



Delaware Geospatial Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

Delaware has been an innovative user of geospatial technology and geographic information systems (GIS) since the early 1990's. Delaware state government uses GIS on a daily basis in agencies that range from State Planning Coordination to Transportation to Natural Resource and Environmental Control to Safety and Homeland Security. In addition GIS is used throughout the state, by all three counties, and by local governments. Although geospatial governance is provided by the Delaware Geographic Data Committee (DGDC) Executive Council, most activity is found at the departmental level and the DGDC Executive Council has neither staff nor any resources to pursue projects or carry out new initiatives. Thus, when intergovernmental or cross departmental coordination does take place, it happens largely on an *ad hoc* basis and with volunteered staff time.

With GIS use growing rapidly both within state government and with other governmental partners and the private sector, there is an increasing need for both orchestrated coordination and the development of resources that can be shared across multiple agencies. As documented in the accompanying Business Plan, this type of coordinated approach can help to reduce duplication of effort and increase the efficiency of state government geospatial service delivery. As such, this Strategic Plan recommends that Delaware join all of its neighboring states in **establishing small, focused GIS Office** that is dedicated to geospatial coordination and the development and maintenance shared geospatial data and services. The two overarching strategic goals identified in this plan are:

1. *Delaware will establish a formal state government **GIS Office**, led by a state Geographic Information Officer (GIO), that will report into its parent agency and fall under the current geospatial governance framework provided by the Delaware Geographic Data Committee's Executive Council.*
2. *The Delaware **GIS Office** will be provided recurring funding that is dedicated to the expansion and improvement of Delaware's framework data and spatial data infrastructure.*

Such an approach will **leverage** the state's documented geospatial **strengths** of:

- Small, manageable geography and rich existing spatial data infrastructure
- The strong collaborative spirit of the state's vibrant geospatial stakeholder community

While **addressing** the geospatial **weaknesses** identified through this planning effort:

- Lack of a focal point for state government geospatial activity
- Lack of a budget line item for *statewide* (i.e. non-departmental) GIS projects and data

While enabling the state to **capitalize on significant opportunities** that include:

- Increasing involvement and investment in geospatial technology by the Department of Technology and Information (DTI)
- Affordably extending geospatial technology into agencies such as Economic Development, Tourism and Emergency Management that are not currently using it to its full extent
- Extending existing and successful partnerships with Federal agencies that can provide funding support

This strategic plan lays out a practical course of action. The time is right to take this next step in the evolution of the state's geospatial capacity.