

Building a new GIS partnership

Local governments, including counties, cities, and regional agencies, have a unique opportunity to partner with the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and several other state agencies to develop a partnership that will reduce the cost of doing business, provide better information for the public and decision makers, and ultimately will provide better services to the public.

What is GIS?

GIS stands for "Geographic Information Systems", a unique information technology that combines traditional database management systems (such as Assessor information) with geographic information (such as an Assessor's map) to create a powerful information management tool. GIS is a relatively young technology that is increasingly being used throughout the state of Oregon.

Many successful programs exist, so what is the problem?

1. Government agencies are not consistently working together and this wastes time, money, and staff.
 - Developing similar or redundant datasets
 - Distributing/sharing data with the same customers
 - Developing similar policies and agreements
 - Developing same/similar skills
2. We have a unique opportunity for success.
 - A state agency is willing to work with us up front rather than waiting until the end and mandating us to do something.
 - We have good examples such as ORMAP, AOC, and OGIC.
3. Many programs are at risk.
 - Will not survive the "bus test" or will be eliminated due to lack of financial resources.
 - Data is not protected from catastrophic events, such as Hurricane Katrina, and a GIS mutual aid network is not in place
 - Our data licenses (or lack thereof) are untested and not supported.
4. Partnerships and joint efforts save money, time, and material.
 - Better bargaining power
 - Economies of scale realized when building/purchasing data
 - Value of information increases
 - Value of data and commitment to maintain good information is not recognized
 - Agreements are based on personal relationships
5. Government agencies are providing inconsistent information to the public that, at a minimum, creates confusion and, at the most, may cause harm.
 - Maps of similar topics but inconsistent data

What do we want and how can we get there?

1. Statewide framework data layers with minimum data standards and metadata exist.
Action: Complete framework data standards (in process).
2. Participants in GIS activities and their roles are known and understood.
Action: Expand METRO's approach to identified data and roles.
3. The value of data and the cost of maintenance are understood and supported at statewide, regional, and local levels of government.
Action: Unknown. This may require legislation to formalize/expand the structure of Oregon Geographic Information Council (OGIC). This might also include structuring data layer specific solutions, such as ORMAP, operated by DOR.
4. Participants have the freedom to integrate data development/maintenance into their business process.
Action: Any future mandates must recognize this important issue.
5. Priorities for development/maintenance of statewide data layers exist.
Action: Unknown. This may require legislation to formalize/expand the structure of OGIC.
6. Data producers are protected from liability and risk when sharing data.
Action: Will require a review by the Attorney General's office and implementation with all participants. Ultimately this may require legislation. This may also involve examining public records law and privacy of data.
7. Statewide projects include funding for GIS data so that is coordinated.
Action: This will require legislation so that new legislation recognizes OGIC and the coordinating role of DAS for data development.
8. Statewide efforts provide financial resources, services, and standard data (such as aerial photos) to support a consistent statewide GIS program.
Action: This will require legislation and budgetary changes to the DAS GIS budget.