



North Carolina Geographic Information Coordinating Council

Minutes

May 6, 2020

PRESENT

Alex Rankin (Chair), Steve Averett, Paul Badr, David Baker, Amy Barron, Debbie Brannan, Kathryn Clifton, Bob Coats, John Correllus, Greg Cox, John Cox, Seth Dearmin, Dianne Enright, John Farley, Kristian Forslin, John Gillis, Dean Grantham, Joanne Halls, Pokey Harris, Jason Hedley, Matt Helms, Debbie Joyner, Bliss Kite, Sarah Koonts, Scott Lokken, Dan Madding, Rich Elkins (for Elaine Marshall), Chris Nida, Allan Sandoval, Gary Thompson, and Ron York

Staff: Tim Johnson, CGIA

ABSENT

Wesley Beddard, Stan Duncan, Chloe Gossage, Tony Simpson, and Lee Worsley

PROCEEDINGS

The Council held its first-ever meeting via Webex due to Governor Cooper's stay at home order because of COVID-19.

Welcome and Chair Announcements

Alex Rankin, Council Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members and visitors on the Webex call. Council staff conducted a roll call to ensure that a quorum was present; a quorum was confirmed with a simple majority of voting members of the Council in attendance. Mr. Rankin and David Giordano of Council staff outlined some instructions for participating in this first Webex meeting of the Council.

Mr. Rankin made several announcements about changes in Council membership since the last meeting. Amy Barron of Duke Energy has been appointed by the Chair as an advisory member to the GICC. Ms. Barron is Manager of GIS, Centralized Design and Residential Development and has briefed the Council previously on access to utility information. Her experience includes work in local government and the private sector. Hope Morgan has left the public sector for the private sector. She had been serving as Vice Chair of the GICC as Department of Public Safety Secretary Hooks' designee. Ms. Morgan will continue to provide leadership of the Working Group for Enhanced Emergency Response. Secretary Hooks has appointed Gary Thompson as his designee; Mr.

Thompson has been a long-time member of the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee and becomes the Vice Chair of the Council.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 12, 2020 meeting were approved for adoption with no changes.

Presentations

Update: Differential Privacy Including Survey Results – Debbie Brannan, LGC Chair; Bob Coats, Governor’s Census Liaison, Office of State Budget and Management

See <https://files.nc.gov/ncdit/GICC-LGC-CensusSurveyResults-20200506.pdf>

Council Chair Rankin recognized Debbie Brannan, Local Government Committee Chair, to describe the latest work by the Council on the differential privacy issue. Ms. Brannan presented the results of a survey conducted by the LGC related to the impact of differential privacy. The survey was distributed to various listservs in late-February and included 10 questions. The LGC received 52 responses.

The questions included the following:

1. What sector do you represent?
2. What census-related data do you need to do your day-to-day job?
3. Related to the previous question, at what geographic level are the census-related data used?
4. Related to questions 2 and 3, please provide additional details [on how you use the data].
5. How do you currently use census data to make decisions in your jurisdiction?
6. Related to question 5, please provide additional detail.
7. Are any of your operational costs associated with the population of your jurisdiction? (for example, software licensing fees)
8. List any state or federal programs in which your jurisdiction participates where funding is determined directly or indirectly through census counts.
9. If possible, provide evidence for how census is used for funding or services rates.
10. With differential privacy, small-area census data analysis may be limited to state and local government agencies for descriptive analyses, assessments, and planning related to public-policy decision making, including the day-to-day decision-making process. Based on your knowledge of differential privacy, how do you think applying this to the 2020 Census data products will affect you?

[Editor’s note: Ms. Brannan had charts in the PowerPoint presentation detailing the response to each question. To access those charts, refer to the link at the beginning of this agenda item, available on the GICC website under the May 6 meeting materials.]

The local governments responding use a variety of census data variables at the block, block group, and census tract levels. The uses of the data include redistricting, sales tax distribution, and population analysis. Census data is routinely used locally for decision making ranging from economic analysis, environmental analysis, public health, community planning, transportation planning, and for allocation of funds, among others. Respondents were asked to comment on state or federal programs where funding is determined through census counts. Those programs include school funding, transportation funding, Medicare and Medicaid, workforce development, code enforcement, stormwater programs, and a variety of others.

Ms. Brannan summarized the results by stating that all kinds of census-related data are used for many reasons and at almost every scale. Local government planning is best performed with more detailed data. It is difficult to analyze the impact of differential privacy without knowing what method will be used to limit the data. Skewed data can have an impact on needs analysis and planning functions of local government resulting in less efficient and effective local government operations.

Mr. Rankin thanked Ms. Brannan and the LGC for its work. He called on Bob Coats for comments and to update the Council on the issue in his liaison role between North Carolina and the Census Bureau.

Mr. Coats updated the Council on differential privacy. The Census Bureau has recognized that the demonstration products issued earlier are not workable and have taken a step back. Feedback is being solicited from data users and the Bureau is working on a series of sprints to address data quality and process concerns. Metrics are being derived after each sprint. Comments can be sent by email to 2020das@census.gov. Further sprints will be looking at improving additional aspects of the data. The sprints will need to be completed by the end of September 2020 for final decisions to be made on apportionment of the privacy loss budget on products and tables by the end of December 2020. The GICC and/or its partners can submit a letter, but specific concerns can be submitted by email for a quicker turnaround. One goal going forward for the Census Bureau is to maintain data privacy without distorting the data. The sprints will hopefully yield insights where that is concerned. Some of the metrics are presented by state and with county analysis and municipal analysis by state. Mr. Coats has asked the Census Bureau for access to that information and is awaiting a response. A newsletter is forthcoming from the Census Bureau to keep users informed. The next Census Bureau conference call is June 2 and Mr. Coats expects to be on that call.

Mr. Rankin asked if it is appropriate for the GICC to communicate with the Census Bureau stating its concerns. Mr. Coats indicated that it would be helpful and informative to share the Local Government Committee survey results as an example of local government impacts from Census Bureau decisions both in terms of providing services and funding. It also gets North Carolina on the record with concerns and that we have performed our due diligence and assessing the impact. A formal letter to the Census Bureau requires a formal response which could take some time. To conclude, Council Chair Rankin thanked Mr. Coats for his remarks and asked for questions from GICC members on the material that Ms. Brannan and Mr. Coats presented.

Mr. Coats added that the Census Bureau has asked that due to COVID-19 the apportionment data normally scheduled for release in December 2020 and redistricting data scheduled for April 2021 be delayed but Congress will decide. The Census Bureau has recommended that the apportionment data be released in April 2021 and the redistricting data in July 2021. With no questions from Council members, Council Chair Rankin suggested that he and Council staff craft a letter to the Census Bureau and perhaps send an email in a parallel process. Tim Johnson commented that building a letter around the local government survey results would be a great approach. Mr. Coats commented that the concrete examples expressed in the survey results would be very impactful feedback. Mr. Rankin asked the Council to approve this approach by asking for a motion directing the creation of a letter to the Census Bureau. A motion was made and approved followed by unanimous vote.

Recommendation Concerning Adoption of Survey Foot vs. International Foot – Paul Badr, SMAC Chair; Gary Thompson, NC Geodetic Survey

Council Chair Rankin recognized Paul Badr, Chair of the Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC), to bring forward a recommendation from the SMAC. At its April 15 meeting Gary Thompson presented the issue of US Survey versus international foot. The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) will decommission the US survey foot and starting in 2022 the US government will only recognize the international foot. NGS transformation tools will only contain the option to convert to US Survey foot for conversions to and from any datum prior to 2022.

The NC Geodetic Survey Advisory Committee and a majority of groups Mr. Thompson has talked to have been supportive of the switch to the international foot. The change will impact all mapping and databases. Mr. Thompson recommended to the SMAC that it adopt the international foot starting with the 2022 datum. After discussion, the SMAC approved the recommendation to switch to the international foot beginning with the 2022 datum and recommends the GICC adopt it. Mr. Badr asked the Council Chair for such adoption.

Mr. Rankin asked the Council to vote on its adoption based on the recommendation from the SMAC. By voice vote, the Council adopted the recommendation.

Committee Reports

Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC). Paul Badr, SMAC Chair, briefed the Council on activities of the committee since the February 12 Council meeting.

The SMAC held its last quarterly meeting on April 15. The primary points are summarized below:

For the Statewide Orthoimagery Program, the 2020 project is well underway for 27 counties in the Coastal Plain. Imagery acquisition was difficult this winter because of rainy, cloudy, and snowy weather. The acquisition was also impacted by military GPS interference training on three separate occasions. In all there were approximately eight days of good flying weather to collect the entire area. Nevertheless, all imagery was collected by March 9. The project is currently in the production phase. Quality control will start in early June and conclude in August. The goal is to have deliverables ready for distribution to the 911 community and county GIS offices by mid-November. The imagery will be available through NC OneMap shortly after delivery to the 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

For NC Parcels, all 100 counties were updated in 2019. During the first quarter of 2020, 66 counties were updated and second quarter updates are underway with 18 counties having updated their parcels to the statewide dataset thus far. Statewide, there is only one county out of 100 counties whose parcel data is a year old. An ongoing issue is the way some commonly used attributes are, or are not, populated. The NC Parcels project team is discussing the possible designation of fields as “required”, “recommended”, or “optional.” The project team will vet this with groups such as the NC Association of Assessing Officers (i.e., tax assessors), NC Department of Revenue, and the computer assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) software vendors.

Council Chair Rankin asked for any questions. Hearing none he called on Debbie Brannan to provide the Local Government Committee report.

Local Government Committee (LGC). Mr. Rankin recognized Debbie Brannan to report.

The LGC met on February 26 with key topics including the differential privacy and Next Generation 911. The committee also received reports from various working groups and subcommittees. The results of the census data survey have been circulated among the local government community. Outreach is an important goal for the LGC, and this has led to creation of a Teams channel to better coordinate local government matters in between quarterly meetings. Creation of a social media presence has also been discussed and the LGC is working with Council staff to coordinate this with the DIT Communications office. Tools such as Twitter and Facebook are being considered. The committee will be looking to fill various committee appointments in the coming weeks as several expire at the end of June, including LGC chair. Josh Norwood is the new representative from the North Carolina Local Government Information Systems Association (NCLGISA), replacing George Brown who recently retired and Crystal Burnett of Brunswick County has replaced Robin Etheridge of Dare County as the representative from the NC Property Mappers Association (NCPMA).

Council Chair Rankin recognized Kathryn Clifton who had a question for Ms. Brannan. Ms. Clifton asked if the LGC had considered LinkedIn as another possible avenue for communication. Anna Verrill, Council staff to the LGC, stated that DIT Communications does not manage as many LinkedIn accounts, the committee decided to start with Twitter and Facebook.

Mr. Rankin next called on Scott Lokken to provide the Federal Interagency Committee report.

Federal Interagency Committee (FIC). Scott Lokken, FIC Chair, shared the recent work of the committee.

Mr. Lokken shared that the FIC met on April 14 via Webex. Presentations included post-hurricane activities and the retirement of the US Survey Foot. The committee discussed the data gaps in NC OneMap and how the federal agencies could help address them through access to federal data such as soils, wetlands, land cover, and federally-owned lands. The FIC also discussed its work plan with members encouraged to pursue those activities.

The next FIC general meeting will be in November in Charlotte face to face if possible. Mr. Lokken shared an update on NGS activities where the state plane coordinate system is concerned. NGS plans to provide equations to perform the transformation from 2022 to NAD83 state plane coordinates to facilitate the North Carolina parcel numbering system.

Council Chair Rankin thanked Mr. Lokken for his remarks and called on Dean Grantham to report on TAC activities.

GIS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Dean Grantham, TAC Chair, reported for the committee.

Mr. Grantham stated that the TAC met on May 1 to discuss its work plan and objectives. The committee agreed that it should meet more frequently with monthly meetings planned. One objective called out in the work plan is to identify best practices for sharing and curating infrastructure data. The TAC intends to pursue two threads in the beginning: (1) look at active work products created by

other GICC committees and (2) look at legal work that the DIT legal counsel has performed where sharing infrastructure data is concerned. Beyond those items, the TAC intends to reach out to state agencies, county governments, municipal governments, and the private sector such as Duke Energy, natural gas companies, railroads, telecommunications, and local utilities. Mr. Grantham stated that the committee intends to be more aggressive in pursuing these objectives through more frequent meetings in the coming months.

Council Chair Rankin recognized Tim Johnson who had a question. Mr. Johnson asked if Mr. Grantham had been able to reach out to the Council members who had been identified at the last GICC meeting to contribute to the discussion on the infrastructure data access objective. Mr. Grantham responded that the TAC wanted to better understand the other committee work products related to the issue before reaching out to those other Council members. Mr. Grantham understood that the SMAC had pursued an aspect of the infrastructure issue and wanted to follow up with the content of its work. Mr. Johnson added that Jessica Middlebrooks, DIT legal counsel assigned to the GICC, had briefed the Council at a previous meeting on the legal framework surrounding the infrastructure data access issue and could potentially support the TAC's work.

Mr. Rankin asked for questions from the Council; with no questions he thanked Mr. Grantham for his report and called on John Farley to provide the SGUC report.

State Government GIS Users Committee (SGUC). John Farley, SGUC Chair, reported for the committee.

Mr. Farley offered that the SGUC is pursuing the opportunity for training as it relates to the ESRI Enterprise License Agreement. The SGUC conducted a survey of state agencies, received a substantial response, and will be looking to evaluate the results. The SGUC will be working with ESRI on a training plan as a result. Some of the survey results did not have anything to do with ESRI software but those needs will be accounted for in the training plan as well.

Council Chair Rankin asked for questions and having none offered the final committee report covering the GICC Management and Operations Committee.

Management and Operations Committee (M&O). The M&O met on March 16 and covered status on 2020 Census, statewide orthoimagery, and NC Parcels. The committee was first reacting to the anticipated delays related to COVID-19. The committee heard the differential privacy survey results that were shared earlier in today's meeting. Hope Morgan shared that she would be leaving state government for the private sector. She agreed to remain involved in the Working Group for Enhanced Emergency Response. The final item discussed was the 2021 NC GIS Conference.

Council Chair Rankin recognized Mr. Johnson to talk about the 2021 conference. Mr. Johnson stated that Raleigh had been selected as the site for the conference and it is scheduled for February 16-19, but COVID-19 impacts could potentially affect the decision. He asked Council members for their thoughts about continuing along a path to hold the conference in light of growing uncertainties with health and safety and state and local government budgets. Any thoughts from Council members would be appreciated between now and May 20 when the conference executive committee meets again.

Hope Morgan recommended conducting a survey to better understand whether potential attendees foresee budget and/or travel restrictions. John Farley suggested looking at a modified conference that could be held at a state facility to help lower the costs. John Correllus offered that budgets will likely be uncertain going forward and a virtual event could be held but over more than just two days and at a lower cost. The ESRI User Conference is coming up and will be virtual. It may give the GIS community an example of what is possible.

Council Chair Rankin encouraged Council members to send any additional comments to Mr. Johnson.

GICC Member Announcements

Council Chair Rankin wanted to recognize new DIT Secretary Tracy Doaks who was on the call earlier but had to leave for another appointment. John Correllus expressed her interest in the work of the Council. Mr. Rankin committed to reserving an agenda slot at the August meeting for any thoughts that she would like to share with the Council.

Mr. Rankin recognized Gary Thompson to talk about a new development with respect to GPS. Several years ago, a company called LightSquared submitted an application to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to access the bandwidth adjacent to the GPS network which would have potentially impacted GPS for users. That application was ultimately rejected by the FCC but recently another company named Ligado Networks has applied and its application has been approved with some restrictions. There has been much discussion about this approval. This issue is being heard by the US Senate Armed Services Committee later this afternoon and will be live streamed. Mr. Thompson believes that it is important for the GICC to track this issue.

Mr. Rankin concluded the meeting by acknowledging Bob Coats for an article that appeared in a recent North Carolina State University alumni magazine concerning his work related to the 2020 Census.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the Chair requested and received a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:07 PM.

The Council has two remaining quarterly meetings for 2020 on August 12 and November 4. Council Chair Rankin advised that both of those meetings may be held by Webex due to the impact of COVID-19.

Presentations given at this [meeting](#) are on the Council [website](#).