

Maximizing the Benefits of FEMA Map Modernization for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



In the Fall of 2004 PaMAGIC began a two-year initiative whose purpose is the creation of a “Common Vision” of the larger GIS Enterprise in the Commonwealth, around which to organize our ideas and energies as a community. The first year’s activities consisted of two separate rounds of attitude and preference surveys at statewide town meetings in November 2004 and March/April 2005. The results are posted at www.pamagic.org in the PaMAGIC Initiatives section.

The “larger GIS Enterprise” remains somewhat undefined, but certainly includes local, state, and federal governments as well as academia and many businesses. As the second year of its Common Vision program, PaMAGIC will initiate a planning process to take advantage of the five-year FEMA Map Modernization Program currently underway. Funded at almost \$250 million per year nationwide, this program offers the most benefits to states with well-documented and supported plans, and the Commonwealth is not taking full advantage of this opportunity. If we act quickly, and as an enterprise, we can still leverage Map Modernization to our lasting benefit. Further, the planning process we propose will prepare us for the larger strategic planning we need to undertake to see and achieve a Common Vision.

The main reasons for undertaking such an effort are:

1. Flooding is Pennsylvania’s #1 natural hazard.
2. The PAMAP program is poised to take advantage of the high resolution topography required for some areas of Map Modernization.
3. The Commonwealth is missing a unique opportunity for federal funding that could approach \$5 million per year for the duration of the program.
4. The lessons learned in building and executing the plan will be valuable in constructing the larger strategic plan for the extended enterprise.

Since FEMA is already in the second year of a five-year program, speed is of the essence. This fall we will gather a group of 10-20 subject matter experts for a two-day intensive session to build the framework of our plan, after which the larger community will scrutinize the details. After a short review period the framework will be finalized by early 2006.

September 15, 2005

The objectives of the FEMA Multi-Hazard Flood Map Modernization Program are:

1. Establish and maintain a premier data collection and delivery system
2. Achieve effective program management
3. Build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships
4. Expand and better inform the user community