

Steps Toward a Wisconsin Geographic Information Council

An update report for the Wisconsin Land Information Association
March 8, 2007

With the termination of the Wisconsin Land Information Board (WLIB) in 2005, Wisconsin has lacked a governance body to coordinate the development and use of geographic information and technologies across the state. The strategic plan *Wisconsin Location Matters – A Statewide Geographic Information Strategy*, published January 2007, identifies the creation of a “Wisconsin Geographic Information Council” (WIGIC) as the first of five strategic goals

(<http://www.wlia.org/wilandinfo/strategic+planning/default.asp>).

Simultaneous with the development of this strategic plan, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) received a separate grant from the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) to develop and promote a geographic information coordinating mechanism. DOA’s Geographic Information Officer contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Madison to research other states’ geospatial governance models and to facilitate the process for the development of a set of recommendations. Towards this goal, a small working group* assembled under the DOA FDGC grant developed the following products:

- A detailed review of geospatial governance bodies in 8 other states. This report will be available on-line as soon as all participating states have approved release of their information. A link to the report will be provided through WLIA’s website (<http://www.wlia.org>).
- A set of criteria to be used to evaluate possible models for a geographic information council. These criteria are summarized on the following page.
- Initial concepts for a geographic information council in the form of two **DRAFT** governance models. These models were based on what the committee judged to be good features of other states’ programs, adapted to the Wisconsin context. The models provided **ARE NOT** recommendations, but rather are intended to generate comments and discussion. **Additional proposed models and ideas are welcome and encouraged.**

The criteria and the two initial draft governance models are intended to help Wisconsin develop a geographic information council that will help meet the other goals defined in the strategic plan – improving coordination, supporting effective and efficient data development and maintenance, fostering a service-oriented environment, pushing for continued and well-directed funding, and promoting understanding and use of a wide variety of geospatial technologies.

Listening Sessions

At least 4 listening sessions will be conducted around the state to generate discussion and to solicit ideas and comments on a Wisconsin Geographic Information Council (WIGIC). Dates and locations of these sessions have not been finalized; please look to the Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA), Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office (SCO), and University of Wisconsin-Madison Land Information & Computer Graphics Facility (LICGF) websites in the next few weeks for more information. We also will provide a website and email contact information for those who wish to provide additional input.

Next Steps

Based on feedback from many communities interested in geographic information and technologies, we hope a WIGIC model will emerge that is inclusive, representative and participatory – a forum that meets multiple needs.

After the Listening Sessions, a team will be created to include representation of organizations that have expressed ideas and concerns during the Listening Sessions. This team will participate in a “governance summit meeting” during the summer of 2007. We hope this summit meeting will result in a consensus recommendation to the Governor via the DOA, leading to an executive order for its implementation before the end of 2007.

* This report was prepared by a small working group assembled under the Wisconsin DOA FGDC grant. Members are: Dave Mockert (GIO), Ted Koch (SCO), Tony Bellovary (Bay Lake RPC), David Fodroczi (Saint Croix County), Richard Vraga (USGS), D. David Moyer, Lea Shanley and Steve Ventura (UW-Madison).

Initial Criteria for Evaluating Geospatial Governance Models (DRAFT 3/02/07)¹

Legitimacy and Voice	Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad and balanced representation (diversity of stakeholders, diversity of expertise) with all members able to contribute to decision-making in a substantial way • Opens direct lines of communication between Council and diversity of stakeholders • Facilitates face-to-face interaction and relationship building • State agency cooperation and participation – voluntary or mandated?
	Consensus Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation of differing interests to reach a broad consensus
Direction	Strategic Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling mechanism/clear mandate – executive order versus legislation? • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of Council, Geographic Information Office (GIO), and State Cartographer’s Office (SCO) • Joint and clearly articulated vision and mission to which all stakeholders see how they can contribute
Performance	Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to access expertise and resources from within and outside the Council to address and resolve issues. • Ability to adjust or create committees and working groups • Ability to adjust meeting frequency and location
	Political Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables the geospatial community to articulate a united vision to policy makers • Increases awareness and understanding of geospatial-related issues and activities among policy makers at all levels and with the public • Involves the highest level of policy makers in geospatial decision making • Promotes the incorporation of geospatial-related issues into statewide policy and decision making • Minimizes the impact of change in administration and of political bias
	Effectiveness and Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readily understandable structure and manageable size • Tangible links and reciprocity between Council, GIO, SCO, and stakeholders • Tangible benefits and deliverables accrued widely and at all levels • Utilizes best practices from the private sector • Capacity building at all levels • Staffing levels specifically focused on coordination and other Council goals • Ability to influence how funds are expended • Ability to provide incentives for participation
Accountability	Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined reporting requirements of the Council to the GIO, SCO, CIO, Legislature, and Governor
	Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides transparent and democratic mechanisms for broad participation in policy development, decision-making and recommendations for funding allocations
Fairness	Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders are encouraged to actively participate in the Council and associated committees • All stakeholders and the public receive sufficient value from the Council
	Rule of Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined, open and fair operating and voting procedures
Sustainability	Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to persist under change in administration • Ability to persist under budgetary constraints • Sufficient funding, administrative support and technical support

¹ Adapted from Graham, J. *et al.*, 2005. Principles for Good Governance in the 21st Century (August 2005). Institute on Governance, Canada. IOG Website: <http://www.iog.ca>, accessed December 10, 2007.

Initial Concepts – Potential Governance Models

DRAFT Governance Model A is a congress model, with three forums (Technology, Agency, User) electing twelve representatives to the Council. The legislature and governor appoint three additional members to the Council. The Council is advisory to the legislature, the governor, and the Wisconsin Department of Administration through the CIO and GIO. The forums conduct the majority of work, and they or the Council create *ad hoc* work groups for specific issues. To the extent possible, the forums conduct business virtually (via Web meetings, blogs, etc.)

Voting Members

- Four members elected from the Technology Forum
- Four members elected from Agency Forum
- Four members elected from User Forum
- One each Governor, Senate, Assembly appointed member
- WDOA Geographic Information Officer (*ex officio, non-voting*)
- State Cartographer (*ex officio, non-voting*)

Forum details

Technology Group (geospatial technology and data)

Addresses issues related to geospatial technology, standards, training, technology transfer, and spatial data infrastructure. Membership is open to anyone with professional/technical expertise that wants to participate but must include:

- at least 3 vendors and consultants
- at least 3 professional organization reps (e.g., WLIA, LION, GITA, EWUG)
- at least 3 academic (e.g., UW system, private college, technical college)
- Agency group and User group representatives

Agency Group

Address issues of policy, funding, licensing, coordination, inter-agency collaboration, and state-local relationships. Membership is open to anyone representing a public agency but must include:

- at least 3 state agency representatives
- at least 3 local/regional agency organization reps (e.g., WCA, WTA, League)
- at least 3 local government reps
- at least 3 federal agency reps (e.g., USGS, NGS, NPS, NRCS, FSA)
- at least 3 tribes
- Technology group and User group representatives

User Group

Addresses issues related to services (needs and evaluations), education and awareness, and public/private collaboration. Membership is open to anyone but must include:

- at least 3 quasi-public (e.g., utilities, telecommunications, emergency services)
- at least 3 for profit (e.g., real estate, transportation, marketing)
- at least 3 non-profit (e.g., land trusts, community organizations, lake districts)
- Technology group and Agency group representatives

DRAFT Governance Model B is a standard hierarchical council. The Council is appointed by the governor, and is advisory to the legislature, the governor, and the Wisconsin Department of Administration through the CIO and GIO. Standing committees and *ad hoc* work groups would address extant issues as needed. Committee Chairs appointed by the Council.

Members (25 voting; 1 non-voting)

- Six members from Towns, Cities, and Counties
- Three members each from State Agencies and the Private Sector
- Two members from Educational Institutions
- One member each from Federal, Tribal, Regional Government Agencies
- One member each from Non-profit Organizations, WLIA, WSLS
- One each Governor, Senate, Assembly appointed member
- WDOA Geographic Information Officer and the State Cartographer (*ex officio*)
- State Budget Officer (non-voting)

Standing Committees

The council would decide the issues to be addressed and task committees. The standing committees can identify issues and proposed solutions to the council for review and concurrence.

Data Framework and Services Committee

Establish an effective and efficient framework to develop, maintain access, integrate, and use geographic data across all areas and jurisdictions in Wisconsin. Identify, provide and maintain a comprehensive suite of geospatial services for Wisconsin.

Funding and Policy Committee

Establish adequate and reliable funding mechanisms dedicated to the coordinated development and maintenance of geospatial resources and activities in Wisconsin. Establish a comprehensive and widely adopted framework of policies, standards, agreements and best practices to streamline the sharing of geospatial data among stakeholder groups.

Education and Outreach Committee

Increase awareness, knowledge and expertise in the value and uses of geospatial information, technologies, and services. Increase awareness of Council activities.

Government Issues Committee

Provide forum for governmental institutions to discuss and resolve issues of concern at a specific level of government or between levels of government. Federal, State, County and Municipal subcommittees will raise or resolve issues and send them to the council or its committees.

Management and Operations Committee

This committee is comprised of the Chair of the Council, the appointees of the Governor and both houses of the legislature, the ex-officio members, the chairs of the standing committees of the Council, and other members of the WIGIC appointed by the Chair. It provides advice and support to the WIGIC on complex organizational and programmatic matters. The committee meets only as formally requested by the council and typically addresses matters addressing difficult policy issues.