

Strategic and Business Plan Development for Maryland in Support of The NSDI Future Directions Fifty States Initiative

Maryland Spatial Data Infrastructure Strategic Planning Committee Minutes

June 22, 2006

Present:

Chairs: Matt Felton, Ken Miller

Staff: Gloria Yeatman, Missy Valentino, Susan Wooden

Members: Warren Campbell, Roger Barlow, Shahbaz Raza, David Gillum, Marshall Stevenson, Manesh Pillai, Michael Scott, Bruce Eikenberg, Jennifer Gajewski, Rich Leadbeater, Jennifer Schottke, Jack Martin, Tom Nasuta, Frank Siano, Mike Sheffer, James Thomas, Mike Lettré, Shawn Wampler, Victor Henry

Location: Towson University Campus, Administration Building, Room 120

The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. and ended at 5 p.m.

Topics of Discussion

1. Introductions

Matt Felton welcomed everyone. All attendees introduced themselves and offered a brief overview of their organization's current GIS or related projects. (See Attachment A.). He then discussed the background of the project and meeting NSGIC's nine criteria as our overarching goal for GIS coordination.

2. Summary of Project Goals

a. Ken Miller reviewed each of the nine criteria and discussed Maryland's current status. Maryland scores 3 of 9, meeting several criteria with only a half-point. We want to eventually achieve a well-integrated GIS coordinating mechanism. He discussed the challenges of the Statewide Orthoimagery Cooperative as an example of ways statewide GIS coordination would introduce efficiencies into complex projects. The question was asked: which criterion should we tackle first? If we achieve "a clearly defined authority...for statewide coordination of geospatial information technologies and data production," the other criteria should naturally follow.

Mike Scott suggested that the authority must be inclusive of the entire state, versus state agency coordination only. Coordination is harder to achieve in the "edges" of the state—the areas that are farther away from the metropolitan centers. The office itself could reside in a state agency but must reach the entire state. An edit to criteria #2 for Maryland was suggested that will make this goal point clear. Maryland stakeholder's role and commitment will relate to data

maintenance, enterprise architecture, IT maintenance issues, and defining what will work for all of Maryland.

Roger Barlow suggested that essential goals include data sharing, exchange, and availability, publicly as well as internally. Everyone uses and needs framework data; we must identify the core data that everyone can agree on.

b. Ken Miller discussed the NSGIC strategic plan template, our goal being to deliver a hardcopy of Maryland's plan as part of this project. Discussion followed on the varying natures of other states' plans. The template covers all facets of a coordination plan, but since each state that has a plan started from a different point and ended up with different plans, it would be useful to discover "what worked" for them.

Rich Leadbeater suggested that organizational charts for each entity (drilled down to the lowest levels) within Maryland would be useful to illustrate where GIS is and is not in the state. Roger Barlow would add goals and benefits statements. The highest goal is to obtain more utility from spatial data; other facets of the plan can be structured behind the data sharing. Even if aspects of data-sharing are beyond our control, we must still aim high.

A SWOT analysis is useful but complex for Maryland, since Maryland is not a blank slate relative to GIS. The need is for more consistency and sustainability. Whereas MSGIC has stated its successes well, for this project the team might define the things that are not going well in order to answer *why* the criteria for coordination should be addressed. Pinpointing the actual cost in dollars of the absence of coordination will be more useful than taking the "if we had a coordinating mechanism, then..." approach.

Jim Thomas asked where education, health, human resources would fit in. Entities that use the base data do not understand where the data come from. He believes that staff from some of the organizations that are unrelated to GIS but use data can be included in the committee. The broader stakeholder group does include such data users. Ken Miler agreed that the committee's should not be the *only* voice for the coordinating mechanism, and non-GIS professionals should be included. He cited the lack of understanding the difference between the quality and usefulness of images discovered via Google Earth versus flown orthoimagery.

3. Strategic Planning Committee Charter Draft

a. Matt Felton introduced and reviewed the charter as a draft document that the committee will refine. He solicited suggestions for membership in the Advisory Board Liaison Executives group. Suggestions include the following:

Shane F. Pendergrass, represents Howard County in the Maryland House of Delegates and is a Member of Health and Government Operations Committee.

Warren G. Deschenaux, Director, Office of Policy Analysis, Maryland General Assembly; **or**

Karl Aro, Executive Director, Office of the Executive Director, Maryland General Assembly.

Paul Thorn, Manager, Management Information Technology Division, City of Annapolis

Michael F. O'Connell, (??), Division Chief Emergency Management Services, Anne Arundel County, incoming Chair, Maryland Emergency Advisory Council

A representative from Maryland Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Managers. John Joyce is Chairman; Mike Sheffer is Vice-chairman; Mike Scott is Regional representative for the Eastern Region.

A representative from the County Engineers Association of Maryland.

Michael Schuster, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project manager for the Western Shore Hurricane Evacuation Study.

Merrill Oliver of the Governor's Grant office.

A representative from the Maryland Association of Community Colleges. The chairs are changing at this time but that should not stop someone from the group from participating.

A representative from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

A representative from the private sector, through linkages with the Towson University Division of Economic and Community Outreach.

A representative from the Maryland Society of Surveyors.

A representative from Consulting Engineers Council of Maryland.

Ken Miller commented that for DNR and MDE, there is no central group at either the state or the national level that could carry the message to its members.

Jennifer Gajewski suggested that representatives of all of the above groups need not sit on the committee. Instead, the groups can be informed via presentations made by members of the Strategic Planning Committee, and/or at MACo, or via e-mail lists.

David Gillum suggested formulating a brief survey with leading questions and thereby solicit feedback from the groups.

b. There was a question about the timeline suggested in the committee charter versus the timeline in the folder of handouts. The March-September timeline is for Strategic Planning; work on the Business Plan will follow. Roger Barlow stated that the entire planning and implementation process will span several years.

4. Communications Strategy

a. Per a question posed by Shawn Wampler the committee discussed the importance of the needs of all user groups will be considered for this project.

b. Gloria Yeatman demonstrated the collaboration software (MS Sharepoint) that we will use to share documents and announcements, and maintain contact lists. Members can check documents out (similar to checking books out from a library) and either edit them directly or send edits to her or to Susan Wooden. Each committee member was or will be given their login and password.

c. Matt Felton reviewed the proposed new face for MMRG, and the new pages that will be added to keep stakeholders and the public informed about the MSDI project. He discussed plans for a newsletter that will be included in the MMRG pages. The link can be sent via e-mail

announcement. Concerns were expressed about blocking. RSS feed was suggested. The alternatives available will be explored.

d. The first draft of a handout to be distributed at the MACo conference in August was reviewed briefly. Various options for exactly how to distribute the handout most effectively were discussed. A sponsorship can be purchased, but since the agencies or organizations of so many members of this committee will be represented, there should be at least five that will allow the handouts to be placed at their booths. ESRI and MSGIC are sharing a booth; Rich Leadbeater suggested creating a Velcroed pop-up graphic that can be attached to the wall of their booth. Jennifer Gajewski suggested posting “for more information, speak to [name] at MACo booth [#].” Rich Leadbeater mentioned several gimmicks for showcasing the project, such as mugs or a drawing for a prize such as a book. Matt Felton requested that members send ideas to Susan Wooden.

5. Assignment: Project Summaries

a. Matt Felton showed and explained a PowerPoint template for members to use to describe one or two key or interesting projects they are working on that would benefit from statewide GIS coordination. He also presented an example project.

Rich Leadbeater suggested that a series of specific questions or incomplete sentences (such as “My GIS project was successful because...”) would combine to make a conversation, and all resulting stories would be consistent. He also suggested that numbers will help put need and results in perspective. Jack Martin suggested classifying the stories into categories such as public safety, engineering, centerline, etc., so categories that have no stories can be made apparent. Jennifer Schottke said it would be helpful to have a clear distinction between projects that were prompted by problems and projects that saved time, money, effort, due to coordination.

Discussion occurred on the merits of the project overviews, with concern expressed that they might give a misleading impression relative to data quality. The point that GIS coordination is meant to reduce redundancy was reinforced. Discussion occurred on the identity of the target audience and ways to appeal to diverse groups; data as a business process for certain organizations but not a business process for others; reducing the steps for obtaining accurate, current data from (for example) from five down to one; and determining Maryland’s current state of coordination status as well as the ideal state of coordination we want to reach. Points made include: sharing the outcome of data purchases; emphasizing the importance of sharing data; reducing redundancy, which exists because of various issues; opportunities that are lost because there is no official statewide GIS coordination and because organizations do not know what resources are available; defining methods for coordination specifically and avoiding a “broad effort;” telling stories the target audiences are interested in versus the stories that committee members are interested in.

b. Bruce Eikenberg asked about warehousing data, i.e., in one place, or distributed. For example, Virginia warehouses data in one location. Data that are not in that location are not considered official. By contrast, the Maryland Centerline data are federated for various practical

reasons. MEMA, also, does not store the data for MEGIN. The point was made that Maryland's preference to date is to *connect* to the data rather than store the data.

The bottom line: this committee must render a hard copy of a strategic plan for statewide GIS coordination, create the conversations that will effectively inform and convince decision makers that the coordinating mechanism will save money, and take the plan to the legislature (Define, Sell, Obtain).

Recording: Susan Wooden



June 26, 2006

Signature

Date

Reviewed: Matt Felton



July 7, 2006

Signature

Date