

---

# STATEMENT OF INTENT

RE: ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATEWIDE PARCEL DATABASE FOR PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

DATE: APRIL 2008

## PURPOSE

This project is designed to construct a single, regularly updated, statewide parcel dataset based on data provided by city, county, state, and federal agencies that develop and maintain parcel data within Washington State. The purpose is to reduce the cost, inefficiencies, and redundant efforts of state and federal agencies, as each independently and periodically contacts parcel data originators for current data sets. This project also seeks to support, where needed, local efforts involved in developing and maintaining parcel data. Key to success is identifying and addressing data distribution concerns.

## PARTICIPANTS

In October 2006 a group of federal, state, tribal and local government participants came together to explore whether there was interest in and a willingness to pursue the development and coordination of a statewide parcel framework data set that would be accessible to various participating agencies. It was determined that tackling this project would involve the identification of a set of core attributes of interest, addressing the concerns of county parcel data producers, the coordination of licensing agreements, and building a working relationship with the county parcel custodians and key agency framework coordinators. Currently, the working group is co-chaired by representatives from the Department of Health and the University of Washington and includes representatives from numerous federal, state, local, and other public agencies in Washington State.

## COLLECTION

Researchers at the University of Washington have begun collecting parcel data from each county Assessor's office and/or GIS department and from federal and state agencies that produce parcel data in Washington State. County Assessors' offices were initially contacted in the fall of 2007. In this on-going effort, we are striving to clearly communicate the project objectives with each county contact, and to address any questions or concerns. Part of this communication includes negotiation of an agreement with parcel data producers on the acquisition, terms of use, data updates, and cost of acquiring the data. The frequency and timing of updates to the statewide parcel layer have not been decided; many agencies, however, agree that an annual update will meet current needs.

## TRANSFORMATION

We agree, to the extent that parcel data producers are interested, to work together to develop the appropriate methods to transform local data into a common statewide format. We intend to, after receiving the parcel geometry and/or assessor-related tabular data, develop a transformation methodology that will result in a normalized data set for Washington State. The normalized data set will be a common format of file type, attribute structure, and spatial reference.

While ensuring that all original metadata provided from the data producers will be maintained, the normalizing procedures will be integrated into the revised metadata to allow complete documentation of the statewide data set. In almost all cases, the normalized data will be a simplified version and/or a subset of the original data. However, as needed by participating agencies, the original non-normalized historical data will be available for reference or closer inspection of additional attributes. Counties and other parcel data producers will be provided the opportunity to review and comment on the normalized format and transformation methodology.

#### SHARING

Parcel data provided by originators and shared through the Parcels Working Group is a critical source of information for participating state and federal agencies. The Parcels Working Group provides a single point of contact and timely access to statewide GIS parcel data for participants. This will increase the efficiency of obtaining parcel data, reduce the redundancy of effort, and decrease cost.

Currently parcel data generators such as cities and counties are frequently contacted by state and federal agencies requesting parcel data sets. Under the existing scenario, each state and federal agency must independently obtain, normalize and store parcel data from cities and counties across Washington. This has often resulted in state and federal agencies using outdated parcel data because of the difficulty in constructing updated datasets.

There are several benefits to producers of parcel data participating in the Parcels Working Group. Producers will receive fewer requests from state and federal agencies for data. There should be fewer “follow-up” questions because the Parcels Working Group will have already normalized the various datasets into a statewide coverage, with associated metadata. Because state and federal users will have access to more current data, the results of their analyses will be more timely and accurate.

The Parcels Working Group recognizes the economic investment in and sensitivity of private data. Our process provides for entities participating in the Parcels Working Group to have access to the statewide parcel dataset. Public inquiries for specific city or county level GIS parcel data will be redirected to the data producer. Producers will have open access to a list of users who have signed this letter of intent committing to using the data appropriately.

The cooperation of parcel data producers with participating government agencies that need statewide parcel data will be a significant factor in making the goal of safe and efficient data sharing of the Washington State Parcel Database a reality.

SIGNED BY THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE PARCELS WORKING GROUP