

Annual Report on Geospatial Information Systems Coordination

Submitted to the General Assembly in Accordance with CGS Sec. 4d-90

Prepared by the Office of Policy and Management
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Introduction

The Office of Policy and Management (OPM) functions as the Governor's staff agency and plays a central role in state government, providing the information and analysis used to formulate public policy for the State and assisting State agencies and municipalities in implementing policy decisions on the Governor's behalf.

Pursuant to CGS [Sec. 4d-90](#), OPM is also responsible for statewide geographic information system (GIS) coordination, including setting policies for the collection, management, and distribution of GIS data, setting standards for GIS data acquisition, management, and reporting, managing the creation and use of GIS applications within state agencies, and consulting with GIS stakeholders from municipalities, regional councils of governments (COGs), state agencies, and others. These responsibilities were assigned to OPM in 2013, when [Public Act 13-299](#) eliminated the former GIS Council.

Since 2013, OPM has handled GIS coordination efforts through the [Intergovernmental Policy and Planning Division](#) (IGPP) and [Data and Policy Analytics Unit](#) (DAPA).

As required by CGS. Sec. 4d-90, OPM reports annually to the Planning and Development Committee on activities performed under such section. This report covers activities performed during the year beginning January 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2021.

General Activities Summary:

The following GIS coordination activities were conducted by OPM in 2021:

- Conducted NSGIC's biennial [Geospatial Maturity Assessment](#) for the first time and participated as regular member of NSGIC activities. The assessment will provide an important baseline for monitoring future GIS development in Connecticut.
- Attended quarterly meetings of the [CT GIS Network](#) and functioned as the state government representative on the 17-member [Steering Committee](#).
- Co-chaired the CT GIS Network Standards Committee. In 2021, the Standards Committee focused on developing standards for the following datasets:
 - Municipal parcel data and CAMA report
 - Trails
 - Zoning

- Collected and processed municipal digital parcel files and CAMA files from COGs, as required annually by [CGS Sec. 7-100I](#).
- Coordinated with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on a DOT-led initiative to update the Connecticut Town Boundaries layer.
- Developed proposals to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support statewide GIS data collection programs to support allocation of broadband resources, particularly to underserved areas. Such programs were included in [Governor Lamont's ARPA plan](#) (pages 26-27) and enacted in SA 21-15.
- Conducted initial research and coordination activities for the next statewide aerial imagery and lidar acquisition, tentatively planned for spring of 2023.
- Presented as a panelist at the fall conference of the [Northeast Arc Users Group](#).
- Coordinated with the University of Connecticut concerning the development of web-based applications and data hosting on [Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online](#) (CT ECO).
- Coordinated with state agencies regarding use of the [State Open Data](#) portal to host or federate authoritative GIS datasets for public access. Developed federation to reduce fragmentation and allow access to agency-level GIS portals for DEEP and DOT through the State Open Data portal.
- Responded to myriad requests from state agencies for technical assistance or guidance concerning GIS projects or initiatives.
- Advised the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) regarding GIS equipment upgrades in the geospatial information lab of the Emergency Operations Center.
- Administered quarterly meetings of the Interagency GIS Workgroup, an informal coordinating/networking body of GIS-focused staff within state agencies.
- Advised the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) concerning the use of mapping applications to collect data and statistics on the use and operation of state-owned vehicles.
- Compiled high-value GIS data inventories from state agencies prepared annually under [CGS Sec. 4-67p](#) and published such inventories in the [CT Data Catalog](#).
- Developed agency guidance for open data related to the retirement (or archiving) of data, publication of new data and automation of data feeds from agencies, and standard enterprise and agency-level agreements for interagency data sharing, pursuant to C.G.S. 4-67p and 4-67z.

Special Activities Summary:

Legislative Work and Initiatives

In late 2020 into early 2021, OPM participated in an advisory capacity on a legislative working group formed by Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey (D-Fairfield). The working group was tasked to:

1. Examine GIS expertise and mapping within the state;
2. Examine GIS centers in other similar states; and
3. Develop recommendations for establishing a State GIS Center in Connecticut

As a result of the legislative working group's research and findings, the Planning and Development Committee of the General Assembly held a public information forum on GIS on February 4, 2021. [HB 6647](#), An Act Concerning Geographic Information Systems, was subsequently raised in the 2021 legislative session. HB 6647 proposed to (1) create a Geographic Information Systems Advisory Council to consult with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, and (2) require the secretary to designate a Geographic Information Officer (GIO) to oversee a Geographic Information System Center.

There were several publications issued to support the concepts raised in HB 6667; they are listed below for reference purposes:

- [GIS Coordination for Connecticut Story Map](#)
- [The Need for a Statewide GIS Center in Connecticut: A Policy Document of the Statewide Connecticut GIS Task Force – January 2021](#)
- [Connecticut Statewide GIS Working Group Presentation on a Statewide GIS Center – February 2021](#)

The evolution of HB 6647 is detailed below:

- March 17, 2021 – HB 6647 is raised by the [Planning and Development Committee](#).
- March 22, 2021 – Planning and Development Committee conducts a public hearing on HB 6647 in addition to 19 other bills. The hearing recording is posted in two pieces – the [first](#) (9 hours, 51 minutes) and the [second](#) (3 hours, 44 minutes). Submitted [written testimony](#) is also posted.
- March 31, 2021 – Planning and Development Committee votes HB 6647 out of committee. See [meeting recording](#) at approximately 5hr 10min.
- April 20, 2021 – Fiscal Note attached to HB 6647.
- May 10, 2021 – Appropriations Committee joint favorable vote.
- June 4, 2021 – Substitute HB 6647, [Amendment LCO No. 9852](#), passes the in the House of Representatives. See [meeting recording](#) at approximately 7hr 4min.
- June 9, 2021 – Regular legislative session ends without a vote on HB 6647 by the Senate.
- June 15, 2021 – The [Budget Implementer](#) is proposed for a Special Session of the General Assembly and includes all of the GIS language contained in Substitute HB 6647. [Public Act No 21-2](#) (Sections 78-80, pages 95-100) was passed by the Senate with some amendments on the same day.

Establishment of GIS Office and Broadband Mapping Efforts

Pursuant to Sec. 78 of Public Act 21-2, OPM set forth to hire the State's first Geographic Information Officer (GIO) in the second half of 2021. After an extensive search process, Alfredo Herrera was selected as the GIO from a pool of qualified applicants and began work on December 31, 2021. The GIO and GIS Office are situated within the Data and Policy Analytics unit within the Office of the Secretary, reporting directly to the Chief Data Officer. Additional staff positions to support the GIS Center are anticipated to be filled in 2022.

As the new GIS Office is expected to support the State's broadband mapping efforts under [Public Act 21-159](#), An Act Concerning Equitable Access to Broadband, OPM is concurrently hiring a Broadband Mapping Coordinator who will work in the GIS Office. The Broadband Mapping Coordinator position is expected to be filled in early 2022.

2021 Reports, Policies, and Standards:

No new GIS reports, policies, or standards were issued by OPM in 2021. The CT GIS Network proposed a new Trails Standard on March 5, 2021, but it has not yet been approved by OPM.

2022 Outlook

With the hiring of a GIO in late 2021 and a Broadband Mapping Coordinator in early 2022, OPM anticipates a gradual increase in its capacity to coordinate with and support state agencies, municipalities, utilities, and others through centralized services and coordination. The development of a State GIS Office, led by the GIO, will help Connecticut to be competitive with peers in the Northeast. Additionally, the new Geospatial Information Systems Advisory Council will convene and begin advising OPM on GIS priorities and policies.

With these changes, 2022 is anticipated to be a transformative year for GIS in Connecticut. However, it is important to note that the improvements will be gradual, happening over several years as additional staff and resources are brought on board. OPM looks forward to reporting on the progress of the GIS Office in years to come.