

New Hampshire Strategic GIS Plan Development

A Fifty States Initiative Project

Award No. **06HQAG0119**

Interim Report

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State of New Hampshire
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Project Narrative:

The prime activities in the first 5½ months of the project have been the selection of Applied Geographics as consultant to guide the strategic planning process, and the initiation of two public information-gathering sessions to collect input on the directions New Hampshire should take to best align itself with the nine coordination criteria established by NSGIC for a successful state GIS program.

Significant dates include:

- April 15, 2006** - Cooperative Assistance awarded
- May 11** - Selection of Applied Geographics as strategic and business plan consultant, following RFP process
- June 21** - State approval of contract with Applied Geographics
- July 18** - “Kickoff” meeting between Applied Geographics and NH Steering Committee
- Aug. 14** - Follow-up meeting to refine NH GIS goals
- Sept 11** - First public information-gathering session, held in Concord, New Hampshire. 50 people attended, representing state government, municipal government, regional planning commissions, academic community, surveying community, utility industry, and GIS industry.
- Sept. 20** - Second information-gathering session, held in Plymouth, New Hampshire. 20 people attended, representing municipal and regional governments, surveying community, and GIS industry.

The project is moving ahead according to schedule. To complete the information-gathering portion of the project (allocated to months 5-7 of the project), 5 in-depth interviews have been scheduled for the second week of October. The interviews will be with three State agencies (Transportation, Environmental Services, and Safety), a focus group of municipal GIS departments, and the GRANIT statewide GIS database that is managed at the University of New Hampshire.

Key accomplishments:

While the project is still in the information-gathering phase, the key accomplishments include (1) bringing stakeholders who have not been actively involved in state GIS coordination activities in the past to the process; and (2) discovering wide support for the creation of a statewide GIS coordinator position.

Stakeholders: The Steering Committee made a major effort to contact GIS users who do not ordinarily attend state GIS Advisory Committee meetings. We estimate that more than half of the attendees at the two information-gathering sessions had not participated in statewide GIS coordination meetings in the past. The greatest numbers of new faces were in the municipal GIS realm and from the GIS industry in New Hampshire. In addition, the Steering Committee made certain to include members of State agencies who, while listed as GIS Advisory Committee members, are not regularly present at meetings. Most significantly, we have received support from the state Office of

Information Technology, both in their presence on the Steering Committee, and in their providing venues, such as the state IT Council, for the Steering Committee to keep the IT leadership informed of our progress. In addition, we have been able to bring in personnel from the state Department of Safety (State Police, E-911 Mapping) who are crucial to the state's future GIS development. We were unsuccessful in attracting members of the New Hampshire legislature to the information sessions, a shortcoming that the NH GIS community has faced in the past as well. However, some of the lack of response must be attributed to the first large-group session being held one day before the state's primary elections.

Statewide GIS Coordinator: The project Steering Committee quickly identified the need for a state GIS coordinator as one of the most crucial items for New Hampshire's GIS. Participants at each information-gathering session, independently of the Steering Committee, also identified a state GIS coordinator as essential. State agencies' comments have so far been unanimous in support of the establishment of this position.

At this early stage in the project, statewide coordination has not changed. We expect to begin implementing changes upon release of the plan in early 2007.

Next Steps:

Upon completion of the information-gathering portion of the project, Applied Geographics and the Steering Committee will continue to meet to work out the details of the state Strategic GIS Plan, based on the 50 States Initiative template. A Business Plan will also be drafted, most likely addressing the proposal to create a state GIS Coordinator position. Having received strong support from the New Hampshire GIS user community for the creation of such a position, the Steering Committee and Applied Geographics need to focus on an appropriate organizational structure and funding mechanism. The Steering Committee continues to need to identify an executive-level champion for New Hampshire GIS.

Applied Geographics has created a wiki-based web site for development of the planning documents (<https://host.appgeo.com/NHWiki/>). Members of the Steering Committee are able to review documents as they are developed by Applied Geographics and submit proposed changes. The strategic plan and business plan will be developed through a collaborative process between Applied Geographics and the Steering Committee.

Attachments:

None at this point.

Feedback on the Cooperative Agreements Program:

CAP Program strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths: For the 50 States Initiative, there has been a strong level of conceptual support from the FGDC and NSGIC, starting with the development of the Strategic Plan and Business Plan templates, and continuing with the assistance offered in the NSGIC mid-year meeting, as well as that expected to occur at the annual meeting in Little Rock.

Similarly, there has been on-going communication and support organized by Milo Robinson through email and teleconferences.

Making a difference: For a state like New Hampshire, where there is currently an all-volunteer coordination effort, there simply are not the resources to properly convene and carry through a serious plan for GIS coordination. The funding from the CAP has allowed us to bring in professional assistance to enable us to make our case as cogently as possible.

Additional feedback on the Cooperative Agreements Program will be available upon completion of the project in 2007.