
New Geospatial Coordinating Body Business Plan

Final Report
August 2006



Prepared by:

West Virginia GIS Coordinating Committee

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Introduction

In November 2005, representatives from the statewide GIS community appointed a GIS Coordination Committee to develop a business plan for a new geospatial coordination program for West Virginia. The committee, which included geospatial professionals from the government, academia, and private sector, convened six times to set up the framework for a new coordination program. In May 2006, at the WV GIS Conference, elements of the proposed coordination program were presented to the statewide geospatial community. A majority of geospatial professionals who participated in this forum agreed that a permanent organization named the Association of Geospatial Professionals should be formed, although additional consensus-building efforts were needed regarding the bylaws which govern the association. In July 2006, the Chief Technology Officer, Mr. Kyle Schafer, presented his geospatial goals and plans to a GIS Work Group, whereby he offered his support in advancing geospatial technologies in the State.

The GIS Coordination Committee held its final meeting on August 22, 2006. This business plan represents the culmination of the committee's efforts and its primary recommendation that a new geospatial coordinating body be formed. This self-governing organization would be made up of a broad and diverse group of stakeholders who share similar objectives of promoting and supporting professionals in the effective use and sharing of geospatial information throughout the State of West Virginia. The members of this organization would collectively provide technical and strategic planning services to the State but would have no governance authority over any agency or geospatial professional. The Association would have a Board of Directors to manage the society and would appoint various committees (e.g., GIS Conference Planning, Strategic Planning, Advocacy) to accomplish its objectives. Prospective members would use the parliamentary authority *Robert's Rules of Order* to set up the new association.

The GIS Coordination Committee has drafted a resolution to form a new coordinating body and has scheduled the first organizational meeting for September 13, 2006. Steps to form the new association are as follows:

STEPS TO SET UP THE ASSOCIATION

- 1) Prepare for the first organizational meeting.
- 2) Invite prospective members.
- 3) Hold the first organizational meeting, during which prospective members:
 - a) Elect temporary officers (chairman pro tem and secretary).
 - b) Adopt a resolution to form a new organization. (*Resolved, that an Association to collectively coordinate geospatial information in the State of West Virginia now be formed.*)
 - c) Appoint a committee to draw up bylaws.
- 4) Draw up bylaws.
- 5) Hold a second organizational meeting to approve the bylaws.
- 6) Enroll members.
- 7) Hold the charter meeting, and elect permanent officers.

Fifty States Initiative

In support of the Future Directions Fifty States Initiative, the State of West Virginia received 2006 funding from the Federal Geographic Data Committee's Cooperative Agreements Program (CAP) to organize a new statewide coordinating structure and for developing strategic and business plans. The vision of the new coordinating structure is to have a broader representation that includes the private sector, academia, and all levels of government. It will strive to include high-level champions, elected officials or executive decision makers in the coordination process who understand geospatial technologies and funding issues. As part of this project, the new

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coordination body will develop strategic and business plans needed to leverage resources and minimize redundancies by integrating and publishing standardized geospatial data from multiple sources. Participants in this project will coordinate closely with the State's Chief Technology Officer to ensure his geospatial goals are integrated into any plan. His goals include (1) establishing GIS as a key decision support tool within the State, and (2) promoting the standardized exchange of information, acquisition, storage, and distribution of GIS information across the State including local government. Lastly, the new coordinating organization will seek formal political recognition, either through executive level or legislative action, as well as identify a source of sustainable funding from State government.

Deficiencies of Current GIS Coordination Structure

In 1992 the State contracted with Plangraphics, Inc. (Frankfort, KY) to develop a GIS development plan for West Virginia. The recommendations in the plan were used by the Governor's Office to issue an Executive Order in 1993 to establish West Virginia's statewide GIS program. The program was later funded in 1995 through provisions of House Bill 2222, that created the Mineral Lands Mapping Program, and subsequently through other state and federal sources. The Executive Order established a GIS Coordinator, State Data Clearinghouse, and three coordinating bodies: a *Policy Council* consisting of cabinet secretaries to implement the State's GIS plan; a *Steering Committee* comprised mostly of geospatial leaders from state government and academia; and a *GIS Users Group* to serve as the vehicle for education, training, and information exchange among GIS users. Of these three coordinating entities, the Steering Committee has been the primary mechanism for advancing statewide spatial data infrastructure in West Virginia during the past decade. Political and technological changes over the previous decade have rendered many aspects of the 1993 Executive Order obsolete. In 2005, the statewide GIS community, after experiencing 10 years of rapid growth in the number of GIS professionals and services employed, collectively recognized that a new GIS coordination program was needed to more adequately serve the State.

Specific shortcomings with the past coordination activities that the GIS community desires to improve include:

- o Formal authorization establishing a new coordinating body along with appropriate bylaws
- o Broader representation and inclusion in decision-making by GIS stakeholder user groups
- o Inclusion of high-level champions of state/local governments in GIS coordination process
- o Collectively creating statewide geospatial strategic and business plans
- o Sharing and managing GIS resources across a statewide enterprise network
- o Identifying sustained funding for GIS coordination activities and partnership development

Principal Coordinating Entities for Statewide Geographic Information

The WV GIS Coordinating Committee recommends that a new coordination body, named the Association of Geospatial Professionals, replace the inactive GIS Steering Committee. The new coordinating body will serve as a medium for geospatial professionals to promote the effective use of geospatial technologies in the State. The self-governing association will have independent relationships with various geospatial entities, including stakeholder user groups, geographic information officers, Governor's Office of Technology, Office of State GIS Coordinator, and State GIS Technical Center. Below is a list of the principal coordinating elements, and Figure 1 shows the entity relationships between the proposed new coordinating body and other geospatial coordinating entities.

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GROUP ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITIES

Association of Geospatial Professionals: Serves as a forum to promote and support geospatial professionals in the effective use and sharing of geospatial information and related resources throughout the State of West Virginia. The Board of Directors consists of members who are elected to govern the Association. The Board is composed of 11 voting members from the public and private sectors, and has the authority to appoint committees to accomplish its objectives.

Stakeholder User Groups: Self-governing stakeholder groups consist of people who share something in common. The user groups provide a forum to discuss and promote geospatial technologies, and may forward policy or technical recommendations to the appropriate coordinating body for action. The independent user groups may be organized by sector, topic, or region. Examples of user groups are listed below:

SECTOR

Academic (Colleges and Universities)

Cities and Towns

Counties

Education (K-12)

Federal Agencies

General Business Community

General Public

Non-Profit Organizations

Private Sector (GIS Vendors and Users)

Regional County Organizations

State Government

Statewide County or City Organizations

Surveying Community

Utilities

TOPIC

Flood Mapping

Streams

Cadastral

Remote Sensing

Transportation

REGION

Northern West Virginia

Southern West Virginia

Eastern Panhandle Region

Potomac Highlands

SINGLE ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITIES

Governor's Office of Technology: The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) provides Cabinet-level support to the statewide geospatial community. The Chief Technology Officer is an ex-officio member of the Information Technology Council which consists of high-level information technology managers from state agencies.

Office of State GIS Coordinator: The State GIS Coordinator serves as a focal point for geospatial coordination activities in West Virginia. Federal liaisons coordinate their agency's geospatial policies and programs through the Office of State GIS Coordinator.

Geographic Information Officers: Geographic Information Officers are usually the lead geospatial leaders of public and private organizations within the State. At the federal level they serve as a liaison between their agency and the Office of State GIS Coordinator. Geographic information

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officers have the leadership and communicative skills and project administrative experience required for the successful implementation of geospatial projects. These individuals comprise a broad representation of geospatial decision-makers from federal, state, county, non-profit, academia, and private sector user communities.

State GIS Technical Center: The Technical Center advances the statewide spatial data infrastructure through a distributed network of services which includes public access to geospatial data and information.

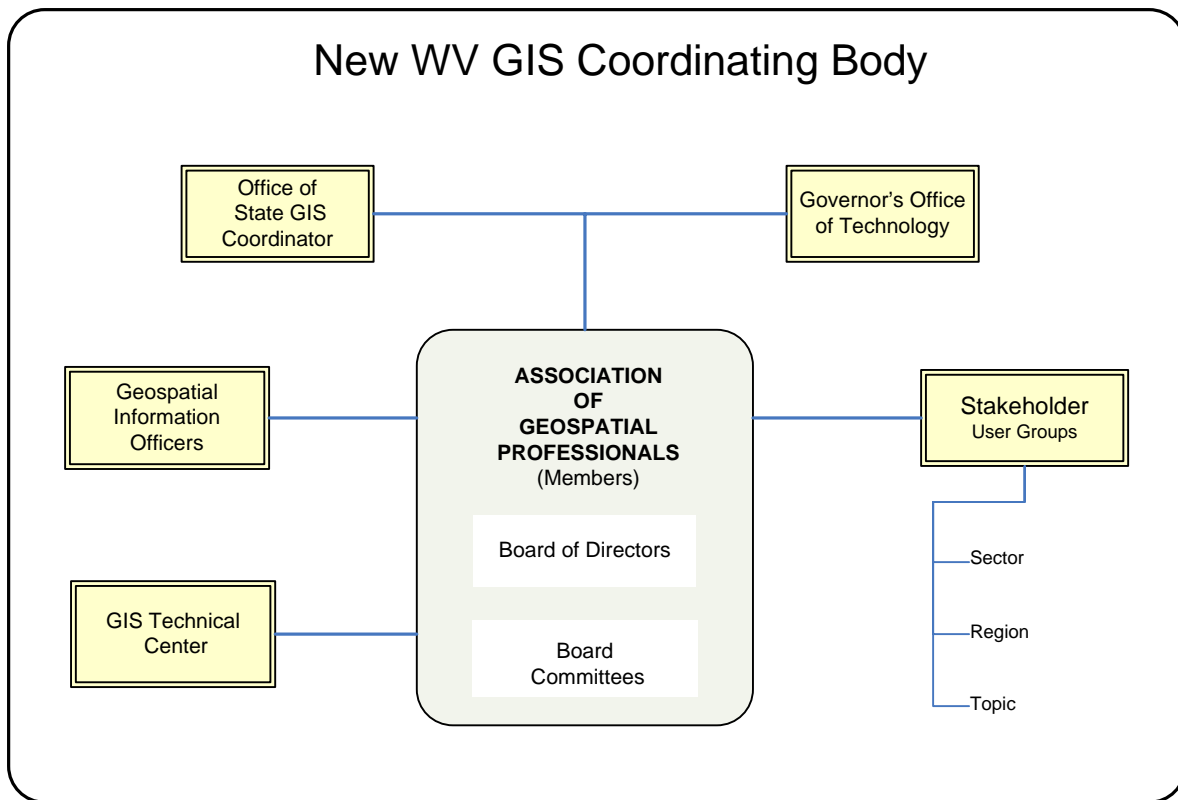


Figure 1. Diagram showing relationship between the new coordinating body (WV Association of Geospatial Professionals) and other coordinating entities

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Draft Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules adopted by the association to govern its actions. Parliamentary procedures will be utilized to draft and adopt the bylaws for the new association. At the first organizational meeting to set up the association, prospective members will be invited to join the bylaws committee. In assembling the committee, *Robert's Rules of Order* (RONR, p. 549) states that the bylaws committee "should generally be large, and should include the most judicious persons available, those who have a special interest in the rules of the society, and those who would otherwise be likely to consume much time discussing the bylaws when they come before the assembly for adoption." Prospective members will have the opportunity to review and alter the proposed bylaws before they are adopted and take effect.

Over the past several months the GIS Coordination Committee discussed the framework bylaws that the new coordinating body would need to carry out its functions and to operate harmoniously to benefit the members individually and collectively. These proposed rules were presented to prospective members at the State GIS Conference in May 2006, in which the members provided feedback to the GIS Coordination Committee. Based on prospective members' comments, modifications to the framework bylaws were made. These framework bylaws, which will serve as a *starting* point for the bylaws committee, are outlined below:

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR BYLAWS

- 1) NAME: WV Association of Geospatial Professionals (WVAGP)
- 2) MISSION: To promote and support geospatial professionals in the effective use and sharing of geospatial information and related resources throughout the state of West Virginia.
- 3) OBJECTIVES:
 - a) ADVISORY: Provide advice to other GIS coordinating entities in the State
 - b) ADVOCACY: Promote awareness of GIS to citizens and key-decision makers
 - c) CERTIFICATION: Encourage certification of geospatial professionals
 - d) COORDINATION: Encourage coordination of GIS programs to minimize redundancy
 - e) DECISION-SUPPORT: Advance GIS services as a key decision support tool
 - f) EXCHANGE: Serve as a vehicle for education, training, and information exchange
 - g) NETWORK: Share and manage GIS resources across a statewide enterprise network
 - h) OUTREACH: Sponsor GIS conferences and other outreach events
 - i) PLANNING: Collectively develop strategic and business plans
 - j) FUNDING: Obtain sustainable funding to support GIS initiatives in West Virginia
 - k) STANDARDS: Standardize the development and exchange of geospatial information
- 4) MEMBERSHIP:
 - a) ELIGIBILITY: Open to all persons with an interest in supporting the mission and objectives of the association.
 - b) VOTING: Members who attend a membership or board meeting within the last year are eligible to vote. (Proviso: Any members who attend meetings the first year are eligible to vote)
 - c) QUORUM: 10% of voting members.
 - d) MEETING FREQUENCY: A minimum of once a year
- 5) BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
 - a) ELECTION: The Board of Directors is elected by voting members.
 - b) COMPOSITION: 11 voting members: 3 from State Agencies, 2 from Education, 2 from Regional/Local Government, 1 from Federal Government, 2 from Private-Sector, and 1 from at-large. If the State GIS Coordinator or Chief Technology Officer (or designee) is not elected to the Board of Directors, then they shall be given an ex-officio, non-voting

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position on the Board. Representatives from the WV Society of Professional Surveyors, statewide county or city organizations, regional organizations, or other organized groups which have an interest in geospatial information are encouraged to attend.

- c) QUORUM: Six members (majority of voting members)
- d) MEETING FREQUENCY: quarterly
- e) TERM OF OFFICE: 2 years
- f) TERM LIMITS: After three successive two-year terms, a Board member shall step down from service for a least one full year before being eligible again for the Board.
- g) OFFICERS: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Officers are elected by the Board of Directors following the annual election of board members.

6) PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY: *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*

7) AMENDMENTS:

- a) *Amendments to Bylaws:* Upon written proposal to the Board by any member of the WVAGP, these bylaws may be amended, repealed, or altered, in whole or in part, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the votes cast by eligible voters of the WVAGP.
- b) *Procedure:* Proposed amendments to the bylaws must be approved by a majority of the Board to be passed on for approval by the active voters. Votes for amendments to the bylaws shall be conducted by mail/email vote, at the annual meeting, or at a specially convened meeting of the WVAGP. The Board Secretary shall notify the eligible voters of the proposed amendment at least thirty (30) days to voting date.

ONLINE RESOURCE INFORMATION

Below are online resources that the reader may find helpful in understanding more about parliamentary procedure and bylaws:

- o Robert's Rules of Order:
<http://www.robertsrules.org/>
- o What do bylaws do or accomplish? (Robert McConnell – registered parliamentarian)
<http://www.parli.com/newsletter/news4-06.htm>
- o Bylaw basics:
<http://www.parli.com/newsletter/news1112.htm>
<http://www.parli.com/newsletter/news696.htm>
<http://www.parli.com/newsletter/news12-03.htm>
- o Are your bylaws democratic?
<http://www.parli.com/newsletter/news697.htm>
- o Steps to start a new association
http://media.wiley.com/assets/303/54/575740_bc01.pdf

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of the GIS Coordination Committee?

The GIS Coordination Committee dissolved after its final meeting on August 22, 2006, in which the Committee recommended that a new coordinating organization be formed. This report represents the final business item executed by the Committee.

Will the WV Association of Geospatial Professionals have any direct authority over GIS professionals or other agencies?

No. The self-governing Association of Geospatial Professionals is independent of GIS coordinating elements such as the Governor's Officer of Technology, Office of State GIS Coordinator, or Geographic Information Officers. However, government leaders in the State may choose to adopt and implement policies and strategies recommended by the Association.

Do you have to be a certified GIS Professional to join the Association?

No. To join the WV Association of Geospatial Professionals you do not have to be a certified Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP) who has met the minimum standards for ethical conduct and professional practice as established by the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI). However, the Association will not discourage GIS professionals from voluntarily seeking GISP certification.

Do you have to pay dues to join the Association?

No. The only requirement to be a voting member is that you must attend one meeting per year.

Will the Board of Directors represent the diversity of its stakeholders?

Yes. The GIS Coordination Committee recommends that the voting members of the Association elect eleven (11) board members who reflect a broad and diverse representation of the stakeholder groups: 3 from State Agencies, 2 from Education, 2 from Regional/Local Government, 1 from Federal Government, 2 from Private-Sector, and 1 from at-large. If the State GIS Coordinator or Chief Technology Officer (or designee) is not elected to the Board of Directors, then they shall be given an ex-officio, non-voting position on the Board.

Representatives from the WV Society of Professional Surveyors, statewide county or city organizations, regional organizations, or other organized groups which have an interest in geospatial information are encouraged to attend.

What is the status of formulating a GIS strategic plan for the State?

A Strategic Planning Committee is being assembled to create strategic and business plans for West Virginia. Once the new coordinating body is organized, the Strategic Planning Committee will be governed by the Association. The Strategic Planning Committee will collaborate with the Office of State GIS Coordinator and Governors Office of Technology to create these plans. A federal grant from the Federal Geographic Data Committee is funding the development and marketing of these plans. A target date to complete drafts of these plans is December 2006.

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People and Events



WV GIS Coordination Committee meeting in May 2006



WV GIS Conference in May 2006 in which the new coordinating body was presented to prospective members.