

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

October 31, 2006

Present:

Chairs: Matt Felton, Ken Miller

Staff: Missy Valentino, Susan Wooden, Gloria Yeatman

Members: David Gillum, Marshall Stevenson, Roger Barlow, Bruce Eikenberg, Victor Henry, Warren Campbell, Richard Leadbeater, Jennifer Gajewski

Absent: Jack Martin, Michael Scott, Jennifer Schottke, Chuck Bristow, John Contestabile, Charlene Howard, Mike Lettré, Shahbaz Raza, Jim Thomas, Tom Nasuta, Frank Siano

Location: Towson University Campus, Administration Building, Room 120

The meeting began at 1:30 p.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m.

Topics of Discussion

1. Updates

MMRG

Matt Felton reported that the redesign of MMRG is live and that he is receiving positive feedback about the Featured Projects page. He has had several inquiries from counties about posting their projects.

New Handout: Matt Felton created a PowerPoint handout called "Maryland GIS Efforts" that can be used to promote MSDI. It was created initially for the State CIO to have a quick reference to the broad ranging impacts and successes of GIS in Maryland. The handout is available to SPC members through the MSDI portal in the Shared Documents folder.

NSGIC Conference: Ken Miller reported on information exchange that occurred during the recent NSGIC conference in Little Rock on the nine coordination criteria. He participated in individual sessions focused on NSDI CAP participation. Two presentations focused on recruiting for GIO positions. A more detailed recap is included in item #4 in these minutes.

MIAP: Ken Miler has no updates to report on the cooperative orthoimagery acquisition project. He has not yet spoken with Greg Slater.

Federal: Roger Barlow stated that his goal for this year is focused on publicly available data. He is working with DNR to get LIDAR data into CLICK (<http://lidar.cr.usgs.gov/>), and will get data from NOAA.

Centerline Cooperative: Dave Gillum announced that work on five additional counties is proceeding very slowly. There is a need to regroup and to formalize certain SHA internal IT issues. Work will begin in earnest again after January 2007.

2. The State of Maryland has established eight IT priorities for FY 2008. Priorities #3 and #6 relate to GIS.

#3: “Develop data format standards for collaborative information exchange.”

The goal is to consolidate data collection. As yet, there is no funding to standardize data format. GIS is expected to be a portion of the model, with standard XML vocabulary as a universal translator. Cost and complexity issues of creating a new state data standard or adopting the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) must be explored. GIS is being considered early in the process, rather than later, which is a positive factor. Dave Gillum asked if this effort will be integrated with the National Capital Region Washington Council of Governments (WashCOG) GIS Committee’s data interoperability initiative. Matt Felton is involved with the WashCOG committee and will coordinate information as appropriate. Warren Campbell stated that the WashCOG’s original funding for the program was dropped, but other sources of funds are being investigated.

#6: “Standardize and consolidate Geographical Information Systems”

This priority includes the requirement of establishing a governance model. Matt Felton suggested the SIEC model as a paradigm for this committee to consider for the strategic plan. [*Note:* A complete view of the model can be found in the PowerPoint agenda prepared for today’s meeting. The agenda is on the MSDI portal in the Meeting Minutes folder (Shared Documents).]

Discussion occurred relative to recommendations in the draft strategic plan.

Recommendation 2: Establish a GIS Coordinating Council. A suggestion was made that the State CIO, not the GIO, chair the GIS Coordinating Council, since the State CIO has more authority and influence. Marshall Stevenson concurred, and explained that this model aligns with the current Frederick County GIS arrangement. Relative to meeting frequency, a quarterly schedule could be too infrequent. Again using Frederick County as an example, Marshall Stevenson stated that a monthly meeting remains on the members’ calendars, but about two weeks prior to the meeting date, he cancels the meeting if there is nothing on the agenda. Keeping the meeting on the calendar allows the opportunity to meet more frequently than quarterly, and is also a means to better work around the members’ full schedules.

The suggestion was also made that the Advisory Board meet prior to the GIS Coordinating Council meetings in order to prepare the council and provide updates on activities. Discussion occurred on federal membership, which is critical at least partially because the federal government is a major funder of GIS initiatives. Since the purpose of the Coordinating Council is to determine where monies (including funds already received from Federal government) should be allocated, the committee concluded that Federal membership is best placed at the Technical Advisory Board level where guidance could be given related to federal standards and requirements. The governance structure of “Network Maryland” was once again mentioned as a corresponding IT model (www.networkmaryland.gov/).

Recommendation 4: Designate Towson University as Technical Support for MSDI. TU-CGIS would provide technical assistance to the GIS community in Maryland. More discussion is needed to work out the definition of the technical assistance, to whom specifically the assistance would be given, how much support, and the cost structure. Marshall Stevenson asked if this recommendation seeks to consolidate all state agencies' current GIS shops (consensus was no), or to help agencies that do not currently have GIS capabilities (consensus was yes). For example, approximately 80-90% of Frederick County agencies use GIS, which is fully funded. All 18 divisions are entitled to the county's GIS services (which Stevenson coordinates) at no additional fee for service. While this model works well for a county, it is more challenging at the state level because of the greater separation of state agencies and the inclusion of local government. Merits of this model, however, will be considered.

Marshall Stevenson sees TU-CGIS as "enterprise GIS for the state." Ken Miller suggested that the committee narrowly define "technical assistance." Roger Barlow felt that data availability and distribution must be funded as part of GIS coordination, but applications should be paid for by individual agencies. These issues will be more fully addressed as part of the business plan.

Matt Felton used the Centerline and Orthoimagery projects as examples of the challenges of convincing agencies and organizations to enter into cooperative arrangements without a central coordinating entity, and the value of tools such as MMRG to showcase the benefits of cooperative projects.

3. Prioritizing NSGIC's Nine Criteria for Statewide GIS Coordination

On this slide included in the PowerPoint of the agenda for this meeting, the nine criteria are rated relative to priority. Per Ken Miller, the remaining 7 criteria will follow after numbers 1 and 2 are in place. The priority for both criteria is "immediate." The priority for number 3 is "Immediate, dependent on 1 and 2."

1. A full-time, paid coordinator position is designated and has the authority to implement the state's business and strategic plans.
Status: We are currently defining the job description.
2. A clearly defined authority exists for statewide coordination of geospatial information technologies and data production.
Status: The strategic plan defines the governance structure.
3. The statewide coordination office has a formal relationship with the state's Chief Information Officer (or similar office).
Status: We have executive sponsorship via the state's Master IT plan for FY 2008.

In response to a question from Roger Barlow, Matt Felton clarified that criteria number 4, currently described as "Fundamental, ongoing," is an ongoing high priority.

4. A champion (politician or executive decision-maker) is aware and involved in the process of coordination.
Status: We have obtained support from the state CIO.

Numbers 6, 8, and 9 are being fulfilled unofficially but will be bolstered once formal coordination is in place.

6. The ability exists to work and coordinate with local governments, academia, and the private sector.
8. Coordinators have the authority to enter into contracts and become capable of receiving and expending funds.
9. The Federal government works through the statewide coordinating authority.

Dave Gillum suggested that a graphic presentation using traffic light symbols versus text to illustrate progress would make the point clearer. Roger Barlow suggested ‘If...then’ statements, since so many variables exist relative to political administrations and agency relationships.

4. Ken Miller discussed the GIO position. During the NSGIC conference, a panel presentation dealt specifically with this topic. Approximately 14 of the 50 states have an “official” GIO position. A NSGIC goal is to achieve a fairly uniform approach to the position across the nation. There is general agreement that the GIO must be politically savvy, must be a skilled communicator, must understand how to use visual presentations to best effect, and must be able to encourage a funding stream.

Funding is obviously a critical factor, and state agencies are not likely to just hand over funding or give up any PINs, especially if they are unsure of obtaining better service than they experience at present. The main point is to give all organizations access to the same data. The question was asked, “Does NSGIC have information on the ways states support data work, manage fees, etc.?” Research will be conducted by the Towson team to investigate this issue. Marshall Stevenson again cited Frederick County as a model for streamlining GIS activities. Frederick County is small, with all units reporting to the same county council, so the model would not be an exact fit for the state.

The presentation slides are available at http://www.nsgic.org/events/2006_conference.cfm.

5. Funding will be the primary agenda topic of the next meeting, which will take place on Wednesday, November 29 from 1-3 p.m. in the Administration Building, room 120.

Recording: Susan Wooden

Signature

Date November 2, 2006

Reviewed: Matt Felton

November 10, 2006

Signature

Date