

Data Endorsement ad-hoc Committee

April 22, 2026

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Attendees

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Alison Slaats , MnGeo (Co-Chair) | ☐ Alison (Ali) Wieckowicz , MNIT DOT |
| ☒ Kevin Trappe , Beltrami Co. (Co-Chair) | ☒ Linse Lahti , DNR |
| ☐ Sally Wakefield , MnGeo | ☐ Pamela Oslin , MESB |
| ☒ Gerald (Gerry) Sjerven , Allete | ☒ Jonathan Mortensen , City of Shoreview |
| ☒ Stacey Stark , U-Spatial, U of M | ☐ Robin Mertes , MN Pollution Control Agency |
| ☒ Tanya Mayer , Met Council | ☒ Kory Thurnau , MnGeo |
| ☒ Jason Ewert , MNIT MPCA | |

Discussion

I. Welcome & Introductions

- Welcome special guests: Curtis Carlson and Mark Kotz of the GAC Standards Committee

II. Overview of work to date

- [Review of other state endorsement/ authoritative data processes](#)
- [Endorsement Question Working Spreadsheet](#)
- [Data Endorsement Proposal Form](#)
- [Data Endorsement Evaluation Form](#)

III. Discuss endorsement process

- Original vision of a simpler, not necessarily a full public review
- Last meeting discussion noted a desire to map out endorsement process
- Standards Committee process was noted as a well established process: [operational procedures document](#)

Key discussion points & takeaways

1) Purpose and scope of “endorsement”

- Committee aims to identify statewide datasets with clear, consistent metadata and demonstrated utility for cross-jurisdictional use; endorsement should not imply local datasets are inferior for local workflows.
- Past research favored a clean, straightforward model—inspired by North Carolina’s approach to designating authoritative datasets—as a conceptual starting point.

2) Proposal & evaluation artifacts

- The committee has drafted a proposal form (for nominators) and an evaluation form (for reviewers); both are close to “beta,” with the next focus on defining the process that uses them.
- Suggestion: include the “why endorsement” statement prominently on page 1 of the proposal form, plus explicit prompts (e.g., “If multiple sources exist, why is this one best for statewide use?”).

3) Communications & disclaimers

- Strong interest in clear disclaimers and metadata statements that point users back to county/city authoritative sources for the most up-to-date information—consistent with current MnGeo practices (e.g., statewide parcel aggregation).
- Counties emphasized avoiding the perception that an endorsed statewide dataset is “always best for all purposes”; messaging should repeatedly reinforce use-case specificity.

4) Public review: whether, who, and how long

- Standards Committee uses 90-day review windows for new standards; the ad-hoc group discussed a shorter window (≈30–60 days) for endorsement items, focusing on targeted audiences (state agencies, counties/cities, known stakeholder networks), while still open to broader comment.
- Comments would be published with names to keep the process transparent and discourage anonymous rants; a summary of comments & responses would accompany final materials.
- Proposed feedback form elements: (a) respondent role (end user vs. SME/data steward), (b) intended use, (c) whether proposed endorsed dataset meets needs, and (d) specific concerns or red-flags.

5) Process design & governance

- Group favors a documented workflow/flowchart, modeled after the Standards Committee procedures, to set clear “swim lanes,” establish responsibilities, and streamline decisions.
- Committee placement remains open: options include a separate permanent Endorsement Committee or housing endorsement within the Standards Committee with designated leads; participants acknowledged workload tradeoffs and favored clarity even if “two committees within a committee.”
- Lifecycle: initial “flurry” of foundational datasets, then occasional future endorsements as needs evolve—i.e., not strictly finite.

6) Alignment with priorities

- Endorsement/standards work should help GAC demonstrate progress on biennial priorities (e.g., parcels as a perennial priority) and align with NSDI concepts of foundational data.

Decisions / Consensus

- Proceed to draft a formal endorsement process document and flowchart, borrowing structure from Standards procedures.
- Public review will be included, but with clear messaging and an appropriate (shorter) duration; comments to be published with attribution.
- Metadata & disclaimers are required for any endorsed dataset, including language that references local authoritative sources for currency.

(No final decision yet on long-term committee placement—separate vs. within Standards—remains under consideration.)

Action items

1. **Endorsement Committee:**
Draft the endorsement workflow/flowchart and the procedures document (roles, steps, timing, public review).
2. **Template for public communication:**
Create a standard “GAC Endorsed Dataset” summary sheet (purpose, statewide scope, metadata/disclaimer highlights, reviewer notes) distinct from the proposer’s form language.
3. **Standards leaders (Mark Kotz & Curtis Carlson):**
Review and provide feedback on the next set of committee materials (flowchart, procedures, templates).

4. **Public review design:**

Propose review window (e.g., 30–60 days) and targeted outreach list (state agencies, counties/cities, University networks, MCGISA regions), plus a feedback form capturing role, intended use, and adequacy.

5. **Kevin Trappe:**

Prepare items to kick off the next meeting (what participants should review/bring).

6. **Metadata & disclaimer language:**

Draft standardized phrasing that points back to local authoritative sources and clarifies use case limitations of statewide aggregates