



Speeding Up the PDCA Approval Process

The busy real estate season is here, and the ability of citizens to close their transactions in a timely and efficient manner is of utmost importance to the Land Registration Offices. For the most part staff in the eight Land Registration Offices have met the three day turn around time for properly submitted PDCA's, however due to the high rejection rate for PDCA's (35%), some delays were occurring in June in the Western Region.

Several steps have been taken to address this concern:

- i We developed a PDCA checklist to assist submitters in preparing PDCA's;
- i In late June we implemented a streamlined Parcel Description Certification Application (PDCA) approval process;
- i We have requested system changes to track descriptions requiring improvement;
- i We have asked the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society (NSBS) to add description review to the LRA audit program;
- i We added staff to clear up backlogs.

The submitter is responsible for two processes when submitting a PDCA:

- Identify the unique PID for the parcel by locating the parcel on the provincial property mapping in Property Online; and
- Review and update the contents of the legal description to ensure that it complies with all professional standards and meets all legislative, regulatory and policy requirements.

The first step is required to enable the registrar to locate the parcel with reasonable accuracy in relation to its neighbours and confirm the match of the PID to the legal description (as required by LRA clause

37(4)(g)). Locating the parcel is fairly straightforward, particularly if done in conjunction with the owner of the parcel, as the regulations require.

The second step in the PDCA process is required to meet professional standards of lawyers and surveyors, which dictate that these professionals are responsible to ensure the accuracy of the legal description. The learning curve for authorized PDCA submitters for the second process – providing an accurate, up-to-date description – has been significant. Even though lawyers and surveyors have for a number of years been required by their professional standards to ensure that proper legal descriptions are being used, the LRA conversion process and the scrutiny given to the legal

Table of Contents

PDCA Approval Process	1-2
Crown Lands	3
GGSearch Replacement	3
Preparing Halifax for December 1	3
E-Payment Coming Soon	4
Municipal Tax Links Expanding	4
Property Online Price Increase	4
Standard Charge Terms	4
Training Calendar	5-6

descriptions appears to have “raised the bar” for those submitting descriptions to the LRO. Because a large number of descriptions continue to contain errors or have missed benefits or burdens, we have consulted with the NSBS about steps we can take to provide a more efficient, and at the same time, effective PDCA process.

Continued on page 2

Faster PDCA Approval Process *continued from page 1*

SNSMR has introduced the new PDCA approval procedure which allows the property mapper to approve the PDCA if the parcel can be located with reasonable accuracy in relation to its neighbours. PDCA approvals are now happening more quickly and with fewer rejections. Submitters have more time to complete the title search and prepare proper descriptions including all the easements and rights of way, without holding up the conversion process. The property mappers are finding that the new two-step process makes a big difference in their ability to process all PDCAs within the specified three days. Some descriptions are still being rejected if gross errors are evident on initial review.

At the same time, system changes have been requested to enable property mappers to approve descriptions subject to correction. This is being done to ensure that corrected descriptions are submitted in a timely way. The system changes will create a new flag under PDCA status in the parcel register. If a PDCA is approved subject to correction, the parcel register PDCA status will indicate that the description requires correction. The flag, "Correcting Description Required" will mean that an amending PDCA to correct the description must be submitted. This status will remain until the corrected parcel description has been submitted and approved by the property mapper. CARIS, our system vendor has given these system changes a high priority, so we hope to have them in place by September.

To coincide with the system changes we are requesting an amendment to the LRA Administration Regulations to require submitters to provide any corrected descriptions within 30 days of the PDCA approval subject to correction. If a properly prepared PDCA is submitted within the 30-day period, there will be no fee or penalty arising from the submission of the correction. (A properly prepared description is one that complies with the Act, regulations and professional standards.) We are also suggesting a regulation that provides potential penalties if the submitter fails to submit a properly prepared PDCA within 30 days, or submits a description that still contains errors or fails to meet the standards. For example, one of the following may apply:

- i A Stop Order against the submitter may be issued [as per LRA clause 56(2)(c)]; and/or
- i The submitter's PDCA submission privileges may be suspended [as per the POL user agreement].

We will also be seeking an amendment to the General Regulations to institute a PDCA processing fee for those PDCAs that are rejected at this stage (after submission of a correcting PDCA). We are recommending that this processing fee be payable by the submitter (not the client), similar to the late bundle fee. As well, the NSBS will begin monitoring the lawyers' descriptions through the routine audit program that is performed on a percentage of all land registration parcels. The routine audit program was established pursuant to the Land Registration Act Agreement with the NSBS. It is cost shared between the NSBS and SNSMR and is designed to check authorized lawyers' compliance with the LRA, regulations and NSBS Professional Standards. By expanding the scope of the routine audit to include description review, we aim to increase the quality and integrity of information in the system.

The changed processes have already reduced delays and the system changes coming in September will allow mappers to track those descriptions that need improvement. Submission of complete and accurate descriptions continue to be the submitters responsibility. Enforcement of the standards, rules and regulations will become part of the audit program, which works to ensure that submitters are meeting their professional standards.

Crown Lands Mapping Layer Will Soon Be On Display in Property Online

As part of the Registry 2000 vision, the project has been in discussions with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) about posting the cadastral Crown layer on Property Online. The Crown layer is the land mass of the province that has not been granted or that has been re-conveyed to Her Majesty, and is now under the administrative control of DNR. Various data issues are being worked out, but agreement has been reached to post the digitized cadastral records that are held by the Registry of Crown Lands on the graphical map view of Property Online. DNR hopes to be able to provide its information for posting by September 2004.

Once posted, system users will be able to display the Crown layer on the Property Online mapping and receive a very good indication of whether further inquiries of the Crown Lands Record Centre are appropriate. Since the *Marketable Titles Act* does not apply to Her Majesty (see Section 9 of that statute), this type of inquiry is critical to ensuring good title to land being converted to the new system. This exciting enhancement brings Property Online closer to our goal of providing easy one-stop access to a broad variety of land-related information.

Grantor Grantee Search Replacement Coming this Fall

The Property Online replacement for the existing Grantor/Grantee search and mass update tool is now ready to be rolled out to our users, however we have decided to wait until September to implement because we do not want to slow down searchers during the height of the real estate season. The Project Team demonstrated the new tool to searchers in Halifax on July 15, 2004, so they could see how the new search tool will help them in their work. The demonstration included some familiar features, such as viewable edit history and customized reports, as well as some new functionality. After the September implementation, searchers will be able to access the enhanced search tool in Registry vaults across the province. Users will also have access to this tool through Property Online. The searchers who participated in the session indicated that the new tool will help them in their work.

Preparing for December Halifax Land Registration Rollout

Efforts are ramping up to ensure that the Halifax Registry is ready for December 1, 2004 land registration implementation. The operation is being examined on several fronts so that resources are in place to support the new processes for both staff and clients:

- T Departmental staff are working with facilities management professionals to examine the space required to transform Halifax into a Land Registration Office. The space requirements of an expanded title searching community are being considered, as is the placement of land registration staff and equipment to ensure that it fits with the new work flow.
- T Staffing resources are being put in place to handle the new processes. Multiple vacancies caused a strain in the Registry through the spring and early summer, resulting in backlogs. Most of these vacancies have now been filled and new staff will be in place by the end of July. In the meantime, a temporary employee has been assisting with some of the back office tasks, and trained employees from both the Project Team and other regions have been lending a hand to attack the backlog. As well, two contract employees have been on site since early June. One more is due to start on October 1 to assist during the implementation.
- T Enhancements to LIN-NS are being finalized to help Registry staff process documents more efficiently. The changes to the PDCA process (see page 1) will help Halifax clients and staff cope with the anticipated high volume of transactions.

Using "Documents in Process" to Do Sub-Searches of Newly Registered Documents

We anticipate that Halifax will continue to face periods of delay in document processing over the summer, but typically the gap between document receipt and initial recording is no longer than four (4) hours. Keep in mind that sub-searches for recorded documents can now be done using the "Documents in Process" function of Property Online (this replaces the daily index sheets that previously were situated at the front counter). Documents appear in "Documents in Process" in real time - as soon as they are recorded at the front counter - so that sub-searches can be done on all documents except for those waiting to be processed by front counter staff (usually not more than a half-day gap). Documents only appear in the Grantor-Grantee Index (GGI) in both the vault and on Property Online when they have been verified by staff at the back counter. The verification process sometimes takes several days to complete.

Property Online Access to Municipal Tax Information Expands

Property Online users will soon be able to access municipal tax information on properties located in almost a dozen municipal units. We will be adding the following links through the Municipal Tax

Query function in the next few weeks:

- < Town of Amherst
- < Town of Bridgetown
- < Town of Bridgewater
- < Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- < District of Clare
- < County of Digby

The following municipal units already make their property tax information available electronically through Property Online:

- < District of Barrington
- < County of Colchester
- < County of Cumberland
- < Town of Parrsboro
- < Town of Truro

Discussions are ongoing with other municipalities across the province to expand this service further.

Property Online Price Adjustment In Effect September 1, 2004

The price for using Property Online is increasing on September 1, 2004 from \$75 per month for five hours of search time plus \$15 per hour thereafter to \$80 per month for five hours plus \$16 per hour for each additional hour of search time.

Note: This price change does not affect the number of hours of search time included in the initial monthly charge for provincial government departments and municipalities that have entered into data sharing agreements with the SNSMR.

This price change is to cover the cost of inflation and to better reflect the true cost of delivering the service. This helps the government avoid cutting services.

If you have any questions about the Property Online billing model or the price change, contact Debbie Carew, Property Registration Accounting Clerk:

- 1-888-639-1905 (within Nova Scotia) or
- 1-902-424-8343 (outside Nova Scotia).

E-Payment Getting Closer The End of a Chequered Era

The March/April edition of Deeds and Dialogue outlined our plans to initiate e-submission of documents (the ability to submit a land registration document over the internet via Property Online). A prerequisite for e-submission of documents is electronic payment (the ability to pay for products and services over the internet via electronic funds transfer, credit card, etc.). The design of both e-submission and e-payment functionality for our Property Online users is now in full swing.

In fact, as a precursor to the expansion of our e-submission functionality in March 2005, we are planning to have all Property Online users pay their monthly subscription fees via e-payment by December 2004. We will be implementing e-payment via electronic funds transfer (EFT), which will debit the monthly subscription fee from each Property Online user's bank account. A notice with the appropriate forms for providing banking information will be sent out to all Property Online users in the next month.

Document Size Increases Dramatically -Use of Standard Mortgage Charge Terms

The Department has noted a significant increase in the length of mortgage documents being recorded at the Registries - from an average of seven pages per document six years ago to 21 pages average currently. Since each page of each document must be counted, processed and photocopied, document length is now becoming a factor in processing delay in the Registries. The Department had planned to have lenders file standard charge terms under the *Land Registration Act* in order to reduce the amount of paper coming into the registries. This plan was placed on hold while we investigated the e-submission process. The Department expects that e-submission will greatly reduce paper coming into the registries.

Land Registration Training Calendar

Halifax County - Fall 2004 (Dates and locations are subject to change)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
September			6	2	3	4
5	6	7 NSBS Module 2	8 NSBS Module 2	9 NSBS Module 2	10	11
12	13 NSBS Module 2	14 NSBS Module 2	15	16	17	18
19	20 Legal Assts Hands-on	21 NSBS Module 3 Legal Assts Hands-on Realtor Training (2 sessions)	22 NSBS Module 3 Legal Assts Hands-on Realtor Training (2 sessions)	23 NSBS Module 3 Title Searcher Hands-on	24 Legal Assts Hands-on	25
26	27 Legal Assts Hands-on NSBS Module 3	28 Lawyer Hands-on (2 sessions) NSBS Module 3	29 Legal Assts Hands-on	30 Legal Assts Hands-on		
October					1 Legal Assts Hands-on	2
3	4	5 NSBS Module 4	6 NSBS Module 4	7 NSBS Module 4 Subdivision Training (2 sessions)	8 Surveyor Training	9
10	11 Thanksgiving Day	12 Legal Assts Hands-on	13 Lawyer Hands-on	14 Lawyer Hands-on	15 Legal Assts Hands-on	16
17	18 Legal Assts Hands-on	19 Legal Assts Hands-on NSBS Module 2	20 Lawyer Hands-on NSBS Module 2	21 Lawyer Hands-on NSBS Module 2	22 Title Searcher Hands-on	23
24	25 Legal Assts Hands-on	26 Surveyor Training NSBS Module 3	27 Subdivision Training (2 sessions) NSBS Module 3	28 Realtor Training (2 sessions) NSBS Module 3	29 Surveyor Training	30
31						

NOTE

Check the Registry 2000 training web site for exact locations, session times and to register online: www.servicens.ca/property/registry/training.

For NSBS training sessions, check the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society web site for locations, session times and to register online: www.nsbs.ns.ca/LRAinitial.htm.

Registration for all realtor training sessions will be handled by the NSAR. Check the NSAR REALTOR® web site for locations, session times and to register online: www.nsar.ns.ca/index.htm.

Land Registration Training Calendar

Halifax County - Fall 2004 (Dates and locations are subject to change)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November						
	1 Legal Assts Hands-on	2 Legal Assts Hands-on NSBS Module 4	3 Lawyer Hands-on NSBS Module 4	4 Lawyer Hands-on NSBS Module 4	5 Legal Assts Hands-on	7
7	8 Surveyor Training	9 Surveyor Training	10 Subdivision Training	11	12	13
14	15 Legal Assts Hands-on Staff Training	16 Title Searcher Hands-on	17 Staff Training	18 Staff Training	19 Staff Training	20
21	22 Legal Assts Hands-on	23 Lawyer Hands-on (2 sessions) Realtor Training (2 sessions)	24 Staff Training Realtor Training (2 sessions)	25 Staff Training Realtor Training (2 sessions)	26 Staff Training	27
28	29	30				
December			1 Halifax LRA Implementation	2	3	4
5	6 Staff Training	7 Staff Training	8 Lawyer Hands-on	9 Legal Assts Hands-on	10 Legal Assts Hands-on	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<p>NOTE: Check the Registry 2000 training web site for exact locations, session times and to register online: www.servicens.ca/property/registry/training</p> <p>For NSBS training modules, check the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society web site for locations, session times and to register online: www.nsbs.ns.ca/LRAinitial.htm</p>						

When 1-866 is Busy, Get Your Answers Online!



The Registry 2000 user group resource web page has a wealth of information and contains the latest news about doing business in the land registration system. Take advantage of the sample forms, scenarios, tips and tricks that are available on this resource page.

www.servicens.ca/property/registry/usergroupresources