

Minnesota Geospatial Advisory Council Meeting

May 20, 2026
10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Meeting Attendance

Members

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Alison Slaats , MNIT MnGeo | ☒ Matt Goodman , St. Louis County Sheriff's Office |
| ☒ Amy Harrigan , MnDOT | ☒ Michael Krueger , City of Moorhead |
| ☒ Britta Maddox , Anoka County | ☒ Michelle Clasen , Washington County |
| ☒ Carla Coates , MN GIS/LIS Consortium MN DPS | ☒ Mitch Bergeson , US Geological Survey |
| ☒ David Brandt , MetroGIS Washington County | ☒ Pat Veraguth , Douglas County |
| ☒ Dennis Tumberg , City of Chanhassen | ☒ Quentin Ikuta , National Indian Carbon Coalition |
| ☒ Gerry Sjerven , Minnesota Power | ☒ Rama Mohapatra , MN State University, Mankato |
| ☒ Heather Albrecht , Hennepin County | ☐ Rick Schute , City of St. Paul |
| ☒ Jessica Fendos , LOGIS | ☒ Ryan Bonney , Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community |
| ☒ Kari Geurts , MNIT DNR | ☒ Ryan Stovern , St. Louis County |
| ☒ Karissa Beierle Pavek , Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments | ☒ Shana Crosson , Mapping Together |
| ☒ Kendis Scharenbroich , Pro-West & Associates | ☒ Stacey Stark , U-Spatial - UMN Duluth |
| ☒ Mary Mortensen , Met Council | ☒ Tanya Mayer , Metropolitan Council |

Meeting Support Staff Attendees

Megan Sisko, *MNIT MnGeo*; Sally Wakefield, *MNIT MnGeo*

Non-Member Attendees

Alissa Stark, <i>MNIT DNR</i>	Connor Plagge, <i>City of Brainerd</i>	Eric Solo, <i>Lake of the Woods County</i>
Andrea Borich, <i>MPCA</i>	Curtis Carlson, <i>MNIT MnGeo</i>	Eric Stennes, <i>Olmsted County</i>
Brandon Tourtelette, <i>VertiGIS</i>	David Plagge, <i>BWSR</i>	Grace Schiroo, <i>McLeod County</i>
Brook Anderson, <i>Ramsey County</i>	David Zehavi, <i>City of Columbia Hts.</i>	Jeff Young, <i>1Spatial</i>
Charles Rader, <i>Unaffiliated</i>	Deb Bergeron, <i>MNIT</i>	Jenna Walz, <i>Sherburne County</i>
Christy Christensen, <i>McLeod Co.</i>	Diana Flores Castillo, <i>MnDOT</i>	Joe Beuckman, <i>Unknown</i>
Clayton Watercott, <i>Metro Transit</i>	Dustin Schmieg, <i>TEKsystems</i>	Joe Sapletal, <i>Dakota County</i>

Joel Stevens, *Tech Wave*
Jon Janke, *Coon Creek Watershed*
Justin Roberts, *MnDOT*
Kaitlyn Bakken, *ND Assoc. of Co.*
Kevin Trappe, *Beltrami County*
Kiah Sagami, *Houston Eng.*
Kory Thurnau, *MNIT MnGeo*
Len Kne, *U-Spatial | UMN-TC*
Linse Lahti, *MN DNR*
Lloyd Dalton, *Unknown*

Lynn Boergerhoff, *HOA Leadership Network*
Mark Kotz, *Standards Comm. Chair*
Matt McLees, *Scott County*
Maxim Kroll, *MPCA*
Mia Ross, *Minnesota Valley Electric*
Michelle Trager, *Rice County*
Mike Koutnik, *MAK Consulting*
Mike True, *Watonwan County*
Molly Shoberg, *MN DNR*
Nancy Rader, *Unaffiliated*

Norman Anderson, *MNIT MnGeo*
Pamela Oslin, *MESB*
Preston Dowell, *St. Louis County*
Reese Phillips, *MN DPS-ECN*
Rick Moore, *MNIT DNR*
Sarah Voje, *EOR, Inc.*
Sean Vaughn, *MNIT DNR*
Shauna Bridger, *MNIT MnGeo*
Steven Moe, *Polk County*
Will Craig, *UMN-TC*

Meeting Options

- **Virtual:** Online via Microsoft Teams

Meeting Materials

- [Agenda packet](#)
- [Presentation slides](#)

1. Call to order

Chair Tanya Mayer called the meeting to order and conducted roll call of GAC members. Prior to this, Mayer reminded attendees that the meeting will be transcribed (but not recorded) by Microsoft Teams to assist with the minutes, and that attendees should refrain from sharing private information.

Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) meeting support staff introduced themselves verbally, and virtual guests placed their name and organization in the Teams chat.

Mayer reviewed the meeting agenda then called for a motion to approve it. Ryan Stovern moved to approve the agenda, and David Brandt seconded. Motion passed by general consent.

- **Motion:** Approve the agenda (Stovern / Brandt) – **Motion passed**

Mayer called for questions or corrections to the previous meeting minutes from March. Alison Slaats requested a correction to the minutes to remove the note that the March meeting was a special meeting. Mayer called for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes with Slaats' modifications. Shana Crosson moved to approve the minutes with the correction, and Britta Maddox seconded. Motion passed by general consent.

- **Motion:** Approve last meeting minutes (from [3/11/2025](#)) with requested modification (Crosson / Maddox) – **Motion passed**

2. Review and receive Committee Reports

Chair Mayer acknowledged receipt of committee reports that are included in the agenda packet, and provided a few highlights:

- **Emergency Preparedness:** Looking for champion to learn about US National Grid from Randy Knippel.
- **K-12:** Started planning for GeoFest, a teacher conference in October.
- **Standards:** Reached out to subject matter experts to see who is interested in helping with the Bikeways Data Standard Expansion for Trails priority project.
- **Recognition of Barriers:** At least half of the committees reported funding and/or volunteer time being an ongoing challenge. Mayer thanked volunteers and acknowledged how difficult it can be to find time alongside regular work duties; she also thanked volunteers' organizations for allowing them to dedicate their time, closing her remarks by recognizing the challenge that these barriers pose.

3. Approve modified Committee Work Plans

Chair Mayer reviewed [priorities](#) newly assigned to committees, noting previously approved modified work plans for Emergency Preparedness, K-12, and Standards; in progress work plan updates for Parcels and Land Records; and newly updated work plans from 3D Geomatics and Outreach.

After no questions, Mayer requested a motion to approve the two updated committee work plans as reflected in the agenda packet. David Brandt moved to approve the updated work plans, and Ryan Stovern seconded. Motion passed by general consent.

- **Motion:** Approve the two updated committee work plans as reflected in the agenda packet (Brandt / Stovern) – **Motion passed**

4. PLSS Point Data Standard proposal

Mark Kotz, previously Metropolitan Council and current co-chair of the Standards Committee, reviewed the proposed PLSS Point Data Standard – some highlights from this overview:

- **Why it's important:** The Public Land Survey System (PLSS) established corners which form the framework for many geospatial datasets in Minnesota, including parcel boundaries.
- **Purpose:** Provide for a single, commonly accepted set of attribute specifications for transferring and aggregating PLSS point data in Minnesota for data aggregation and sharing (esp. across boundaries).
- **History of the standard:**
 - Standard created and proposed by two GAC committees, Parcels and Land Records and PLSS Preservation, which worked with the Standards Comm. to prepare it in GAC standard format.
 - Standards Committee approved the proposed standard for *public review* September 2025.
 - 90-day public review occurred November 2025 through February 2026; received comments and responses to those comments are in the agenda packet.
 - Modifications were made to accommodate feedback and discussions with commenters.
 - Standards Committee approved the modified standard (as seen in the agenda packet) on May 4.
 - Today: Standards Committee is requesting GAC approval of the standard.

- **Key topic:** Confusion around GAC standards compliance and the word “mandatory”.
 - GAC standards have “Mandatory” data elements, and programs like the Next Generation 911 (NG911) data aggregation (which leverage GAC standards) also have “Mandatory” data elements – however, “Mandatory” in these two contexts are different because compliance to GAC standards are voluntary based on an organization’s needs, whereas the NG911 program has its own requirements for participating in that program.
 - New language was included in the PLSS Point Data Standard to address this confusion.
 - The Standards Committee will be rolling out a communications campaign upon release of the PLSS Point Data Standard to educate the community about GAC standards compliance – verbiage will be updated within the GAC standards, on the GAC website, and in communications out to the community (e.g., GIS/LIS E-announcements and MnGeo newsletters).

Kotz asked the GAC to approve the proposed PLSS Point Data Standard and asked for questions from members. Sally Wakefield asked how much feedback was received and Kotz shared about 20 comments, reflecting that feedback was not unusually high or low compared to other standards.

Chair Mayer asked for a motion to approve the PLSS Point Data Standard as reflected in the agenda packet. Ryan Stovern moved to approve the standard, and Pat Veraguth seconded. Motion passed by general consent.

- **Motion:** Approve the PLSS Point Data Standard as reflected in the agenda packet (Stovern / Veraguth) – **Motion passed**

Megan Sisko recognized the standard’s passing as a huge accomplishment, thanking the Arrowhead Geospatial Collaborative which started the standard, and all others involved since, including surveying organizations.

5. PLSS Monument Grant Program update

Kory Thurnau, Chair of the PLSS Preservation Committee, reviewed Minn. Stat. 381.125 which created the PLSS Monument Grant Program and the years of effort that this statute took to come to fruition, expressing great appreciation for contributors. He then explained the PLSS Preservation Committee’s role in working with the Chief Geospatial Information Officer (GIO) to develop the grant program and meet the statutory requirement that selection criteria favor counties that demonstrate financial need. Of the appropriated \$9.7M, \$600k was for administration and \$9.1M for grants to complete two types of work:

- 1) Update survey records and data regarding monuments
- 2) Restore, maintain, and/or update PLSS corners

Thurnau showed an example corner certificate and photos of completed monument restoration work. He also showed an example of the other type of grant work, highlighting Polk County as the only county focusing primarily on records. He showed the Polk County website with a PLSS Corner Viewer web application, Survey Records Library, and PLSS Remonumentation Plan.

Thurnau summarized the status of the grant projects:

- 21 of 34 grants have been completed – \$7.8M has been paid/reimbursed
- 13 grants received extensions – these counties realized efficiencies so they could complete more work with the funding; \$1.3M of committed funds remain to be reimbursed and there are no additional funds

Thurnau shared that the PLSS Remonumentation Legislation Subcommittee (of the GAC Parcels and Land Records Committee) is working with MN Society of Professional Surveyors (MSPS) to secure future funding for this work, reflecting that counties have shown there is capacity to do this work if it is funded. Veraguth added that these projects helped counties realize how much work there is to be had. Slaats noted that the proven success is incentive for more funding and that the administrative part of the grant allowed MnGeo to hire a licensed land surveyor – this has been such a success that MnGeo has put aside general fund appropriations to ensure this position is retained, highlighting the importance of this role to statewide foundational datasets.

Chair Mayer thanked everyone for their work, recognizing this as a big step forward for the community.

6. Imagery Committee proposal

Chair Mayer reviewed the Imagery Committee Proposal to create a new permanent GAC committee to guide the development and stewardship of a coordinated statewide imagery program for MN. Proposed co-chairs are Tanya Mayer and Heather Albrecht, with several volunteers ready to serve as committee members.

The committee would work on the Statewide Imagery Program priority which had no committee support for the last two terms. This priority is defined as a long-term effort dedicated to optimizing the acquisition, inspection, documentation, distribution, and archiving of statewide imagery; its Executive Sponsor is Alison Slaats and Priority Owners Christy Christensen and Jennifer Murphy.

Mayer summarized the committee's objectives, activities, and deliverables as reflected in the proposed committee charter included in the agenda packet. This includes assisting MnGeo in developing a Request for Proposal for a statewide imagery needs assessment. The committee would update the GAC quarterly and submit formal recommendations as it achieves its objectives and completes key deliverables.

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, developed recommendations may include:

- A Statewide Imagery Strategy
- Imagery acquisition cycles and specifications
- Governance and coordination structure
- Potential funding and cost-sharing models
- Guidance on imagery hosting, access, and distribution

Rama Mohapatra expressed thanks for the proposal, highlighting its importance to higher education (esp. student research), and noting the desire for high resolution imagery greater than 3-inch or 2-inch.

Mayer motioned to create a new GAC Imagery Committee and accept the proposed committee charter and work plan. David Brandt seconded. Motion passed by general consent.

- **Motion:** Create a new GAC Imagery Committee and accept the proposed committee charter and work plan (Mayer / Brandt) – **Motion passed**

Mayer encouraged anyone interested in joining the committee to reach out to her or Heather Albrecht.

Nancy Rader thanked the GAC for creating the new committee and referenced the on-hold Image Service Sustainability Committee.

7. Break and networking

Chair Mayer put the meeting on a half-hour break.

8a. Committee Presentation 1: Outreach

Jessica Fendos reviewed the six priorities assigned to the committee, four of which are related to foundational datasets. Fendos also reviewed the overall purpose of the committee, its objectives, and its history, highlighting its reformation in January 2025.

Fendos showcased the first round of [GAC Hub Sites](#) on-screen, noting that the site has not yet been launched and should not yet be used. She reviewed the status of the Hub Site and next steps, including establishing a maintenance plan and building out the remaining committee Hub Sites.

Fendos then reviewed updates provided by Stacey Stark for the Open Data Subcommittee which continues to:

- Reach out to counties regarding opt-in participation to parcel and NG911 datasets
- Listen to concerns from counties hesitant to become open data participants
- Develop strategies and relevant case studies supporting opting-in
- Explore alternative methods to assist counties in extracting additional parcel attributes

The subcommittee is beginning to explore:

- How the Department of Revenue's PRISM data can enhance existing parcel datasets
- Updating the parcels StoryMap with new stories
- Developing an Open Data Glossary
- The value of a Return on Investment (ROI) study related to open data

Fendos shared updates related to the GAC's participation at the GIS/LIS Annual Conference:

- Two people submitted ideas for GAC presentations (for K-12 and Meet Me at the Corner).
- The abstract submission deadline has been postponed to May 22; anyone interested in or planning to present on behalf of the GAC should reach out to Fendos so she can coordinate with MnGeo to highlight these sessions in MnGeo's GIS newsletter.
- The Outreach Committee is working to secure a booth at the conference and invited ideas for what to include at the booth; reach out to Fendos if you are interested in volunteering at the booth.

Fendos closed with a committee recommendation that MnGeo sponsor an ROI study for open county data.

8b. Committee Presentation 2: Standards

Mark Kotz, Co-Chair of the GAC Standards Committee, introduced what standards are and their purpose, then reviewed the purpose of the committee: To administer and support a process that allows the MN geospatial community to create geospatial standards. Kotz highlighted how the committee partners with subject-matter experts (SMEs) to create/modify standards and that the committee maintains supporting materials like domains and lookup tables. He noted that work happens as needed and there is no regular meeting schedule; the committee may meet once a year or have several meetings if activities arise.

Kotz then summarized why GAC standards are important, highlighting them as a standard way to *share* data (not store it), making data sharing and aggregating easier, more efficient, and higher quality. Kotz also emphasized that since standards are voluntary, they need to be created by the community for the community.

Kotz shared the current activities of the committee to include:

- 1) Three GAC priorities:
 - a. **PLSS Point Data Standard** – Just passed!
 - b. **Transportation Asset Data Standard** – A federal standard on this type of data is in progress, so work is on hold until this passes, as this could meet the community's needs.
 - c. **Trails Data Standard** – No one has volunteered to lead this work so there is not a group working on this effort. The committee will continue to raise awareness of the priority, but work cannot progress unless those who have a need for the standard come forward to volunteer their time.
 - i. *Additional background:* Kotz noted that the current Bikeways Data Standard was originally proposed as a Trails Data Standard but the needs of the SMEs involved in that effort centered around bikeways, and they found a general trails data standard to be much more complicated, so it was narrowed down to bikeways. If this priority moves forward, it may become an extension of the Bikeways Standard or its own standard.
- 2) **Communication campaign** to increase understanding of standards and clarity around compliance.
- 3) **Ongoing updates/maintenance** – Updating the Lake and Wetland Basin ID Standard, handling a proposal to add a new attribute to the Address Points and Road Centerlines standards, and updating domains and lookup tables as needed.

Several attendees provided feedback about current standards activities:

- Mitch Bergeson recommended that the Federal Trails Data Standards be leveraged to ease the incorporation of data into national trails datasets – Kotz indicated this would be a great starting point.
- Alison Slaats recommended looking at the OpenStreetMap trails data schema as well.
- MetroGIS shared that they are reinvigorating work on a regional trails standard – they'll inform the group that there is potential to collaborate on a larger state trails standard.
- Bergeson also recommended looking at the USGS 3D Hydrography Program (3DHP) schema for the Lake and Wetland Basin IDs Standard, as there are unique IDs that may help with interoperability between those datasets.

Pat Veraguth asked about the status of the Culvert Data Standard (another GAC priority) and Kotz explained that this effort has not yet reached the Standards Committee and is an effort of the 3D Geomatics Committee. Rick Moore mentioned that lidar data derivative development has taken his focus from this standard and the 3D Geomatics Committee will be working with MnGeo to start up this effort.

9a. Sector Report 1: County - Twin Cities metro

Heather Albrecht, At-Large GAC member, spoke on behalf of her role at a Twin Cities metro county. Albrecht reviewed the geographic coverage of the seven-county Twin Cities metro region – Anoka, Washington, Hennepin, Ramsey, Carver, Scott, and Dakota Counties – and shared about three regional efforts:

- 1) **MetroGIS:** Regional seven-county metro GIS initiative that serves to promote and facilitate sharing of geospatial data across the region; has a similar sector makeup as the GAC.

- 2) **8 County Collaborative:** The seven metro counties plus Olmsted County; GIS Managers talk about issues impacting the counties – imagery, open data, etc. – and shares about events, activities, and resources.
- 3) **Bi-monthly MESB/DPS NG911 meeting:** The Metropolitan Emergency Services Board (MESB) and Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) join the 8 County Collaborative meetings bi-monthly to share updates about the NG911 program; MetroGIS and MnGeo also join these bi-monthly meetings.

Albrecht then reviewed what GIS looks like at Hennepin County, highlighting the Hennepin County GIS Users Group, consultants, imagery vendors, and various county government involvement. Albrecht noted that Hennepin County shares their imagery with their local governments.

Albrecht offered various other ways to engage and collaborate with the Twin Cities metro region:

- Support the GAC County Government Twin Cities metro representative (currently Washington Co. Commissioner Michelle Clasen)
- [MCGISA](#) Teatime: a weekly call with county GIS professionals across the state
- MN GIS/LIS Consortium events

Albrecht shared what brought her to various GAC roles and how she overcame time constraints to participate. Through her roles on the Open Data Subcommittee, GAC Executive and Leadership Teams, and Imagery Committee she has contributed to work that in turn meets her organization's needs (e.g., securing neighboring county data) and grows support for her organization, justifying her time to her employer.

Albrecht shared about the various ways to get involved, from being a GAC member, to being on a committee (even just to listen in). She recommended that volunteers participate at a level that works for them, and not to get discouraged if a first attempt at applying to be on the GAC does not result in an appointment.

To participate on a committee or subgroup, please reach out to MnGeo or the committee chair.

9b. Sector Report 2: City - Twin Cities metro

Dennis Tumberg, the GAC's Twin Cities Metro City representative, summarized what city GIS looks like:

- Some cities have multiple staff, others have one
- Demand is growing as GIS and Asset Management is utilized more

Tumberg shared about the Twin Cities GIS User Group which has 82 members representing 43 government agencies – the group meets quarterly and is led by John Nerge (Brooklyn Park). Recent projects and presentations include GIS data governance, data requests, accessibility, park finder upgrades, and working with Waze, Google Maps, Apple Maps, etc.

Tumberg then summarized the sector's participation in the GAC priority project surveys, noting that the sector did not submit any priority ideas and five people contributed prioritization feedback (rep. 3% of feedback).

Tumberg expressed interest in expanding outreach to the sector about the GAC, priorities surveys, and other relevant organizations (MetroGIS, MN GIS/LIS, etc.), reflecting that it can be difficult to become aware of, distinguish between, and understand the applicability of these organizations to one's own work duties. He intends to explore how to get metro cities more involved (e.g. what types of projects are going on that might benefit cities) and may survey the metro cities to better understand current awareness.

9c. Sector Report 3: At-Large (Public Safety & Emergency Management)

Public safety and emergency management At-Large GAC members – Britta Maddox (Anoka County Fire Protection Council), Matt Goodman (St. Louis County Sheriff's Office), and Rick Schute (City of St. Paul) – shared highlights from each of their areas in the sector as follows.

Maddox presented on behalf of Rick Schute about current fire pre-planning efforts happening at Ramsey County. Schute highlighted three major takeaways from their move to the Esri Fire Pre-Planning Solution:

- GIS adds the most value when it's integrated into the tactical workflow.
- Esri has ArcGIS Solutions available for a variety of public safety needs.
- To operational GIS across public safety, "find the partners with the biggest operational gaps, get them to demand the resources from leadership, and be ready to innovate and iterate as you move toward a unified response environment."

Maddox shared that Anoka County Fire Protection Council is also taking on pre-planning efforts and working on a way to keep the data up to date, except they are using a platform called [NERIS](#) – National Emergency Response Information System, an upgrade from the National Fire Information System that existed for about 40 years. Maddox shared about her organization's transition to NERIS, which organizations nationwide had to switch to by Jan. 1, 2026. The platform enables dynamic reporting of all hazards (not just fires), includes more robust location information, and supports advanced geoanalysis of data. With the national deployment, users can see data from across the country and departments.

Next, Maddox shared NG911 updates from Curt Carlson, summarizing what NG911 is and showing NG911 GIS data aggregation development by quarter with 93.67% of data available so far (based on no. of layers provided). The program is working to convey the importance of keeping the NG911 data up to date, esp. since it is used for more than just NG911. New data supplier assistance tools include an ArcGIS Pro add-in to run validations, and a [Data Export and Conversion Tool](#) to perform simple validations and format data with proper capitalization, fully spelled-out attributes, domain conversions.

Matt Goodman shared the status of statewide Indoor School Mapping Projects funded by legislation appropriated through the Emergency Communication Networks Division of DPS to Statewide Emergency Communications Board (SECB) regions. The original completion deadline was June 2026, but most regions are seeking extensions. All regions except the SE contracted with the Critical Response Group – of these regions, over 1,650 schools are completed. The status of the SE region is unknown. Resulting data is owned by the associated SECB region and is considered nonpublic, restricting sharing and use.

Goodman shared that open questions remain about where the final indoor school mapping data can live, and whether it should be downloadable in a GIS format so they can be provisioned into 911 CAD systems. Goodman explained that there was no funding for ongoing maintenance of the data, so if not made available in GIS format for local GIS staff to maintain, the data will become a snapshot in time.

Next, Goodman shared about the fire evacuation zone mapping efforts going on across the Arrowhead region, highlighting a shared unofficial best practices document prescribing schema and symbology for evacuation mapping to improve interoperability and messaging consistency across neighboring jurisdictions.

Status of fire evacuation zone mapping efforts implementation by county:

- **Lake, St. Louis, and Itasca** - fully implemented
- **Cook** - partially compliant; evacuation zones were created before the guidelines
- **Carlton** - building their zones
- **Aitkin, Cass, and Crow Wing** - expressed interest

Goodman closed by inviting other northern Minnesota counties to join their effort. Kotz encouraged that this effort is a great way for a state standard to start, noting its potential to boost adoption. He recommended getting more counties on board with it, seeing how that goes, and then consider bringing it to the GAC Standards Committee. Kotz clarified that the GAC can establish a variety of standards, including symbology.

10. Minnesota Geospatial Information Office updates

Alison Slaats shared updates from MnGeo:

- **MN Geospatial Image Service** - Recently added 2025 NAIP, and 2024 and 1938 Lyon County imagery is coming soon. MnGeo is exploring ways to enhance the service with new technology (STAC and Cloud Optimized GeoTIFFs). Reach out to [Kory Thurnau](#) if you have imagery you'd like added to the service.
- **Geospatial Commons Modernization** - The updated Commons was released in March and legacy Commons will be retired at the end of June; this update focused on easing use for data publishers and users, with emphasis on more services. Office hours are available to help publishers migrate data to the new platform. Anyone interested in publishing to the Commons should reach out to commons.mngeo@state.mn.us. MnGeo has applied for funding to update the MN Metadata Editor.
- **MnTopo 2 / Lidar** - MnTopo 2 was officially launched May 19, replacing the DNR's MnTopo application. A virtual public training will occur on June 3 to learn about how to use the app and connect with the data. Slaats thanked the many people involved with this work, including the 3D Geomatics Committee, MNIT DNR, DNR, and many more! The statewide DEM is still in progress and continually being added to as data is created. See the slide for more details about available layers.
- **Legislative Updates** – Additional funding for PLSS preservation and remonumentation was not approved and will be attempted again next year. Changes to the Data Practices Act pertaining to GIS (esp. parcels) was not seen in this year's legislative session, however, MnGeo is looking to confirm this with the Dept. of Administration. Mayer shared that she also did not see any new changes this session.

11. Executive Team updates

Chair Mayer reviewed members of the GAC Executive and Leadership Teams and their activities since the March meeting, highlighting each team's meeting, the GAC Committee Leadership Retreat, two requests for letters of support, and continuing member coffee chats with the GAC Chair and GIO. The GAC Coffee Chat survey will be updated to allow members to request a meeting with Mayer and Slaats at any time throughout the term.

Mayer explained that the GAC periodically receives requests for letters of support, often with short turnaround times (less than a week) and the GAC does not have a defined process to respond to do these requests. Mayer

inquired with MnGeo, the Executive Team, and Leadership Team about how to handle these requests and the following questions and points were raised:

- **Authority:** Who can write a letter on behalf of the GAC? Do GAC letters of support need a full GAC vote?
- **Timeliness:** GAC meetings are infrequent and special meetings require 3-days' notice; e-votes do not meet Open Meeting Law.
- **Process:** Consider publishing guidelines and instructions for requesting a letter of support on the website and revisiting the process at the beginning of each term.
- **Recommendation:** Bring these questions to the full GAC for a decision.

Mayer reviewed the types of requests that typically come in:

- 1) **Non-funding** (e.g., support for the preservation of the Natural Resource Atlas)
- 2) **State program or legislative funding** (e.g., state legislation to fund MN PLSS remonumentation)
- 3) **Directed funding** (e.g., requested support from a specific city or college for Congressionally-directed federal funding to that specific city or college for a geospatial program)

The examples in categories 1 and 2 were letters of support sent in the past by the GAC. The two recent requests fell into category three. Because the turnaround time for these requests was so fast, and there was no procedure or guidelines to follow, these requests were denied.

Mayer asked members to consider four different ways for handling requests for support and highlighted potential implications of each:

- 1) Full GAC membership approval – requiring special meeting of the GAC
- 2) GAC gives authority for decision to the Executive Team or Leadership Team, with notification to the GAC
- 3) GAC gives authority to the Chair, with notification to the GAC
- 4) Combination of these options based on the request “type” (non-funding vs. state vs. directed funding)

Mayer asked for thoughts from members:

- Gerry Sjerven asked if there are any issues with any of the options per statute that established the GAC and MnGeo. Mayer shared that the feedback provided to her and Alison Slaats from the MNIT Deputy Commissioner and MNIT Communications Team was that they did not see an issue with the council providing letters of support with the GAC letterhead (not MNIT letterhead).
- Kotz shared his experiences as chair handling these types of requests and expressed **discomfort with Option #3**, noting that he would not have agreed to that option as a member. Kotz supported establishing a process for handling these requests.
- Goodman recommended including an option for members to anonymously abstain or not vote in case there is ever a conflict of interest or disagreement. Goodman then expressed **support for Option #2**.
- Mayer reiterated the need to make decisions in front of the public and therefore e-voting is not an option (which may be different than how the MN GIS/LIS Consortium may handle requests for letters of support because they are a nonprofit which operates differently).
- Sjerven shared how the MN GIS/LIS Consortium handles letters of support and expressed **support for Options #1 and #2**. Sjerven also emphasized the importance that letters of support are clear that they are coming from the GAC, not just the chair.

- Michael Koutnik recommended separate letters of support from MnGeo/GIO and the GAC and encouraged recommending requestors to approach both organizations.
- Slaats shared that MnGeo is not supposed to support anything that may conflict with other state agency initiatives or state-funded work, citing last year's St. Cloud State request as an example. She recommended creating a decision matrix for determining how to handle a letter of support. Slaats closed her comments recognizing the importance of the GAC providing letters of support as a representative of the geospatial community to show that the community support certain initiatives.
- Sisko added that Open Meeting Law says each vote must be recorded so votes cannot be conducted anonymously but members could abstain from a vote. Abstains would also be recorded.
- Molly Shoberg shared that a minimum required time for review (e.g., 2 weeks) may be beneficial to members and that she **would vote for Option #2**.

Mayer closed the letter of support discussion by thanking everyone for their thoughts and suggested the GAC continue the conversation at a future meeting, perhaps bringing a proposal forward in the fall.

Mayer then reviewed what's next for the GAC, highlighting the GAC Committee Leadership Retreat after the meeting, Executive and Leadership Team meetings in August, and the next GAC meeting on September 16.

Mayer reminded attendees of the deadlines for the Governor's Certificate and MN GIS/LIS Awards and reviewed the GAC's desired outcomes and goals for the term, providing an update on each. She also shared the GAC member sector and committee presentation schedule for the term. See slides for details about these updates.

12. Round Robin / Announcements

Chair Mayer invited members then attendees to make announcements or provide updates.

- **Brandt:** Next MetroGIS meeting is June 3 – see MetroGIS website if interested.
- **Stovern:** Held another meeting Monday with 28 Greater MN counties participants.
- **Crosson:** GeoFest will be October 10 – to participate reach out to Crosson or Tumberg.
- **Veraguth:** MSPS and the MN Assoc. of County Surveyors will have a booth at a state trapshooting event.
- **Brandon Tourtelotte:** 50 attendees and 14 college students attended the MN GIS/LIS Spring Workshops May 14 (the second biggest yet) with workshops in morning and afternoon and a social event after.
- **Albrecht:** MSPS is holding a summer land surveying camp for middle and high-school-aged students.

13. Adjourn

Chair Mayer adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Next Quarterly GAC Meeting: September 16, 2026, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (*hybrid*)

Minutes prepared by: Megan Sisko

For questions regarding the minutes, please contact gisinfo.mngeo@state.mn.us.