



North Carolina Geographic Information Coordinating Council

Minutes

February 18, 2026

PROCEEDINGS

The Council held its quarterly meeting at the Barber Park Event Center, 1502 Barber Park Dr, Greensboro, North Carolina, and via virtual meeting connection.

Welcome and Chair Announcements

Ms. Hope Morgan, GICC Chair, called the meeting to order. Ms. Morgan welcomed attendees to the city of Greensboro and thanked the city for hosting the meeting. She noted that the meeting was being held in accordance with open meeting laws, aligning the GICC with other statutory boards and commissions.

Ian McAdoo read the ethics statement to the Council:

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Council member to avoid both conflicts of interest and the appearances of conflict.

If any Council member has any known conflict of interest or is aware of facts that might create the appearance of such conflict, with respect to any matters coming before the Council today, please identify the conflict or the facts that might create the appearance of a conflict to ensure that any inappropriate participation in that matter may be avoided.

If at any time, any new matter that raises a conflicts issue arises during the meeting, please be sure to identify it at that time.

Council members should exercise appropriate caution in the performance of their public duties should conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest related to issues that come before the Council. This would include recusing themselves to the extent that their interests would influence or could reasonably appear to influence their actions.

Ms. Morgan informed in-person attendees of the required QR code attendance registration process and acknowledged those attending online, noting that their attendance information was already recorded.

Ms. Morgan introduced Ms. Raquel Bensadoun as the new Chair of the State Government GIS Users Committee (SGUC). Ms. Bensadoun serves as Geospatial Services Supervisor for NCDOT, where her team administers ArcGIS Online and the GO!NC platform, maintains enterprise services and applications, and coordinates statewide projects. Prior to joining NCDOT, she worked in GIS for Emergency Management in Broward County, FL.

Ms. Morgan recognized Mr. Bob Coats for his decade of service as the Governor of North Carolina's U.S. Census liaison, and his commitment to the GICC. Mr. Coats was praised for his approachable communication style and his generosity in supporting local government counterparts throughout the state. Even after retiring the previous year, Mr. Coats continued to make time for the Council. A certificate of appreciation was presented to Mr. Coats, who expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with the GICC community.

City of Greensboro Spotlight

Ms. Morgan invited Mr. Steve Averett to welcome the Council to the city and share the City of Greensboro's activities with the Council. Mr. Averett welcomed attendees to the Barber Park Event Center and introduced Mr. Keith Watkins, a GIS Administrator with the city, to share his experience using AI tools in his daily GIS workflows.



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Mr. Watkins described how the past year and a half had been the most productive period of his career as a GIS professional, driven in large part by his adoption of AI tools when a key developer on his team went on extended leave. Faced with major data pipeline projects and no dedicated programmer, he turned to AI, initially using it for minor tasks such as polishing email drafts, then progressively for more complex work including ETL pipelines, SQL queries, and Python scripts. He described his experience using ChatGPT, Microsoft 365 Copilot, and Claude AI, often using all three simultaneously for comparison.

Mr. Watkins demonstrated a dashboard built for the City of Greensboro showing permitting metrics, which he had used as a test case for each of the three AI platforms. He asked each to analyze the dashboard's JSON configuration for color contrast and ADA 508 accessibility compliance, requesting suggested color schemes that would be accessible to a wider range of users. The output included a breakdown of existing colors, suggested replacements, simulation of different types of visual disability, and annotated JSON showing exactly what it changed.

Mr. Watkins offered several key principles from his experience. First, the quality of AI output is entirely dependent on the quality of the prompt. Users who can clearly describe their problem in context will get the best results, because AI cannot fill in business knowledge gaps that the user does not provide. Second, persistence and iteration are essential; he noted that users should expect to run 10 to 15 iterations on a complex task and treat each failure as a learning opportunity. Third, constraints matter. Telling the AI what not to change is as important as telling it what to do. Fourth, AI tools work best as collaborators: users should ask why the AI made a specific choice, which both helps them learn and guides the tool toward better outputs. Finally, he cautioned that every output must be verified before use, as AI can and does produce plausible-looking errors. He encouraged the Council not to be afraid of AI tools, but also not to rely on them for everything, stressing that they are most powerful when wielded by someone with genuine domain knowledge.

Build to Endure: A Systems Approach for Resilient and Responsive U.S. Infrastructure Presentation

Ms. Elizabeth Losos (Duke University) and Mr. Nick Novelli (AECOM) presented an overview of a newly released publication titled “Build to Endure: A Systems Approach for Resilient and Responsive U.S. Infrastructure,” released by a consortium of organizations including the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), AECOM, Bentley Systems, Microsoft, and Duke University.

Ms. Losos explained that the publication focuses on infrastructure resilience at the systems level, rather than the single-asset level. Citing ASCE’s infrastructure report card, she noted that systems-level resilience is among the top concerns as new infrastructure begins to be built out following the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and as climate-related hazards intensify. The publication specifically targets small and mid-size cities and jurisdictions, noting that larger cities like Charlotte and Raleigh have already begun investing in relevant technologies, while smaller municipalities are often not yet part of the digital infrastructure revolution.

Mr. Novelli described the publication’s three-part framework: strategic resilience planning; policy and regulatory effectiveness; and broad stakeholder empowerment. He outlined the technology capability layers the group identified as most relevant for advancing resilience: expanded data foundations, integrated geospatial environments, advanced analytics platforms, digital twins and scenario-based planning, and cloud-based scalable platforms. He noted that North Carolina’s existing GIS data infrastructure is already an exceptional foundation for this work.

Ms. Losos noted that in parallel with the publication, a workshop was being held the following day bringing together representatives from Orange and Durham counties — jurisdictions affected by flooding from Tropical Storm Chantal — alongside Bentley, AECOM, Duke University, North Carolina State



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University, and UNC Chapel Hill. The goal of the workshop was to explore how technology, potentially including digital twins, could address flood risk at a regional scale, and to develop a model that could be replicated across North Carolina in connection with the NC Flood Resiliency Blueprint. An evening public event at Duke University was also announced, which would be attended by U.S. Representative Foushee and the Mayor of Chapel Hill, featuring a panel with Ms. Losos, Mr. Novelli, and NC DEQ's Stuart Brown.

Ms. Morgan noted the publication would be shared with the Council and that links to the workshop would also be distributed. Ms. Morgan offered a conflict-of-interest disclosure: she works for AECOM but is not involved with the program described in the presentation. She thanked Ms. Losos and Mr. Novelli for joining.

Committee Updates

Local Government Committee (LGC) – Natalie Walton-Corbett

The committee last met in December 2025. For 2026, the committee has shifted its focus from disaster response and preparedness toward committee member support and training. The LGC received updates from John Quintero on the 2026 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) process and from Gary Thompson on the 2022 datum transition. The committee is exploring partnerships with Esri to provide ArcGIS training and resources focused on new tools and software updates. The committee welcomes additional participants, and members interested in joining are encouraged to reach out.

State Government GIS Users Committee (SGUC) – Melanie Williams

Mrs. Williams provided her final committee update before passing the chair role to Ms. Bensadoun. Activity has been relatively quiet as the committee wraps up current work. Topics in progress include potential development of a strategic plan, continuation of a review of GIS job classifications, and planning for 2026 committee activities. Leadership formally transitions to Ms. Bensadoun effective this meeting.

Federal Interagency Committee (FIC) – Jeremy Baynes:

The committee is actively planning 2026 meetings and intends to maintain the joint presentation format used successfully in 2025. A new Census Bureau representative has been approved as a committee member. The committee continues to stay engaged with and connected to all other GICC committees.

Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC) – Paul Badr (reported by David Giordano):

The SMAC last met on December 10, 2025. The 2025 Eastern Piedmont orthoimagery was delivered to PSAPs in early December, with three and four-band imagery and full-resolution TIFs available on NC OneMap for download and viewing. The 2026 Northern Piedmont and Mountains project is underway, with delivery expected by December 2026. Seamless parcels data continues to improve; as of the December SMAC meeting, 42 counties had updated their data in Q4 2025, with an additional 30 updates being processed. The seamless parcels working group is engaging CAMA vendors across the state to improve data consistency. Building footprint statewide updates are nearly complete. Only 2 counties remained as of early January 2026. Contractors and in-house teams are employing new techniques to accelerate processing. The next SMAC meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2026.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):

Ms. Morgan, in Mr. Matt Helms' absence, gave a brief update on the TAC's activities, noting that the continuing work on the big data best practices guide. The committee is seeking additional members to cover underrepresented topic areas, and a new CGIA staff liaison (Darrin Smith) has been assigned to support the group. Members with experience in managing and sharing large datasets are encouraged to reach out to Matt Helms or CGIA staff.



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Management and Operations (M&O) – Hope Morgan:

Ms. Morgan provided the M&O update. The M&O committee, comprised of committee chairs, reviews 2026 goals for each committee, information sharing plans, and emerging priority topics, like AI and the transition to a new datum. The committee is currently reviewing committee goals and assessing priorities for the year.

Accessibility Working Group – Nancy Ross:

Ms. Ross reported that the deadline for public-facing applications to meet accessibility requirements is April 24, 2026 for agencies serving populations of 50,000 or more. The group meets every other Thursday from 2:00 to 3:00 PM and has seven primary goals: (1) define minimum compliance criteria; (2) identify common barriers to achieving accessibility; (3) share examples and templates; (4) inventory available tools for design and quality control; (5) develop a template checklist; (6) engage with the Department of Justice, which had occurred the day prior; and (7) create a centralized accessibility resource hub, potentially available through NC OneMap. A survey distributed through the NCGIS listserv has received 12 responses to date, but additional responses from counties, cities, and agencies are needed. Ms. Ross noted interest in incorporating the AI-assisted accessibility techniques demonstrated earlier in the meeting into the group's resource library. Members interested in joining should contact Ms. Ross, Darrin Smith, Mrs. Williams, or Dr. Fei.

GIS Day Review Panel

Ms. Morgan invited representatives from four organizations to share their GIS Day 2025 experiences. Participants shared the following reports.

Person County – Sallie Vaughn

Ms. Vaughn organized a two-day GIS Day event in Person County featuring training sessions on Esri products and Census data tools. Despite significant preparation, including rented rooms, computers, and materials, attendance was nearly absent, with only a handful of staff and one citizen attending. Ms. Vaughn noted the lesson learned: Person County's GIS department is responsive and accessible to staff and constituents that there was little perceived need for formal training events. Future events will be restructured to feature guest speakers on topics relevant to local workflows and community interests, rather than general training sessions.

Wilson County / City of Wilson – Will Corbett

Mr. Corbett described a multi-day GIS Day collaboration between Wilson County and the City of Wilson that included three distinct programs: a Wednesday contest for GIS users within both organizations; a children's program held Thursday at a local science museum, and a community panel on Saturday with speakers from emergency management, GIS staff from both the county and city, and other partners. The Saturday panel drew a mixed audience, with some community members walking away with a new understanding of what GIS is and what role it plays in emergency management, and the children's event had low attendance due to the absence of a charter school group that had initially committed to attend. Mr. Corbett noted the event was successful overall and that future iterations would aim to be slightly more accessible to general audiences while maintaining the technical depth that existing GIS practitioners value.

City of Greensboro – Steve Averett

Mr. Averett described Greensboro's most successful GIS Day to date as a collaborative event held at the Van Dyke Performance Space in the Greensboro Cultural Center downtown. The event included partner organizations like Guilford County, Forsyth County, Davidson County, City of Winston-Salem, City of High Point, NC A&T, and two UNC Greensboro groups. The morning session featured presentations



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from each participating organization on their current GIS work; the afternoon was a table session open for attendees to circulate and engage directly with staff. The event attracted more than 100 attendees, exceeding expectations. Mr. Averett noted that the collaboration across multiple regional partners was the key to the event's success, and that year-over-year consistency in hosting the event builds awareness. He plans to hold the event again in 2026, with a greater focus on engaging the public and potentially partnering with high schools. He acknowledged that getting public school groups requires months of advance planning to navigate administrative processes.

Duke Energy – Amy Barron

Ms. Amy Barron shared that Duke Energy hosted its 14th Annual Discover GIS Day event, drawing over 600 participants virtually and across all jurisdictions. Ms. Barron encouraged other organizations to attach GIS Day programming to high-interest topics like AI to expand reach, and described a recent presentation titled “Share the Love: AI Loves GIS,” where Duke Energy’s AI and GIS teams presented jointly on how each group uses the other’s data. For 2026, the team will focus on outreach to engineers, surveyors, and professionals seeking professional development hours (PDH credits).

American Flood Coalition Presentation

Mr. Tony McEwen introduced the American Flood Coalition (AFC), a national nonprofit focused on driving transformational adaptation to flooding through better policy at the state and federal level and improved flow of resources to front-line communities. The organization is philanthropically funded, does not seek government contracts, and is membership-based at no cost. Membership spans small towns, large cities, counties, state legislators, chambers of commerce, and members of Congress, with North Carolina and Florida representing the AFC’s deepest state engagement. The AFC is a bipartisan organization and noted that this positioning gives it unique access to elected officials.

Mr. McEwen described the AFC’s legislative engagement work, including annual trips bringing state legislators from Southern states to the Netherlands to observe innovations in flood resilience and prioritization. On an annual basis, the AFC also brings approximately 75 local elected officials — including roughly 15 from North Carolina — to Washington, DC for a two-day educational program on flood resilience, exposing them to other communities’ experiences and facilitating direct engagement on Capitol Hill.

On Hurricane Helene recovery, Mr. McEwen noted that the AFC created the Western North Carolina Recovery Resilience Partnership, comprising 25 communities across western North Carolina. The partnership provides funding assistance for community leaders to maintain an advocacy presence in Washington, DC and Raleigh. The AFC has appeared on national and statewide television, visited the White House multiple times, and testified before Congress and the FEMA Review Council on behalf of these communities. He noted that western North Carolina has received approximately 12% of the \$60 billion in estimated Helene damages — historically slow delivery of federal disaster resources.

Mr. McEwen cited a U.S. Chamber of Commerce study finding that every \$1 invested in resilience saves \$13 in infrastructure damages and economic impacts, which the AFC uses as a central message with legislators and business communities. He described an ongoing effort to secure recurring annual mitigation funding from the North Carolina General Assembly, noting that a recent \$20 million allocation generated 104 applications — four times the available funds.

Dr. Ruth Akintoye presented the AFC’s State Flood Resilience Framework. She opened by explaining why watersheds matter: flooding does not respect jurisdictional boundaries, and rain falling upstream can flood communities downstream that never saw the storm. Watershed-scale coordination therefore converts fragmented local efforts into strategic, coordinated statewide resilience. She outlined five framework components that help states achieve flood resilience:



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1. **Leadership and Accountability:** A single empowered entity with statewide authority to set priorities, rally other agencies, and coordinate across jurisdictions, including the creation of watershed-level entities that can compete for and administer grant funding.
2. **Good Data:** State-level flood data and models that cover the entire state at a watershed scale, are centralized and accessible to local governments, and enable meaningful statewide comparisons of risk.
3. **Strategic Planning:** A state plan with clear, measurable goals; a consistent methodology for ranking local and regional projects into a prioritized, funded list; and the application of flood risk data across all state planning and programs.
4. **Funding and Financing:** A coordinated funding framework that aligns federal and state dollars toward high-priority projects, with dedicated and recurring state appropriations to maximize federal leverage.
5. **Incentivizing Standards and Practices:** Development standards and insurance structures that incorporate forward-looking flood risk data, promote resilience in new construction, and protect long-term taxpayer investments.

Dr. Akintoye noted that the framework was developed collaboratively with state leaders and experts across the country, and that its recommendations can be implemented incrementally, building on existing structures. She described the AFC's support services to states, including policy templates, best-practice sharing, technical input on resilience plans, and public communications.

Mr. McEwen closed by highlighting member resources available at no cost, including the Flood Funding Finder (a simplified guide to federal dollars for smaller communities); an Adaptation for All Guide, which breaks down 26 different approaches to flooding and sea level rise taken from case studies around the nation and world; and a post-disaster toolkit for recovery planning. He expressed optimism that North Carolina is at a historically significant moment for advancing resilience policy and resources and invited ongoing collaboration with the GICC.

Ms. Morgan noted that Council members are appointed by the House, Senate, and Governor, and that the GICC's role in fostering coordination, data sharing, and efficiency across agencies makes it a natural partner for the AFC's work. She offered the GICC as a forum where local and state government coordination on flood resilience can be demonstrated and shared with policymakers.

NC Census and Boundary Annexation Survey Update Presentation

Ms. Morgan introduced Mr. John Quintero of the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) to provide updates on several Census Bureau programs with direct relevance to the GICC community.

Mr. Quintero began with the American Community Survey five-year estimates, covering 2020–2024 and released at the end of January 2026, delayed due to a federal shutdown. These estimates cover all counties, municipalities, statistical areas, census blocks, and block groups in North Carolina. The data is accessible directly from the Census Bureau and will be incorporated into OSBM data products. OSBM's state demography blog also includes analysis of wellbeing, income, poverty trends, population estimates, and congressional apportionment projections.

Second, the Census Bureau has cancelled four of six planned 2030 Census operational test sites, including the Western North Carolina site that had been specifically designed to improve counting of hard-to-count and undercounted populations. The cancellation and modifications to the test may reduce the ability to test methods for reaching underrepresented communities before the 2030 count.



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Third, the Local Update of Census Addresses program, which is an opportunity for local governments to review the Census Bureau's master address file, has been reinstated for the 2030 census cycle. Local governments can opt in to review and correct address records for their communities. The process is voluntary, requires confidentiality agreements, and is expected to run from late 2027 through 2028–2029. Participation is contingent on having certified, up-to-date boundary data on file with the Census Bureau, which links directly to the importance of the Boundary and Annexation Survey.

Fourth, Colleen Kiley from CGIA reported on the status of the first statewide Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) submission process. She described a new consolidated workflow developed between CGIA and the Secretary of State's office to improve the accuracy and completeness of boundary change submissions to the Census Bureau. As of early January 2026, 470 annexations had been added to the 2025 dataset, with a backlog reduced from over 400 missing submissions to only 69. A mapping application website launched in January allows counties and cities to see which annexations are missing, submit GIS files directly, and review and approve boundary updates before they are submitted to the Census Bureau. The submission deadline is Friday, February 20, 2026. Mrs. Kiley urged all local governments to check the website and submit outstanding annexations, emphasizing that submitting missing annexations improve the accuracy of Census boundary data for the next decade.

Review of 2026 GICC Planning Discussion

Ms. Morgan noted that the full 2026 planning discussion, originally scheduled for this meeting, would be deferred to the May 2026 meeting due to time constraints. The planning session conducted at the November 2025 meeting generated substantial notes and ideas, and the Council will return to those themes in May to develop concrete plans.

Ms. Morgan also announced that she had been appointed to the North Carolina Board of Engineers and Land Surveyors, necessitating her resignation as GICC Chair effective end of February 2026. She noted she had been involved with the GICC in some capacity since 2008 and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve. Mr. Matthew McLamb, GIO, presented Ms. Morgan with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Council, noting she had served as Chair for over four years.

GIO Report

Mr. McLamb noted that Mrs. Melanie Williams has recently joined CGIA as a staff member and welcomed her to the team.

Mr. McLamb reported that the 2025 National Geospatial Maturity Assessment (GMA) results had been released the prior week. The GMA is conducted every two years by the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) and grades states across a series of data layer themes using self-reported metrics. He noted that the 2025 assessment significantly expanded the depth and complexity of questions compared to 2023, and that the grading scale was adjusted in ways that made direct year-to-year comparisons difficult. North Carolina and other states have expressed concern to NSGIC about this, and the hope is that the 2027 assessment will use a methodology consistent with previous years.

North Carolina's 2025 GMA results by theme are as follows:

1. Coordination: No change, remained A
2. Addresses: No change, remained A
3. Parcels: No change, remained A
4. Elevation: Improved from A- to A



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5. Orthoimagery (leaf-off): Declined from A to B+; attributed to changed grading criteria. The assessors determined that statewide coverage on a four-year capture cycle is no longer considered sufficient frequency
6. Transportation: Declined from A to B-; attributed to a changed methodology requiring grading based on a single road dataset rather than a combination of qualifying datasets
7. Next Generation 911: Improved from A to A+
8. Geodetic Control: No change, remained A
9. Government Units: No change, remained A
10. Orthoimagery (leaf-on): Declined from B to C; attributed to North Carolina not performing image enhancement on NAIP leaf-on imagery and changes in how that practice is graded

North Carolina's overall grade changed from A (2023) to A- (2025), remaining in the A category despite changes to the grading criteria. Mr. McLamb credited this performance to the collaborative work of local, state, and federal partners, as well as the private sector and academia.

Regarding the 2027 NCGIS Conference, Mr. McLamb reported that an RFP for the host venue and city closes in one week. The Council will receive an announcement of the selected city and venue before the May 2026 meeting. Conference dates are expected to fall between February and April 2027. For budget planning purposes, Mr. McLamb advised using the 2025 registration rate of \$475 for a standard full pass as a baseline, with some upward cushion. The 2027 conference will be the 40th anniversary of the event.

Adjournment

Following completion of all agenda items, the meeting was adjourned. Ms. Morgan thanked all participants both in-person and virtual. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026.

2026 GICC Quarterly Meeting Dates

Wednesday, May 20
Wednesday, August 19
Thursday, November 19



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Member Attendance

Last	First	Present	Proxy	Agency/Organization
Averett	Steve	Yes		City of Greensboro
Badr	Paul	No		GPI
Baker	David	No		N.C. Association of County Commissioners
Barron	Amy	Yes		Duke Energy
Baynes	Jeremy	V-Yes		U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Clyburn	Lee	No		CBRE
Connolly	Michael	P-Yes	Dough Huffman	Department of Revenue
Cox	John	Yes		Department of Administration
Dowdy	Jason	Yes		CACI, Inc.
Duncan	Stan	No		Private Citizen
Egleston	Larken	No		Department of Justice
Enright	Dianne	Yes		Department of Health and Human Services
Grantham	Dean	Yes		Department of Environmental Quality
Halls	Joanne	Yes		University of North Carolina System
Harris	Pokey	Yes		N.C. 911 Board
Hedley	Jason	Yes		Colliers Engineering
Helms	Matthew	No		Charlotte Water
Jackson	Jeremiah	Yes		Department of Public Instruction
Koonts	Sarah	P-Yes	Corinne Foster	Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Marshall	Elaine F.	P-Yes	Richard Elkins	Department of the Secretary of State
Morgan	Hope	Yes		AECOM
Mouat	Gavin	Yes		Public Utilities Commission
Nida	Christopher	No		N.C. League of Municipalities
Quinterno	John	Yes		Office of State Budget & Management
Sandoval	Allan	Yes		Department of Commerce
Serkin	Allen	V-Yes		Cape Fear Council of Governments
Spitler	Ed	No		N.C. Community College System
Thompson	Gary	Yes		Department of Public Safety
Thurman	Linda Ann	Yes		University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Vaughn	Sallie	Yes		Person County
Vose	Christian	Yes		Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Walton-Corbett	Natalie	Yes		City of Greenville



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Wewer	Martha	Yes		Department of Information Technology
Wilson	Eric	Yes		Department of Transportation

Attendance Codes:

Yes = In person | V-Yes = Virtual | P-Yes = Proxy | No = Absent