

LION Position on a Statewide GIS Repository

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The Wisconsin Land Information Officers Network (LION) offers the following analysis and proposal to be considered as a solution to achieving a Wisconsin GIS Repository. This proposal is intended to meet the needs of all stakeholders, data creators, users and consumers in the state. LION's objective is to push for more action that leads to a solution on this issue.

Introduction:

Since the first efforts were undertaken to create a statewide dataset, there has been much discussion of a central repository for statewide data. This would provide a central authoritative source and ease the government-to-government exchange of statewide data. With the passage of Act 20 and the creation of state wide parcel data, there was hope that a central statewide data repository would finally be done. With the reorganization of the Geographic Information Officer (GIO) position to Wisconsin DOA – Division of Intergovernmental Relations (DIR) there was an expectation that this could be accomplished. However, over the past several years it has become clear that there are several institutional and policy obstacles that have been in the way. It is also clear that the Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP) funding is not sufficient to support the needed IT infrastructure, in addition to all the other initiatives that require funding. Critical base budget and strategic initiative grants, other state wide data and technology needs have committed the WLIP fund.

It must be recognized that the expectations were overly optimistic within the current structure of state agencies. At the core DIR is in charge of managing several grant programs, including the WLIP which is the purpose of the division and they do it well. However, the division is not provided with resources to manage an IT infrastructure required for a State GIS Data Repository. The WLIP funding should remain committed to counties for the development and management of land records systems and data at the local level, so we can continue to provide and enhance the currency and accuracy of data statewide. The state can be best served by DIR focusing on its central directive.

The challenge is to find an alternative state agency that can provide the IT infrastructure and support for a statewide GIS repository. The current structure of state agencies presents challenges (staffing, network connectivity, budget, etc.) in developing an interconnected IT infrastructure that would make it easy to share data. In addition, the management of a central repository, severing state, local and private entities is outside the mission of many state agencies.

Goals:

The Goals of the Land Information Community should be broadened to include the following:

- Establish a single data broker for geospatial data in the State of Wisconsin.
- Establish a Wisconsin GIS Data Repository for geospatial data, vector and raster to meet various institutional needs across the state.
- Establish an authoritative source for statewide geospatial data in Wisconsin.
- Ensure consistent access to current geospatial data.
- Leverage relationships with local governments and state agencies for the development of standards.
- Reduce unnecessary redundancy, inefficiency and potential inaccuracy of data stored in isolated servers across multiple state agencies.
- Simplify the government to government exchange of data between local, county, state and federal agencies.
- Identify a funding source outside the WLIP for operations.

Proposal:

LION advocates that the Wisconsin Land Information community formally identifies the Wisconsin Legislative Technical Service Bureau (LTSB) as the official holder of the Wisconsin GIS Repository. LION would work with WLIA, WSLS, WCA, NENA-APCO and other organizations to push for this effort. This proposal would give the LTSB the formal recognition and authority over the Wisconsin GIS Repository and have the authority to hire staff and acquire technology to meet this role. This would require funding outside the WLIP to establish and maintain the repository. LION would advocate working with the Next Gen 911 (NG911) efforts, to establish the needed infrastructure for implementation of a NG911 system in Wisconsin. By having the LTSB manage the Wisconsin GIS Repository the legislature would have a vital role in the future success of land record modernization efforts in the state.

Reasons for LTSB to manage the Wisconsin GIS Repository:

- Has a proven track record of working with state and county government in the development of state wide dataset.
- Currently hosts the WI Statewide Parcel data.
- Serves as the data broker with the US Census to provide numerous foundational GIS datasets for Census geography.
- Has the technical staff and experience managing statewide datasets.
- Can bridge some of the institutional and policy barriers confronting the establishment of a Wisconsin GIS Repository.
- Connects the Legislature to the broader effort for the Wisconsin Land Records Modernization.