

**National Spatial Data Infrastructure
Cooperative Agreement Program
Category 3 Fifty States Initiative
Strategic and Business Plans**

Agreement No. 06HQAG0103

Interim Report

Organization:

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Project Narrative:

The Connecticut Geospatial Information Systems Council (GIS Council), comprising 21 members representing state agencies, academic institutions, regional planning organizations (RPOs) and municipalities, was formally convened in February 2006. The GIS Council subsequently established bylaws, including the creation of a nine-member Executive Committee, various working groups, and a dedicated website to improve statewide GIS coordination and information sharing.

In March 2006, the GIS Council Chairman tasked the project leader and collaborating organizations with developing recommendations for a statewide strategic plan and associated business plans following the National States Geographic Information Council templates. The project leader for this grant also serves as the GIS Council Project Manager. Connecticut sent two representatives to the Fifty States Initiative kick-off workshop in Annapolis, MD on March 19, 2006.

In May 2006, staff from Applied Geographics, Inc. facilitated a workshop for the Connecticut team on developing strategic and business plans. Subsequently, a work plan and project specifications were developed to hire a consultant to assist the Connecticut team in developing the strategic and business plans. Unfortunately, a consultant has yet to be hired due to delays in the allocation of federal grant funds.

The Connecticut team continues to provide stakeholder outreach to a number of organizations on the strategic and business planning process, including RPOs and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. Furthermore, these efforts have resulted in the formation of new GIS user groups among the state's fifteen RPOs and the fire service members of the Public Safety Alliance for GIS. The GIS Council also prepared the Connecticut Framework Geographic Data report within the National Spatial Data Infrastructure construct. The Connecticut framework consists of commonly needed, used, and produced data brought into a common standard and made widely accessible.

In July 2006, the GIS Council accepted the Enterprise and Homeland Security GIS Requirements Analysis and Implementation Strategy report prepared by ESRI. The GIS Council entered into a contract with ESRI in August 2006 to conduct Phase 1 Development of the Enterprise and Homeland Security GIS. While this project is geared toward state, regional and municipal officials and first responders involved with emergency operations, much of the data and associated applications will be useful in the day-to-day responsibilities of myriad GIS users. Future phases are expected to build out the system into other facets of government functions.

Next Steps:

- The Connecticut team expects to hire a consultant to facilitate completion of the strategic and business planning process as soon as the federal funding allocation issue is resolved.
- The GIS Council has solicited the GIS user community for their examples of best practices to be displayed at the Connecticut GIS Day event to be held on November 15, 2006 at the state Legislative Office Building.
- Meetings with state, regional and municipal officials will be conducted in January 2007 to review the status of the Phase 1 buildout, and to facilitate discussion on future coordination and data needs.
- A town-by-town survey is being conducted by a member of the Connecticut team to determine the extent of GIS usage in Connecticut municipalities.
- An area where further assistance would be helpful is regarding how other states handle data sharing agreements between state and municipalities in coordinating data and activities.
- The GIS Council, which was created by the state legislature without a dedicated funding source, will utilize the results of the strategic and business plans to make its case for future levels of sustainable funding.

Attachments:

None at this time

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program:

The Connecticut team feels that the CAP Program serves as an effective focal point for GIS activities, and enhances our ability to network with peer states to address various themes and concerns of Connecticut's stakeholders. The level of financial assistance is likely satisfactory for at least the strategic plan and initial business plan. However, future business plans may require additional resources. Program management by USGS has been commendable, but the March 2007 deadline does present some challenges in light of our ongoing funding allocation issue.