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PMGP Initiative



Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Municipal Geospatial Group Initiative Plan

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# Introduction

In response to the growing need for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and support in the geospatial field within the state of Pennsylvania, we propose the establishment of a **Pennsylvania Municipal Geospatial Group**. This initiative aims to bring together cities, towns, boroughs, authorities, and organizations representing these entities to foster cooperation, innovation, and data-driven decision-making.

## How We Differ from County-Level Groups

While Pennsylvania already has county-level geospatial groups, our statewide initiative offers several distinct advantages and differences:

1. **Statewide Reach:** The statewide scope of our initiative allows us to connect geospatial professionals, experts, and enthusiasts from across Pennsylvania. This broader network will facilitate sharing best practices, resources, and geospatial data more comprehensively than county-level groups.
2. **Municipal Focus:** Unlike county-level groups, our initiative is dedicated to municipalities, towns, and their affiliated organizations. This specialized focus will address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by these entities.
3. **Scale and Impact:** The statewide initiative can leverage the collective expertise and resources of municipalities, enabling us to take on larger geospatial projects, pursue funding opportunities, and influence statewide geospatial policies.
4. **Knowledge Exchange:** By facilitating knowledge exchange between municipalities, we aim to create a dynamic ecosystem where innovative geospatial solutions and best practices can flourish.

## Nesting within Keystone GIS

In the initial phase, our initiative will be nested within **Keystone GIS**, an established and respected geospatial organization in Pennsylvania. This affiliation will offer several benefits:

* **Operational Support:** Keystone GIS will provide administrative and operational support for the fledgling nonprofit, including financial management, event coordination, and communication infrastructure.
* **Credibility and Trust:** Leveraging Keystone GIS's reputation will help establish trust and credibility with potential members, partners, and sponsors.
* **Smooth Transition:** While we plan for the group to operate independently in the future, the partnership with Keystone GIS ensures a smooth transition when the initiative is ready to stand on its own.

## Structure and Governance

Our initiative will mirror the structure of the *County GIS Professionals Association of Pennsylvania*, which includes executive committees, working groups, and regular meetings. The governance will involve:

* **Board of Directors:** A board will be established to oversee the initiative, set strategic direction, and make critical decisions.
* **Working Groups:** Various working groups will focus on specific topics, such as data sharing, technology standards, training, and more.
* **Members:** Municipalities, towns, boroughs, authorities, and related organizations will be encouraged to become members and actively participate in the initiative's activities.
* **Regular Meetings and Events:** Periodic meetings, webinars, and workshops will be organized to facilitate knowledge sharing and networking.

## Objectives and Action Plan

Our key objectives include:

1. **Collaboration:** Foster collaboration among municipalities to share geospatial data, best practices, and tools.
2. **Capacity Building:** Enhance the geospatial capabilities of municipalities through training, workshops, and knowledge exchange.
3. **Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that promote geospatial data sharing, interoperability, and standards at the state level.
4. **Innovation:** Encourage and support innovative geospatial projects that benefit Pennsylvania municipalities.
5. **Resource Sharing:** Establish a repository of shared resources, including data, applications, and geospatial expertise.
6. **Sustainability:** Develop a long-term strategy for financial sustainability and organizational independence.

# Initial Steps for Organizing and Creating the Group

To kickstart the formation of the Pennsylvania Statewide Municipal Geospatial Nonprofit Group, a series of crucial initial steps must be taken:

### 1. Formation of a Steering Committee

* **Identify Key Stakeholders:** Reach out to municipal representatives, geospatial experts, and organizations interested in participating.
* **Convene a Steering Committee:** Form a small steering committee responsible for guiding the early stages of the initiative.
* **Set Objectives:** Define the group's mission, objectives, and immediate goals.

### 2. Legal Structure and Governance

* **Legal Entity:** Determine the appropriate legal structure for the nonprofit organization, such as a 501(c)(3) status.
* **Bylaws:** Draft bylaws that outline the governance structure, membership requirements, and decision-making processes.
* **Board of Directors:** Recruit and appoint a diverse and representative board of directors to lead the initiative.

### 3. Membership Drive

* **Membership Criteria:** Define membership criteria and categories, including municipal, organizational, and individual memberships.
* **Recruitment Campaign:** Launch a membership recruitment campaign targeting municipalities, geospatial professionals, and related entities.
* **Membership Benefits:** Clearly communicate the benefits of joining the group, such as access to resources, networking opportunities, and influence in shaping geospatial policies.

**4.** Communication and Outreach

* **Website and Social Media:** Create a website and establish a presence on social media platforms to disseminate information and engage with potential members.
* **Outreach Events:** Organize informational webinars, virtual meetings, or workshops to introduce the initiative and attract interest.
* **Networking:** Build relationships with other geospatial organizations, local government associations, and relevant stakeholders.

### 5. Collaboration Framework

* **Working Groups:** Establish initial working groups based on common geospatial themes, such as data sharing, technology standards, and education.
* **Meetings:** Plan the first meeting to introduce the working groups and encourage participation.

### 6. Financial Planning

* **Budget:** Develop a preliminary budget for the first year, outlining expected expenses and potential revenue sources.
* **Funding Strategy:** Identify potential funding sources, including membership fees, grants, sponsorships, and partnerships.
* **Financial Oversight:** Appoint a treasurer or financial officer responsible for managing funds.

### 7. Timeline

* **Project Timeline:** Create a detailed timeline with milestones for the first year, including the launch, recruitment, and initial working group meetings.
* **Long-Term Vision:** Begin discussing the long-term vision for the initiative, including goals for independence from Keystone GIS.

### 8. Documenting Progress

* **Initiative Records:** Establish a system for documenting meeting minutes, decisions, and any formal agreements made during the initial stages.
* **Progress Reports:** Develop a process for regular progress reporting to stakeholders and the Keystone GIS team.

These initial steps will set the foundation for the Pennsylvania Statewide Municipal Geospatial Nonprofit Group, paving the way for successful organization and collaboration. As the group gains momentum, it can continue to evolve and expand its initiatives, further benefiting municipalities across the state.

# Conclusion

The Pennsylvania Statewide Municipal Geospatial Nonprofit Initiative offers a unique opportunity to unite municipalities, towns, boroughs, authorities, and organizations across the state, focusing on geospatial solutions that address common challenges. By aligning with Keystone GIS and building on the successful structure of county-level geospatial groups, we are poised to make a substantial impact on geospatial development and cooperation in Pennsylvania.

Reference: https://www.countygispros.org/

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