

**CALIFORNIA GIS COUNCIL
SUMMARY OF JANUARY 2007 VIRTUAL MEETING**

Question 1 – State Data Priorities

Given our recent completion of the Draft Framework Data Plan, where we prioritized the seven NSDI layers and 11 California-centric framework layers, one next logical goal is to improve on the existing framework layers by rolling up (e.g., to regionalize, for use beyond the local level to a regional, state, or federal level) local data with better spatial and attribute resolution. The intent would be to really meet the needs of all our partners in California. How do the regional and local partners see this working? What kinds of expectations do regional and local partners have of State and Federal entities? What kinds of investments are required? What are the impediments to local and regional data flowing to State and Federal entities?

9 postings

- The need to provide GIS support to mutual aid may be strong motivator to locals.
- Bill's barriers to data sharing:
 - **Institutional and Process**
 - Lack of Inventory or Awareness
 - Lack of Incentives to Share
 - Liability and Security Risks
 - Data Aggregation Concerns
 - Data Incompatibility
 - No Process for Information Sharing
 - No Protocols to Identify Authoritative Data
 - Data Utility
 - Cultural Issues
 - Inadequate Funding
 - Licensing Restrictions
 - Vision and Mandate
 - **Legal Barriers**
 - Courts of Jurisdiction
 - Indemnification
 - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests
 - **Data Security**
 - Classifications (sensitive, confidential, etc.)
 - Spoofing
 - Data alteration
 - Unauthorized Disclosure
- Why lack of regional/local input?
- Looks like many are visiting but few are commenting.
- Technical problems with forum may be compromising participation.

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- In spite of lack of GIO, good progress being made at state level.
- News of lack of substantive action on state GIO is disconcerting.
- Roll up of data from locals to higher levels doesn't much benefit locals.
- Enlightened self interest and volunteerism will only take you so far.
- Sponsorship at higher (state) level needed.
- Locals finding other alternatives to working with state and feds to meet their needs.
- GIS Council effort may be at critical juncture and needs increased state investment to succeed.
- Council should focus on fewer, easier to succeed but not as important initiatives and then build on success.
- 11 California centric data layers identified in Data Report is a good starting point to start discussion and collaborative effort. Ask state agencies with responsibility and/or involvement with these for standards.
- Need GIS architecture that will enable agencies like OHS to build their own secure GIS layers on top of authoritative, current and public GIS layers.
- Web services applications for mobile are feasible and necessary (for emergency response/homeland security).
- OHS seconds Burgess comments regarding classification challenges.
- Protected data handled under Protected Critical Infrastructure Information (PCII) and Chemical Vulnerability Information (CVI).
- Ultimate goal to seamlessly share data between all levels of government for homeland security/emergency response.
- OHS is looking for opportunity to fund state GIO which they see as important to their mission!

Question 2 – Prioritizing GIS coordination criteria

List the state's top three priorities going forward in meeting NSGIC's essential criteria for GIS coordination. The NSGIC essential criteria are:

1. Establishing a full-time coordinator
2. Clearly defining authority of the coordinator or the coordination body
3. Establishing coordination between GIS coordinating office and state's CIO
4. Establishing a political champion
5. Establishing an assigned clearinghouse and data infrastructure responsibilities
6. Establishing the ability for the state to coordinate with locals and privates
7. Ensuring availability of suitable funding sources
8. Ensuring coordinator has authority to enter contracts and receive/expend funds

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9. Establishing functioning coordination between federal and state GIS activities

Do you have additional criteria to suggest?

9 postings

- Priorities should be 1, 2, 8 and maybe 3 and combined into a single goal.
- 7, funding, would be next most important.
- State should set own house in order before attempting to help others do same.
- Funding agencies should have representatives that make up a GIS Policy Committee that directs the GIO.
- Lumping may appear reasonable but can seldom be achieved together.
- Agree with combining factors and include at least one coordination effort.
- Have typically pursued state coordination as high priority but with little success. May be time for radical departure.
- Focus on strategic direction as politics determines organization and budgeting.
- Get key organizations (e.g., Council, CGIA, URISA, regional collaboratives, etc.) organized into a representative force to champion and create policy for coordinated GIS delivery.
- Demonstrate return on investment to the benefit of most (all?) stakeholders.
- Policy to provide for GIO with staff, budget, legislative mandate and spending authority to deliver results to state, regional and local public interests.
- Align with Governor's budget and legislative agenda.
- Need to define measurable improvements from establishment of GIO to obtain endorsement from local government.
- Centralized point of communication for decentralized and autonomous State agencies means very little at the local level.
- GIO needs strong ties to State CIO.
- Need political champion.
- Public safety/emergency response a top priority theme.
- Come up with questions for non-GIS business people to see if they understand the importance of GIS to community.
 - Are we prepared (city and county)?
 - What does this mean to them (business community)?
 - Do they understand how GIS helps them?
 - Ask same of politicians.

Question 3 – Prioritizing Federal Funding

List your top three priorities where federal funding would best be programmed to help achieve success as defined by NSGIC's Fifty States Initiative Action Plan

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(See http://nsgic.org/hottopics/50states_initiative_handout.pdf). The NSGIC elements are:

- Establishing Fifty States Initiative strategic and business plans within the state,
- Establishing data sharing agreements within the state,
- Establishing data stewardships for each framework layer within the state,
- Establishing framework data layers,
- Establishing/maintaining a functioning clearinghouse or web portal,
- Creating compliant metadata, posting to Geospatial OneStop,
- Participation in The National Map,
- Adhering to FGDC/OGC/ANSI/ISO standards.

Are there other elements for success that need to be added to this list?

8 postings

- USGS is trying to balance spending between “framework” data, strategic planning and data stewardship.
 - Should USGS do more?
 - Should FGDC put more money toward strategic planning and metadata development?
 - Is Federal funding needed by locals to post metadata?
 - What is needed to promote data sharing agreements?
 - Is lack of funding a barrier to the development of strategic plans by locals?
 - Should planning be considered by FGDC or DHS as a unique category for funding?
- Strategic is direction needed first but planning isn’t enough.
- Locals struggling to implement the above listed things but efforts fall short due to lack of funding for ongoing operations.
- There is a limit to what can be done with volunteers.
- Regional efforts in this regard should be funded (rather than state efforts?)
- Funding needed for full time staff (regional GIOs?).
- Assign state staff to work regionally (the State Department of Geospatial Services with regional offices co-located within the offices of regional collaboratives?)
- Regional GIOs would explore new technology, make recommendations on standards, stitch together local GIS layers, and generally overcome many of the obstacles that are faced at regional level.
- Clearinghouses are fine but don’t collect and integrate data. Partnering with and between regional groups that, in turn, partner with universities and private industry can bridge this gap.
- California should talk to Texas as both rely heavily on regional governments.

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- Success breeds success; start anywhere but do so with projects that are doable and that meet the business needs of partners.
- These efforts don't always need a big infusion of money to succeed (e.g., fund purchase and set up of data servers at regional/local level).
- What can Feds do to help establish State GIO?
- Feds can make high level contact with Governor's office. Perhaps offer to direct all Federal geospatial grants through GIO?
- Perhaps counties and cities could put state GIO on their legislative agendas assuming GIS is already on their radar.
- Start with data that is important to State regulatory agencies and requires a statewide implementation.
- State GIO needs to mandate cooperation.
- Focus should be on stewardship for ONE framework layer within state and establishing data sharing agreements for local and State agencies for that layer (e.g., transportation and emergency response). This idea seconded.
- Public safety and emergency response may be good (best?) candidate for above idea.
- Obtain federal funding for at least one additional liaison position to regional groups.
- Must meet local needs.
- Need dedicated person to coordinate with regional groups (e.g., a "GIO Lite").
- Rather than a quick data win, focus on showcasing of existing use of GIS technology/information (e.g., crime, health, addressing, etc.).
 - Build on top of MS Live Local, Google maps or Yahoo maps
 - Obtain commercial centerline data at no cost for demonstration project?

Question 4 - Federal Technical Support

List the three highest priorities where technical services/support from USGS - National Geospatial Technical Operations Center (NGTOC) would be most valued by the state. Examples include imagery QA/QC, vector data integration support, web map service support, NHD training, data catalog support, etc.

5 postings

- No additional help is needed with setting up catalogs.
- Don't muddy water with promotion of alternate catalogs like RAMONA, at least until these systems can harvest data from existing catalogs (e.g., are federated). This was seconded.
- Most help needed on establishing State GIO.
- Need more resources to implement technical solutions rather than technical support.

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- May need technical support when we start “rolling up” local data.
- Money down, data up is the key to sustainability.
- Fund key geospatial framework data that all/most needed/use.
- More public/private partnerships are needed.
- Find and collaborate on commonalities.
- Need more liaison/advocacy positions in both public and private sectors.
- It’s all about relationships.
- Turning point for local/regional efforts involved 2 or 3 departments that make commitment to work together contributing staff to a perceived common good.
 - This kind of stakeholder “ownership” needed to start things off.
- Need both top down and bottom up efforts to succeed.

Question 5 - Roles

How do we foresee our individual, regional, and collective roles for a fully mature California Spatial Data Infrastructure? What should each local, regional, state or federal role be? What are the expectations for this and are these really achievable?

13 postings

- Local hope was that State agencies would “see the light” and step up and adopt standards, but that has not happened.
- Some regional groups are starting to develop standards (e.g., BAR-GC, CIRGIS, SANGIS?).
- The lack of state standards are an impediment to regional and local efforts to develop or adopt standards.
- Standards need to be practical (e.g., easily understood and implemented). Data like transportation, governmental units and parcels are good examples of this.
- Between region compatibility and consistency are issues.
- With exception of emergency response, local agencies have little use or interest in regional data or the data model into which local data are translated.
- Roles would be as follows:
 - Federal - fund local activities (e.g., CAP grants).
 - State - coordinate development of regional standards, adopt these standards (for state agencies?) and promote them through outreach.
 - Regional - developing repeatable processes for data compilation into adopted state standards and doing the importing/translation/maintenance work on the regional data sets.

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- Local - cross-walk (map) local data to adopted regional standard and provide data in a timely manner.
- Feds also have role as data provider in some cases as it “owns” about 40% of land in California.
- Federal boundaries need to line up with local and State boundaries (e.g., watersheds, roads, jurisdictions, etc.).
- Can we get GIS Council to act as proxy for State GIO?
- What processes do we put in place to reconcile differences at the edges as we combine local and regional data?
- What data do we start with (e.g., parcels, roads, jurisdictional boundaries)?
- For transportation, best approach may be to license commercial data.
- Adjoining counties often disagree on common boundaries.
- Many applications do not require a “legal” solution to boundary disputes.
- Start with county boundaries and then reconcile parcels to these.
- State Board of Equalization created CAD version of Contra Costa Tax Rate Areas (TRA) that was then, in turn, used by county to generate other related political boundaries (e.g., school districts, utility districts, fire service areas, etc.). SBE will be doing this for other counties.
- Edge matching/resolution process more important than the actual product.
- Easy to use applications and repeatable processes for integrating data from multiple sources are critical (see County of Santa Cruz model).
- Some are not enthusiastic about standards and see them as a barrier to data sharing (there may be confusion here between a standard intended for a regional or state wide perspective as opposed to something that is intended to be implemented on individual production systems). Seconded by one other.
- Caltrans has a good working example of extracting data from multiple sources as web map services and XML messaging for homogenization in a common view.
- SACOG experience with administrative boundaries suggest that these would not be a good starting point; too many legal issues. Parcels may also be problematic.
- Technology (e.g., SOA, service bus, etc.) offers a work around to standards issues.
- There is still need to collaborate in order to achieve the “communal view” or standard. Sources need to cooperate in mapping their data to the communal standard.
- Standards are often defined to support a very specific goal or technology whereas geospatial data often supports multiple objectives (e.g., streets).
- Most cities and counties can’t even agree on a single standard for a common need like streets.
- Data standards should be like http; very basic and “below the data model.” Seconded by one other.