**GIS Council Draft Minutes August 28th, 2024**

Members Attending: Steve Gray – MAS, Jim Steil – IHL, Evan Wright – MDOT, David Dockery – DEQ, Wayne Williams – MBRPG, Rebecca Powell – MDA, Sean Hodges – MFC, Gary LeBlanc – ITS, Blake Pickering – Assessor Lincoln County, Kelle Barfield – Supervisor District 5 Warren County

Additional Participants: Jonathan Alford – BEAM, Haley Feather - MS811, Steve Champlin - DEQ, Wesley Edwards – MEMA, Jimmy Bradley – MGI, Will Grayson, MDOT, Audrey Creel – MDOT, Lillian Victory – DEQ, Scott Trapolino – City of Olive Branch, Laura Hip-Mayer – IHL, Baxter Kruger – MOHS (Homeland Security), Steve Roberts – ITS, John Cartwright – MSU.

**Meeting Purpose**

Discuss legislative requests and strategic planning for the Mississippi GIS Council.

**Key Takeaways**

* The primary legislative request will be funding for a strategic plan, with secondary emphasis on hardware support. Same focus as last year with greater urgency.
  + All members of last year’s Legislative Committee will be included in communications.
  + Anyone else interested is encouraged to Contact the Chair or Vice Chair.
* Non-voting members (Homeland Security, Broadband) are added to the council for broader representation.
* Mississippi Geospatial Conference scheduled for October 10-11, overlapping with Cruising the Coast event.
* Next GIS Council meeting is set for December 14th.

**Topics**

1. **Minutes of May 22 were approved**
2. **Legislative Strategy for Funding**

* Focus on securing funding for a comprehensive strategic plan
* Secondary request for hardware support to maintain current operations
* Need to establish a mechanism for receiving and implementing potential funding
* Aim to provide legislators with options for funding allocation
* Emphasize urgency due to aging infrastructure and evolving GIS landscape
* Timeline: Begin advocacy efforts immediately, intensify in January when session begins

1. **Strategic Plan Development**

* Critical for securing funding and guiding future GIS efforts in Mississippi
* Will include user requirement gathering sessions across the state
* Aim to update 20-year-old data and tech requirements
* Will help determine fiscal models for recurring funding to support legislative mission
* Consider hiring an external company experienced in state GIS strategic planning

1. **Council Membership and Representation**

* Motion passed to add Homeland Security and Broadband as non-voting members
* Recognize need to include major statewide GIS players not present when council was formed
* Consider future adjustments to council composition based on strategic plan findings

1. **Mississippi Geospatial Conference**

* Scheduled for October 10-11 on the coast, overlapping with Cruising the Coast event
* Parking fees waived for conference attendees at USM coast campus
* Slight schedule adjustments to accommodate travel (later start on Thursday)

1. **NSGIC Conference**

* Encouraged council members to attend for perspective on other states' GIS efforts
* Valuable for understanding best practices and potential improvements

1. **Next Steps – Action Items**

* Create shared document for council members to contribute agency-specific GIS value narratives –
  + MARIS
* Investigate process for acquiring a "magic number" (vendor number) for potential funding –
  + MAS/BEAM
* Re-form legislative committee to explore funding options and strategies –
  + GIS Council Leadership
* Begin outreach to legislative leaders to discuss GIS council needs –
  + Legislative Committee
* Prepare for January meetings with key legislators (e.g., Senator Hobson, Representative Bell) –
  + MAS
* Gather testimonials of the utility and necessity of the MARIS clearinghouse –
  + GIS Council/MARIS
* Obtain a list of GIS training attendees (Anonymized) from Mississippi State University – MS811