

CALIFORNIA GIS STRATEGIC PLAN PHASE 2: REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

**Regional Workshop #1:
Redding, CA
October 10, 2007**

Prepared for:

**California GIS Council &
California Geographic Information Association**

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I. PREWORKSHOP SURVEY RESULTS

A. Far North Regional GIS Council

1) Regional Organizational Capacity

- Technology is not meeting business needs in networking, data storage, data exchange, hardware, or software capabilities.
- Funding is considered minimal and there are currently no funding mechanisms in place.
- There is no staff available to support GIS efforts. There are minimal volunteers.
- Strong executive support is seldom available.
- There is no formal process for project oversight, but one is in the works.
- There is a need to implement policies that would facilitate data sharing.

2) California Spatial Data Infrastructure

- This region has none of the seven core framework and eleven California-centric data theme datasets available.
- The top 5 regional datasets this region would like to develop next are:
 - Cadastral
 - Transportation
 - Elevation
 - Street Addressing
 - Earth Cover

3) Regional Implementation

- This region has used the Imagery for the Nation, the California Spatial Library, and the California Environmental Information Catalog, but not the 50 States Initiative.
- The establishment of a GIO is viewed as important.
- This region sees the GIO fulfilling the following responsibilities:
 - Provide leadership in the development and sharing of geospatial data
 - Provide leadership in the development and sharing of geospatial web services and tool
 - Provide leadership in the establishment of GIS technology and data standards
 - Promote best practices for methods and procedures related to the use and development of geospatial data and geographic information systems
 - Coordinate appropriate use of GIS through outreach and networking of potential and expert users
 - Coordinate and administer grants related to geospatial information and geographic information systems
 - Assimilate local data to a statewide dataset, but
- This region believes the GIO should be placed in a state agency that is programmatically neutral with broad, enterprise wide responsibilities --e.g., the State Library, the Governors' Office of Planning and Research (OPR) or the Department of Technology Services (DTS)

B. North Valley Regional GIS Council

1) Regional Organizational Capacity

- Technology is not meeting business needs in networking, or data exchange capabilities, but is suitable for data storage, hardware, and software capabilities.
- Funding is considered minimal and there are currently no funding mechanisms in place.
- There are less than five staff available to support GIS efforts. There are minimal on-site paid employees, and adequate retained consultants.
- Strong executive support is often available.
- There is no formal process for project oversight.
- There is a need to implement policies that would facilitate data sharing.

2) California Spatial Data Infrastructure

- The following datasets are available for this region:
 - Elevation (no standards, >1 m horizontal accuracy, >1 year old, from USGS 30 meter DEM)
- The top 5 regional datasets this region would like to develop next are:
 - Cadastral
 - Transportation
 - Hydrography
 - Street Addressing
 - Flood Hazards

3) Regional Implementation

- This region has used the California Spatial Library and the California Environmental Information Catalog.
- The establishment of a GIO is viewed as important.
- This region sees the GIO fulfilling the following responsibilities:
 - Provide leadership in the development and sharing of geospatial data
 - Promote best practices for methods and procedures related to the use and development of geospatial data and geographic information systems
 - Facilitate training for skills related to use and development of geospatial information and geographic information systems
 - Coordinate and administer grants related to geospatial information and geographic information systems
- This region believes the GIO should be placed in a state agency that is programmatically neutral with broad, enterprise wide responsibilities --e.g., the State Library, the Governors' Office of Planning and Research (OPR) or the Department of Technology Services (DTS)

II.REGIONAL WORKSHOP 1 SUMMARY

ATTENDENCE

Workshop 1 had a strong representation from the Far North Regional Collaborative. Additional representation included one individual from the North Valley. In all, 22 individuals and two Collaboratives were present for the discussion. 13 individuals were from local government, 3 from state government, and 6 from private entities.

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CURRENT SITUATION

1) SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strength in numbers • Broad regional representation including county, city, state and federal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Valley has not communicated in a year. • There are three counties, and therefore three “pots of money.” 		
<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication through regional website; https://r1.dfg.ca.gov/Portal/Default.aspx?alias=r1.dfg.ca.gov/portal/fnrgc • Minutes of the meetings are posted on the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to do a better job of outreach beyond core geospatial resources into increase awareness and values of GIS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity exists to educate elected officials and Management on GIS, how GIS is used, and the business value (Shasta County is focusing on this) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Organizational or public ignorance” of the capabilities of GIS.
<p>Data Sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are “data sharing arrangements” in place and procedures for updating data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is doubt that these data and procedures are being used. • There are concerns about data quality. • There is a lack of education regarding liability and inaccuracy of the datasets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top priority datasets are transportation and cadastral. They are pursuing transportation and have collected road layers from most agencies. • Strong regional desire to find or create a best practices document on data sharing agreements. Often times, this information is lost when people leave an organization. How to maintain, operate, and disseminate data. • Develop a standard disclaimer for liability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no discussion of who would host the data. • There is often an unwillingness or inability to share information. This unwillingness is centered around a lack of comfort with the currency and accuracy of data. There is a perceived liability. • There is a need for internal policies for sharing datasets.
<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been ongoing discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently no direct funding, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are financial resources and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a question of who

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STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
regarding funding opportunities.	and no jurisdiction has identified money to go towards data development.	grants available if a mechanism can be determined. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been discussion of grant opportunities and becoming a 501c3. 	would manage any grants. Two possibilities mentioned were the Western Shasta Regional Conservation District or the Regional Transportation Authority.
Data Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no true regional data. • Funding and resources is an issue. • Difficulty finding staff with the right skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to move forward and create an information management system and worry less about accuracy. By accepting a more fluid base standard, the first step of creation will be accomplished. • Create a “One Stop Shop” for regional GIS data. This would alleviate the leg work that is required for acquiring data. • Create a formalized distribution plan and schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived liability due to accuracy of the data.

REQUIREMENTS

1) Regional Discussion of Data Sharing and Standards

The challenge of who will create the regional or statewide datasets has not yet been answered. Ultimately, the GIS staff may not make this decision, because this must be answered at a higher level. Although the GIS staff is supportive of these efforts, it is not always a priority to the decision makers. Often times, support is given, but no actual funds.

There is a concern that the implementation of standards or other fundamental changes in data at this time would have far reaching effects. Because certain datasets have formed the basis for other systems (e.g. transportation), establishing standard would require the modification of all impacted systems. This challenge could limit the changes people are 0+willing to make.

It is necessary to determine the core attributes at the region and the state and then ensure it is extendable to more detailed attributes at the regional and local level. The state must make it easy to comply with the standards or it will likely not happen without dedicated funding. There is concern on the cost to add additional attributes to get to a common standard.

While people are willing to share data, the real challenge comes with aggregating and storing data. There must be a commonality in order to role data up together. Without quality metadata or an established standard, information will vary significantly. Specific questions must be answered first (e.g. Do you include forest service roads, mobile home parks, etc?). These questions must be answered based on who the intended audience is. CGIA is focused on making data available for state, regional, or local audiences. Does this audience include the private sector, etc?

It was suggested that the Open Street Map Initiative be used as a model. Google Earth allows for informal data sharing. Information and data is provided by the public and is available to the public. The concern with this format is liability. These concerns must be addressed at the state level.

2) Regional Discussion of Federated Data Efforts and Incentives for Participation

Funding! Funding is the best incentive to encourage involvement. Funding would buy equipment, staff, or services for those who don't have internal resources. Currently, creating standards may not be a priority for an organization, so any funding that is available may not be directed toward this effort.

While locally there is less concern for statewide datasets, regionally, people do care about the state. People are willing to share the data, if the state is willing to aggregate the data. There is doubt that the state is willing to take this step, and if it becomes the regions responsibility, it likely won't happen.

In the region the question is asked, what is the regional value to move data for a statewide coverage and what are the associated costs. Are there state agencies who have funds to aggregate data, move the data into a common data model, and is agency funding available?

There is a need at the state level for this data. While money is being spent on these efforts, much of the progress is disparate. Caltrans has aggregated data, but has not maintained it. Some state

agencies have agreements with local agencies for data sharing, but these have been made in separate pieces.

The Bay Area has MOUs to share data and have purchased four servers which host this data. This data is a one time delivery and does not have a continual update cycle. There is also no ongoing sustained funding.

For a less resource rich collaborative, how do they accomplish this? And then what is done with the data? These are questions that must be answered.

The City of Redding has many of their city layers available on their website. In a staged process, this could be done with other communities. By making standards very easy to comply with, the process will be initiated faster.

IMPLEMENTATION

1) State Support

The state must offer as much value to the region/locality as the region/locality offers to the state. Make it as easy for the region as they make it for the state.

Caltrans process for hiring GIS staff is slow. They do not have the resources to create data, and are challenged even with sharing the data within departments. There is a lack of awareness that other departments can benefit from the data.

The state could offer more geospatial classification exams to build a talent pool.

While Regions have developed personal relationships amongst themselves, those relationships can only go so far. In order to roll data up to the state level, there has to be more than an informal relationship.

2) Governance

The GIO and support staff will likely be between three and seven people. [Adkins]

This Region strongly believes the GIO should be involved in coordinating grants. There must be an established, higher level position, to administer grants and ensure that resources are delegated to those areas that need them. There is a need for a position whose purpose is to ensure that funds are used in a way that supports the overall infrastructure of the state. As the situation stands now, those areas that already have resources are the areas that continue to receive grants. There is doubt that we can be successful without a GIO. You need authority at that level to accomplish the necessary tasks. This authority would create much more consolidated coordination.

The question was posed: Given that there isn't a GIO, what can the CA GIS Council do for you? Answers included:

It would be beneficial to have someone, such as a GIO, with authority. They could move quicker on initiatives, consolidate coordination. In the meantime, CA GIS Council can:

- Acquire, educate and serve as a conduit for best practices, to avoid reinventing the wheel.
- There needs to be more of a focus on marketing both GIS and the CGIS Council beyond just GIS professionals, but also to the decision makers, who aren't aware of the benefits.

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- Define the responsibilities of the GIO. The GIO needs to make recommendations to legislature.
- They can develop, build, and create standards, and complete the Strategic Plan.

While it would be beneficial to have someone with authority, a GIO cannot simply ask for funds. These funds come out of a budget, so the GIO would have to have a direct connection to receive funds from the legislature. Because there is a finite amount to the budget, the GIO is competing against other factors. Often GIS is integral to those other elements.

The presence of a GIO would help create awareness of the need for GIS and a connection to legislature. While there is currently not a GIO, it is important to take advantage of events like “GIS Day.” Through a “GIS Day”, legislators can become more aware of the need to fund GIS. Ideas included:

- “A day in the life of government without GIS”- show what a day in the life of government would be like without GIS.
- Show how GIS connects to a policy or problem, not that it is GIS for the sake of GIS.