



September 1 2011

Brian Maloney
Director
Ministry of Natural Resources
Geographic Information Branch
300 Water Street
Robinson Place North Tower
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M5

Dear Brian:

Re: Ontario Parcel Sub License Agreement

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Ontario Parcel Agreement (OPA) with Teranet and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation which expires May 2012. This parcel data is the premier land management unit/scale at which Conservation Authorities (CAs) operate and use on a daily basis. Conservation Ontario (CO) is pleased that the Province is considering the renewal of the OPA agreement which provides tremendous business value and efficiencies to CA business. CO received comments from most CAs indicating access to this data is obviously very important. The following comments are submitted for your consideration by Conservation Ontario, which is the network of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities .

Business Value:

Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulations (O. Reg. 97/04) under Section 28(1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Parcel data is critical for the review of applications for permission under S. 28 of the Act and review of development applications under the *Planning Act*. The parcel data is used:

- In review of applications both from a natural hazards and natural heritage perspective.
- To identify building envelopes in the context of our regulatory and environmental policies
- To serve the public by confirming and querying proponent's properties accurately through civic address, PIN, or ARN.
- To provide a first view of a property before initiating a site visit - dimensioning - area, depth, setbacks from roads and adjacent properties.
- To perform spatial analysis of land use – development density, assessment of properties affected by a condition, etc.
- By municipalities who send parcel severance requests to the CA for review. CAs use the property lines together with the regulation limits to ensure that the proposal meets provincial policy.
- For ensuring compliance with the *Conservation Authorities Act* including the assessment of encroachments into the regulated area and other violations.
- To verify that the violation is occurring on the subject property.
- To determine the PIN or ARN to get property owner information from the municipality.

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S. 15 (2)(c)(iii) of Ontario Regulation 287/07

As a result of the *Clean Water Act*, Conservation Authorities are working with communities in Ontario to develop source protection plans in order to protect their municipal sources of drinking water. Consistent coverage of parcel data under OPA is critical to Source Water Protection (SWP) as it provides a list of ARN or PINs facilitating CA access to additional attributes to identify landowners who pose a significant risk to groundwater (S 15 2 c iii). Additionally, parcel data is used:

- As part of a larger subset of data to deliver critical programming
- To determine the number and type of properties likely affected by SWP in the initial stages using property lines and Land use codes (non OPA)
- In the determination of the IPZ-2 boundaries when the property is a preferential pathway due to farm tile drainage.
- With property codes to make assumptions about land use activities for DW (define acronym) Threat assessment
- As a screening tool (i.e. masks) for various Managed Land, Livestock Density and Impervious Surface calculations
- Check whether a property falls within a Vulnerable Zone for Stewardship Funding Eligibility
- Ensure that the land use activity (i.e. potential DW Threat) assumed to be on an individual's property actually is on that property and not an adjacent one.
- Check whether a property falls within a Vulnerable Zone for landowner notification during the SWP AR consultation process to determine the PIN or ARN to get property owner information
- Check whether a property falls within a Vulnerable Zone for landowner notification during other CA and municipal review processes
- The ASSESSMENT and CROWN data was used as reference to verify boundaries when required (as several CAs do not have OWNERSHIP PARCEL data).

Although it is not entirely clear what the future needs of Source Protection Planning are in relation to the Ontario Parcel data, we anticipate that there will be an ongoing need for the data particularly as Source Protection Planning enters the implementation and update phases. The implication of the expiry of the Ontario Parcel data agreement in May 2012 on the ongoing needs of the Source Protection Planning Program requires additional research. Since Source Protection Planning is provincially mandated it is critical that Land Information Ontario work with the Ministry of Environment (particularly the Source Protection Programs Branch) to confirm the needs and benefits of access to the Ontario Parcel data.

Stewardship

Conservation Authorities have a long history in working with landowners in the planning and delivery of watershed stewardship initiatives. Parcel data is required to monitor and assess the state of our watersheds, provide advice and technical assistance and build partnerships with all levels of government, environmental groups, businesses, residents and landowners. In addition, parcel data is required in:

- Forestry Projects - use property lines to properly assess an applicant's available land for forestry/restoration projects, grant eligibility, etc.
- Water Quality Improvement Grants - Many watershed plans require landowner notification of grants for rural landowners to improve water quality
- Tree Planting - Stewardship staff uses the layer to inventory tree planting and stewardship activity locations

Emergency Management Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9

Conservation Authorities' floodplain and hazard data are vital components for Emergency Management (EM) in Ontario. The 36 Conservation Authorities work with the provincial government on flood forecasting and warning, Dam Safety, Erosion, Subsidence and Unstable Soils. CAs use parcel data for EM to:

- Provide timely, accurate information/evacuation requirements regarding the properties and numbers of landowners who may be affected by emergency situations
- Produce a "Flood Vulnerable Structure Database" which has the capability of alerting local municipal officials to homes, other buildings, properties and roads/municipal infrastructure that may be affected during an emergency event.
- Advise of the extent of public risk to a particular threat

Conservation Land Act - O. Reg. 293/03

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Ontario Conservation Authorities own over 145,000 Hectares of Land in Ontario. Historically land has been acquired to build infrastructure such as dams and dikes; to create recreational areas (e.g. conservation areas and trails); and/or to protect natural areas and habitat. As a large land owner, demands on CA property management staff are significant. They use Parcel data on a daily basis for reviewing and resolving property boundary issues, determining ownership, and often confirming a CA's own deed registry.

Other Considerations

In addition to the above indication of business value of the Ontario Parcel Agreement, there are several other items for consideration.

Municipal Access

- For internal planning purposes, some CAs have access to geometry updates, and in some cases MPAC updates from various levels of municipal government.
- The MPAC data provides additional (non current OPA) business critical information such as owner name, mailing address, land use code and farm code.
- Parcel data and attributes are available from some of our Municipal Partners. However, assembling this data, where it is available, is time consuming and inefficient. LIO provides a more efficient 'one stop shop'.

Alternative Access

- The alternatives to access via OPA are not suitable simply due the difficulty of most CAs to assemble data based on municipal delivery. CAs with more than a few municipalities will spend significant staff time to assemble and update geometry/attributes
- Since CAs do business for MNR and MOE (review of natural hazards under the PPS, delegated responsibility for wetlands, SWP, etc) CAs should be covered under the MNR agreement since CAs are doing business with/on behalf of MNR/MOE.
- A subscription to Geowarehouse.ca is not a complete solution, as it will only provide CAs with sales history reports, and not provide the complete spatial geometry necessary for the range of jobs that CAs undertake on behalf of the province.

AOLS Access

CO responded to an AOLS survey last fall regarding the Ontario Digital Cadastral Database Feasibility Study as a future alternative to access through LIO. AOLS' position on making the data available should be considered and communicated throughout the negotiations.

Willingness to Contribute

Responding CAs have indicated that they are willing to contribute from \$0 to \$3000 per year for the OPA, which is in line with previous OGDE agreement costs. The return on investment is related to the efficiencies gained through one stop shopping, rather than using staff time to stitch together the parcel fabric from many municipalities.

Typically those who need to access the data from several municipalities are willing to pay more than those who have one or two municipalities. For CAs who receive the parcel information from the Counties, there is little incentive for them to contribute financially to this project. This is punctuated by the fact that CA contributions would typically be funded through municipal levy, resulting in municipalities paying twice, or through DWSP funding meaning MNR/MOE would pay twice.

Priorities

In summary, Conservation Ontario would like to see the following included in the 2012 OPA renewal negotiations:

Members:

Please include all 36 CAs and 38 Source Protection Areas as partners able to access the data for shared MNR/CA or Municipal/CA business.

Extent

There are many data gaps in the parcel data across CA areas (e.g. no PINs for Lambton County) so MNR

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Ontario Parcel has its limitations for several CAs.

More Attributes

Access to additional attributes such as Sales History (Landowner) and Land Use Code (MPAC).

Improved accuracy

Many parcels are not representative, likely due to outdated mapping. The potential link to AOLS should be discussed.

Legal

Continued ability to utilize the mapping on websites and in reports etc.

Overall, if parcel data becomes an administrative burden to maintain, Conservation Authorities will not be able to perform their legislative and delegated duties to their fullest capabilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on the Ontario Parcel Sub License. Should you have any questions regarding the above comments, please contact me by email (cwilkinson@conservationontario.ca) or at (905) 895-0716 extension 230.

Sincerely,

Chris Wilkinson
Water Resources Information Program Coordinator
Conservation Ontario
c.c. CA CAOs/GMs