Nebraska GIS Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes -- September 22, 2000

Present were (authorized to vote *):

Mahendra Bansal		Department of Natural Resources
Jim Brown	*	State Surveyor's Office
Blaine Dinwiddie	*	Omaha Public Power District
John Erickson	*	Department of Health and Human Services
Dick Genrich	*	Department of Roads
Dan Hoffman	*	Policy Research Office
Mark Kuzila	*	Conservation and Survey Division - UNL
Tom Lamberson	*	Department of Environmental Quality
James Langtry	*	Lancaster County Engineer
Bob Martin	*	Department of Property Assessment and Taxation
Steve Peaslee	*	USDA-NRCS
Steve Schafer	*	CIO
Dayle Williamson	*	Department of Natural Resources
Larry Zink		GIS Steering Committee Coordinator

Complete Meeting Agenda

NOTICE OF MEETING: A public notice of the meeting, pursuant to Section 84-1411 R.R. S. 1943, was published in the Lincoln Journal-Star on September 15, 2000.

ROLL CALL: Vice Chairperson Mark Kuzila called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. and requested a call of the roll. Twelve duly authorized representatives were present at the time of the roll call. Therefore, a quorum was present to conduct business.

NON-PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE BUSINESS: Larry said that the GIS/LIS Association would like to share booth space at the NACO Annual Convention and split the cost with the Steering Committee. There were no objections.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: Larry noted that this was a special meeting called to review and revise, as necessary, the "final" draft of the GIS Strategic Plan and Annual Report. Given that meeting purpose, Larry started the discussion by asking the general question of whether the current draft of the Steering Committee's strategic plan accurately reflects the direction in which the Committee wishes to go.

Tom commented that the executive summary is well done. He suggested adding a paragraph to provide more explanation of the initiatives and where the Steering Committee is at. He expressed concern that there are items clearly identified as priorities by the Steering Committee, such as the transportation database, are mixed with items that the Committee has not taken as strong an action on, such as the Regional Centers are identified exactly the same. Tom felt these must be differentiated in some fashion, either by prioritizing or by highlighting them as significant issues that need to be dealt with but have not been addressed yet. Street addresses, Regional Centers and the Service Bureau all fall into this category.

Steve Schafer clarified that Tom's idea was to separate those three areas out into a section for items in need of further investigation or other areas of priority that need to be addressed. Larry pointed out that the descriptive language does call for further research and investigation although the items are not clearly delineated in a seperate section. Tom said that if the wording is left as it is but with a heading of items upon which no action has been taken on, that would clearly separate the issues.

Larry pointed out that the street address database was the only issue that has not been discussed by the Steering Committee and suggested that the street address database can be eliminated entirely as it is clearly a different sort of issue. The only

action being suggested for this item was the formation of a database advisory committee while the other two issues are clearly major policy type initiatives.

Larry said that Steve had expressed some concern about these items also because they could be talking about new personnel. The language used with regards to the Regional Service Centers discusses the reality that this concept needs to be explored with policy makers and that is basically what the action plan entails. The Service Bureau section is clearer, and talks about working with the Legislative and Executive branches of government to provide base funding. The language could be softened to be, explore the need and support for designating and providing base money.

Tom indicated that the even just the addition of a note to clarify that no action has been taken yet would be acceptable. Larry pointed out that endorsing this document basically is a formal action. Steve Schafer said he would prefer to see these items removed to a separate section titled Topics for Further Investigation.

Mark asked if that doing this could affect Steering Committee actions in the coming year. If these items are moved over, does this preclude the ability to take action later because it was not formally adopted in the plan? Tom said that was his concern in actually setting formal priorities because that would not allow the flexibility during the rest of the year to act if discussion led to a shift in priority.

Jim Brown expressed concern in that he felt these issues, which are very important to local governments, are being deprioritized without their input. Tom indicated this was the reason he suggested a videoconference.

Mark asked why this is even an issue. This is a plan, not a report of action. Steve Schafer said that there is a danger in including this in with other items that the Committee has spent considerable time and energy developing, like the priority databases. The purpose of this plan is to communicate what the Steering Committee thinks needs to move forward. These two items will raise red flags because they will require additional staff and expansion that some people will consider to be big government. These items will become the focus of discussion rather than things like the priority databases.

Jim Brown stated that if these items are deprioritized, then the Steering Committee has advanced the cause only of databases that are of interest to state government and have destroyed the concept of the Steering Committee as a partnership between state and local government. Local government does not have any interest in developing the hydrography database or many of the others being developed now. They need help in rural Nebraska

Mark commented that there seemed to be a difference between Tom's reasons for wanting to move these items and Steve's. In order to get this plan moved forward, items suggesting an increase in the size of government are not politically expedient. Steve Schafer added, not without well developed arguments for it. Such a request will not be viewed favorably. His understanding is that the Steering Committee has not spent a lot of time working through these concepts and thinking through how these will work, who is responsible for what, where they would be housed, etc. They are good ideas but are not well thought out plans.

Larry said that is basically what the language says, that the proposal is to involve people in the discussion and to determine if there is a need. Jim Brown indicated that he would agree if the Committee wanted to add a statement that these two concepts need additional work, but he is opposed to moving them to another section that would indicate they are of a lower priority.

Larry explained that he has the final action statement clearly states that the next step is to enter into dialogue with policy makers. Jim Langtry requested that the language be changed to strike the reference to the state from the document, as it should reflect the inclusion of other entities as well. As the plan reads now, the implication is of a new state agency and it does not need to be a state agency. Larry asked for assistance in wording this so that it does not indicate the creation of a new agency, noting that is not the intention of these statements. The intent is to have support from a state sponsored agency, but not necessarily from a new entity. Jim Langtry pointed out that it could involve a consulting engineer that is providing services for a group of counties. There are a number of ways that this can be addressed. Tom agreed, commenting that the issue is providing support for local government, which no one will argue is not a pressing concern.

Steve Schafer said that the word causing the most difficulty seemed to be 'centers' as that implies the creation of an entire new entity, which in turn will require additional funds. The direct issue is getting technical support where it is needed, not the creation of support centers as such. Larry pointed out that the Property Assessment and Taxation Division is potentially going to have the need for a significant amount of GIS work to be done. There is some question as to whether that will be developed in-house or contracted out. Steve Schafer said that the title of this piece identifies the solution rather than the problem and that replacing 'service bureau' with 'technical support for local government' will identify the need rather than the solution.

Larry explained that his association with technical assistance is someone who comes out to talk through problems as they

arise, but not does actually do the work. Tom said that technical assistance to him means anything from helping an agency write an RFP to having the equipment and doing the work. Tom asked if there was any objection to referencing this section as technical assistance and then having an explanation of the needs in the body.

Jim Brown said that he was not comfortable with the change at all. Larry asked if he was comfortable in moving away from language that specified service centers to technical assistance if it is still placed in the same section.

Larry clarified that the changes suggested would be to re-label the section 'regional technical assistance centers' to assist local government and putting that in the body of the document.

Tom said that it is more than just changing the title of the paragraph, it is taking out the work 'centers' entirely and changing the focus from the solution to the need. Rather than specifying that regional technical centers are needed, the document will read that there is need for regional technical support for local government.

Jim said that this has been a topic of discussion for ten years but nothing has ever been done. The need has been discussed and discussed and the feeling in local government is that it is time to get off dead center. All that has been done in the past ten years is the development of state databases.

Larry explained that the Steering Committee created a Land Records Modernization Advisory Committee who drafted this proposal. It has come back to this committee to be described as a proposal under the concept of going out to local government to see if there is support for fleshing the concept out. The Steering Committee has never actually passed a formal resolution to that effect however. Larry said that the Service Bureau concept was one that he had developed based on discussions with others about a perceived need for such a thing. He noted that he placed this concept in the draft strategic plan based on his understanding of his charge in developing an expedited strategic plan. That is that he was to draft concepts and the Steering Committee would accept or edit them as they think best. Based on that understanding, it is the Steering Committee's call as to whether the need for a Service Bureau should be included in the Strategic Plan.

Steve Schafer asked if the assumption that State government would create and fund the GIS Regional Support centers. Larry indicated that they probably will not happen without state government having a significant role in making it happen. State government needs to provide the basic structure and look to local government to buy in and create partnerships.

Jim Langtry added that the Legislature will have to create the process by which local government can buy into this service center and to get the funding. Statutes will have to be changed to allow this to happen. Larry indicated that the Advisory Committee recognizes that there is no sense in advancing with this concept unless there is strong support on the local level. That is where the Committee stands at the moment, investigating support by local government. Larry indicated that it is his understanding that Larry Worrell is planning on addressing this topic at several NACO meetings in the coming month.

Tom asked if any other solutions were going to be discussed that would accomplish the same thing. Larry said that if Larry Worrell is doing the speaking, it is likely that this concept will be promoted.

Tom said that the concept of having GIS Service Centers throughout the state is doomed to failure as a stand-alone proposal. Larry clarified that the concept includes surveying as well, because there is a need for professional surveyors too. In addition, there is the possibility of bundling other information technology support needed within a given region in this place as well. Tom agreed that there were probably a lot of technical IT needs on the local government level but that is not identified in this proposal.

Tom suggested creating a separate initiative six that talks about providing technical assistance to local government. That would clearly give it higher priority than it has now.

Tom moved for the GIS Steering Committee's strategic plan to reflect the addition of a new initiative, number 6, which identifies the need for state government to provide technical support to local government and state agencies, incorporating the concepts of explanation of need for technical assistance at the local level as well as the state level and the concepts identified in the regional service centers and the GIS service bureau discussion. Those two subsets of initiative two and five are to be deleted from their present location. Larry clarified that this proposal involves removing the two bold references to these concepts. They will be discussed in a narrative form but not listed as highlighted suggestions.

Tom said these concepts will be discussed in the narrative as having been identified as possible solutions and that if any other ideas have been discussed, they belong in this section as well.

Steve Schafer seconded the motion.

Dayle commented that the Steering Committee's mission includes a statement, which reads 'to assist organizations to make public investment in GIS technology and geospatial data in an effective, efficient, and coordinated manner. With this initiative, the Steering Committee is basically saying that here are some things we are preparing to do that with and it may be an overstatement. The Steering Committee is not capable of fulfilling this goal at the moment. It needs to be clear that this initiative addresses fulfilling the Committee's mission.

Jim Langtry pointed out that local government is not looking for the State to provide technical assistance or necessarily funding. They want the legislature to provide a means for local government to pool their own resources to contract out for these services.

Jim Brown indicated that the motion as drafted still deprioritizes these issues. Mark asked how it reduces emphasis. Jim Brown explained that places it as initiative six, behind hiring a new staff person and developing geospatial databases.

Larry commented that these issues are less visible because there is no specific project, which all the others have. This one talks generally about the need but does not attach a specific project.

Jim Langtry said that the big issue seems that if additional state resources are requested then other state agencies are going to get cut. This results in the state agencies around the table protecting themselves and leaving local government with nothing. Dayle agreed that is the case.

Steve Schafer commented that another issue is that this has not been fully debated yet. There are other alternatives that have not been considered. GIS is just one area in the entire area of technology. Jim Langtry said that these same issues have been coming up for ten years but have always been pushed aside. The Steering Committee is supposed to be making a coordinated effort to oversee the development of GIS throughout the state of Nebraska, not just the interests of one or two state agency.

Steve Schafer pointed out that the issues have not been fully explored yet. Jim Langtry said that is just another means to put off taking any action on issues that are important to local government. This document has been circulated via the Internet and such and the local government representatives did not attend this meeting because they assumed the only changes that would occur would be cosmetic changes. The suggestions thus far have been significant and they will not have the opportunity to provide input.

Mark said that he doesn't see Tom's motion as being that significantly altering.

Steve Schafer suggested inserting these items directly following the Land Records Modernization initiative as initiative three. There is no intent to de-emphasize the importance of this issue; it is simply a matter of not buying into an incomplete solution that has not been entirely thought out yet. Jim Langtry added that the service bureaus will not be a complete solution. Some local government entities are in need of such help. Others will not. There will be a wide range of solutions.

Tom agreed that is a good point, that this solution might fit perfectly for areas of western Nebraska and be a terrible solution for eastern Nebraska. That solidifies the point that this is only one solution of many.

Blaine suggested creating a separate initiative six, to provide technical assistance to local government, with two subheadings, Regional Professional Service Centers and GIS Service Bureau. The first sentence of each section would make clear that these are the two solutions that have been identified.

Mark asked for the motion to be amended for the vote. Tom said that the amendment is for the Regional Professional Service Centers and the GIS Service Bureau to be identified as specific alternatives to address the issue of providing technical support to local government.

Larry restated his understanding of what was discussed is that the language already drafted would be used, along with a paragraph discussing the need that this will address. Then the Regional Service Centers and the Service Bureau will be presented as specific projects, with their current headings. Jim Brown asked where that would show up. Larry said it would fall after initiative two. There would be no other changes in the body of the document other than to add the language change that would include 'explore the need and support for designating and providing funding for...'

Tom asked if the database development fund was specifically targeted for that purpose. Larry said that was the original intent because database development will probably not get done unless it is so funded. Tom suggested that perhaps it should be labeled simply a GIS development fund to allow it to be used for other things.

Jim Brown commented that when looking at a strategic plan, you cannot have all the answers when you write it. It is a plan of action, not a report of progress. Historically, the Steering Committee has been reluctant to ask for money. Local government needs some help and the Committee needs to ask for help directly. Tom said he was not arguing whether to include it or not, but rather what the scope of it will be.

Larry called the roll and the motion passed. *(see vote #1 on Voting Record sheet)*.

Steve Schafer suggested altering the executive summary to change the portion following the request for funds for an additional FTE. Dayle suggested removing it entirely, adding that it would work better to state that the Steering Committee drafted this plan because it will be helpful to policy makers.

Steve Schafer asked if there was any interest in attempting to prioritize these initiatives. While it is not essential to do so, it is helpful to policymakers. Jim Brown said that would be something that could come in time, but not at this time.

Larry commented that in the last two meetings, there had been a lot of frustration expressed about not having the resources needed and therefore the Steering Committee was not able to accomplish anything. Larry said that while he shared many of those same frustrations, he felt it was important to point out that of the many initiatives listed as needed in the Strategic Plan, all of them but three are already underway in some form. This reflect a considerable amount of ongoing work of some variety. Steve Schafer added that this document sends a tremendous message that this committee has dealt with a great number of issues.

Larry asked what to do with the street address database item because it does not fit into the solution created for the other two items. Tom said he had no strong feelings one way or the other about this issue as long as it is clear that further discussion needs to take place.

Tom moved to adopt the GIS Steering Committee's Strategic Plan and Annual Report as amended with the correction of typographical errors. Jim Brown seconded. The motion passed. *(see vote #2 on Voting Record sheet)*.

The meeting was adjourned.

The **next meeting is scheduled for November 2, 2000** at the Nebraska Department of Roads, Lincoln, NE.

	Roll Call	Tech.Asst. Initiative #1	Approval of Strategic Plan #2						
DAS - Steve Schafer	P	+	+	.		.	.	.	.
DEQ - Tom Lamberson Dennis Burling	P	+	+	.	.	.		.	.
CSD - Mark Kuzila Jim Merchant, Jim Lacy	P	+	A	.	.	.	.		.
NGPC - Mele Koneya Bruce Sackett	A	.	.	.	.	.	.		.
NRC - Dayle Williamson Mahendra Bansal	P	+	+	.	.	.	.		.
PTD - Cathy Lang Bob Martin, Scott Gaines	P	+	+	.	.	.	.		.
PRO - Lauren Hill Dan Hoffman	P	+	+	.	.	.	.		.
DOR - Dick Genrich (John Craig) Jon Ogden, Ed Kelley	P	+	+	.	.	.			.
St.Surv - Jim Brown	A/P	+	+	.	.	.	.		.
LRD - Val Goodman	A	.	.	.	.	.	.		.
Nathan Mc Caleb. Steve Peaslee	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.
John Miyoshi	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Blaine Dinwiddie Steve Larson	A/P	+	+	.	.	.	.		.
Cliff Welsh	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Larry Worrell Jim Langtry	P	+	+	.	.	.	.		.
Lash Chaffin	A	.	.	.	.	.	.		.
Duane Stott	A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	
Dennis Wilson	A	.	.	.	.	.	.		.
Dick Nelson John Erickson	P	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	
TOTALS	10 - P / 12 - P	12 - +	11 - +		.	.	.	.	.

Table title: Vote Tallies for 9/22/00 GIS Str. Cmte. Meeting

"P"=present, "A"=absent, "+"=voting for, "-"=voting against, "NV"=not voting

11/1/2000 6:56 AM