector. She spoke how MnGeo is funded through projects (service bureau) and programs (general fund). MnGeo is guided by a strategic plan as described in the slide deck, which provides detail about MnGeo’s coordination and leadership roles. She encouraged all in attendance to subscribe to MnGeo’s newsletters via [Gov Delivery](#). Finally, she described MnGeo’s support role to the GAC.

Tangible examples of work done by MnGeo, advised by the GAC

- Quarterly aggregation of parcel data, including conversion to GAC parcel standard, and publication of opt-in parcel dataset on Commons
- Support of Geospatial Commons (1000+ resources and 45 publishers)
- Financial and organizational support for USGS 3DEP lidar funding partnerships
- Building of MnTOPO 2 application to support storage and delivery of new lidar data and derivatives
- Building a StoryMap to explain the benefits of parcel sharing, with content from the Parcel and Land Records Committee
- Ongoing support the WMS image service that shares county, state agency, federal and other imagery in a fast and freely available service

- Participation in meetings to advocate for GAC goals and principles, such as data sharing

Chair Richer recognized and thanks MnGeo for the support they to the council.

5. GAC Member Roles & Expectations (Richter)

Chair Richter shared a slide outlining member roles and expectations, including remaining connections to sectors and other organizations. Members are also expected to commit to at least one workgroup, committee, or project team. Members were encouraged to connect with council leadership or MnGeo staff with any questions or concerns.

6. Committee Recruitment (Richter)

Chair Richter spoke to the active committees as outlined in the slide deck the and encouraged members and others to refer to the [GAC Committee pages](#) to learn more about each groups activities. She called out the Outreach committee specifically because they are currently recruiting for leadership/liaison roles. There are two subgroups under the Outreach umbrella – Open Foundational Data that works with counties to share data on the Geospatial Commons and Geospatial Success stories that works to amplify examples of good work being done by the geospatial community. Much of the work of the GAC is done at the committee level and their work is critical to the GAC’s role to advise MnGeo.

7. Leadership Team (Richter)

Chair Richter spoke to installing a new leadership team for the coming term, explaining that she is chairing as the “active” chair, but a new Chair and Vice-Chair will be selected at this meeting.

a. Roles & Expectations

Richter spoke to a slide outlining leadership roles and expectations. Many echo member roles but include additional responsibilities to help develop meeting and agenda content. She added that a few new roles have been added to the leadership team. There are multiple roles to fill –

- Chair – lead meetings, finalize agendas with leadership team, communicate with MnGeo, the GAC and the leadership team, provide guidance to inquiries from committees or the public, provide overall vision and leadership for the GAC and meet with MnGeo GIO as needed, write letters of support or directives.
- Vice Chair – lead in absence of the chair, advocate for priority projects, engage with committees to see that they are getting requested support from the GAC or MnGeo, lead discussions about priority projects, curate and manage the annual priority survey, including presentation to the GAC
- Secretary – lead in the absence of chair/vice chair, disseminate draft agendas to the GAC and MnGeo, quarterly emails to the GAC and leadership team advising of timelines and due dates, oversee content collection for project and committee updates, annual reports, workplans and quarterly meeting packets, work with MnGeo on GovDelivery GAC related announcements.

- Advisor – curate content for the quarterly GAC meetings and bring ideas forward for agenda setting
- Board – leadership team and GAC as requested (3 positions available)

b. Selection

Chair - Brandt nominated Heather Albrecht to role of chair. Albrecht accepted the nomination.

Vice Chair – Britta Maddox self-nominated for Vice Chair

Secretary – Tanya Mayer self-nominated for Secretary

Advisor – Kari Geurts self-nominated for Advisor

Board – Richter nominated Victoria Reinhardt, Pat Veraguth and Dennis Tumberg self-nominated for board roles

Richter called for a nomination to move the leadership team slate as nominated. She added that she and Brandt will work to transition to the new team.

Motion: Accept the slate as nominated to be installed as the new leadership team (Brandt/Amundson) – Motion passed

8. Break & Networking

9. State of Minnesota Hazard Mitigation Plan (Stark)

Stacey Stark presented an overview of the MN State Hazard Mitigation Plan she is working on. Stacey works for U-Spatial and they have a contract with the Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office (HSEM) at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to update this plan. They do a lot of the outreach with other agencies. The U-Spatial role is to focus on the geospatial aspect of risk assessment and vulnerability analysis for natural hazards that the state faces and compiling that plan. This year the plan includes an online Hub site that will allow residents of Minnesota to explore natural hazards, including the history and likelihood for future risk from those hazards.

FEMA requires a hazard mitigation plan every 5 years from participating jurisdictions to be eligible for funding. If a jurisdiction wants to apply for grants, an active mitigation plan needs to be in place. Every county and some cities have a plan in place. The State also has a plan that differs from the others in that it is a roll-up of state capabilities and programs, and the actions and goals are higher level. The 2019 plan can be accessed at: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/hazard-mitigation/Pages/state-hazard-mitigation-plan.aspx>.

Stark explained that hazard mitigation is between recovery and resilience in the cycle of preparedness. The purpose of this plan is to identify the state's major hazards, assess the vulnerability to those hazards, and take steps to reduce vulnerability using the technical and program resources of Minnesota agencies. There is a big overlap between hazard mitigation and climate resiliency. For the plan itself FEMA is interested in addressing risks and vulnerabilities of people and property.

She is reaching out to stakeholders and organizational representatives to contribute to this content and how their work may contribute to the plan. Additionally, she is looking for volunteers to review the draft content as part of a review team. The draft will include agency partners that work in the space of hazard mitigation and climate resiliency planning. She shared some examples of agency work and how they might fit into this plan. It will also include information about programs, policy and funding that relate to this plan. The next section in the plan lists includes (geospatial) tools and resources that explore risks and vulnerability, like the work underway at Ramsey County that Reinhardt shared at the last meeting. Some of these are being worked on in GAC committees and workgroups.

U-Spatial is using geospatial data to identify hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks. She shared a slide of content she is responsible for and highlighted challenges with finding some of this data specific to Minnesota. She asked for help from the group to identify datasets that might be relevant to the plan. They are also required to do an assessment of risk exposure to state assets and critical infrastructure. The Critical Infrastructure workgroup of the Emergency Preparedness Committee has been helpful over the past 5 years to build confidence in the asset data. They need to know actual building locations, as opposed to the address of a state park for example. This data should include details such as value and height to properly assess risk. Another section of the plan inventories specific actions and strategies to mitigate hazards. Some involve the need for funding specific tools and resources and engagement with specific groups, including this council. She also outlined specific actions needed by agency.

She closed by summarizing her ask of members and other participants on the call –

- Serve as a reviewer of geospatial data sections
- Share “success stories” of how geospatial data has contributed to hazard mitigation and community resilience planning
- Share datasets that support natural hazard research (and let her know about it!)
- Contribute to resiliency planning in local jurisdictions – review plans, share mitigation data and ideas

Stacey can be reached at slstark@d.umn.edu

10. MnGeo Updates (MnGeo)

a. Surveyor position

Alison Slaats shared that plans to hire a licensed land surveyor to coordinate the PLSS remonumentation grant program funded in the last legislative cycle are on track and interviews are in progress. MnGeo should have someone on staff in October.

b. Progress on advised work

Slaats reported that much of the progress on current activities is included in the Committee and Priority Project reports. She called out specific progress on outreach to counties to opt-in to the datasets that will be shared publicly via the Geospatial Commons. That includes adding additional counties to the parcel dataset and progress toward publishing the road centerline (RCL) and address point (ADP) datasets (extractions from the NG911 data counties are submitting as part of that process)

c. NSGIC

Slaats informed the group that each member is provided a National States Geospatial Advisory Council (NSGIC) membership. NSGIC is a national forum to advance state level coordination and provides access to share policies and practices. Most states have a coordination office similar to MnGeo and a coordinating councils like the GAC. Membership provides access to discussion boards and committees relative to Minnesota's efforts. There are also a limited number of memberships available to support committee work. She encouraged members to familiarize themselves with NSGIC.

11. Legislative & NSGIC Updates

While some of this was detailed earlier in the message Slaats spoke to the PLSS funding that was recently passed and congratulated the PLSS Committee on their efforts and progress. MnGeo was also given a modest increase in the last state budget and is already putting those additional resources to work on building out Lidar distribution tools and to focus on GAC data priorities.

She also spoke to the bi-annual NSGIC Geospatial Maturity Assessment. They do this to help states set goals, identify peer states for collaboration, identify areas requiring attention and connect with opportunities and resources. There are several sections in the assessment and MnGeo completes the assessment with the help of subject matter experts in the community. Slaats explained that Minnesota went down ½ a grade (B+) due to changes in address and transportation sections. We no longer have current statewide address point and road centerline data as those datasets were old and are being replaced by data coming from the NG911 program. Even though our score went down temporarily, we expect to bounce back in the next cycle. Slaats also provided specifics on each theme in the assessment, noting an increase in the grade related to Parcels. Hydrography was not graded because the National Hydrographic Dataset (NHD) is being replaced by a new program called 3DHP will be based on nationwide Lidar data. No states have fully made this transition yet, so it was no longer graded.

12. Priority Projects Annual Survey: Timeline & Goals (Richter/Brandt)

Brandt spoke to the need to set priorities because there are many potential projects. Each year the GAC goes through the list to establish those priorities. A call will be made soon to the community to suggest additional priorities and following that, elicit feedback via survey to help guide the prioritization process. This year's priorities were set last year. Brandt spoke to a slide outlining the steps and timeline and to update the priority list for the coming year. Richter add that committee and workgroup initiatives and informed by this process that integrates stakeholder input. This year the projects will be categorized into groups to make the survey more user friendly.

13. Updates on MN GAC Priority Projects and Initiatives (Brandt)

14. Brandt introduced three update items that priority and initiative owners should report on:

1. What is your most recent success?
2. Are you are experiencing a barrier?
3. What is your next task?

4. Do you have a request for assistance

A slide containing a table of priority projects was shared and Brandt explained the list is a mix of active and inactive projects. He further explained that some items have gotten going and may be in ongoing maintenance (Parcels for example) and others require more work to get them launched.

- **Parcel Data** – Norman Anderson
 - Most recent successes:
 - Status of [Free and Open Data](#) – the list of counties making their data available to the public continues to grow. Stevens County is the latest addition which brings the total up to 53 (as of 4/20/23)
 - The [public GAC-standard compiled dataset](#) quarterly update was last published on August 4th, 2023 and includes 44 opt-in counties. An ArcGIS online webmap and feature layer are also available.
 - Next tasks: 2 additional counties will be added for a special October cut before GIS/LIS (McLeod and Morrison). A secured AGOL statewide feature layer is also under development for internal (government) use (FY'24).

- **Critical Infrastructure Data** – Stark
 - Most recent success:
 - Validated correctional facilities data and now have over 50 counties that have contributed their validation of fire, police and hospital locations.
 - Next tasks:
 - Always looking for member to join this workgroup!

- **Address Points Data and Road Centerline Data** – Slaats
 - Most recent success:
 - The foundational workgroup is reaching out to counties to opt-in to a public version of these datasets. 21 counties have opted-in to data. We hope to publish a version of these datasets on the Commons by the next meeting.
 - Next tasks:
 - Complete the metadata for the resources.
 - Separate display maps for Address Points and Road Centerlines.

- **Culvert Data Standard** – Moore
 - Most recent successes:
 - Worked with MnGeo to complete a Survey123 survey. Hopes to deploy survey in next 2-3 weeks.
 - Barriers:
 - Most respondents have likely been in the field during the summer months, so held off on sending it out.

- Next tasks:
 - Process the results as they come in and start the process of refining the attributes for the standard.

- **Publication of Open Foundational Datasets – Knipple**
 - Most recent successes:
 - A workgroup has been formed (Contributing to Nationwide and Commercial Data Assets – “CAN DO”) has developed a charter and is meeting regularly.
 - Knipple has been appointed to the NSGIC Address and Transportation & Address Committee to integrate MN datasets with other states also working to share data with national vendors (Google, Esri, etc.)

- **New Lidar Acquisition - Sjerven**
 - Most recent success:
 - Reviewing Past Acquisitions from 22/23.
 - Lidar Acquisition underway in our Minnesota River East and West Lidar Acquisition Blocks (LAB)
 - Lidar Acquisition for West portion of Central Miss LAB/3 counties (green) are complete.
 - Barriers:
 - Funding for lidar acquisition, management, and dissemination remains to be an ongoing need that presents barriers and delays
 - Weather: Difficult spring for acquisition
 - Late snow
 - Flooding
 - Smoke
 - Next task:
 - Work with Alison/MnGeo on next steps or MnTOPO 2.0
 - Continuing to seek our goal of covering Minnesota with Quality Level-1 lidar.
 - Community of Practice focused on development of lidar derived products

- **U.S. National Grid Materials – Knippel**
 - **Ongoing**
 - **Continue work with Emergency Preparedness Committee**
 - **Formed US National Grid Institute sponsored by SharedGeo (Swayzee)**
 - **Updated Statewide USNG maps (10k squares) Available through EPC USNG website**
 - **Migrated that data from Dakota County servers into servers shared by SharedGeo**
 - **Will be presenting two presentations at GIS/LIS**
 - **Website under continuous updates**

- **Re-monumentation of Section Corners – Veraguth**
 - Most recent successes:
 - Signed by the Governor
 - Barriers:
 - Outreach to every county
 - Next tasks:
 - Hire a Survey Coordinator
 - Set up PLSS Remonumentation Committee
 - Establish application

- **MnGeo Image Service Improvements – Slaats**
 - Most recent successes:
 - Added 4 new layers to WMS Image service.
 - Barriers: None
 - Next tasks:
 - Lake County to add into WMS – will be built in the cloud.

- **Geodata Archive Implementation:** The implementation of an archive for Minnesota geospatial data – Mattke
 - Most recent success:
 - The Big Ten Geospatial Information Network is working on report outlining what it would look like to build a Geodata Archive for the Big Ten. Much of the work of the Workgroup will be used for this exploration.
 - Draft Ready for Executive committee.
 - Hopefully more at December Meeting.
 - Barriers:
 - Request for Assistance:
 - How can we leverage this to archive Minnesota Data? Would a Big Ten Geodata Archive serve the need for a MN Geodata Archive?
 - Next task:
 - Looking into costs and software options for Spatial Data Infrastructure.

- **Underground Utilities Data – Swazee**
 - Most recent success:
 - Entering Year 3 on decades long process. Learning more about the feasibility as a whole.
 - Lots of professional interest of this subject in trade publications.
 - Working on 1st integration of user to data Provider (WSB & Associates to MnDOT) \$125k
 - Barriers:
 - Next Tasks:
 - Awaiting hearing results to hear if we get a grant for \$100k
 - Presentation of a brief in Pittsburg, PA giving presentation to Energy Sector. That will also be made available at GIS/LIS conference
 - Tomorrow is EPC meeting. New Vice-chair. See www.mgaecp.org for details
 - EPC Christmas Party returns on 12/14

- **Success Stories for Geospatial Technology – Brandt**
 - Most recent success:
 - Trying to Gather Success stories and trying to figure out a way to share success.
 - New hub site up and running.
 - Barriers:
 - The involvement of CJIS and other private data is a stronger barrier to these projects than others.
 - Next Tasks:
 - Continue the discovery process. Will share link to hub site before end of 2023

- **Summary Crime Data – Richter**
 - Most recent success:
 - Presented at GIS Bytes Lunch & Learn
 - Barriers:
 - Data Privacy, retrieving appropriate datasets
 - Next Tasks:
 - Delve further into the data provided on the state’s website and talk to BCA re: what is available for mapping use.

14. Announcements or Other Business

- Congratulations to Ryan Mattke on his appointment to National Geospatial Advisory Council – US Department of the Interior.
- MN institute of asset management meeting tomorrow.
- Please take a look at the McGISA page: <https://mcgisa-mcleodcountygis.hub.arcgis.com/>
- Reminder that GIS/LIS Consortium is October 4-6 Early registration ends tomorrow.
- K-12 teachers Educator Day Friday October 6. Free for Teachers.

15. Adjourn

Next Quarterly GAC Meeting:

~~December 13, 2023, 10:00 – 12:00*~~

*re-scheduled to: December 20, 2023, 10:00 – 12:00