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Project Title: Statewide Geospatial Council (SGC) Strategic Plan and Business Plan Development

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Organization: The County Commissioners Association of PA, P.O. Box 60769, Harrisburg, PA. 17106

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Collaborating Organizations:

1. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey/PAMAP Program Office
2. Office of Administration, Office for Information Technology, Geospatial Technologies Office
3. County GIS Professionals Association
4. PA Mapping and Geospatial Consortium (PAMAGIC)
5. United States Geological Survey
6. The Pennsylvania State University/ Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA) – State GIS Clearinghouse/NSDI Node
7. Legislative Office for Research Liaison (LORL)
8. PA-MAPPS: An association of Private Geospatial firms in Pennsylvania, the first state chapter of the National MAPPS organization.

Executive Summary

This planning effort involved an open and inclusive process aimed at gaining direct geospatial stakeholder input on the need for and potential roles of a council. Toward this end, in the autumn of 2008 six geospatial stakeholder workshops – attended by over 150 stakeholders – were conducted across the state. Additional information gathering was achieved through an on-line survey and individual discussions and interviews. In addition, a multi-jurisdictional steering committee oversaw the strategic planning effort and helped interpret and organize the stakeholder input into a cohesive plan.

The end result is a plan that reflects extremely strong support for the creation of a council. For example, 70% of survey respondents “agreed” that a new geospatial coordination council should be formed. Further, existing geospatial organizations such as PaMAGIC have supported the idea of a new council. This plan presents a new vision statement for a new council: Complex geospatial technology decisions and investments will be simplified and improved through open communications, collaborative efforts and unified planning.

In addition, based on input gained through the workshops and the survey, the steering committee helped to identify the primary roles that a new council would fulfill.



These are:

- **Advocate** for statewide geospatial initiatives and programs
- Generate and maintain a **statewide geospatial strategic plan**
- **Advise on the prioritization** of statewide geospatial initiatives and programs
- Advocate for **sustainable funding** for geospatial activity
- **Review and comment** on legislation with geospatial provisions
- Serve as the **focal point for statewide geospatial communication** and coordination

The plan goes on to identify an implementation path and a one year timeline for establishing a new council. This plan helps to document that the state has done its homework on council formation over the course of several years. It is now time to move forward to create the council.

Project Narrative

The purpose of this project is to gather input from a broad range of geospatial information stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that will form a consensus-based mission and vision for the Statewide Geospatial Council (SGC). This input will help guide the activities of the proposed SGC, define the goals and focus of initial working committees, and set priorities for the Council's first year. Throughout the process, the project team will incorporate previous strategic planning initiatives, review existing state council models, and provide opportunities for the geospatial community to be the driving force behind a successful new statewide geospatial council for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Next Steps

This plan is the result of an open and inclusive process and represents the hard work of numerous members of the Pennsylvania geospatial community. Nevertheless, this document is simply a plan, and there is no entity that has a mandate to carry out its recommendations. Although it may be relatively easy to put this plan "on the shelf", concerted effort, energy and creativity can succeed in moving forward and towards implementation, and the creation of the council. The same people and organizations that participated in this process – whether through the steering committee, or through a workshop, or as an advocate – will need to mobilize to carry this plan forward. As described above, the key first step is to gather support for this plan and for council formation and to enlist organizations to advocate for its implementation. With enough support, hopefully a strong voice and champion for geospatial coordination will emerge who can build momentum and creatively bridge the disagreements that have so far prevented a council from being formed. This document defines the goals and provides an overall game plan. The geospatial community team now needs to run the plays to execute that game plan.



Attachments

1. GIS Strategic Coordination Plan for PA
2. PA GIS conference presentation

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program

What are the CAP Program strengths and weaknesses?

The strengths are the fact that the program provides assistance to further expertise and knowledge in five important categories. This is very beneficial to shaping the future of Geospatial initiatives.

Where does it make a difference?

It makes a difference to smaller townships and municipalities that are struggling to have a GIS presence.

Was the assistance you received sufficient or effective?

The assistance was outstanding. I especially liked the kick off meeting at the conference and availability to access the templates of the project documents.

What would you recommend that the FGDC do differently?

Even though we were able to contact our counterparts in other states to compare project notes, it would be nice to have more conference calls. I think that it would be nice just to talk as a group to compare notes or brainstorm.

Are there factors that are missing or additional needs that should be considered?

None that I'm aware of.

Are there program management concerns that need to be addressed, such as the time frame?

No I thought that the timeframe was sufficient with the option to have an extension

If you were to do this again, what would you do differently?

Nothing.