

Montana Land Information Advisory Council (MLIAC) – Executive Summary
Thursday, June 13, 2019
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Headquarters
Helena, Montana

Attendees:

Members or Designees: Dawn Anderson – State Agency Representative; Mike Bousliman – State Agency Representative; Rudy Cicon – MARLS Representative; Gordon Conn – State Agency Representative; Janet Cornish – Public Utilities or Private Business Representative; Representative Julie Dooling – Montana House Representative; Warren Fahner online – Local Government Representative; Elaina Graham – U.S. Department of Agriculture Representative; Matt Heller – U.S. Department of Interior Representative; Molly Hirschi – GIS Professionals Representative; Valentijn Hoff – Montana University System Representative; Lee Macholz – Local Government Representative; Catherine Maynard – USDA Representative; Eric Spangenberg – Local Government Representative; Jennie Stapp – Council Chair; and John Tubbs – State Agency Representative.

Guests: Tom Carlson – USGS; Jenny Connelley – MAGIP; Dylan Cole – Montana Department of Revenue; Steve Story – DNRC; Terri Morganson – Esri.

Staff: Erin Fashoway, Evan Hammer, Michael Fashoway, Kenny Ketner, Troy Blandford, Maya Daurio, and John Kilgour.

Chair Jennie Stapp called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Welcome & Introductions

The Council members and guests introduced themselves.

Administrative Updates/Agenda Changes

Erin Fashoway explained potential changes to the order of agenda items to accommodate the schedules of the presenters. Specifically, Dylan Cole’s presentation was moved to the beginning of the agenda.

Approval of Executive Summary

There were no corrections or additions made to the April 2, 2019, executive summary.

Motion was made by Member Cornish to approve the April 2, 2019, executive summary, and the motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.

MLIA Collections Forecasting Report

Dylan Cole, Department of Revenue, presented his projections of future MLIA account collections. He explained the forecasting methodology he used to develop his projections. Some projections used a “moving average” method and some used an “exponential smoothing” method, both of which weight more recent observations more heavily. Dylan presented a series of monthly and yearly forecasts and explained the varying levels of confidence he had in them. All of the models predicted falling MLIA account revenues up to fiscal year 2022, which was the end date for the projections. Dylan noted that the forecasts are “naïve,” meaning that they weren’t controlled for outside variables. Dylan presented

one final graph illustrating the average percentage of account revenues collected at various points throughout the year, which estimated total collections for FY2019 to be at about \$725,000.

Dylan responded to questions from the Council about his projections and the MLIA collections. Dylan's opinion of the MLIA collections is that the revenue is not that volatile, even though it is slowly decreasing. The first few years of collections were exceptionally high, but aside from those first years, the collections have been pretty consistent at around \$65,000 to \$70,000 per month. Evan Hammer explained that some of the volatility from month to month is the result of inconsistent county reporting procedures, and he summarized some possible explanations for past collection trends.

MLIA Collections Report

Evan presented the MLIA Collections Report. He expects FY2019 collections to be between \$700,000 and \$725,000 at the end of the fiscal year, which would be one of the lowest collection years on record. The overall account balance is healthy, though.

There was some brief discussion among the Council members and staff about whether or not adjusting the collection numbers for inflation would be helpful. The Council discussed the funding mechanism of county recording fees and the history of the fee, whether there had ever been discussion about supplementing the fee with other revenue, and so forth. Erin clarified that the funding source is a dollar per-page fee; \$0.75 is allocated to the Land Information Account and \$0.25 is allocated to each county land information account.

Chair Stapp asked for recommendations for areas of further research to determine what factors are influencing the level of MLIA collections, and Dylan suggested looking at the trends on a county level. Erin asked the Council if they had any suggestions for how they would like to see the collections report reconfigured. She can prepare a report to illustrate the data by county. Member Cornish suggested that tying sources of funds to uses of the funds would be useful to see side-by-side with the collections report.

The Council discussed what to do in the face of declining revenues in the MLIA account and how the gap could be addressed through the budgeting process and alternative sources of revenue.

Montana State Library Financial Report

Evan presented the State Library Financial Report. He explained that the MLIA account balance is expected to be at about \$1 million at the end of June. He then presented the quarterly overall State Library Financial Report that is presented to the State Library Commission. Moving forward, when these materials are posted for Commission meetings, the Council members will also be notified of their availability. Council members can also attend Commission meetings or listen to parts of the meetings related to MLIA and the Land Plan. The overall goal is to provide this information to the Council in a more streamlined fashion.

Chair Stapp emphasized that the MLIA account is not the only source of funding that supports spatial data infrastructure work and MLIA grants. The State Library's budget also helps support these activities by funding IT support and data storage.

The Council briefly discussed section 7-4-2637, MCA, the statute governing collection of document recording fees and allocating a portion of them to the MLIA account. The system was created the way it was because of existing models in other states and because it was a solution the legislature saw as benign and as something that could fund both counties and the state. The Council discussed the potential benefit

of seeing the collection data on a county-by-county basis, and Member Conn offered to coordinate Department of Revenue staff to research the topic.

MLIA Grant Administration (FY2018/2019) Report

Erin provided a brief overview of the MLIA grant program for new members of the Council and then updated the Council on the FY2019 grants. Over half of the FY2019 grants will be extended due to legitimate circumstances beyond the grant recipients' control. Some FY2018 are also still wrapping up, but they are coming to a close. There will be some underspending for FY2018; any unspent funds will remain in the MLIA account. Erin fielded some questions about reasons for grants being extended into the next fiscal year and success stories and positive feedback from the grant recipients. Chair Stapp mentioned that MSL will coordinate some grant recipients to present on what they've accomplished at the September MLIAC meeting.

State Librarian's Report

Chair Stapp provided a final update on the legislative session's impact on the State Library's budget. The overall State Library budget recovered about half of the funding that was lost during the 2017 budget cuts, most of which was in the personal services budget. With upcoming hires, the Library will be back to about the same level of FTE that it was at prior to the 2017 cuts. The Library is currently conducting a recruitment process for a data coordinator position and two GIS technicians to assist with the GIS analyst workload. In the recent legislative session, the State Library also received \$250,000 in one-time only funds, and it is currently planning for how to use those funds. Funding for lidar storage and the real-time network are current funding needs that the Library is considering. The Library did not receive any ongoing funding for Next Generation 9-1-1 from the state legislature.

Chair Stapp discussed House Bill 633, which created an interim study to look at diversifying the State Library's budget and identify more stable sources of revenue. The study was assigned to the Legislative Finance Committee, which has created an education subcommittee to explore options for the State Library. Chair Stapp answered questions from the Council about the Library's budget, the upcoming interim study, and the Library's organizational structure.

Chair Stapp updated the Council on the restructuring process the Library is currently undergoing. The Library has decided to flatten its organizational structure by eliminating the Library Development Division and encouraging more organic collaboration among staff. The model of user services/information management/information products that has been in place in the Digital Library Division will be applied across the entire agency. Chair Stapp responded to questions about the restructuring and whether it will extend to collaboration with other agencies or local governments.

In conclusion, Chair Stapp reminded the Council of the current application process for appointments. Following new appointments, there will be an orientation program for new members. It is the Governor's opinion that current members' terms do not expire until their seats have been filled, not at the end of the biennium. The State Library is developing a welcome packet for new members. Member Cornish suggested including an explanation of the Council members' role and responsibilities as well as an organizational chart. Another suggestion was an acronym glossary.

MLIAC Subcommittee Reports

Grant Review Subcommittee: The Subcommittee will have a debriefing meeting following the Council meeting to review the recent grant application and scoring process.

Land Plan Subcommittee: A few things need to be added to the Land Plan this year, including geo-enabled elections and lidar planning. Erin asked for volunteers to serve on the Land Plan Subcommittee.

Members Maynard, Hoff, Heller, and Macholz volunteered to serve on the Subcommittee.

MAGIP Report

Jenny Connelley, MAGIP President, provided an update on recent MAGIP board of directors elections, other MAGIP appointments, current vacancies on several MAGIP committees, and the annual MAGIP board retreat. Updating the organization's bylaws is a major goal of MAGIP's for the next year, and one of the main priorities is a social media plan. The next MAGIP board meeting is July 16th.

Chair Stapp stated that MAGIP is still looking for a member of the Council to sit on its board of directors.

Member Cornish moved that Catherine Maynard be MLIAC's representative on the MAGIP board of directors, temporarily, on an interim basis. The motion was seconded by Member Graham. The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.

Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure

CadNSDI Presentation: Maya Daurio, GIS Analyst at the State Library, explained that the State Library is currently the custodian for the CadNSDI, which is the cadastral component of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). She presented a story map reflecting annual changes to the CadNSDI and explained the importance of the CadNSDI to the State Library and other Montana agencies. MSL is constantly trying to improve the digital representation of the CadNSDI, and one of the main ways of doing that is through the MLIA grants and the survey control collected by grantees.

Chair Stapp brought up the potential for streamlining grant awards for PLSS work, allocating funds to priority areas of the state, and incorporating that process into the Land Plan. There was some discussion among the Council and staff of what this process could look like.

Break for lunch from 12:01 p.m. to 12:31 p.m.

Elevation – Statewide Lidar Update: Erin Fashway and Troy Blandford, GIS Analyst at the State Library, presented the statewide lidar update. In 2018, the Council designated the Library as the state lead for elevation data and tasked the Library with developing a plan for statewide lidar coverage. Troy presented the draft state lidar plan and explained and clarified major components of the plan. Erin explained the role of the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) in coordinating strategies for lidar collection in the western United States. Tom Carlson, USGS liaison to Montana, contributed comments on the benefits of lidar coverage. Troy explained the role and composition of the Montana Elevation Working Group, which will guide lidar planning in the state. He also presented the Montana Lidar Inventory and explained the information available there about lidar acquisition status, priority areas of interest, data requests, and so forth.

Evan and Erin clarified the role of the State Library in the lidar collection process. The Library is coordinating the process, but it has little money to contribute toward lidar collections. Entities providing funding have the greatest influence on what areas are collected. There was some discussion among the Council members and Library staff, as well as Tom Carlson, USGS, and Steve Story, DNRC, about the importance of collaboration among different entities in the state to leverage USGS funding and the level

of past collaboration among entities in the state, particularly with respect to DNRC lidar collections funded by FEMA.

Troy presented the plan's priority areas for acquisition and explained that the lidar plan recommends acquiring lidar data on a countywide basis. Troy explained the lidar plan's recommendations and technical specifications. The main specification in the plan is to recommend quality level 1 (QL1) and to require quality level 2 (QL2) for new acquisitions.

The State Library intends to be the repository for state lidar data. Troy presented estimates for storage needs at the Library, which would far exceed the entire current digital collection at the Library. Lidar data is currently being stored at the state data center, but the Library is exploring other options for lidar data storage.

Troy presented cost estimates for achieving statewide lidar coverage and explained the funding approach of building partnerships to apply for USGS funding. Troy reviewed known risks to the plan and next steps.

In conclusion, Troy informed the Council that the State Library recently coordinated a BAA (Broad Agency Announcement) application and was awarded a USGS 3DEP (3D Elevation Program) contribution of \$1.25 million to acquire 6,300 square miles of lidar coverage in Montana.

Member Cornish moved to adopt the Montana Lidar Plan with a tremendous amount of enthusiastic support for the work that Troy and Erin have done. The motion was seconded by Member Spangenberg. The motion passed with all in favor, none opposed, and none abstaining.

New (Beta) Cadastral Presentation

Kenny Ketner, Montana State Library, presented the new Montana Cadastral application, which will be released in a six-month beta period alongside the current cadastral. Kenny walked the Council through the new application and demonstrated some of the new features.

Kenny responded to questions and suggestions from the Council about some of the features and functionality of the new application. Member Tubbs asked about the current limitation of conducting searches by county and if that would be updated in the new application. It will not be updated in this version. State Library staff explained some of the challenges involved in making that type of change. Member Heller suggested making the cadastral searchable using latitude and longitude coordinates. He also asked if the State Library planned to interview frequent cadastral users like realtors to get their feedback on the updates. Erin replied that the Library will be reaching out to major stakeholders to get their feedback. The Library has also started tracking inquiries received about the cadastral application.

NAIP 2018/2019: Erin explained that NAIP 2017 had gaps due to smoke and snow. It was recollected in 2018 and is currently being processed internally. Montana was recently prioritized for collection in 2019.

MSDI Service Changes: Erin explained the State Library's recent cleanup in its web services environment. The State Library is standardizing its naming conventions and is also implementing a new standard for web services. It will no longer offer web services in State Plane coordinate system. Rather, the Library will offer the web services in Web Mercator. Anyone currently using web services will need to make changes within the next 90 days. September 20th is the target date for taking down web services in the State Plane coordinate system.

GIS Coordinator's Report

USGS Introductions – Tom Carlson, USGS Montana Liaison: Tom explained his role as USGS liaison for Montana as well as Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. He briefly summarized some of USGS's programs and products.

Montana Real-Time Network: Erin has been working on the Montana Real-Time Network (RTN) with the Department of Transportation. Erin is part of a working group with Wally Gladstone of Northern Engineering and Consulting, Inc., who has been a big promoter of a Montana real-time network. Montana is currently part of a pilot project with Washington that is scheduled to end this fall. Montana will ask to remain on the project until the end of the year, and in the meantime will work to get its own RTN up and running. Anyone interested in becoming part of the RTN working group should contact Erin. There was some discussion among the Council members and staff about the potential costs of a real-time network, its benefits to the state, Utah's funding model, and what Montana's RTN model might look like.

NSGIC's Geo-Enabled Elections: Erin updated the Council on NSGIC's geo-enabled elections project. Eight states are participating in a pilot project looking into how states can implement GIS in the election process. The Montana Secretary of State's Office has expressed interest in partnering with the State Library on elections-related projects. Election boundaries fall under the purview of the MLIA and MSDI and therefore will hopefully be integrated into the upcoming Land Plan. The State Library will keep the Council informed about the geo-enabled elections process moving forward.

Lidar Update: Erin returned to an aspect of the lidar agenda topic and explained that she's been in contact with potential lidar funding partners to prepare for a fall 2019 BAA proposal. The State Library is interested in partnering with private entities as well as governmental entities on the BAA. There was some discussion among the Council and Tom Carlson about the possibility of doing this. Tom was not aware of any past public-private partnerships on a BAA, but it is possible to do it.

NSGIC Update: Erin provided an update on the annual NSGIC Conference in Wasatch, Utah, in the fall. A Council member normally attends the conference. Members should contact Erin if they are interested in going. The NSGIC board has also been discussing greater engagement with stakeholders such as the Council. Erin requested input from the Council on how NSGIC could benefit the Council's work.

Public Comment

Chair Stapp asked for any public comment on matters within the Council's jurisdiction. There was no public comment.

Chair Stapp reminded the Council that its next meeting is Wednesday, September 11, 2019, and that members should submit their applications if they are applying for another term on the Council. She adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.