GPCOG GeoParcels Round Table Discussion

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This document is a summary only. It is not a word for word re-creation of the discussion.

Hosted By:

Donna Tippett, GPCOG

Aimee Dubois, MEGUG

(DT, GPCOG)   Intro

(AD, MEGUG) Slideshow on Geoparcels (see slideshow link)

(DJ, Yarmouth) **Should you try to develop an off the shelf parcel viewer or use 3rd party developer?**

(AD, MEGUG) We would be interested in a public-private partnership. Some would be interested in our data. Not sure how to facilitate this. Google has more recent info than we do, they have 2010 flight data on Google Maps.

(JP, Falmouth) **Who is responsible for all of the updates?**

(AD, MEGUG) We would request the data from the towns 1-2 times/year.

(JP, Falmouth) **Is this going to be mandatory for all towns in Maine?**

(AD, MEGUG) No.

Some USM students are working on a study, they may be digitizing some parcels, with some grant money. They will be digitizing parcels in greater Portland and greater Bangor areas. Also a broad-band grant for the purpose of broad-band mapping may help with parcel data. We see this will cover most of the state. There was no maintenance plan after parcel grants, many towns haven't updated their original parcels.

(AD, MEGUG) **How do we entice towns to do the maintenance?**

(JP, Falmouth) So we're not sure how we're going to sustain this project and we're just going ahead?

(AD, MEGUG) That is correct.

(DT, GPCOG) A big chunk of the pilot project in Hancock was establishing framework for keeping the parcels updated.

(DT, GPCOG) **What is realistic for each town in terms of update frequency? How accurate will they be? Where do we go from here?**

(MT, Auburn) We have a committee with Auburn, Lewiston and AVCOG. We maintain parcels for some smaller towns for a fee.

(AD, MEGUG) That's a great idea. Would like to see other larger towns take on that role.

(SS, Unitil) We have some projects in which we are interested in obtaining some towns parcel data. One reason is to identify parcels near construction. If the parcel data included physical locations, we could send letters to see if owners are interested in becoming natural gas customers. Without an address, parcels aren't as useful.

(AD, MEGUG) One field the geoparcels would require is physical address.

(SS, Unitil) A partnership with electric company could prove beneficial to the geoparcels project. We sometimes update parcel data by adding new subdivisions etc, that is helpful to siting new gas lines.

(WG, Kennebunkport) **Where will the money come from to update geoparcels? Is it feasible to have some sort of GIS fee, when a property is transferred?**

(AD, MEGUG) Surcharge on the real estate transfer form has been discussed, but it is believed that it won't be looked upon favorably.

(EL) **What is the estimate for total number of parcel changes per year?**

(AD, MEGUG) We don't know, not sure how we would go about getting that. We don't envision one person/company doing all the updates, some towns will do it themselves, some already have a consultant, etc – makes it difficult to come up with a flat rate per change.

(PE, Casco) Towns update their parcels every year.

(AW, Sewall) No, some haven't done it for 10 years.

(PE, Casco) **Do some towns update in GIS or AutoCAD?**

(AW, Sewall) Some towns update in AutoCAD and transfer to GIS, some do it directly in GIS.

(PE, Casco) AutoCAD to GIS isn't seamless, we are having problems.

(AD, MEGUG) The goal is to have a digital layer with a standard of a GIS format. But if they have an AutoCAD file, we could use that.

(AG, Falmouth) When you are talking about updating a parcel, there are the boundaries, but also a number of other changes, such as book/page updates, owner changes, etc. Number of deed transfers per county, or states ratio study for all transfers might be ways to get the total number of changes/year for the state. Boundaries would be updated less frequently, book/page, last owner etc is updated more frequently. Acreage changes are frequent, even if there is no boundary change, due to surveys. How do towns handle condos/common land?

(AD, MEGUG) Condos/common land is handled differently in different towns.

(AW, Sewall) Mass GIS has gotten vendors to do assessing extracts, maybe we could set something up with Trio and other municipal software vendors.

((AW, Sewall)) Who is doing the QA/QC for the student parcels?

(AD, MEGUG) Tora Johnson from UM Machias and MEGIS will do the final QA/QC

(AW, Sewall) University of GA does a lot of parcel digitzing work, some has been 'cleaned up' by Sewall. The parcel quality wasn't as high as it would be with a professional consultant. There is a concern to keep a tight grasp on student created parcels.

Another thing is that with grant money, are they developing tax maps, not just parcel layer. The towns really need tax maps, in addition to a parcel layer. Tax maps include dimensions and other annotation, not just polygons.

(AD, MEGUG) Tora said that most towns want actual tax maps. It was not part of grant, but for an additional rate, they will create the maps too.

(JB, New Gloucester) Tax maps have inaccuracies, and making them digital increases the belief that they are accurate. With the orthophotos, it becomes apparent that there are inaccuracies in the tax maps. Perceived Accuracy is a major issue.

(AD, MEGUG) By making the parcels digital, it might bring attention to this issue.

There can be a Disclaimer on the website for Parcel Viewers. However, most people don't read the disclaimer.

(WG, Kennebunkport) Digital parcel layers are a great tool for finding inaccuracies. I find it helps find areas that need improvement and makes for more accurate parcels.

(WG, Kennebunkport) Re: student mapping, some towns had problems with shoreland zoning maps, which had to be re-done due to student mapping errors. This became very costly for these towns.

(DJ, Yarmouth) There are levels for parcel mapping – you could label towns as to what level parcels they have.

(AD, MEGUG) Current Maine parcel standards have these levels. Not sure if this information would be included in the parcel data, but it could be in the metadata.

(Audience) Points out that accuracy varies within a community.

(Audience) **Some communities are inundated with parcel data requests. Could there be an option for using the viewer, so that users could download data, thereby easing town work-load? This would be an incentive for town participation.**

(AD, MEGUG) That is a parallel effort in the Geolibrary board, the Geoportal. Working on developing capabilities to download data as a shapefile or kml

Also, would like towns to be able to load their data through the Geoportal, so they won't be bothered for requests for parcel updates 2 times / year. Although, we're not sure how we'll be able to fund the GeoPortal for the long-term.

(JC, ESRI) ESRI's Arcgis.com is a free application where towns can post layer files and anyone can view and download them. You need an ESRI global account, which is free.

Towns can still maintain their own on-line parcel viewers.

(AL, USM) **What do some other states do?**

(AD, MEGUG) New England and the northeast is different from rest of country. Out west they do everything at the county level.

(DT, GPCOG) Many have mentioned that there should be more attribute data associated with each parcel than is planned at this time. **How do towns feel about having more detailed info on-line?**

(AG, Falmouth) The only thing Falmouth does not put on is the house photo. But it is public info, so people can get it if they request it. The more data on-line the better.

(DS, Windham) Some people in Windham don't want their info on-line, there are about 100 properties that they have 'opted out'.   More rural towns have this problem.

(AD, MEGUG)   Some people need to keep their info confidential for security reasons, including judges, people with protective orders, etc

(DS, Windham) You can choose to publish whatever you want, but even if you don't put it on-line, you have to provide it if someone walks into the office and requests it specifically.

(Audience) **How to convince assessors to update info more frequently?**

(WG, Kennebunkport)   If you start to put out info, then that info is always expected.

(MS, Scarborough) Outreach to gain support, get people to see that we are looking at the bigger picture, to view several communites together.

(AD, MEGUG)   We definitely need to get out beyond Portland.

(AB, Standish) It goes back to the cost of the updates. Partnering with groups that want the data who would pay might be a way to go.

(AD, MEGUG)   We don't have access (in terms of a contact person) to Google. Delorme is not really in a position to collect and pay for this info.

(AB, Standish) Google Earth Pro has lots of this data. Also, it's helpful to work with council and utilities.

(AD, MEGUG)   The state has 8000 licences for Google Earth Pro, which is intended to be used for emergency response and utilities outages.   Google maps has Standish parcels.

Windham and New Gloucester have their parcels up on Google Earth. They are clickable to get more info.

(JC, ESRI) ESRI has a community-based mapping effort – free program to put your data into a larger map. We cache it and put it on our server. Works great if you already are using ArcEditor or ArcServer.

Idea for national spatial data project, now have lots of free services that are available.

(DT, GPCOG) Web- mapping options is slightly off-topic, but GPCOG would be interested in setting up a demo session to discuss.

(JP, Falmouth) One way to fund these projects would be a fee thru the registry of deeds.

(AD, MEGUG)   Part of ILRIS was to talk to county registrars. Some require accounts, some require fees to access their deed information on-line. Hancock did not have either.

(DW, USGS) Counties are trying to break down barriers, and have all the deed info in 1 place.

The geolibrary sees that many different places have parcel data, idea is to collect data in one authoritative source.

(WG, Kennebunkport)   **Is their another source of data for Fema maps?**

(BB, MEMA) Fema forgets that data is all generic. They need to be updated – can't do analysis because they have no idea where properties are. Have money to collect critical facilities data, but not private data. Targeting York, Cumberland and Hancock or Penobscot counties for digital parcel data right now.

(USM) Right now students are collecting data in Portland and Bangor area – for regional planning modeling, so land use codes are very important, but many towns don't have it. Sometimes it links in from an assessing database. Land Use Codes are not standard.

(AD, MEGUG)   Currently, each town has different Land Use Codes, so if we ask for the Land Use Codes as a field, they will be unusable, because they are all different. There is a need to standardize.

(DW, USGS) Re: Land Use Codes

- 90% of towns did not populate the land use field in parcel grants projects.

- The Hancock pilot project would be a good time to collect land use codes.

- Cama vendors have 6 different sets of codes.

- If you come up with a standard how do you apply it? Best chance is with the assessors.

- Challenge to come up with Land Use Codes that work for assessors and for state needs.

- New codes almost ready, but it will be the basics. Commercial, residential, public, etc, possibly with a 2nd detail level.

(USM) Land Use Codes will be critical for buy-in for regional analysis and planning.

(MS, Scarborough) Agree, but cost is a barrier. And you have to show benefits to decision makers, by showing them some great products. Have to 'sell' the program to those who can bring it forward.

(DT, GPCOG) I hope it's not too hard to sell you on the benefit of regional planning: transit, landuse, flood, emergency management etc, Planning, with standardized data produces more accurate analysis. Readily available and standardized data makes it possible to put together strong and convincing grant applications. One incentive to maintaining parcels is regional planning and possible regional grant money.

Would like to get more info on what the towns process is so that they can start collecting and updating data without it being hardship.

(MT, Auburn) We have the assessors send updates every month, and they use versioning. Although, those updates only go to the public every six months. So they are updated in GIS with versioning.

(AD, MEGUG)   Auburn is on high end, most towns don't have that ability currently. Some towns see benefit, others aren't as fond of the idea. I am soliciting advice on how to get to the decision-makers in the town interested in giving their data to the state.

(MD, Gorham) If managers saw the regional planning benefits, they might be willing to participate.

(PE, Casco) You need a local champion.

(AL, USM) What about MMA?

(AD, MEGUG)   We do work with them. We co-sponsor the technology conference which will be March 3rd. We are doing a geoparcels discussion there. We should work more closely with them.

(NA, GPCOG) Mgmt buy-in is crucial. It will be a cumulative process to bring decision makers along. It does have added value, despite the costs. Take this out to smaller sub-regions.   We still have to go to the policy makers.

(AG, Falmouth) We need info from county – Cumberland county is aggressive, if they were on board, they might be able to bring along. Assessors as a group, could assist in helping towns bring their data up-to-date. Counties have ability to get regional grant money.

(MT, Auburn) Local champion is so helpful. Interested parties could be real estate agents or emergency mgmt, etc

(AD, MEGUG)   Auburn is a really good model. Planning commissions are going to be huge in the development of this data.

(AL, USM) There are so many layers and organizations that we have talked about. MEGIS is the repository, but what state department is responsible for this.

(AD, MEGUG)   I would say the Maine GeoLibrary is. It is not a state department.

(AL, USM) So there is no state department which towns answer to.

(AD, MEGUG)   MEGIS is an authority but have no authority to mandate that towns must submit their data. Geolibrary is created thru state legislation. MEGUG intertwined with them, because of our membership.

(JP, Falmouth) Should it come back to legislature? If we want to accomplish x, y, z, then we need this authority.

(AD, MEGUG)   We aren't going to just 'tell people' they have to, doesn't seem like a good way to go.

(JC, ESRI)   How about trying to combine parcels on state-wide level, headed by Dept of Revenue. They need this data, and can do state-wide evaluations.

(AD, MEGUG)   We have had discussions with them.

MEGUG had a fall meeting, someone form MRS made it clear that they are trying to change to a new system, it is not going well. They have not been a driving factor in this process.

(DW, USGS) They have NO interest in maintaining parcel data for the state.

(PE, Casco) We need to come up with list of benefits and send it around on listservs

(DT, GPCOG) **Do registries have interest in a tool (the parcel viewer) for their customers to access their data?**

(AD, MEGUG)   No, they catalog documents. End of story.

(JP, Falmouth) **Can you take Hancock pilot project – to show examples of what you can do with the data?**

(AD, MEGUG)   Yes, that is a great selling point.

(JP, Falmouth) You could show how it can be used for waste mgmt, emergency mgmt, etc,

(AD, MEGUG)   The Hancock pilot project is in development, will be rolling out in early, March at the earliest. It will be a great 'show and tell' for managers.

(WG, Kennebunkport) When we got the regional list, first thing they did was to print mailing list for flood plain changes, this was an immediate benefit. It pointed out a lot of mistakes in the map, but it made it easier to challenge FEMA data. In the long run people can save on premiums if they are really not in the flood plain.

(AD, MEGUG) Thank you to everyone who attended.