



North Carolina
Geographic Information Coordinating Council
Local Government Committee

MINUTES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
May 18, 2016, 2:00 PM

PROCEEDINGS

The quarterly meeting of the Local Government Committee (LGC), a committee of the Geographic Information Coordinating Council (GICC), was held on May 18, 2016.

PRESENT

LGC members:

Jessica Brannock, High Country COG, representing ARCED
Lucy Cardwell, Currituck County, representing NCPMA
Michelle Deese, Catawba County, representing NCLGISA
Travis Penland, City of Hendersonville, representing Carolina URISA
Benita Staples, Mecklenburg County, representing NCACC
Alice Wilson, City of New Bern, representing APA-NC and SMAC Rep

Absent:

Kathryn Clifton, Chair, Davidson County, representing NCLM

Others:

Marcus Bryant, Durham County, SMAC Representative
Pam Carver, Henderson County, Working Group for Seamless Parcels
Stephen Dew, Guilford County, Working Group for Orthophotography Planning
Tim Johnson, CGIA Director
Scott Miller, Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Jeff Brown, CGIA, Staff to the LGC

WELCOME

On behalf of Kathryn (Kat) Clifton, absent following the death of father, Jeff Brown called the meeting to order and welcomed members and representatives and guests.

GICC TOPICS

The Coordinating Council (GICC) met on May 11. The first topic was presented by Tim Johnson. He explained that two changes in a statute related to engineering and surveying

occurred in 2014 and 2015, but came to the attention of the Council only in the last few weeks. The 2014 changes were part of a large bill on regulatory reform, inserted in the fifth version, and not easily found by searching for keywords. The impetus for the changes may have come from engineers, but they affect land surveying as well. The Council Chair, Stan Duncan, was surprised to be surprised by these changes with no notice from Council members until just recently. The Council discussed monitoring by legislative liaisons of member organizations and ways to better inform liaisons to discover language that affects GIS.

The main concern is that the section of the law that was previously interpreted as an exemption for state and local governments and councils of governments (GS 89C-7) was rewritten as 89C-7a and contains no language about government exemptions. The Council would like to know if local governments were aware of the changes and if there has been any effect on local government GIS. A letter from the Attorney General's office specifically interpreted the government exemption to include councils of government.

Kat Clifton and Jeff Brown sent out an online survey to LGC members and representatives and the Advisory Team. The findings from 13 responses indicated that most were not aware of the legislative changes, there was no impact on local government GIS operations, and no impact on a local government GIS contractor. Four of the respondents are licensed as Professional Land Surveyors.

Mr. Johnson continued by explaining the process: the working group is forming and will be asked to report to the Council at the August 10 meeting. The working group will identify needed steps for greater awareness and for an assessment of impacts. The process will be deliberate and will engage the NC Board of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCBELS).

A lively discussion brought out the following points.

- The legislation and related rules of NCBELS apply to GIS data collection by both local government GIS operations and contractors.
- A concept in the legislation is that data development involving "public safety" is subject to licensed surveying requirements, but that term needs to be defined for common understanding.
- There could be broad implications if local government data collection is restricted. Affordability of geospatial data for small local governments is of particular concern.
- Survey grade data collection of locations of features is much more expensive than mapping grade representations of features. Affordability of geospatial data for local governments is of great concern.
- Councils of Government serve small jurisdictions with data development to inventory water and sewer facilities, storm water, sidewalks, etc. Disclaimers and requirements for accuracy are included in contracts.
- The working group will be important in clarifying the issues, impacts, and solutions. If GIS professionals need to "stay in their lane," the lane needs a clear definition.

- NCBELS is the enforcement body for laws and related rules.
- Considering the government exemptions prior to the change in the statute, most local government GIS professionals chose not to incur the expense and spend the time required to become a licensed Professional Land Surveyor. NCBELS offered a grandfathering path for GIS professionals that ended in June 2014. Changes in the law after the grandfathering period translate to more time and expense for a license. Reopening the grandfathering period may be needed if licensing is actually required.
- Requesting data development by a contractor may call attention to local government geospatial data development practices. A contractor does not have exemption when doing work for a local government.
- There are valid concerns about geographic data quality and protecting the public. The long standing state standard for GPS data collection recognizes the importance of mapping grade accuracy and public purposes.
- The Department of Environmental Quality offers grants for asset inventory and assessment work. Councils of Government may apply for mapping water and sewer facilities in small jurisdictions. Partnerships with private businesses are not uncommon, though councils of governments may not respond to a request for proposals by local governments.
- The new language in the statute may turn out to have no practical impact, but lack of clarity in the wording raises concern. LGC members who read the legislation, even multiple times, did not understand the practical meaning.
- Business as usual is the only practical choice for GIS professionals until issues are resolved.

Questions raised included the following:

- Is there risk and liability for data collected by GIS professionals since 2014?
- Are there datasets on NC OneMap that relate to “public safety” and what does that mean for data maintenance and public access?
- The previous working group on the surveyor’s law concluded that an inventory of features (e.g., fire hydrants) was a valid purpose for GIS. Is an inventory not a valid purpose for GIS anymore?
- Does the new language pertain to public GIS professionals or only private contractors?
- Does certification as a GIS Professional (GISP) have any bearing on rules for geospatial data development or should it? Might there be a variation on the GISP to serve land surveying purposes? Is ASPRS certification related, too?
- Is a purpose of the change in statute to attract more GIS professionals to PLS certification? How many GIS professionals took advantage of the grandfathering provision in 2013? [Note: NCBELS newsletter Fall 2014 reported 58 applicants and 42 licensed under the grandfathering provision].

Mr. Johnson urged LGC members with a strong interest in this issue to volunteer for the working group by sending an email to Stan Duncan (stan.duncan2016@gmail.com) and copy tim.johnson@nc.gov. The group will evaluate issues and report to the Council.

On a second GICC topic, Mr. Johnson reported that the NC GIS Conference 2017, to be held in Raleigh in February, has programming in progress. Ideas for topics and presentations are welcome. Jeff Essic (jfessic@ncsu.edu) is the best contact for the program committee.

Mr. Johnson gave LGC a preview on rates, to be released soon. Registration will be \$175, and late registration will be \$225. The theme will be “30 Rocks GIS” for this 30th anniversary of the first conference. Online registration is expected to be open by July 1.

He urged more local governments to apply for the Herb Stout awards. The announcement of that competition will be earlier this time, before July 1, giving more time to prepare an application.

Regarding Council members, Governor McCrory appointed Steve Averett, City of Greensboro, to represent municipal government at the recommendation of the NC League of Municipalities.

Also, the Council approved a charter for a 2022 Reference Frame Working Group. Stephen Dew volunteered to be a representative for LGC. The group’s work this summer will include analysis of impacts of the proposed reference frame.

Bylaws and Members

Kathryn Clifton presented the proposed revisions to the LGC Bylaws to the Management & Operations Committee. The revisions as approved by the LGC will go before the GICC for approval on August 10.

LGC reviewed member status for next year (starting in July). NC Property Mappers Association appointed Robin Etheridge of Dare County to serve on the LGC, replacing Lucy Cardwell whose term expired. Jeff Brown recognized Lucy for her good service on LGC for two full two-year terms. For Carolina URISA, Travis Penland will likely serve another term. Jeff Brown will contact Tobin Bradley to confirm his continued participation on the Technical Advisory Committee. The latter tends to engage local government subject matter experts, including Tobin, depending on a technical question or practice.

Local Government Geospatial Data

The first data topic was introduced by Alice Wilson. The City of New Bern had a new residential development across the Trent River that is within city limits, but the US Postal Service (USPS) assigned mailing addresses to homes in the development with the Zip Code for Trent Woods. Addressing for the City of New Bern is done by the E911 coordinator in the Police Department and has the correct jurisdiction. The discrepancy means that a homeowner applying for insurance in an online application is automatically assigned “Trent Woods” as the jurisdiction based on the USPS Zip Code. Insurance rates can differ based on jurisdiction (and fire departments).

Alice found a contact at the USPS in Charlotte who can help resolve addressing issues where the delivery station place name is not the same as the municipality name. Marcus Bryant noted that Zip Code areas cut across county boundaries in Durham County and its neighboring counties. The USPS address is determined by the post office, but there is no official GIS dataset for Zip Code areas. In fact, Durham has been providing its post office with approximate Zip Code boundary polygons. Stephen Dew has seen addressing complications in the High Point area where municipalities cross county boundaries. Alice has discussed with Stan Duncan a potential mailing address issue by the Census Bureau, to be explored further. Will the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) for Census 2020 validate addresses based on local government addresses and/or USPS addresses and how are respondents placed in jurisdictions? Small municipalities may find LUCA more challenging given these issues. Michelle added that she has corrected addresses shown on Google Maps through a Google website and she has seen corrections show up in other commercial street mapping sites.

The second data topic was data sharing. Michelle Deese explained that she received three requests for parcel data around the same time from NC Parcels program, the Floodplain Mapping Program and the State Board of Elections. Michelle and Jeff Brown had a conversation and found that the NC Parcels program requested more attributes, but the point was well taken that better coordination of state agency requests to local governments could save time for all and support consistency in data applied to state projects. Jeff followed up with Hope Morgan to share parcel data for selected counties. He pointed to great progress on parcels that are now readily accessible through NC OneMap. Roads, to be published soon by NCDOT, will be the best available source for all roads. Imagery and elevation data are acquired statewide. Michelle explained that Catawba County offers several downloadable datasets but charges a fee for a copy of county parcel data. Michelle explained that she is happy to share data, but sees a need for more communication and knowledge transfer among state agencies. Marcus added that Durham set up an FTP site that is updated monthly, and shares access information with state agencies, local governments, universities, etc. Consequently, he has seen a big drop in requests from state agencies. Alice added that publishing web map services has worked well for the City of New Bern for public access. Guilford County offers data download and web services that consumers can discover online. Jeff expressed appreciation for the discussion and Tim Johnson acknowledged there is still room for improvement among state agencies.

Value of GIS

Jeff reported that Kathryn Clifton is urging local government GIS managers to get mileage out of text and graphics from entries for the Herb Stout award, GIS Conference presentations, and reports to help highlight the value of GIS.

BRIEF UPDATES FROM COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Metadata Committee

Stephen Dew reported that the committee is developing metadata templates for framework datasets and has formed task groups to work on framework themes and apply

the State and Local Government Metadata Profile to sample datasets. The City of Greensboro has volunteered to test and implement templates and will provide staff time to assist. Greensboro represents a use case for a jurisdiction with no metadata. Another jurisdiction could represent a use case for transforming metadata to the new Profile. Work continues with software tools and techniques. Training sessions are planned for late summer and fall.

Working Group for Orthophotography Planning (WGOP)

Stephen Dew reported that the Coastal 2016 imagery has been acquired and the project is on schedule. The NC 911 Board approved the next phase: Eastern Piedmont for acquisition in 2017. Tim Johnson added that the quality control phase for the Coastal imagery will begin in the summer. Also, the re-flights were successful in the Sandhills region and imagery products have been delivered to the counties. LGC members used the VOICE quality control tool in earlier phases.

Phase 4 LiDAR is partially collected after a late start. Acquisition will resume in the winter and products will be available in mid-2017.

Working Group for Seamless Parcels (WGSP)

Pam Carver reported that spring updates are in progress, with 70 counties updated so far. Also, 30 county data managers now have an NCID and can run the updates themselves. For Pam, where source fields were unchanged since the last update, the “transform” process took 90 seconds for Henderson County. Jeff thanked committee members for their participation.

Statewide Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC)

Alice Wilson and Marcus Bryant attended the SMAC meeting in April. Alice explained that most of the SMAC items have been discussed today, but added that the statewide dataset for roads is nearing completion, and updated municipal boundaries are in progress in a collaboration between NCDOT and the Land Records Management Program. Also, the LiDAR program is now taking advantage of Geiger-mode technology to generate a product with higher density (eight points per square meter). On the topic of hydrography, the Division of Water Resources is working on resolution of stream name differences among state stream datasets. Concerning standards, work is in progress on updating the core cadastral data content standard and the street centerline standard. The cadastral standard is on target to be approved by SMAC and submitted to the GICC in August.

CURRENT ISSUES OR CONCERNS

Alice attended the Esri Southeastern User Conference in Charlotte. She enjoyed discussions and the hands-on work areas for trying different tools. Jeff Brown noted that a conference on open source software and open data took place at the same time in Raleigh. If local GIS managers are interested in such tools, some of the state GIS users attended and would have information to share. Upcoming professional development opportunities include a symposium by the NC Arc User Group (NCAUG) at East Carolina University on May 24 and a NCAUG western symposium on July 29

(ncaug.com). Mapping School, designed for new hires in land records and tax mapping, is scheduled for the week of August 15.

NEXT MEETING

LGC meeting dates for 2016: Wednesdays, starting at 2:00 PM

August 24

November 30

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15.