



Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council

Report of Accomplishments and Recommendations

August 2010

Executive Summary

During the past two years, the interim Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council (WIGICC) has demonstrated its value through numerous accomplishments both major and minor. The following report highlights many of these accomplishments and includes specific recommendations for the creation of a permanent Council through legislative action. An interim and completely volunteer Council does not have the capacity to meet these stated needs for Wisconsin geospatial coordination.

Geospatial data and technology are strategic resources that are critically important for Wisconsin's economic competitiveness, homeland security, resource management, transportation network, and many other service areas. The Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council should be made a permanent statewide council that advises the Wisconsin State Geographic Information Officer, the Wisconsin State Cartographer, the Governor's Homeland Security Council, the Wisconsin Legislature, and others on public policy issues. WIGICC will advance statewide initiatives through the effective use of geographic information, applications, and technology. Administrative support for the Council will come from the staffs of the ex-officio members. An appropriate funding model must be developed and must address the long-term sustainability of WIGICC.

Similar to the structure of the original interim Council, a permanent Council should have members who represent the major sectors and stakeholders in the geospatial community, including municipalities, counties, regional planning commissions, state agencies, the federal government, tribal agencies, the private sector, the non-profit sector, and academia. A diverse and broad-based representation is essential for the success of WIGICC. Coordination councils exist in 45 other states.

The WIGICC is uniquely positioned to assist in the improvement of the quality, accessibility, utility, and value of geographic information and technologies. Because of its comprehensive membership and statewide perspective, WIGICC can provide the statewide collaboration and cooperation necessary for making the best use and development of geospatial resources.

Purpose

This document is intended to re-evaluate the interim nature suggested for the Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council (WIGICC) in the March 10, 2008 Department of Administration memorandum addressed to the newly formed WIGICC.

This document reports on the significant progress, process, actions, and accomplishments of WIGICC over the past 23 months. This document also describes the goals of the Council, how objectives were met, what was learned along the way, and how the Council's internal and external operations paved the way to significant successes. This re-emphasizes the continued importance of having statewide interests, addressed by domain-specific representatives, focused on the consideration and advancement of Wisconsin's geospatial concerns.

Ultimately, this report provides a strong recommendation for the continuation of WIGICC with a permanent and recognized status.

WIGICC—Concept, Vision, Mission, and Goals

The Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council offers a model for coordination that is inclusive, representative, and participatory. The overarching goal of this organization is to give all stakeholders within the geospatial community a voice in geospatial initiatives within the state. This model is considered a key criterion for successful geographic information coordination by the National States Geographic Information Council. Coordination councils exist in 45 other states for the purpose of geographic information coordination. Details about these criteria can be found at http://www.nsgic.org/resources/fifty_states_initiative_handout.pdf.

Vision

The Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council is a sustainable, stakeholder-governed, statewide organization that provides leadership and direction for the cooperative development and use of geographic information and technologies.

Mission

The Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council facilitates the delivery of public services, encourages economic development, and helps protect the public and the environment by improving the quality, accessibility, utility, and value of geographic information and technologies.

Goals

The goals for a Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council, presented below, were articulated during several statewide listening sessions held prior to WIGICC creation as an interim measure.

This listing further illustrates the intended purpose of this document and the need for WIGICC permanency and support. An interim and completely volunteer Council does not have the capacity to meet these stated needs for Wisconsin geospatial coordination.

- Legitimacy and Voice
 - Ensure broad, equitable, inclusive, and balanced representation of stakeholders (that is, diversity of stakeholders, diversity of expertise, and geographic diversity), and allow all members to contribute to the Council's decision making in a substantial way
 - Encourage state agency cooperation and participation
 - Mediate differing interests to reach a broad consensus
 - Provide mechanisms for dispute resolution between stakeholders
 - Make the Council accessible to stakeholders through open meetings and direct contact with Council members
- Direction
 - Provide a clearly articulated mandate
 - Clearly define benefits and risks
- Roles and Relationships
 - Provide a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for the Council
 - Provide a clear definition of roles and responsibilities to Geographic Information Office (GIO), and State Cartographer's Office (SCO)
 - Create and formalize direct lines of communication between Council and stakeholders (for example, county boards and associations)
 - Facilitate face-to-face interaction and relationship building between Council and stakeholders and amongst stakeholder groups

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- Provide storage, retention, and sharing of knowledge of geographic information and processes for future generations
- Provide outreach, education, and awareness
- Performance
 - Access expertise and resources from within and from outside the Council to address and resolve issues
 - Adjust or create committees, communities of practice, and working groups as needed
 - Adjust meeting frequency and location as needed
 - Minimize the impact of political bias on the functions of the Council
 - Minimize the impact of change in administration on the functions of the Council
 - Enable the geospatial community to articulate a united vision to policy makers through the representation of the Council
 - Increase awareness and understanding of geospatial-related issues and activities among policy makers at all levels and with the public
 - Involve the appropriate level of policy makers in geospatial decision making
 - Promote the incorporation of geospatial-related issues into statewide policy and decision making through continuous collaboration with the legislature and state governmental offices
 - Provide clear performance metrics and ongoing assessment
 - Provide readily understandable structure and manageable size
 - Provide tangible links and reciprocity between Council, Geographic Information Officer, State Cartographer's Office, and stakeholders
 - Provide tangible benefits and deliverables widely and at all levels
 - Utilize best practices from all sectors of stakeholders
 - Build capacity at all levels
 - Provide staff and resources focused on coordination and other Council goals and activities
 - Develop and influence adoption of guidelines and standards
 - Identify funding sources and to influence how funds are expended
 - Provide incentives for participation

Accomplishments

WIGICC has accomplished a number of goals since its inception in September 2008. These accomplishments fall into one of four categories: coordination, framework, outreach, and internal operations. These categories align with the recently established business plan.

Coordination

These accomplishments relate to developing and facilitating processes and standards and coordinating activities between the stakeholder network and the Council. This activity provides strategic and business planning guidance.

Stakeholder network engagement was an important topic discussed during the formation of WIGICC. The network is seen as a key to success in defining and resolving critical issues. In the first 23 months two stakeholder meetings were held, several issues were brought to the Council from the network, and some network members participated in ongoing actions. However, improvement is needed in getting the network involved in WIGICC activities. It is anticipated that the team structure adopted by the Council will help to focus the energy of the Council and the network where it can be most effective.

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In the first 23 months, the Council made two significant accomplishments related to coordination:

WIGICC coordinated the federal agency response to the request for partnerships to support Wisconsin Regional Orthophoto Consortium (WROC). A notice was sent to WIGICC federal agency community of practice resulting in total commitment of \$400,000 to the project. This commitment assured the complete state coverage of orthophotos; reduced costs for all federal, state, and county partners; and eliminated potential duplication of effort.

In 2010, WIGICC provided input to the legislature on Assembly Bill 271. A half-day meeting was held to hear different perspectives on the bill and concerns about its effects. The Council worked to inform the legislature of stakeholder concerns, provided alternative language, and responded to legislative inquiries about a Senate Amendment 1 to Assembly Bill 271.

Recommendation: The Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs (DMA) has indicated a strong desire to have WIGICC participation in a developing a statewide homeland security GIS strategic plan. WIGICC should consider this a high priority issue and work with DMA and other important groups to establish this plan.

Recommendation: DMA is beginning to pursue adoption of the U.S. National Grid for the state of Wisconsin. This is a national standard that has proved effective in emergency management and response activities. The implementation effort is in the planning stages and WIGICC, working with other groups in the state, is in a unique position to help develop the plan, educate the stakeholders, and assist the implementation. WIGICC recommends that this be a priority activity for the coordination team over the next year.

Coordination Accomplishments

- A “kick-off” stakeholder network meeting was held in Appleton on October 28, 2008.
- Andrew Swartz, on behalf of WIGICC, made a presentation to Wisconsin Homeland Security Council on April 15, 2009.
- Four standing teams were established for WIGICC on October 24, 2009.
 - Implementation – Coordination
 - Implementation – Data Framework
 - Outreach
 - Internal Operations
- A request for funds to support WROC was sent to the Federal Agency community of practice on December 9, 2009, resulting in total commitment of \$400,000 to the project.
- December 17, 2009, a meeting was held with parties interested in Assembly Bill 271 (AB271) to inform Council on issues and encourage exchange of information.
- The Council provided motion of support for joint DOA/SCO FGDC CAP grant proposal for integrating local transportation data to state and federal databases.
- WIGICC provided written and verbal testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development regarding Assembly Bill 271 (AB271) on January 6 and 7, 2010.
- In response to request from Senator Lassa, the Council chair provided suggested improvement to wording of AB 271 on January 19, 2010.

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- The Council accepted WIGICC business plan by February 10, 2010.

Framework

These accomplishments relate to geographic information issues in the state. Addressing these issues is a primary business reason for the existence of WIGICC. Originally it was thought WIGICC would choose one or two specific actions to pursue and resolve them in the first 23 months. However, identifying which specific issues to address and resolve proved difficult and the number of issues to be addressed was large. The Council adopted a process of accepting and pursuing issues that had meaningful impact on the stakeholder network *if* individuals were available and willing to work to resolve them.

A significant framework accomplishment resulted from a request by the state agency constituency to establish a “Minor Civil Divisions” (MCD) community of practice. This activity has been the most comprehensive and inclusive review of *how* and *where* minor civil division boundaries are built and maintained across the state. Processes have been documented and some potential savings identified. The goal of the effort is to develop an authoritative data set that is consistently maintained. WIGICC is providing technical support and a representative on the MCD team.

Recommendation: Implement “GIS Interoperability” community of practice research/discussion topics concept to identify technical obstacles to service adoption, define possible solutions, and evolve statewide architectural component roles (producers, consumers, catalogs, repositories, and others).

Recommendation: Work with data custodians statewide to define and evolve statewide data models for common framework layers per ongoing WIGICC and other statewide initiatives including Parcels, MCDs, etc. Identify and apply current best practices at national, state, regional, and local levels. Determine and implement ongoing stewardship model(s) for each.

Recommendation: Establish “Map Service Cartography” or similar community of practice to address visualization and base map development issues relating to the practical application of map services.

Framework Accomplishments

- Endorsed regional orthoimagery consortium concept, including WROC, on February 10, 2009.
- Established “GIS Interoperability” community of practice on February 10, 2009. Draft letter, case study, and survey (oriented to implementation and understanding of web services) are being compiled and released to interested network people.
- Established a “Minor Civil Divisions” community of practice (the first meeting was September 28, 2009). Presented a progress report at WLIA annual meeting February 25, 2010. Identified a vision for ideal MCD process and actions steps June 10, 2010.
- Created a “hydrography” community of practice February 10, 2010.
- Erik Mickelson, Lee Samson, Jerry Sullivan, and AJ Wortley presented “Using Wisconsin’s Geospatial Services” at the WLIA annual conference on February 26, 2010.

Outreach

These accomplishments relate to communications by providing information to the stakeholder network about the mission, objective, status, and activities of WIGICC. These efforts generally provided information about the Council, sought input and participation from the network, or strived to develop relationships with other entities in the state.

Although the Council attempted to communicate broadly, this is an area that needs improvement. A standing team was established to address this issue.

Recommendation: Outreach efforts continue to be a high priority activity for WIGICC. In particular, WIGICC is positioned to reach out and engage the emerging non-traditional geospatial user community. This includes individuals in the health professions, economic development, the non-profit sector, and others who are eager to use and apply geospatial tools and concepts but lack the background and skills to do so. By developing stronger ties to this community, WIGICC can serve as a coordinating body making connections between people, communities, data, and other necessary resources to help these non-traditional sectors succeed in their efforts. This is important and significant. It is one of the largest growth areas of the geospatial community, having received much impetus from the wide availability of Google and other web-based mapping sites. WIGICC is uniquely positioned to assist this emerging group because it defines "geospatial" in the broadest possible terms.

Outreach Accomplishments

- WIGICC Council was introduced at WLIA regional meeting October 16, 2008.
- Ted Koch and Curtis Pulford presented "A shared vision for GIS and land records in Wisconsin" at WLIA regional Meeting October 16, 2008.
- Ted Koch and Curtis Pulford presented "All about WIGICC" at WLIA Annual Conference in Wisconsin Dells on February 19, 2009.
- Ted Koch and Dick Vraga staffed WIGICC booth at meeting of the Wisconsin County Constitutional Officers in Madison on March 2, 2009.
- WIGICC Brochure and poster published March 15, 2009.
- Ted Koch and Jim Lacy met with state Senator Jim Holperin to introduce WIGICC concept on March 11, 2009.
- An ad hoc committee was established to engage WLIA on communication processes and procedures. Several meetings were held and a "relationship document" was drafted. The document was approved by WIGICC October 14, 2009. Document was not approved by WLIA board. Discussions continue.
- The second WIGICC Stakeholder Network Meeting was held in Wausau on June 10, 2009 (afternoon activities).
- Dick Vraga and Jon Schwichtenberg met with WLIA Board to discuss WLIA/WIGICC relationship document on October 21, 2009.

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- Several WIGICC members attended WLIA board meeting on Feb 24, 2010, during WLIA Annual meeting. WIGICC also hosted an open discussion session with WLIA membership February 25, 2010.

Internal Operations

These activities serve to establish the foundational structure for conducting the business of the Council. Although preliminary work on several of these items had been done by the WIGICC Working Group (WWG), it was important for the Council to establish this framework and take ownership of the processes. Although these accomplishments are administrative in nature, they are significant because of the amount time necessary to achieve them and because they are important to ensure the processes allow for equitable treatment for all members. These efforts also serve to define the role WIGICC intends to play in the state and how the stakeholders can be involved.

Recommendation: Because significant effort was devoted within the WWG and the first 23 months of WIGICC, it is recommended that the majority of these items be retained for a permanent Council. Specific improvement can be made in individual elements of these established procedures and documents, but a complete rework is not recommended for the foreseeable future.

Internal Operations Accomplishments

- WIGICC website goes live September 8, 2008.
- USGS Assistance Award of \$38,900 given to SCO for WIGICC support September 9, 2008.
- Interim Council membership finalized September 15, 2008.
- **First WIGICC Council meeting held in Madison on September 23, 2008. WIGICC is born!**
- Bylaws and Charter approved December 17, 2009.
- WIGICC Executive Committee established April 16, 2009.

Recommendations for Continuance

Council Permanence

We recommend that efforts begin to establish WIGICC as a permanent entity. There are three primary reasons for this recommendation:

1. The use of geospatial technologies is ubiquitous throughout government agencies, private industry, and in the lives of citizens of this state. This situation has occurred relatively quickly with the rapid pace of technology and the infrastructure to effectively manage this transition is needed. In 45 other states a coordination council of some type is a key component of that infrastructure. The establishment of a council was the first recommendation of the Wisconsin Location Matters – A Statewide Geographic Information Strategy.

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2. Over the past 23 months, the interim WIGICC has made significant progress toward permanent establishment of a council. Foundational processes and documents have been developed, teams have been formed, issues have been addressed, and some initiatives have been accomplished.
3. The lack of formal recognition has hampered the ability of WIGICC to be as productive as possible. Because of its lack of formal recognition, stakeholder groups struggle to justify the dedication of personnel to the effort, some stakeholders question the authority of the Council to become engaged in issues, some stakeholders doubt the long-term outlook of the Council, and some stakeholders doubt the ability of the Council to enact positive change and influence important constituents.

We recommend that permanence be established through legislative action. WIGICC will establish a team to work with legislators and the Legislative Reference Bureau to craft the appropriate language. It is in the public's interest that these activities be coordinated. Because WIGICC will be providing support for policy decisions regarding the use of geospatial technology in the state, and the legislature is the policy making branch of the government, it is appropriate the WIGICC be established via legislation. As indicated through discussions with other states, we understand that this solution could take longer to adopt but will be perceived as a more permanent solution.

We further recommend the interim WIGICC be continued indefinitely until it can be made permanent and that the Council adopt other recommendations listed in this report as soon as practical.

Council Structure

The existing structure of the WIGICC was designed to meet several characteristics that were important to the Wisconsin stakeholder community as provided through a series of meetings and listening sessions. Two of the most important characteristics were breadth of representation and ability to act. These issues tend to influence the size of the Council in opposite directions; breadth generally leads toward a larger council and a smaller council is often needed to respond quickly to issues. The results of the first two years of the WIGICC confirm that this balance is still critical and that both issues remain very important to the stakeholders.

Although the Council believes its size and structure are approximately correct, we recommend the following modifications:

Add one representative to the "Cities, Towns, and Village Governments" Sector

Due to the amount of GIS work being done across the state by city, town, and village governments and the anticipated growth in GIS in that sector, the Council believes the structure should contain a second representative for this sector. This will serve to improve the representation of these entities within the state and will assure continuity of representation for this stakeholder group should a member need to leave the Council.

Add three "at large" representatives to improve representation and increase Council capacity.

During the formative stages of the interim Council, the stakeholder community was very concerned about being involved in the selection of the WIGICC membership through a voting process. Although the existing selection process is designed to accommodate that need, it can leave gaps in filling other important characteristics such as geographic diversity, statewide representation; domain representation (for example, emergency management, law enforcement or planning); and subject matter expertise to address what are expected to be critical issues in the near term. These "at large" representatives would be selected by the "ex-officio" members of the Council with approval from the whole Council. It is proposed that each term be a one-year term with repeat terms allowed.

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WIGICC Membership 19 Voting Members across 6 sectors 2 Non-voting Members	
State Government	3
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Local Governments and Regional Organizations	5
Regional Planning Commissions	1
County Governments	2
City, Town, and Village Governments	2
Other Government	2
Tribal Government or agency	1
Federal agency with field offices within Wisconsin	1
Non-Government	4
Private Businesses	2
Non-Profit Organizations	2
Academic	2
Universities, UW-Extension, and Technical colleges, K-12	2
At Large	3
Nominated by ex-officio members, approved by Council	3
Ex-Officio, (Non-Voting)	2
<i>WI State Geographic Information Officer (GIO), ex-officio, non-voting</i>	1
<i>Wisconsin State Cartographer (SCO), ex-officio, non-voting</i>	1

Council Selection Process

The interim Council bylaws establish a process for the selection of Council members. We recommend that this process be kept in place, and that operational tools needed to use that process be developed and implemented in the summer of 2010 for new elections to occur in fall. The ex-officio members should be responsible for this development.

Council Support

The stakeholder community is concerned about the funding for this Council and its relationship to the Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP), the Land Information officers' Network (LION), and the Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIA). Addressing the details is beyond the scope of this document, but is a critical issue. The Council will engage concerned stakeholders to develop an appropriate funding model that addresses the long-term sustainability of WIGICC. One possible solution is an annual appropriation. Funding models that provide "start up" funds but no commitment for long-term support not only threaten the Council's sustainability but can shift the focus of the Council to fund-raising efforts to support itself rather than on strategic initiatives that benefit the community.

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An important element for the success of the WIGICC is having reliable administrative support. Although the Council has, and will continue to seek, the most economical and efficient ways to conduct business, a base level of support is needed for the effectiveness of the Council. This generally requires modest amounts of funding and staff support. Charter bylaws state this support should come from the State's Geographic Information Officer and the Wisconsin State Cartographers Office. A breakdown of support needs is shown below:

- Telecommunications
- Rooms
- Outreach materials
- Members travel
- Conference fees
- Website support (servers and people)
- Administrative personnel support
- Outreach to national efforts (travel, lodging, meals)

This report was adopted as final by the Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council on August 19, 2010. To locate this report on line or learn more about the Council go to wigicc.org.