California GIS Council

Establishing Regional GIS Councils to Work with The Council on Planning, Policy and Partnerships

Action Item:

• <u>GIS Council to form a Regional Council Subcommittee</u> to develop a consensus recommendation on how to establish regional operational areas for The Council. Timeframe: December 1-February 28, 2001

Why Should The Council Establish Regional GIS Councils?

California's size and complexity make it necessary to develop a network of regional GIS Councils that can be provide regional input to The Council's planning, policy development and partnerships to build California's GIS infrastructure. The Council's charter, Section III, sub section C, states:

"Regional GIS Councils will review The Council's reports, provide recommendations on policy alignment with local and regional GIS needs and be a focal point for partnerships to build California's geographic information infrastructure. The number, geographic breakdown and resources needed to support these meetings will be determined by The Council."

What Principles Should Guide the Development of Regional GIS Councils?

There are three important principles that should guide development of regional GIS Councils. First, all of California must be included so that the broad range of local and regional GIS needs are included in planning and policy.

Second, the regional organizations must reflect local patterns of participation and collaboration. In the past, local and regional governments have been mandated to work with jurisdictions that do reflect their existing relationships and networks.

Finally, the regional structure needs to be both flexible and consistent. One the one hand, there will be GIS mapping projects for framework layers of data that may require a specific kind of regional partnership--for example, using watersheds as regions to build a statewide hydrography layer. However, the Council's primary role is to plan for GIS and develop collaborative policies on critical issues, such as data and cost sharing, which will require a consistent set of regional entities who can provide on-going advice to The Council.

Who Should Serve on This Subcommittee?

As a collaborative forum, it is important that The Council's local and regional members participate in this subcommittee. In addition, the subcommittee may wish to involve local government organizations and networks to engage a broader group of GIS stakeholders in defining regional operational areas that work for them.

What Options Have Surfaced?

A wide-range of options surfaced during Council formation discussions--from using California's bio-regions or watersheds to Community Development Block Grant regions. In general, there were two categories of suggestions that the Subcommittee may wish to consider:

- Administrative/Political: Work with existing regional administrative boundaries, such as Councils of Government, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or a combinations thereof..
- Geographic Affinity: Invite regions to self-define based on their sense of regional boundaries and their priority goals (i.e. The Central Coast Joint Data Committee, which includes part of all of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Mateo, San Luis Obisbo and Venture Counties is an existing collaborative that meets bi-monthly and undertakes regional GIS projects).