

Focus Group #2

February 19, 2002

10. (57) How have you heard of GeoNOVA ?

- Coffee conversations
 - informal
- Slowly sunk in - did receive message via people and presentations
- Elections asked to participate in Steering Committee
- Involved in GeoNOVA start up study in '95

11. (6) What is your view of what GeoNOVA is ?

- Geographic Infrastructure containing building blocks of data maintenance by owners
 - Data collected once at source
 - Standards for data
- Agreement among departments to share data and a tech to enable share data
- Verbal agreement - not written. Loose and not understood
- Corporate data sets
- Seamless and transparent integration of data sets

12. (58) What is the ultimate objective of GeoNOVA ?

- Same as above
- Enable better policy analysis and development based on better data
- Making corporate data available to many by collecting at source
 - Avoid duplication (provincial, municipal, federal)

13. (59) Do you think GeoNOVA should be more widely promoted? If so, how?

- Yes - need a major PR campaign to show all benefits and what it can do
- Come up with tangible projects to demonstrate/promote the concept
- Move from talk to action
- Need to engage the private sector

20. (16) To what extent do you currently use geographic information and technology?

- Elections**
- rely on geography to do job
 - civic address registry linked to electoral
 - share with federal/municipal
 - Topo Data
 - NSPRD On-line
 - Civic Addressing

Municipal Relations

- Monitoring subdivision and development
- Digital Municipal Electoral Districts
- Use census data and location of municipal facilities, services and demographics
- Use parcel layer extensively and link to owner/Assessment data

SNS&MR

- Support municipal units who want to use Land Development Office (LDO) to track subdivision, permitting and zoning
- Advice for municipality using one system - standards
- Opportunity to use LDO to include:
 - subdivision and civic addressing (NS CAF) info to update process
 - High use
 - Use and sell air photos
 - Coordinate parcels from subdivision plans
 - Property Records High
 - civic addressing

21. (11) What major initiative do you have underway with geographic information ?

- Negotiate with Feds →move NS Civic Address into Federal. Geography
- Municipal Relation - UDIRA - Urban Development in Rural Areas Project
- Registry 2000
 - Parcel layer primary data
 - Land Titles Legislation will introduce more certainty

22. (30) What place does database maintenance play in your organization ?

Elections Office - Maintenance of electoral districts is ongoing

Municipal Relations

- Maintain municipal election districts
- Major extractions/sub sets of provincial parcel data sets
- Manipulating federal census data

RIMS/ Land Records

- Maintenance parcel layer
- Availability to public

24. (10) What is your opinion of the state of the province's geographic data with respect to: Availability; Relevance; Accuracy; Timeliness/Up-to-date; Accessibility; Cost ?

- PID-AAN link is still an issue
- Good service from NSGC but there's a lot of work to create a data set covers large area because data availability at management unit level →Req. Seamless database linked to attributes
- Obtaining data from NSGC not a problem
- Cost not a problem

- Difficult to get “added value” data sets - may be a lack of resources (e.g. converting data to another format)
(We don’t have staff in-house to do this)

In the past, were able to obtain more support from NSGC

- Problems in getting data from other departments (e.g. DNR Protected Areas) - data licensing obstacles in digital format (was available in hard copy)
- Getting data from Assessment, there are ambiguous FOIPOP issues
- No clear definitions/agreements with municipalities to include their data within provincial data sets
- As a provider of info it is unclear what should and should not be released
- Cda census data license - totally unclear what can do with the data

26. (15) To what extent do you share your data and databases? For free or a fee ?

- Need a listing/directory of people (on the web) who you call to get access to data
- Call NSGC when looking for data
- Elec. Share data freely with other departments. Have license agreement for outside parties - free for research
- Distribute hard copy products and description of methodology used to create
- Prop Records database - on-line
 - provincial government free
 - municipal free provided agree to share updates
 - private sector - \$

27. (17) To what extent are you aware of/adhere to provincial policies with respect to: Coordinate Referencing - NAD 83 and UTM; NSTDB - data collection standards for topo data; Property Records; Data Distribution - licenses, price encourages use, free to provincial users, commercial use approved

- Co-ordinate Reference policy - not adopted - NAD’83 UTM →1 or 2 zones
- Not aware of Prop. Rec. Policy - things have changed
- Have difficulty with look up codes for property feature - incomplete. Should come with the data sets
- Not aware of policy

28. (50) How do policy and standards affect/influence/constrain you ? Are they a help or a hindrance ?

- Policy and standards are always a hindrance but are needed to share data
- A question raised during the discussion: Why is someone distributing data in AutoCAD?

29. (32) How do new users secure assistance in geographic applications, data and use?

- Take a course
- Hire a trained GIS technician
- NSGC can help 'some' but departments need their own GIS resources
- NSGC will help with the data
- Hard to stay current
 - need on going training
 - especially for departments with small geographic components
- Not very well
- LIC Map Library does provide support to users
- Call a contact person (e.g. Todd Burt)
- Training is too general - not focused on our business.

30. (27) What would you consider the past accomplishments of GeoNOVA ?

- Awareness and development of technical standards - Land Use Classification
- Would have primary databases without GeoNOVA →GeoNOVA is the concept of sharing the data → there is therefore an importance on standards
- GeoNOVA would be bringing Crown and private parcels together and sharing them
- Some technology transfer
- Collect data once and share →example of RIMS taking on data capture for Assessment to reduce duplication

31. (28) What would you consider the lost opportunities or areas GeoNOVA has not delivered on ?

- Expected an Integrated Wide Area Network (IWAN) to deliver geographic data →it's not here
- Were standards used to influence our specifications
 - have not done a good job of cross referencing them both
 - departments are happy to go off and do their own thing
- GeoNOVA seen as NSGC doing things for them →NSGC supposed to focus on technology transfer by hand holding clients and private sector until they are self sustaining
- Too much focus on high level concept and not sold practical initiatives as outcomes/building blocks of GeoNOVA
- Lots going on in municipal and private sector SNS&MR is not aware of →need to if promoting
- There exists a lack of trust by all participants as to the role of GeoNOVA within their respective jurisdiction.
- Municipal Administrative Handbook has a section on acquiring GIS (3 years old)
 - haven't had many inquiries from municipalities. Give out 6 copies in last 2 months.

- Not aware of the link between GeoNOVA and civic addressing
- GeoNOVA intended as a focal point for awareness of geographic information
- Municipalities never invited to the table this is seen as a fundamental problem
- Need to help thru training

32. (24) What is your opinion of the effectiveness of the current GeoNOVA initiative?

- Everything would have been done without GeoNOVA
- Four levels of awareness amongst municipalities
- SNS&MR effective in moving projects forward but what about other departments?

33. (8) What is your view of the effectiveness of the current GeoNOVA organizational structure?

- People meet and go do own thing
- Should we change the name?
- Old Land Use Committee was effective
 - Move to GeoNOVA working groups
 - Lost senior management (Deputy Minister) buy in
 - There was a point to it (land use issues)
- Define the issues it should focus on, e.g. standards

43. (63) When you think of corporate geographic information what do you envision being in place in 5 years ?

- Ability to share corporate data to a consistent standard (primary databases and some thematic themes)
- Seamless graphics and attributes
- Access data live from a central server
 - don't copy the data
 - see updates automatically
- Our complex data available in a more generalized way for analysis
- E.g. OASIS neighbourhoods
- Ability to SMASH data together readily (spatial fusion)
- Ability to access data via a geo portal
- Municipal concerns
 - municipal has more current data than the province - how will provincial procedures ensure keep up
 - who is liable for the data
- Role of Meta Data
- No common source for data like municipal/town boundaries
- Have a project and file management structure/directory to enable people to access, not only data, but projects people are working on - accessible to everyone else in province

- 44. (60) Is a GeoNOVA Initiative required over the next 5 years?**
- Benefit from a structure to prioritize/focus GeoNOVA initiatives - will this get in the way of department projects
 - There is an ongoing need for standards
 - Need to build excitement/branding for GeoNOVA by web site/e-mail
 - Opportunity to follow BC model of centralized service delivery
- 52. (44) Does the level of participation in GeoNOVA need to be expanded ? Why? To whom ?**
- Future of GeoNOVA lies in partnerships
 - especially municipal, 2-3 representatives on GeoNOVA
 - think of where info is coming from (Elections Canada calling municipal directly)
 - Focal point for training
 - If GeoNOVA is a catch all then widen representation will drag it down. If focus then can effectively include municipal, e.g.
 - training
 - civic address
- 45. (34) What do you see as the importance/relevance of the following principles with respect to GeoNOVA: Create data once at source and use it many times; Undertake a corporate approach to data creation, management, dissemination, and use; Adhere to standards; Share data freely amongst provincial departments; List data in the NS Directory of Geographic Information.**
- Share data with provincial and municipal
 - not just province
 - improve relationship with feds
 - Issues of free vs fee data
 - Show the public important policy issues thru geographic info (e.g. show service areas for hospitals in province)
 - Use geographic data to inform citizens
 - Need to move from principles to work plans
 - Help municipality with data warehouses and geo portals
 - Provide, at their discretion, the infrastructure to enable municipalities to add zoning or other municipal data to a provincial system - available to public

- 51. (48) Who do you see leading GeoNOVA in the future ?**

- SNS&MR
- A future version of the old Land Use Committee
- Could be Policy and Planning
- Not BC Model - MSRM
- 2 Tier - Director/policy; - Technical