Statewide Parcel Data Exploratory Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 18, 2006
10:00 AM to Noon
WA Dept. of Ecology, 300 Desmond Dr., Lacey
Room R3A-19

Updated: Nov.7, 2006

Attendees: Sam Bardelson, USGS; Sam Wentz, CTED; Craig Erickson, DOH; Mike Mohrman, OFM; Kyle Reese-Cassal, OFM; Tom Kimpel, OFM; Ken Reister, DNR; Marc McCalmen, WDFW; Shelly Snyder, WDFW; John Bay, WDFW; Tom Williams, DSHS; Whitney Buschmann, WSDOT; Deborah Naslund, WADNR; Jane Ely, WA DOR; Sandi McAuliffe, WA DOR; Orrin Frederick, BLM; Marc Thomas, FGDC Cadastral Subcomm; Tony Hartrich, Quinault Indian Nation; Rich Kim, Ecology; Luke Rogers, Univ. of Washington; David Gadsden, ESRI; Andrew Kinney, Thurston County; Scott Augustine, EPA; Scott Kellogg, DOH; Ray Philen, DOR; Stephen Leibenguth, DOH; Tami Griffen, WSDOT; Jordyn Mitchell, WSDOT; Dale Guenther, US Forest Service; Stephen Bernath, Ecology; Joy Paulus, IAC; John Tooley, Ecology

Summary:

The Framework Management Group recently resumed meeting and found that there is interest in coordinating the collection and distribution of County Parcel data.

On October 18th a meeting was held to assess the level of need for parcel data, and to determine whether agencies are redundantly contacting county offices for this data. Judging by the number of agencies represented (34 people attended from; State, Federal, Tribal, County agencies) there is a strong interest in obtaining parcel data in a manner that is more efficient and effective.

Several agencies apply considerable resources to obtaining county parcel data on either a periodic or continual basis - Ecology, Health, Social and Health Services, UW, OFM, WSDOT, USFS, and more. Some of these agencies do substantial processing of the data. For example the UW can report on parcels of a single land owner across county boundaries.

Luke Rogers from the UW will be putting together a web based survey to collect information such as: present expenditure of resources on data collection, geographic extent of data needs, use of the data, and benefits to the public. Luke would like to have each agency make one coordinated survey response. Ken Reister will coordinate a response from the DNR. The survey should be available sometime in November with a reply period thru December. I expect to be contacting all DNR GIS users about the survey in November.

The results of the survey could help in justification to the legislature and or various agencies for funds to assist the Counties of Washington State in the development of digital parcel data. Approximately 35% of Washington Counties have not made the leap to digital parcel data. This assistance as well as offers of data sharing may enable and encourage the Counties to make parcel data available to us.
 - Ken Reister, WADNR

Notes

Introductions & Background

This meeting is to gauge the interest in finding a small group of key agencies that are interested to pursuing the development and coordination of a statewide parcel framework data set that would be accessible to various state agencies. Tackling this project would involve the identification of core attributes of interest; licensing and distribution; and building a working partnership with the county parcel custodians and the key agency framework coordinator.

It has become apparent that a variety of state agencies have an interest in statewide parcel data
Need to determine level of interest
Need mechanism for state agencies and counties to share parcel information

Make it easy for counties to share data-have to find avenue that will work for both counties and state

County Data Stats

10 Counties don't have digital data - mostly Eastern Washington
Half the counties require a digital sharing agreement
4 or 5 have ftp site where data can be downloaded
Some counties require that you contact Assessor's office for data
Some require that you write a letter to the Assessor requesting the data
10 to 15 counties charge for data, between $50 and $250

General County Perspective

There are reasons why counties have not coordinated efforts thus far
Revenue: Fewer data purchases by state results in less revenue for counties
How do the state agencies coordinate this effort and not financially burden the counties?
Redistribution: Counties like to understand who has what data

Liability issues

Review of Existing State Agencies that are Collecting and Managing Statewide Parcel Data Sets - Group Discussion

Questions:
What are the state agencies doing to collect data?
How are they doing this?
Is there a solution that works for counties and state?
What are the licensing issues?
What are the bare bones of what we need to know about parcels (attributes, etc.)?

Ecology (John Tooley)
Mid level managers overseeing projects involving GIS
Out of this came service and data needs, one of which was a need for statewide parcel data
A statewide parcel set with short list of attributes was created for use within DOE (Ex: Water rights-places of use)
Sometimes these DOE groups need more information and need to look at the raw data, not the simplified statewide version
Rich Kim-data administrator-visits counties annually to collect the data, loads it into SDE as a statewide normalized data set

Ecology (Steven Bernath)
Forest practice
When forest practice board makes rules they have to do a small business/economic impact statement
One concern is the need to get a better handle on small vs. large forest owners
Funding for RTI to better develop database
There is money in this budget for data stewardship

Thurston County (Andrew Kinney)
Probably receive 50 requests/year for data
Numerous requests from same agencies-agencies aren't communicating about who has what
County needs to be able to show commissioners how the data they are providing is benefiting customers
Example of FEMA cooperation resulted in 45% reduction in flood insurance rates. This was an easy sell to the commissioners since it has obvious benefits to the county taxpayers

DSHS (Tom Williams)
Use parcel layers to identify risks for sex offenders – use the location of day care facilities, schools, etc. This value added risk assessment information is useful to Thurston Co. and is part of a data sharing agreement
If attribute info is lacking, write a python script and get information from the county website
Operate with data sharing agreements (Ex: get data from Thurston County annually, in exchange for risk information DSHS assigns)
Attributes Needed-site address (if not available, use parcel ID, or taxpayer name, ID)
Obtains 24-25 counties on an irregular basis

Keeps as separate county data sets.

OFM (Mike Mohrman)
Obtains parcels from 24 counties, used for tracking new housing areas and annexation areas.
Small area estimates program
City Annexations
Use data to geocode locations
Attributes Needed: parcel number, address, structure type, building permit info
Keeps as separate county data sets

WSDOT (Jordyn Mitchell)
Uses are similar to others, except that mainly use the geometry
Annexations
Attributes Needed: geometry for plotting annexations
Keeps as separate county data sets and update frequency varies

DOH (Craig Erickson)
Uses parcels to build, mailing lists, map housing units with septic systems
Attributes Needed: owner, parcel number, building values

UW (Luke Rogers)
The Rural Technology Initiatives Office began in 2001 to compile assessor's attributes.
Normalized attributes across counties and developed a Land Uses cross walk between codes used by teach county and a master list
Wrote a program to build geometries based on legal descriptions
Very intensive normalization process-normalize ownerships so there will be only one owner across county boundaries
Attributes Needed-assessed values, land use, legal, zoning, names, addresses (most of the attributes that are consistent across county boundaries)

DOR (Craig Erickson)
Has a WAC to require that counties start implementing a land use code
There are not a lot of guidelines so how it is implemented varies between counties

BLM (Orrin Frederick)
Maintains a Public Land Survey corners database with survey level accuracy. Contains parcels for feral ownership. Emphasis is on geographic PLS survey corners
Developed land use information across every township in state
Degree of reliability is an issue. Start with original survey (GLO), most recently working with tribes
Have good inventory of location info for forests involved. Currently only 7% of state is survey accurate. Using parcels for federal ownership/oversight

BLM – NW Interagency Fire (Dale Gunther)
Interested in structure and location information adjacent to federal lands for fire fighting and pre-planning
Currently using satellite imagery to determine structure location for firefighting purposes-where to locate fire-fighting resources
Used in pre-planning (before fire has started)
These needs also apply to USFS
Looking at wild and urban interface, and around USFS lands
Oregon has done something similar

USGS (Sam Bardelson)
No vested interest in parcels
Would use the data from time to time

FGDC Cadastral Subcommittee (Marc Thomas)
Looking for parcel data for all of the US to used in the National Spatial Data Infrastructure
Preparing to launch web-based inventory for counties to enter what data they are collecting and why.
The Subcommittee web site (www.nationalcad.org) will also have links to federal, state, county and city GIS/Parcel sources and the names and telephone numbers of the lead contacts. The site also has information on other state's experiences with this type of parcel collection effort.

DOR (Jane Ely)
Creating tax code map and city layer
These data sets are accessible through address lookup on DOR website
When Jane has time she contacts counties to get parcel data, has about 10 counties right now
All the lines are drawn along parcel boundaries-having parcel layers could help them correct these boundaries
Attributes Needed - The only attribute that is necessary is the parcel number. There are other attributes that would be useful, especially the city (incorporated or not incorporated, and city name). Other attributes that would be nice, but I'd rather have a parcel layer with "bare bones attributes" rather than none at all.

WDFW (Shelly Snyder)
Biologists and regional managers have project-based needs related to land ownership issues
Building land information system for land owned or managed by WDFW
Interested in survey level of control that is brought into state
Uses parcel contacts as a mailing source for public notices

Parcel & Survey Control
Big discussion on the level of survey control on parcel data in general. Thurston County's was not tied to survey control because of the high cost. Some organization use parcel geometry hyperlink to electronic survey document

List Business Uses for Parcel Data and Core Attributes of Importance - Group Discussion

Business Model:
-Business model is needed for the shared parcel data. Value added information of interest to the counties could be a marketing point. This will need to be high visibility benefits such as Flood Insurance Rate reduction, not just more efficiency in the IT department.
-BLM want to be a player as a data provider. Farm Forestry Organization in DC and Olympia have been lobbying for this. Having a steering committee of Eastside and Westside counties, and highly automated and lightly automated counties.
-National.CAD.org has a list of core attributes, a business plan and other supporting documentation to consider
-www.nationalcad.org has a list of core attributes for wild land fire requirements, a business plan template and other supporting documentation for this group to consider.
-County benefits need to be clearly shown
-ROI Report would help to document and justify the cost and outline organizational benefits

Where to go from here:
Each agency needs to determine how much money we spend on getting the parcel data, normalizing, etc.
Need something to present to management-why this project is worthwhile
This endeavor requires a project lead
This meeting was to gauge the interest of the parties involved
Who can head this up?
WATRANS is a good example of what it takes to do a project like this-multiple layers (local, state, federal)

Parcel Survey:
-Luke Rogers volunteered to set up web site for the project including a web-based survey site to capture current agency activities and current agency use of parcel data.
-UW will work on drafting survey with help from Joy, Sam & Rich
-Review of draft survey will be provided by Mark T, Mark M, Tom, Mike and Jordyn
-Hopefully send out within 2 weeks
-Need to survey state agencies to determine commitment, needs, specific attribute information, business needs, geographic extent
       What each agency needs in order to run their business?
       Data providers-what does each data provider have?
       What are the business needs? How would you benefit from having this data available?
       What geographic extent are you interested in? (state wide/Puget Sound/individual county)
       What attributes do you need?
       What information do you generate as a result of using this information?
       Are others interested in this value added information?

Next Steps:
Meet again on Wednesday the third week in January 17, 2007 from 10 to Noon

Other Thoughts and Ideas:

-Joy:
Spoke with Cy Smith, Oregon GIS Coordinator
He has been working for 3 years to get a statewide parcel layer
Had difficulty getting the state agencies to work together
Lessons to be learned from Oregon?

-WATRANS:
Make sure that you give the people you are getting the data from the opportunity to be part of the entire process
Their needs considered, they get something out of it
In order to be successful it takes time to build partnerships
Tammy started with DOT, then created broad base partner group. Those people worked with her to select steering committee-tried to get at least one county from each side with advanced GIS department, and one from each side with start-up GIS department
Show return on investment
How does this project help big issues (traffic safety, how we get traffic revenue, i.e. how project will help major issues, not a tiny department)

-NationalCAD.org
Core attributes document

-Other states:
Other states have done similar things - there should be information online
What it takes, recommendations
Recommended frameworks
How has the coordinator position been funded?
One of the more successful has been a recording fee on the parcels-every time there is a transaction a fee is charged
DOR heads this up

Private sector-may be of interest to private entities?

Needs to be handled as enterprise data set

Additional Information

Note Takers: Whitney Buschmann, WSDOT; Joy Paulus, IAC; John Tooley, Ecology; Sam Bardelson, USGS

Meeting Follow-up Materials Provided:
BLM - Steve Sherer, BPA GIS Manager

We maintain literally thousands of miles of high voltage transmission lines and rights-of-way in Washington (as well as Oregon, Idaho, Montana). Part of this maintenance involves vegetation management, which requires that we contact landowners to inform them of our planned activities.

In the past, our realty specialists gathered current landowner information by visiting county offices. Although that still occurs, more recently we have been able to acquire current parcel data from county GIS shops, when available. As you might imagine, this saves all kinds of time and money.

As a regional entity that needs to deal with many counties, it would help us if there were a standard data sharing agreement that contained wording appropriate for our use, that each county could accept. As it stands now, when a county requires an agreement (not all do), we need to have it reviewed, modified, returned, reviewed, and finally signed. As with any contract, it takes time (and money). If there was one agreement that could be used statewide, which contained language that Federal agencies would accept, it would make things easier and the process would be faster. As we depend on specific field seasons to accomplish our work, time is sometimes a critical factor.

Another issue, of course, is attributes. Our requirement (for this project) is simple: parcel number, site address, landowner name, and mailing address. Any standardization that counties would agree to would help our process.

Ultimately, it would be great if there were a statewide portal that agency's like mine could go to for downloading parcel data. It could be password protected to ensure that only those with valid agreements could access it. Beyond that, web services would allow direct access into GIS applications