

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Imagery Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: 07/22/2026

Meeting Time: 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Attendees:

Heather Albrecht (Hennepin Co.) , Kory Thurnau (MnGeo), Jennifer Murphy (DNR) , Geoff Bitner (DOT), Ryan Bonney (SMSC), Joe Sapletal (Dakota Co.), Christian Sovak (DOT)

1. Imagery Sustainability & Archiving

Sustainability Subcommittee Transition

The committee discussed formally moving the former Imagery Sustainability Subcommittee under the newly established GAC Imagery Committee. Members indicated this transition has been informally understood but has not yet been officially communicated or approved by GAC.

Key points:

- The sustainability effort was originally intended to function as an annual coordination activity rather than an active standing subcommittee.
- Ongoing coordination with archival stakeholders remains important. (GAC Archiving Committee)
- The committee agreed that GAC should formally recognize the transfer of responsibilities.

Proposed Annual Imagery Sustainability Meeting

Members supported establishing an annual meeting (January) to:

- Review imagery catalog use statistics
- Review & discuss imagery archiving and preservation activities.
 - Ensure clarity on where retired imagery lives (true archival vs. service retirement) and how historic imagery is cataloged/maintained.
- Evaluate long-term maintenance needs of statewide imagery resources

2. Other State Programs

Members discussed learning from imagery programs in other states, particularly:

- **Michigan** – statewide program administered by the state with regional imagery acquisition on a regional rotation schedule. Also utilizes a federal grant to leverage Nearmap service statewide.
- **Wisconsin** – Seems to be more county-centric imagery and lidar model with statewide aggregation and indexing.
- **Rhode Island** – NSGIC Webinar: [Better Together: Rhode Island's Collaborative Approach to Statewide Imagery](#) Wednesday | August 19, 2026 | 2:00 - 3:00 pm ET

The committee expressed interest in inviting representatives from Michigan and Wisconsin to present to the group.

3. Incentive and Funding Models

Members discussed potential funding approaches, including:

- County participation incentives.
- Reimbursement or "coupon" programs to encourage imagery sharing.
- State buy-up or cost-sharing models.
- Vendor subscription approaches.
- Regional or phased acquisition strategies.

Michigan's model, where counties may opt into state-supported acquisitions while retaining flexibility for local specifications, was highlighted as a concept worth evaluating.

4. Vendor Models and Commercial Imagery

The committee discussed commercial imagery providers such as Nearmap and their advantages:

- Frequent image updates.
- Fast delivery.
- Subscription access models.
- Ease of use for local governments.

Challenges noted:

- Limited statewide coverage.
- Vendor-specific pricing structures.
- Long-term contract considerations.
- Differences between commercial subscriptions and traditional statewide acquisition models.

Michigan's statewide Nearmap implementation, funded through federal grants, was identified as an example to explore/review.

5. Needs Assessment Review

The committee reviewed the draft needs assessment RFP and discussed several additions:

Potential Additions

- Return on investment (ROI) analysis.
 - Potential examples include:
 - Property assessment and taxation.
 - Infrastructure management.
 - Forestry and natural resources.
 - Emergency response.
 - FEMA activities.
 - Transportation planning.
 - Watershed and environmental analysis.

Documenting these benefits will strengthen future funding proposals.

- Startup and long-term funding scenarios.
- Governance options.
- Alternative funding mechanisms.
- County incentive programs.
- Vendor and subscription models.
- Implementation roadmaps.
- Business use cases.

Members emphasized that the consultant should:

- Evaluate governance models.
- Recommend funding approaches.
- Develop legislative support materials.
- Provide implementation strategies.

Multi-agency cost-sharing for the assessment should be explored.

Action Items

Action Item	Lead	Timeline
Request GAC formally recognize transfer of the on-hold Image Service Sustainability Committee responsibilities to the Imagery Committee	Committee Leadership	Upcoming GAC meeting
Develop annual imagery sustainability and archiving meeting process	Imagery Committee	Winter 2027
Create shared document for collecting questions for other states	Kory	Done
Develop standard questions for other states with programs	Committee Members	Next meeting
Research Wisconsin imagery and lidar model	Kory	Next meeting
Explore scheduling a Michigan imagery program presentation	Kory	Before next meeting if possible
Expand ROI language in the needs assessment RFP	Jennifer / Committee Leadership	Next draft
Review and incorporate lessons from other state programs	Committee Members	Ongoing
Continue refinement of needs assessment RFP structure and tasks	Committee Leadership	Next meeting

Next Meeting

August 26, 2026 @ 2p.m.

Topics for Next Meeting

- Discuss findings from the NSGIC Rhode Island webinar.
- Review [questions for other state imagery programs](#).
- Continue refining the imagery needs assessment RFP.

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