

NYS GIS Strategic Planning Project Capital District Stakeholder Meeting

Albany, NY

Meeting Date: October 31 , 2007

A representative cross-section of different levels of government and the private sector was in attendance (see registration list for names of attendees). The following presents “synthesized highlights” of the discussion that took place at the meeting as recorded by Michael Turner from Applied Geographics, Inc.

Strong supporters of the orthophoto program

Attendees expressed near unanimous praise for the orthophoto program - categorically, a huge success story. Some people wondered aloud whether the current 5-year update cycle for more rural areas was sufficient and whether there is an opportunity to go for a 3-year update cycle.

Strong supporters of web services approach

Strong interest in and endorsement of web services approach for data access. However, similar reports about unreliable and unacceptable performance of orthophoto web services via the current arrangement with the EROS Data Center. USGS reported that the EROS Data Center is also available to store the state’s LiDAR data sets.

Need for broader funding collaborators for orthophoto buy-up program

Suggestion was made that there should be more extensive advertising of the orthophoto buy-up program. The implication was that there is insufficient knowledge in the private and utility sectors and that these sectors could potentially be tapped as parts of broader funding collaboratives.

Schenectady suggests promoting link between data and daily tasks

Schenectady County suggested that there needs to be further education and outreach aimed at describing “how data helps people do their jobs”. At the local level there’s currently insufficient linkage between data funding requests and specific policy outcomes.

Need for non-technical GIS tools to build support

There was further endorsement of the need for the state to provide non-technical tools to local governments that help them gain support for local GIS efforts. Case studies that describe GIS budgeting and utility of various GIS data sets in a policy setting were described as examples.

DEC Water need for contours as accessible elevation data

DEC Water described that there are technical challenges in converting DEM/DTM data to contours and that contours are a more “user friendlier” presentation of elevation data.

Duplicate copies of framework data sets on local servers

Several state agencies acknowledged that they have duplicate copies of large data sets such as the statewide orthophotos on their own servers. Increasingly, some of these agencies are also developing their own secure web portals aimed at internal users and it would be great if these types of applications did not need to have local copies of framework data sets. These benefits would be even greater as “composite” data layers such as parcels become available due to the fact that these data change frequently and due to the number of individual entities from which the composite is built.

Need for seamless, statewide data

Several state agencies described their interest in consistent, seamless data across the state. Even the varying years of the orthophoto imagery provide some challenges for some statewide activities.

NYSDOT indicates availability of high-resolution imagery for some areas of State

NYSDOT described that they have extensive high-resolution imagery covering many of their corridors. These data were created as project specific data sets, however, they may have some general applicability. NYSDOT indicated a willingness to place these data into the statewide clearinghouse.

NY Canal Corporation and the Nature Conservancy indicate interest in improved elevation data; willingness to fund

The NY Canal Corporation described their strong interest in improved elevation data to support flood related activities. The NY Canal Corporation indicate that they have the potential to contribute funding to the statewide orthophoto program, perhaps as a buy-up for improved elevation data, however, they have not yet done so. Similarly, the Nature Conservancy (TNC) reiterated their very strong interest in improved elevation data, particularly for the Adirondack area, and a potential willingness and ability to contribute to buy-ups.

2-3M DEMs available for \$500K from SUNY Buffalo for improved statewide layer

The Dept. of State described that they have received a proposal from SUNY Buffalo to produce 2-3M resolution DEMs on a statewide basis for \$500k. The gentleman asked whether such a program would provide value to this group of stakeholders. While these data would likely not be sufficient to create 2 foot contours (i.e. the standard for doing FEMA Map Modernization updates), it would create an improved, uniform statewide product that would be useful to NYSDOT.

NHD development project as model for successful collaboration

DEC and USGS described the National Hydrography Data (NHD) development project in detail. This project is a 5-year effort with co-funding and co-staffing between the state and USGS. Initially, 12 basins have been prioritized for data improvement with 6 of those being tackled by USGS and the other 6 tackled by the state. Once a basin is completed it is submitted to USGS for approval. Once approved, USGS will make the data publicly available. The state can then obtain the data from USGS and make it available to the Clearinghouse, ALIS and the Cooperative. DEC described this as a great model for collaboration where it:

- Builds on the existing ALIS baseline hydrography

- Uses state money
- Uses federal money
- Provides opportunities for local government input. However, at present there is no specific local government role

Improved drainage basin data from NY Water Science Center available end of 2008

The NY Water Science Center is currently involved in improving the drainage basin data for NY as part of the National Basin Layer. Improvements will move the basins from HUC 8-digit codes to HUC-10 and HUC-12 coding. The result will be the delineation of basins that are appx. 50-70 square miles across the state. This project will be completed by the end of 2008 via funding from the USGS and NRCS.

Albany noted lag in updates for road data in ALIS database

The City of Albany, Criminal Justice Dept. noted that occasionally addresses they are interested in are not in the ALIS database (i.e. there's a lag in when new roads are added). Albany enquired whether it would be possible to use MMNT in a "wholly notification" context? Since they are not responsible for maintaining the roads data, can they be given access to "flag issues" for someone else's "do list"?

ALIS data not adequate for cross-county geocoding; multiple sources necessary

The Mohawk Valley Water Authority described a project where they attempted to geocode customers across a two county area and this experience provides a good example of some of the complexities involved with geocoding. In short, the ALIS data by itself was not adequate to get the best results. Rather, the MVWA ended up using at least three sources, particularly for the Utica area: ALIS, County roads and Utica City Planning roads.

Exposure of data quality issues can deter Assessor cooperation in GIS efforts

Herkimer noted that the quality of parcel attribute data can be poor (i.e. the Assessor's CAMA databases can have errors in them). Herkimer noted that these underlying data quality issues can create barriers to Assessor's wanting to become involved in GIS. First, they perceive GIS as a tool that will expose the data further and thus more people will become aware of these data errors. Second, once the errors are exposed there will be pressure to correct them and this will lead to additional work for the Assessors.

ORPS grant program available for GIS/Assessing website development

Bowne Management reported that ORPS, through Real Property Services had a grant program that support local governments getting their Assessment data onto the web. Bowne reported working with communities to use this funding source to develop websites that included GIS capabilities.

State expressed need for statewide consistent polygons, consistent ORPS ID number and annual updates

State agency needs were summarized as:

- Polygons consistently availability on a statewide basis
- Consistent application of the ORPS ID number

- Updated annually

Need for centrally available data from local agencies to minimize redundant collections

During the workshop, the question was asked of the audience: “how many of you state agency participants have collected and used local parcel data within your state agency?” Approximately 15 state agencies answered YES. This implies two key things. First, there is a great need and interest in local parcel data. Second, there is potentially a great amount of redundant effort as 15 agencies independently pursue the same objective.

Entities express wide variety of applications for local parcel data

A subsequent question asked these state agencies to describe their uses of local parcel data in the state planning and decision making context (due to time constraints, not all agencies had an opportunity to reply to this question):

1. **Public Health Research:** Uses parcel data to understand land use mix in urban areas. Land use mix enables them to determine metrics such as “walkability” of built environments and these factors can be indicators in other public health metrics.
2. **NYS DOT:** Uses parcel data to assess the rights of way they own. In addition, they use parcel data to determine abutter’s to their projects and for estimating potential project impact.
3. **NY Thruway Authority:** Uses parcel data to assess their own land holdings. In addition, they use parcels to assess opportunities for disbursement of surplus holdings.
4. **Criminal Justice:** Uses parcel data as a substrate for geocoding. Looking at crime prevention opportunities in the built environment.
5. **Secretary of State, Division of Coastal Resources:** Uses parcels to identify non-point source pollution sources. In addition, uses parcels to identify opportunities for open space acquisition.
6. **State Parks:** Uses parcels to identify opportunities for open space acquisition.
7. **Fish & Wildlife:** Uses parcels to support wetlands notification process. In addition, uses parcels to assess how to potentially gain access to lands to conduct wildlife surveys.
8. **State Museum:** Uses parcels to determine ownership of oil and gas wells.
9. **DEC Water:** Uses parcels to support natural resource modeling. For instance, parcels assist in modeling questions such as “is there enough water for current and future land uses” in a particular area? In addition, parcels are used to support drought management.
10. **DEC:** Parcels assist in their property management function and in providing notification (e.g. to abutters).

11. **NY Canal Corporation:** Parcels are used in the right-of-way management activities. In addition, parcels assist in providing notification (e.g. to abutters) as well as assessments of economic development opportunities.

Schenectady County and the Coastal Resources Center suggest incentives for data sharing cooperation

Schenectady County and the Coastal Resources Center suggested that the state might consider developing incentives for data sharing. Examples of suggested incentives included:

- Providing discounts on the buy-up to counties that readily share their data with the state.
- Making the buy-up option contingent on a county being an active member of the Data Sharing Cooperative.

DEC suggests keeping archived data available for temporal change assessments

DEC mentioned the importance of potentially archiving older parcel data sets as newer parcel data becomes available. One key area of environmental inquiry pertains to “how has sub-division impacted the landscape and natural resource systems”. Keeping older parcel data will enable temporal assessment of sub-division.

Need for active management of Data Sharing Cooperative to ensure entities are fulfilling commitment to keep data up to date

As with Highland, this workshop identified the need for “active custodianship” of the Data Sharing Cooperative to combat the dated data within the Cooperative. It was suggested that proactive work to get cooperative members to “fulfill their agreements” is necessary.

Acknowledgement of boundary discrepancies between municipalities and counties

As with several other workshops, participants acknowledged that county and municipal “boundary issues” (both on the maps and on the ground) are abundant. As Schenectady County put it, “we just put our head in the sand” about the general accuracy of boundary depictions.

Potential to use MMNT for flagging boundary issues

One workshop participant asked whether the MMNT application could be used as a means of flagging, and potentially editing faulty boundaries (as opposed to just roads and addressing).

Coast Resource Center expressed need for submerged structure data

The Coastal Resource Center identified bathymetric data (for both the Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean) and submerged structure data (e.g. undersea utilities and outfalls) as being a significant data gap.

Suggestion to include private sector in Data Sharing Cooperative membership

A private sector planning consultant observed that the Data Sharing Cooperative’s current limitation of membership to public agencies poses some challenges. He cited cases where many smaller municipalities rely on their consultants to manage their spatial

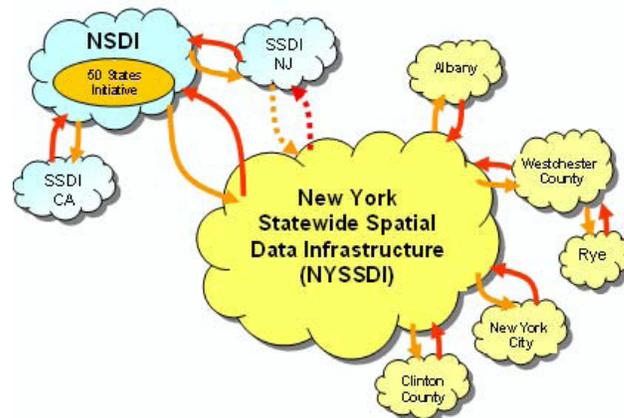
data. Since these consultants cannot join the cooperative these data sets are not making their way into the cooperative. Is there an opportunity to review the cooperative “membership policy” and to potentially create a separate class of membership for the private sector (e.g. “private sector custodians of public agency data”)?

The Nature Conservancy expressed need for authoritative openspace data and full-time openspace data custodian

The Nature Conservancy identified that statewide **open space is an important data gap**. While there are several efforts – including TNC’s own – to create these data there is not a single, authoritative source. Probably most importantly, to date no entity or agency has been identified as the custodian for statewide open space data. TNC indicated a willingness to share their own efforts toward maintaining these data. TNC also indicated that DEC has “been in talks” with TNC regarding designating a fulltime open space custodian within that agency. This is not unprecedented as some (but certainly not all) other states such as Massachusetts have fulltime open space custodians.

Suggestion to link GIS initiatives to economic development to align with Governor’s agenda

- One of the workshop participants suggested that, given the governor’s agenda, GIS should be linked to economic development as much as feasible. Examples included:
 - Direct use of GIS technology to support the economic development agenda, e.g. for site suitability assessment
 - Citing the utility of GIS technology to support realtors (and potentially other businesses that are inherently spatial in nature)



Participants:

Henry Kovacs	(NYS Dept of Transportation)
Bruce Oswald	(James W. Sewall)
Hockeson Carol	(New York State Canal Corporation)
Brad Stratton	(The Nature Conservancy)
Barbara Cruden	(NYSDEC)
Kevin Hunt	(NYSDOT)
Linda Rockwood	(MVGIS)
Eoin Wrafter	(Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council)
Clare Dunn	(NYS Museum)
Elisabeth DeGironimo	(Mohawk Valley Water Authority)
Jeffrey Herter	(NYS Dept. of State, Division of Coastal Resources and New York Ocean & Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council)
Mark Storti	(County of Schenectady)
Katie Budreski	(Stone Environmental Inc.)
Girk Cakmak	(Bowne Management Systems, Inc.)
Bob Gehrer	(NYS CSCIC)
Tom Henderson	(NYS CSCIC)
Don Meltz	
Glen Johnson	(NYSDOH)
Carol Hockeson	(NYS Canal Corporation)
Jim Close	(NYSDEC)
Martin Smith	(USGS)
Katherine Barnes	(NYSDEC)
Dennis Wischman	(NYSDEC)
Nancy Brelos	(Pictometry)
Jeff Barth	(NYSDOT)
Paul Rooney	(ESRI)
Christina Croll	(NYS OPRHP)
Stephen Radzysinski	(NYSDOT)
Christopher O'Connor	(NYSDEC)
Betty Ketcham	(NYS DOT)
Todd Nelson	(NYS Division of Criminal Justice)
Eric Herman	(NYS Thruway Authority)
Carl Herzog	(NYSDEC)
Douglas Freehafer	(USGS NY Water Science Center)
Thomas Duffy	(NYS CSCIC)
Ricardo Lopez-Torrijos	(NYS DEC)
Jay Buhr	(JIMAPCO, Inc.)
Heidi Krahlung	(NY Natural Heritage Program - NYSDEC /The Nature Conservancy)
Tim Daly	(NYS Dept. Environmental Conservation, Division of Water)
Douglas Hadjin	(NYSDOT)
Amy Heebner	(New York State Library)