

# PLS/GIS WORKING GROUP

STATUS REPORT TO GICC

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Bob Brinson, May 10, 2017

# Background

- The GICC and NC Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors (NCBEES) have collaborated periodically for a number of years
- Statutory changes in GS 89C in 2014 and 2015 raised concerns and led the Council to form the Working Group for PLS and GIS
  - State and local government employee exclusion for GIS activities
  - GIS contractors engaged in work for public agencies
  - Reports of private sector GIS practitioners receiving letters from NCBEES about activities requiring a PLS license

# What are the concerns?

- Does new (7a) language change the exclusion for public employees doing GIS activities for their employers?
- Does the new language impact contractors who are engaged to do similar activities for public agencies?
- Are private sector GIS practitioners encroaching into territory requiring a Professional Land Surveying license?

# What are our objectives?

- Preserve and clarify the exclusion for public employees and contractors who do GIS work for public entities
- For the broader GIS community, make sure that practitioners can reliably understand what unlicensed work is allowed and what activities require a PLS license

# What is our process?

- Develop use cases
- Understand terms
- Create decision tree
- Consider better documentation

# Use cases

Use Case	Discussion Notes	Recommendation	NC Policy, NC Law or other reference
UC-7 Creating and maintaining street centerlines	<p>Purpose is to represent public and private roads as an inventory and a network of connected roadways. Sources may include products of surveying (e.g., orthoimagery sealed by a photogrammetrist) or locations from an instrument that has manufacturer's recommended parameters and use, and/or in reference to other geospatial data such as cadastral.</p>	<p>Does not require PLS where it is not intended to indicate the precise location of fixed works. Disclaimer and metadata are essential to clarify sources and methods and intended use. GIS product is not intended for and is not suitable for design or engineering.</p>	<p>NCEES Model Rules (210.30, Sec B.2)</p>

# Seek clarity of terms

- There are a number of terms and concepts which require more clarity:
  - Safety of the public
  - Public utility service
  - Authoritative data and authoritative purpose
  - Stated level of accuracy

# Decision tree

- GIS practitioners seek clarity
- We assume NCBEES doesn't want to spend all their time being the practice police
- What can we do to help guide practitioners?
- Can something like a decision tree help a GIS practitioner know that they are on safe ground, or that the engagement clearly requires a license?



# Standardizing documentation

- Use of engagement letters
- Disclaimers to help define boundaries?
- Citing metadata about authoritative sources

# Next steps: immediate

- Review of summary documents by the PLS/GIS Working Group – use cases, findings, decision tree
- Engage NCBEES in discussion
- Document areas of agreement
- Determine if legislative involvement is needed

# Next steps: long term

- Historically, we have treated these issues as occasional, as-needed discussions with NCBEES.
- We are seeing a need for a continuing collaboration.
- Neither surveying and engineering, nor GIS practice operates in a static environment.
- At a minimum, technology is providing new tools and the potential for new work products.