

## **Focus Group #4**

**February 21, 2002**

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

- Provincial web site
- Civic addressing, NSPRD, Target NS
- Discussion with colleagues
- Osmosis
- Ed's e-mails related to this study
- While working on the NBGIC Land Gazette

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

- Sharing data between different departments/organizations to avoid duplication
- Clearing house to collect and disseminating geo-spatial data
- Organized way to bring spatial analysis into government decision making

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

- save dollars
- one stop shop for geographic information (everything; municipal, provincial, business)
- FREE exchange of information
- Focus on digital information
- Draw business to the province by our facilities/show environment to business/investors
- Inventory of digital data and services (how to get permits...)

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

**Rural Cape Breton**

- Zoning mapping
- Land use planning
- DEM - location maps; - watershed maps
- Engineering (Auto CAD)
- Other municipal units are doing similar: Kings, Truro, Amherst, Pictou
- In process of going from paper →Digital
- Some digital mapping and moving to GIS - constrained by resources
- Financial analysis - using GIS for area rates
- Lots of places don't realize they are using digital data/GIS

## **HRM**

- not all digital data in system. Would be crippled without it.
- GIS Used for budgets, front counter enquiries
- Some municipal units such as Antigonish - getting started (City View)
- What population of province served by municipalities using GIS extensively ?

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

### **HRM**

- - civic address initiative
- - infrastructure data collection (GPS, ArcPAD)
- Declining price of GPS technology driving affordable data collection

### **Cumberland**

- Scanning and geo-referencing air photos for Arc Explorer applications to deliver to - council, police, fire. They have found the approach impressive.

### **Truro**

- Converting home grown data collection systems to Local Development Office application to increase use across departments.

### **Kings**

- Scanned subdivision plans back to 1993 and geo-referencing. Use with Arc explorer (next year go back to 1968)
- Continue digitization of data.
- Property mapping is key (PID and AAN) - 1 FTE improve the match 40% →92%

### **Pictou**

- Allocate pipeline Assessment dollars to agencies based on pipeline
- Economic development land use/zoning →target NS
- Watershed
- Link permits to parcels

## **23. (14) To what extent do you use the “Primary” datasets:**

### **Coordinate Network**

- Condition of monuments is so poor - use local surveyors' points
- Use to digitize subdivision plans
- Surveyors use it (HRM)
- Will be requiring surveyors to provide co-ordination on subdivision plans

## **Air Photos**

- Daily - 911
  - there exists an updating issue regarding frequency of re-flying
  - cost (using 1988 and buying 1992 as required)
- (4 municipal agencies noted they were scanning photos) - big job
- Demand for digital ortho - all units had an interest in this product

## **Topo Data**

- 1:10K and 1:2K every day
- Big issues with currency (Amherst - maintenance GPS points for 20 new foundations/year)
- People don't realize the value of Canadian Land Inventory Database
- HRM will use location certification to update topo data for HRM
- Annapolis - subdivision plans with buildings shown

## **Property Records**

- Bread and butter
- Currency is an issue
- Accuracy is critical for Registry 2000
- Issues of PID assignment
- Maintenance of zoning maps based on parcel maps changing
- Need for parcel coastline to match topo
- PID-AAN match is still an issue

## **Civic Addressing**

- Municipal Units create it
- 6 created own files and they are now 'owned' by the province
- Reviewing community boundaries
- Update both centerline and property file
- Lot of work to maintain
- Property file good for info display
- Opportunity to partner with MTT and NSPI
- Other departments will come to municipality for civic address info
- Daily

## **Land Cover**

- Critical for land use planning
- DNR Forestry - won't provide except at a costs - \$50 for 1:10K sheet (even NSGC can't get it)
- Real problem for resource planning
- Real problem for Agriculture
- DNR Mines - good and free
- No system to maintain land cover thru SNS&MR

## Department of Environment Data of value

- Contaminated sites
  - Underground storage
  - Wells
- Not geo-reference data

## 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 ?

### Timeliness

- Need current info on ownership and assessment changes thru NSPRD on-line (improving)
- Need provincial standard for geo-referencing for survey plans →digital submission and approval (Rural - Transportation  
Incl. - Environment  
- Assessment)
- Need building footprints for issuing permits

### Accessibility

- Phone up "the guy"/"the girl" to get the data
- Should be able to get on the web
- Signing data licenses with each department is silly - should license agreement  
Municipal - Provincial
- Cost - issue with cost of
  - land cover
  - air photos
- Province provide high resolution satellite imagery (match 1:2K)

### Accuracy

- Not the issue
- How it's collected is important to know
- More data is better
- Have data from all sources need to accept data with different accuracy
- Truro - give data away free - want it used (don't distribute provincial data)
- Kings - give away on trade with province
  - haven't given zoning away yet
- Give away/sell map products
  - Looking at development polices of data distribution fee/free (1 with policy in place)
- Protect name attached to phone number

**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 referencing** - aware  
- will move when official

General awareness of all

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

- Vender consulting - ESRI
- Hire a COGS grad
- Tried without a GIS Tech and only had maps. With a GIS tech analysis increased 10 times
- Kings - every desk with Arc Explorer  
- done in services on AE and AV
- Key is having someone on staff who knows what they are doing
- Still a mystery for senior administration and elected

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

- NS Directory of Geographic Information →not updated since 1995
- Relationship with province has improved. Dealing with NSGC on access to data - good and not afraid it will cost lots
- Can get data easier

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

- Not gone far enough/fast enough. Limited by budget constraints. Education and Health could benefit from use of GIS
- Not much accessible information being communicated with municipality on the benefits to municipalities
- People in it for a long time - tired
- Key to everything is to know what's been done/what data available. Now I have to phone people. Communicate both existing and planned data.
- Need to remind people about what's there
- Want a web site with list of data
- Want to know what 'social' departments are doing and implication for planning
- Missed on standards
  - need standards for building permit attributes to share
  - use land use standards

- Astounded that provincial IT staff didn't know or engage with GIS tech.

- Education politicians (municipal)
  - so understand what it is to use it and support it
  
- 32. (24) What is your opinion of the effectiveness of the current GeoNOVA initiative?**
  - Getting data easier
  - Access to data is getting better
  - “Nothing but happy” - info we’re getting for free is great (some data we can’t afford to pay for - but it would be worth paying for)
  - LICs are getting value back from municipality in corrections to property and civic addressing data
  - Common goal →better information
  - Objective - base and property mapping
    - effective
    - clearing house and access to date - ineffective
  
- 34. (20) Are there forums for you to exchange information with colleagues regarding geographic information and technology ? Should there be ?**
  - No
  - Atlantic ESRI user Group
    - ↳List service
  - GIS all around us →CB
  - Geomatics Atlantic
  - GANS?
  - Map Info - L
  - Planning Technical Annual Workshop
  - Lots of active list servers but don’t see geographic issues discussed. Technical direction separated from policy/planning issues.
  
- 35. (18) Is your data described in the NS Directory of Geographic Information ? Is the description current ?**
  - No
  - Don’t know
  
- 36. (31) Do you use the NS Directory of Geographic Information to: find data ; direct others to find data ?**
  - No
  - Tried - out of date
  
- 40. (37) What new and/or innovative applications are you considering in the next 5 years ?**
  - GPS for data capture

- Internet - currently display JPEG zoning map

- want to display and link to property records
- too expensive for us to purchase the tech to do it
- Routing application - garbage
  - snow
- Field data collection with hand held/GPS
- Hydro-geological study for ground water - wells, ..
- Better associated Stats Canada enumeration areas and geographic co-ordinate with local people
- Benefit from alignment of Stats Can GSA, fire boundary, school bounds,...

**41. (39) How has the Internet changed how you: manage data; access data ? How do you anticipate the changing over the next 5 years ?**

- Citizen access to data
- Applying for services - permits
- E-mail for subdivision approval
- Paper generation is too much

**42. (12) What are your requirements for data distribution infrastructure ?**

- Lead from SNS&MR would assist in providing an infrastructure for data dissemination
- Need consistency and standards to enable sharing of information (e.g. LDO initiative)

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

- Land information available in one place - zoning, land use, properties, and permits over web  
e.g. PEI Government web site
- Ability to download what you see
- Ability to upload current data
- Municipality be involved in maintenance →who's going to pay for this?
- All FREE
- Entity based, 3-D topological
- Concept of updating data at source and exchanging data continues to advance (not stagnant or abandoned)
- What's it going to cost municipalities (people and dollars) to maintain it  
- recognize the difference between urban and rural
- Need assessment data in a format which integrates with property data
- Why can't municipality see assessment field cards
- Like Assessment, Registry and LIC under one dome.

**44. (60) Is a GeoNOVA Initiative required over the next 5 years?**

- Absolutely - all we've talked about requires coordination

- Everything complained about what's not done - won't happen without GeoNOVA

**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 freely amongst municipal, provincial, federal (provide federal data to municipality)
- Our municipality can't work to province time frames → have gone off on their own and funded themselves (e.g. civic address). Have a problem with freely giving data to province - when it cost us.
- Want to collect data once → we are the source of lots of data. Then we have to fight to get the data back (e.g. assessment field cards).
- Why not give data free to private sector?
- If taxpayer paid for it, it should be free
- Standards - need to develop collaboratively
  - building permit information
  - just ask and we'll be involved

**46. (46) What are your top priorities for GeoNOVA over the next 5 years?**

- For existing data update at source then acquire new data sets with resources saved from updating at source
- Awareness/but in on how spatial info will benefit - must build the business case
- Social demographic data has powerful use spatially
- Expand use beyond 'primary' data sets - particular focus on social issues (e.g. HRM evacuation Do to train derailment, special medical needs, recent heart surgery...)
- Need to sell this to our clients (councillors, senior managers) and our counterparts thru out the province
- Share what we are doing and plant seeds on how to apply better. Promote innovation and share ideas.
- Opportunity for an annual forum among communities.

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

- GeoNOVA association
  - receive data must be a member. Board of Directors
- SNS&MR
- Corporate partnership of all levels of government (e.g. UNSM)
- Need to share info and understand external environment

**52. (44) Does the level of participation in GeoNOVA need to be expanded ? Why? To whom ?**

- YES
- Municipality are source of creation and maintenance of data
- Include federal/municipal/private?
- Ask for representation from planning association, UNSM, - appointed by peers  
→not picked.
- Need a multi-tiered structure
  - representative sub-committeesMunicipality - IT
  - Engineering
  - Planning
  - Policy
  - Recreation