

Montana State Library

GIS Coordination Strategic Planning

Technical Stakeholder Workshop Summary



Prepared by:

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Workshop Overview

As part of developing a strategic plan for the Montana State Library GIS office, Applied Geographics, Inc. (AppGeo) facilitated an online (Zoom) workshop on July 21, 2021 from 9:00 am to 11:30 am (MT). The overall goal of the workshop was to engage MSL stakeholders in the strategic planning process and collect input on key questions.

This workshop, which was one of two such events, was aimed at engaging technical stakeholders. A total of 23 people participated in the workshop including the AppGeo and Montana State Library (MSL) project team members. The full list of participants can be found in the project's Teams directory at General > 1_Information Gathering > Workshops > Workshop 1 - Technical > [20210721_Participants with Breakout Rooms.xlsx](#).

The workshop agenda was based upon several considerations and sources including the online stakeholder survey, Erin Fashoway (Montana State GIS Coordinator), Jennie Stapp (Montana State Librarian) and the strategic planning project team. AppGeo also drew upon previous experience to craft the workshop agenda.

The discussion explored perspectives and ideas centered around three core questions (see below). The workshop began with a brief orientation on strategic planning and its importance. Summaries of several online survey questions were used to offer background and to get participants thinking at an appropriate level.

After the introduction, participants, MSL project team members, and AppGeo staff were segregated into three virtual breakout rooms:

1. State participants
2. Local Government participants
3. Private/Federal participants

Each breakout room discussed the same question for 10 minutes and then a group spokesperson presented a summary from their room to all participants in a general session. The process was repeated for each of the three questions.

Breakout room assignments can be viewed in the participants report found in the project's Team directory at General > 1_Information Gathering > Workshops > Workshop 1 - Technical > [20210721_Participants with Breakout Rooms.xlsx](#).

The introductory slides are in the project's Team directory at General > 1_Information Gathering > Workshop > [Stakeholder Workshop 1 MSL GIS Strategic Plan - July 2021.pdf](#).

The workshop was recorded and will be placed in the same Team's workshop directory.

Workshop Questions and Discussion Summaries

Breakout Question 1: Data, Data, Data

The MSL has a statutory responsibility for the MSDI. MSL also provides many other GIS datasets and products. Data governance, management, discovery and consumption were key themes throughout the survey.

Understanding the policy drivers and business needs, do the MSDI and other GIS data and products meet your current and expected future needs?

Question 1 Group Discussion Summary:

Breakout Group	Major Themes
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSDI Cadastral road dataset could be more robust, reliable, and with metadata describing date of last update and systemic corrections. Specifically, MT DOT could provide that layer with the appropriate metadata (i.e., a definitive layer). There are many road datasets out there including the one in the MSDI. Would like to be able to trust AND verify whichever data one is using.
Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some expressed satisfaction with the way things are; no need for drastic changes. ● Many group members have transactional interactions with MSL (moment to moment, specific issues or needs) ● Some group members did not know about the structure of MSL via statute, MLIA, House Bill 50, 911 funding, nor did they know anything about a vision, mission or organizational mandate. ● As data providers to MSL the group is pretty happy about the process itself ● Some of the group would like to see the state data, especially Cadastral, updated more often since they (the local government GIS folks) update their data more often than the state updates Cadastral ● Opinion was offered that MSL could help coordinate and standardize for cities/counties that are doing similar things to ensure consistency ● One opinion offered was that searching for data at MSL could be confusing for the uninitiated, especially data on the Amazon site.
Private/Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group members agree that the MSL data offerings and the MSDI layers are beneficial to their operations. The MSL's offerings are better than most states and they are happy with the MSL. ● It can be difficult to make sure that they are consuming the correct source of data. The cadastral data sourced from the MSL

	<p>might be different from parcel data that comes from other sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding authoritative MSL data in ArcPro poses a challenge. This is a challenge incurred by ArcPro, not the MSL.
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Breakout Question 2: MSL Priorities

The survey asked about the importance of MSL actions or potential activities (see Table 1).

<i>Activity/Potential Activity</i>	<i>Pct. Ranked High</i>
Clearinghouse For All State Agency Data	69%
Publish MSDI Datasets	61%
Coordination of State Agency Geospatial Data Acquisition/Maintenance	61%
Web Services for MSDI Datasets	58%
Completion of All MSDI Datasets	56%
Clearinghouse for County Data	51%
State Geodata Standards Setting	44%
Improve Current Online Maps and Applications	42%
Clearinghouse for Federal Data	35%
Improve Data Update Frequency	35%
GIS Professional Education / Training Center	34%
Add New Online Maps and Applications	31%
Training Center	30%
Licensing Center (Provide access to GIS Software)	25%
Improve Data Issue Reporting	25%
K-12 Education Resource	23%
Publicize Geographic Names Review Processes	10%

Table 1: Results from Stakeholder Survey

Thinking back to Survey Question 29 and additional comments shared in the survey , the MSL is expected to cover a lot of ground.

“High priorities” include data management and governance, data and application publishing, training, funding and substantial support to local governments. Do the state’s priorities as defined in the Land Plan align with the community’s priorities?

Given that MSL does not have unlimited resources, where should MSL strategically invest its resources in the future and why?

For instance (hypothetically), should MSL broaden the portfolio of datasets it manages

at the expense of limiting support for local government collaborations? The reverse?

Question 2 Group Discussion Summary:

Breakout Group	Major Themes
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSL Clearinghouse should include pointers to additional data: BLM, USGS (other federal data too) ● Question on coordination objectives: Is the MSL focused on improving quality of data OR working with data stewards to collect more data? Erin clarified that they were working both ways - improving quality AND expanding portfolio of data in clearinghouse ● Accessibility: There is a need to make datasets available to a wide range of users, from technicians to decision-makers who are not technical. Right now, for something like a flood event, one has to go to lots of sources just to find data; the clearinghouse should be structured to guide people to find data - even if it is not managed by MSL. Accessibility varies by the need: developers need an API, technicians want a data service or download, managers want a web application that lets them visualize data.
Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall, the group generally agreed with the survey results showing potential MSL priorities in descending order. However, if promoting addressing then should focus on helping counties that lack resources to do it. ● The group agreed that some meta-education about MSL (history, legislative and statutory basis, current activities and future plans) would be valuable. The new-to-MT folks are unclear on MSL mandates and how they fit in as stakeholders ● Compared to some other states (Nebraska and Colorado), Montana is perceived as being in a better position as far as data coordination and a clearinghouse ● Broader topics beyond data might be helped by MSL: IT expertise, contracting (blanket contracts), information or assistance on grants, etc. Erin confirmed that there is a master purchase agreement available to local governments. ● General agreement that the Cadastral tool is a very valuable offering ● Find a better way to point to sources for authoritative data, do not try to be a clearinghouse with data copies for download ● Some were unaware of the Land Plan, others felt the priorities in current Land Plan were appropriate
Private/Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSL needs to promote and inform users on their efforts ● The MSL's Cadastral tool is essential and consumed by a lot of users.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to see clearer, more streamlined ways to report data errors or data quality problems • Collaborations should be readily discoverable and “creatable” • Would be nice to have local data updated in a timely manner; Increase the speed of the MSDI data updates. • Commercial consumers of the MSDI layers need to do a significant amount of education with regards to data stewardship and data issues • It is unclear how consumers of the layers can get answers to their questions - should the MSL take point or should it be the role of the Counties to answer questions about data issues? • MSL should increase collaboration with locals
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Breakout Question 3: MSL Geospatial Role and Structure

This survey question asked if stakeholders were aware of the following programs and opportunities (see Table 2).

<i>Program / Opportunity</i>	<i>Pct. "Unaware"</i>
Input to Land Information Plan	43%
Participation in the Montana Land Information Advisory Council (MLIAC)	38%
Participation in Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) Working Groups	35%
Montana Land Information Act (MLIA) Grants	29%
Partnerships with MSL	26%
Data Sharing with MSL	22%

Table 2: Results from Stakeholder Survey

How well do you understand the mission of MSL's geospatial program and the role of the State GIS Coordinator within it?

Do you feel you have a voice in setting priorities and offering feedback to MSL (i.e., through the Land Plan process)?

Do you know who to reach out to for State GIS questions/resources?

Do you understand the relationship between MLIAC, MSL, and the greater GIS community?

Question 3 Group Discussion Summary:

Breakout Group	Major Themes
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GIS Coordination - the MSL web site is a little confusing to use when one is trying to figure out what coordination is occurring now and what is planned in the future. ● Collaboration - some feel that sometimes there was a plan or decision made that was not inclusive of stakeholders. For example, NG911 felt like decisions occurred without much communication. This created expectations from stakeholders that were not informed of decisions that differ from the course of action taken. ● Involve peer agencies more and in more detail; they would like to get more involved in the planning and decision-making process overall. "No story is communicated right now". ● Coordination should include making sure overlapping interests know of each other - for instance when there are stewards of similar datasets being developed in different agencies or offices.
Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSL needs to increase regular communication with the GIS community. Can the MSL provide a monthly or quarterly newsletter to let people know what is going on at the MSL (share stories, projects, future plans), and at the Federal level? ● More frequent updates to the Cadastral data layers would be beneficial. ● Counties located in the eastern portion of the state need more representation. There is a disconnect between the eastern and western portions of the state. ● Many group members were unclear of the relationship between the MSL and MLIAC. Many group members were unsure what the land plan was as they are new to MT. ● It would benefit some counties if the MSL could provide documentation, data standards, and transition support when new GIS coordinators are hired. ● Education about what the counties should be doing to move to NG911 would be helpful to some. ● Should MSL be providing leadership and strategy about technology choices (e.g., open source, Esri, business intelligence, 3rd party managed services)?
Private/Federal	N/A: Group members did not participate in this portion of the meeting.