

**Bylaws of the  
Geographic Information Systems Planning  
Council of the  
Capital Area Council of Governments**

**Article I – Name, Purpose, Responsibilities**

The Regional Geographic Information Systems Planning Council (GISPC) is created by the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG), for coordinating and affecting the mutual development, implementation, sharing and maintenance of geospatial data and GIS applications among federal, state and regional and local governments; institutions; and organizations of the ten-county State Planning Region 12. Staff support for the GISPC is represented by the CAPCOG GIS Section. The CAPCOG GISPC is formed to meet local and regional needs and in response to recommendations of the Texas GISPC, Statewide Geographic Information Systems Plan. The plan calls for the formation of Regional Geographic Coordinating Councils in partnership with Councils of Governments in Texas. CAPCOG recognizes the need for establishing consistent GIS infrastructure and data exchange standards to assure maximum benefits of joint data development and information sharing, and will pursue the implementation of National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI), Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and Texas GISPC adopted goals and standards in the region.

The GISPC will provide advisory support and guidance to CAPCOG administration, its Executive Committee, GIS staff, and committees in planning for programs or projects with GIS related applications. Emphasis will be placed on effecting the coordination, development, and implementation of cooperative programs, projects and agreements to establish GIS communications and data exchange standards; online data services; geospatial data sharing initiatives; and, Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

The GISPC will work to establish and maintain collaborative cost-sharing partnerships, among state and federal governmental agencies, cooperating local governments; and institutions and organizations in the ten-county CAPCOG region that are currently using or have a need for accurate up-to-date aerial photography, digital imagery, map and geospatial data coverage.

Members of the GISPC will assist in the education and promotion of GIS and serve as communication links to local GIS service providers and users from their respective county and/or regional service area. In support of CAPCOG's on-going effort to enhance 9-1-1 Emergency Services, members will work with county 9-1-1 GIS coordinators, database managers and members of the Capital Area Emergency Communications District (CAECD) Strategic Advisory Committee to accomplish the requirements of CAECD and entity contracts for implementation and coordination of GIS activities.

The GISPC will hold necessary meetings for conducting council business; and perform other tasks as directed by the CAPCOG Executive Committee.

## Article II - Membership

### Number

The GISPC will be made up of sixteen categorical, voting members, representing the following:

County/City	Number of Representatives
Bastrop County	1
Blanco County	1
Burnet County	1
Caldwell County	1
Fayette County	1
Hays County	2
Lee County	1
Llano County	1
Travis County	2
City of Austin	2
Williamson County	3

Nominations for county representatives will be made by the CAPCOG local government entity Executive Committee representative(s) in collaboration with the respective entity governing bodies. Once appointed by the CAPCOG Executive Committee the representative, if the only representative for the county, becomes the CAPCOG/County GIS point of contact. In Hays, Travis and Williamson Counties where more than one representative is to be appointed, representatives are encouraged to designate a CAPCOG/County GIS point of contact for their respective county.

1. A CAPCOG staff member, designated by the CAPCOG Executive Director, shall serve as Council liaison and shall attend each Council meeting.
2. A representative of the CAPCOG Executive Committee may serve on the Council.
3. All active members of the GISPC will follow the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI) Code of Ethics for GIS professionals. <https://www.gisci.org/Ethics/CodeofEthics.aspx>

### Qualifications

Representatives selected to fill vacancies must meet the following qualifications:

1. Be an employee, preferably working with GIS, of the City or County he/she represents in the GISPC.
2. Have actual experience working with or developing GIS operations or data.
3. Willingness to support efforts to improve the capabilities and standards of GIS use in the region.
4. Take responsibility for providing information acquired in the GISPC meetings to the applicable personnel in the county or city they represent.
5. Desirable appointee affiliations: local government (elected officials and/or staff), county appraisal districts, 9-1-1 addressing/GIS coordinators, special districts or authorities, colleges and universities with GIS programs.
6. Members of the Council shall reside or be employed in the county/city they are to represent and must also be representative of the demographics of State Planning Region 12.

### Term

1. The term of appointment for a member of the Council shall begin on the date of

- appointment by the CAPCOG Executive Committee, and be through December 31st of odd numbered years.
2. A member may be reappointed by the CAPCOG Executive Committee.
  3. In the case of a vacancy, the CAPCOG Executive Committee shall appoint a replacement to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.
  4. A member may be removed for good cause by the CAPCOG Executive Committee.

#### Vacancy

A vacancy occurs when:

1. a member dies; or
2. a member's term expires and the member is not reappointed; or
3. a member resigns in writing to the CAPCOG Committee liaison and the Committee Chair with notification to the Executive Committee at its next regular meeting.; or
4. a member is removed; or
5. a member no longer satisfies the qualification requirements.

#### Attendance

1. Members are expected to attend all meetings.
2. Attendance records documenting Council member absences will be maintained by the CAPCOG Council liaison. If a committee member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, notification must be made to the CAPCOG Committee liaison at least two business days prior to the meeting for an absence to be excused.; notification must be received in enough time to ensure there will be a quorum.
3. Non-attendance at a GISPC meeting without notification to the CAPCOG Council liaison will be considered an unexcused absence. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may send a representative who assumes all but the voting rights and responsibilities of the member.
4. A member is removed when, within one calendar year, he/she misses 50% of the minimum number of meetings to be held or two (2) consecutive meetings, with at least one of the meetings being an unexcused absence, whichever is greater. The member will be notified in writing of such removal.
5. Members so removed may appeal in writing to the CAPCOG Executive Committee within two (2) weeks of the date of notification. Appeals will be dealt with in a timely manner and the member will be notified in writing of the decision.

### **Article III – Officers**

#### Election

The election of the Chair and Vice Chair will occur at the first meeting of the calendar year.

#### Term

1. Officers serve one-year terms, beginning on the date of election.
2. Officers may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

#### Vacancy

In the event of either officer is unable to complete his/her term, the Committee will elect a replacement at the next meeting to serve the remainder of the term.

### Duties

1. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council. The Chair shall represent the Council in presentations to the CAPCOG Executive Committee unless such responsibility is delegated by the Chair.
2. In the case of a tie during a vote at which a quorum is present, the Chair will be deemed to have the authority to break the tie.
3. The Vice-Chair shall perform all the duties of the Chair in the case of absence or disability and such other duties as may arise, from time to time, when required or requested by the Council.
4. In case the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent or unable to perform their duties, the Council may appoint a Chair pro tem.

### Other Officers

The Council may elect other Officers from time to time to carry out its responsibilities. This may be done by a simple majority vote of the Council members at any regularly scheduled meeting where a quorum is present.

## **Article IV - Meetings**

### Regular

1. The Council shall meet at least quarterly on a day, time and place specified by the CAPCOG Executive Director, the CAPCOG Council liaison or the Council as a whole.
2. Written notice, including an agenda, of each regular meeting shall be prepared by the CAPCOG Council liaison and mailed, or electronically transmitted, or hand-delivered to each Council member at least five (5) business days before the meeting date.

### Special

1. The Council shall meet specially if called by the CAPCOG Executive Director, the CAPCOG Council liaison, the Council Chair or requested in writing by at least one-third of the membership, excluding vacancies, of the Council.
2. A request by the membership for a special meeting must be in writing, addressed to the Chair, and describe the purpose or purposes of the meeting. Only that business reasonably related to the purpose or purposes described in the request may be conducted at a special meeting.
3. Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least 72 hours prior to the special meeting.

### Quorum and Action

1. A majority of the total voting membership, excluding vacancies, constitutes a quorum for conducting Council business.
2. A majority vote of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present is necessary for action by the Council. During a meeting at which a quorum has been established, and then subsequently lost due to members leaving, all remaining business items requiring a Council vote or action must be postponed until the next scheduled meeting at which a quorum is established.
3. A Council member may not transfer voting rights by proxy.

### Open Meetings and Records

1. All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public. The meetings are not subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act.
2. Minutes of Committee meetings, documents distributed, and other records are

property of CAPCOG and shall be maintained in accordance with CAPCOG's Records Retention Schedule. These materials are available for public view, at CAPCOG's offices or upon receipt of a written request by the interested party. The Council liaison representing the Capital Area Council of Governments or his/her designee shall be the recording clerk.

3. Except where these bylaws require otherwise, *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the conduct of Council meetings.

#### Conflict of Interest

1. A Council member, other than an elected public official, who is a member of the governing body, an officer, or an employee of an applicant for funding must disclose his or her status before the application is considered by the Council and may not participate in discussion of or vote on the application. The Council member is counted in determining the existence of a quorum.
2. A vote cast in violation of this section is not counted.

#### Professional Conduct

Committee members should maintain objectivity and professionalism when carrying out business of the Committee. Committee members will not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age. In the event that a Committee member acts in a manner which brings the work of the Committee into question or controversy, it shall be the responsibility of the CAPCOG Executive Director to address the incident with the appointing member of the Executive Committee and if appropriate, to recommend removal from the committee to the Executive Committee.

### **Article V – Ad Hoc Committees**

#### Appointment

Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Chair with the approval of the Council and shall serve for special purposes to comply with special needs.

#### Term

Membership on ad hoc committees shall be established to achieve the purpose for which the committee was created.

#### Meetings

The method for calling ad hoc committee meetings shall be the same as that for calling Council meetings or at the discretion of the ad hoc committee membership to discharge their responsibility.

#### Officers

The Chairs of the ad hoc committees shall be appointed by the Chair of the GISPC.

### **Article VI – Amendments** **By CAPCOG Executive Committee**

The CAPCOG Executive Committee may amend these bylaws at a regular or special called meeting. The written text of a proposed amendment must be included with the notice of the meeting at which the amendment will be considered.

By the Geographic Information Systems Planning Council

The GISPC may recommend an amendment to these bylaws at a regular or special meeting. The written text of a proposed amendment must be recorded at the meeting at which the amendment is discussed and voted upon. An amendment adopted by the GISPC is not effective unless approved by the CAPCOG Executive Committee. The written text of a proposed amendment must be included with the notice of the meeting at which the amendment will be considered by the CAPCOG Executive Committee.

Effective Date

An amendment to these bylaws takes effect when approved by the CAPCOG Executive Committee, unless the amendment specifies a later effective date. Copies of amended bylaws will be distributed to Council members by the Council liaison.

# CODE OF ETHICS

## *The GIS Certification Institute*

This Code of Ethics is intended to provide guidelines for GIS (geographic information system) professionals. It should help professionals make appropriate and ethical choices. It should provide a basis for evaluating their work from an ethical point of view. By heeding this code, GIS professionals will help to preserve and enhance public trust in the discipline.

This code is based on the ethical principle of always treating others with respect and never merely as means to an end: i.e., deontology. It requires us to consider the impact of our actions on other persons and to modify our actions to reflect the respect and concern we have for them. It emphasizes our obligations to other persons, to our colleagues and the profession, to our employers, and to society as a whole. Those obligations provide the organizing structure for these guidelines.

The text of this code draws on the work of many professional societies. It is not surprising that many codes of ethics have a similar structure and provide similar guidelines to their professionals, because they are based upon a similar concept of morality. A few of the guidelines that are unique to the GIS profession include the encouragement to make data and findings widely available, to document data and products, to be actively involved in data retention and security, to show respect for copyright and other intellectual property rights, and to display concern for the sensitive data about individuals discovered through geospatial or database manipulations. Longer statements expand on or provide examples for the GIS profession.

A positive tone is taken throughout the text of this code. GIS professionals commit themselves to ethical behavior rather than merely seeking to avoid specific acts. The problems with listing acts to be avoided are: 1) there are usually reasonable exceptions to any avoidance rule and 2) there is implicit approval of any act not on the list. Instead, this code provides a list of many positive actions. These explicit actions illustrate respect for others and help strengthen both an understanding of this ethos and a commitment to it.

This code is not expected to provide guidelines for all situations. Ambiguities will occur and personal judgment will be required. Sometimes a GIS professional becomes stuck in a dilemma where two right actions are in conflict with each other or any course of action violates some aspect of this code. Help might come from talking with colleagues or reading relevant works such as those listed in the bibliography. Ultimately, a professional must reflect carefully on such situations before making the tough decision. Contemplating the values and goals of alternative ethical paradigms may be useful in reaching a decision:

- View persons who exemplify morality as your own guide (Virtue Ethics)
- Attempt to maximize the happiness of everyone affected (Utilitarianism)
- Only follow maxims of conduct that everyone else could adopt (Kantianism)
- Always treat other persons as ends, never merely as means (Deontology)

### **I. Obligations to Society**

The GIS professional recognizes the impact of his or her work on society as a whole, on subgroups of society including geographic or demographic minorities, on future generations, and inclusive of social, economic, environmental, or technical fields of endeavor. Obligations to society shall be paramount when there is conflict with other obligations. Therefore, the GIS professional will:

1. Do the Best Work Possible
  - Be objective, use due care, and make full use of education and skills.
  - Practice integrity and not be unduly swayed by the demands of others.
  - Provide full, clear, and accurate information.
  - Be aware of consequences, good and bad.
  - Strive to do what is right, not just what is legal.
2. Contribute to the Community to the Extent Possible, Feasible, and Advisable
  - Make data and findings widely available.
  - Strive for broad citizen involvement in problem definition, data identification, analysis, and decision-making.
  - Donate services to the community.
3. Speak Out About Issues
  - Call attention to emerging public issues and identify appropriate responses based on personal expertise.
  - Call attention to the unprofessional work of others. First take concerns to those persons; if satisfaction is not gained and the problems warrant, then
  - additional people and organizations should be notified.
  - Admit when a mistake has been made and make corrections where possible.

## **II. Obligations to Employers and Funders**

The GIS professional recognizes that he or she has been hired to deliver needed products and services. The employer (or funder) expects quality work and professional conduct. Therefore, the GIS professional will:

1. Deliver Quality Work
  - Be qualified for the tasks accepted.
  - Keep current in the field through readings and professional development.
  - Identify risks and the potential means to reduce them.
  - Define alternative strategies to reach employer/funder goals, if possible, and the implications of each.
  - Document work so that others can use it. This includes metadata and program documentation.
2. Have a Professional Relationship
  - Hold information confidential unless authorized to release it.
  - Avoid all conflicts of interest with clients and employers if possible, but when they are unavoidable, disclose that conflict.
  - Avoid soliciting, accepting, or offering any gratuity or inappropriate benefit connected to a potential or existing business or working relationship.
  - Accept work reviews as a means to improve performance.
  - Honor contracts and assigned responsibilities.
  - Accept decisions of employers and clients, unless they are illegal or unethical.
  - Help develop security, backup, retention, recovery, and disposal rules.
  - Acknowledge and accept rules about the personal use of employer resources. This includes computers, data, telecommunication equipment, and other resources.



- Strive to resolve differences.
3. Be Honest in Representations
    - State professional qualifications truthfully.
    - Make honest proposals that allow the work to be completed for the resources requested.
    - Deliver an hour's work for an hour's pay.
    - Describe products and services fully.
    - Be forthcoming about any limitations of data, software, assumptions, models, methods, and analysis.

### **III. Obligations to Colleagues and the Profession**

The GIS professional recognizes the value of being part of a community of other professionals. Together, we support each other and add to the stature of the field. Therefore, the GIS professional will:

1. Respect the Work of Others.
  - Cite the work of others whenever possible and appropriate.
  - Honor the intellectual property rights of others. This includes their rights in software and data.
  - Accept and provide fair critical comments on professional work.
  - Recognize the limitations of one's own knowledge and skills and recognize and use the skills of other professionals as needed. This includes both
    - those in other disciplines and GIS professionals with deeper skills in
    - critical sub-areas of the field.
  - Work respectfully and capably with others in GIS and other disciplines.
  - Respect existing working relationships between others, including employer/employee and contractor/client relationships.
  - Deal honestly and fairly with prospective employees, contractors, and vendors.
2. Contribute to the Discipline to the Extent Possible
  - Publish results so others can learn about them.
  - Volunteer time to professional educational and organizational efforts: local, national, or global.
  - Support individual colleagues in their professional development. Special attention should be given to underrepresented groups whose diverse
    - backgrounds will add to the strength of the profession.

### **IV. Obligations to Individuals in Society**

The GIS professional recognizes the impact of his or her work on individual people and will strive to avoid harm to them. Therefore, the GIS professional will:

1. Respect Privacy
  - Protect individual privacy, especially about sensitive information.
  - Be especially careful with new information discovered about an individual through GIS-based manipulations (such as geocoding) or the combination of two or more databases.
2. Respect Individuals
  - Encourage individual autonomy. For example, allow individuals to withhold consent from being added to a database, correct information about themselves in a database, and remove themselves from a database.

- Avoid undue intrusions into the lives of individuals.
- Be truthful when disclosing information about an individual.
- Treat all individuals equally, without regard to race, gender, or other personal characteristic not related to the task at hand.

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Downloaded from: [https://www.gisci.org/Portals/0/Ethics/CodeOfEthics\\_PR.pdf](https://www.gisci.org/Portals/0/Ethics/CodeOfEthics_PR.pdf)

Bylaws History

Action	Date	Comments
<b>Adopted</b>	05/1997	
<b>Revised</b>	04/1998	
<b>Revised</b>	07/1999	
<b>Revised</b>	12/1999	
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<b>Revised</b>	05/2012	
<b>Revised</b>	10/2015	Removed biannual progress reports to the CAPCOG Executive Committee. Added the GISCI Code of Ethics to the By-Laws in two places — under the Article II-Membership, and the full code of ethics at the end of the document. Under attendance 1 – added language to include attending meetings by remote access.
<b>Revised</b>	12/2018	Resignation; nonattendance; elections; minutes; professional conduct