



DEEDS AND DIALOGUE

WE'VE REACHED SOME MILESTONES

- √ Completed analysis of consultation feedback July 31, 2000
- √ Consumer Cost analysis completed September 30, 2000
- √ Preliminary Case for Change completed December 1, 2000
- √ Issue papers initiated December 15, 2000
- √ Departmental consultation completed January 31, 2001

Consultation Up-date

Since the release of the Registry 2000 discussion paper on January 13, 2000, the project team has received more than 90 submissions from a variety of stakeholders and made more than 50 presentations. From the time the discussion paper was released, the feedback has been coming in with responses ranging from issue-specific comments to line-by-line examination of the draft legislation. The overall reaction has been very positive and indicates that the project is on the right track. The Registry 2000 Team is analysing feedback received during Phase I of the project to ensure that concerns are addressed as Phases II and III are rolled out.

The Registry 2000 consultation process was augmented by a phone survey of 500 Nova Scotians who had bought or sold a home in the last year. People surveyed were very satisfied with the services being provided to them by their lawyers, bankers, realtors, and others involved in their property transactions. They expressed concerns about the level of real estate fees and deed transfer taxes.

People from all stakeholder groups seem especially excited by the electronic aspect of the

reform initiative. The survey indicated that more than 75% of those surveyed have internet access, and about 70% are interested in obtaining property ownership info over the internet. This view was supported by opinions expressed at presentations all across the province.

Stakeholders say that electronic access will make the system easier to use, from home or office via the Internet, and will result in extended service hours. This ties in well with Service Nova Scotia's primary role as leader in electronic service delivery and e-commerce, delivering the majority of its programs and services on-line in the next three years.

Continued dialogue with stakeholders is critical to the success of the project. In order to familiarize the general public with the new system, an education component to the reform initiative will be developed to explain the new registry process and its benefits. Staff and user training will also be critical to the new system's success.

Please send any questions, comments or concerns to reg-2000@gov.ns.ca

Department News

The **Registry 2000 Project** has found a new home within Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations - as part of the Registry Management and Operations Division, headed by Nancy Vanstone, who is also the Registry 2000 project sponsor. The new Division also includes all Property Registration offices, Geographic Information Services, the Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre in Amherst, the Nova Scotia Business Registry, Vital Statistics, the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, and business licensing and permits. Management of registries and information services have been combined under this new structure to provide simplified service delivery and common business processes.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations continues to evolve as it acquires a more defined departmental structure. Five new divisions (down from seven between the former two departments) provide a framework for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to deliver balanced services across the province.

Alpha Site Selection -Where Should Registry 2000 Start?

The roll-out of the new land titles system and electronic land information registry will start first in one county - named "Alpha Site" by the project team because the exact location is not yet known. After an evaluation period, a rapid implementation of the new system will begin in all the remaining counties across the province. The first county will be used to evaluate the new approach and to work out any bugs in the new system.

Identifying which county should be the Alpha Site will be based on the evaluation of many factors, including:

- The number of individual land parcels in the County
- The number of parcels bought or sold each year
- The number of documents filed and subdivisions created each year
- The state of property mapping
- The quality of the survey fabric
- The quality of the legacy paper records
- Issues relating to the index (GGI) and file improvement
- Location within the province
- Condition of Registry facilities
- User readiness (lawyers and other stakeholders)
- Municipal Units issues (state of technology, data exchange, etc)

Once all of the information has been collected and weighed, a short list of possible sites will be prepared and a recommendation will be made to the Department.

Technology Update

As we move forward with the Registry 2000 project, we are shifting our focus to the definition of the technical requirements for the new system. Many issues relating to new processes which are part of any Land Titles system were addressed during a process review which was undertaken by the project team and members of the Registry staff in April-May 2000. As well, the project team can rely on information gathered during the business area analysis done in preparation for Registry 2000. Still, much work remains to be done.

A Systems Requirements Sub-Committee has been established to take a more detailed approach to determine the new system's functionality while ensuring that the legacy system for the existing registry continues to support the traditional functions.

Outstanding Legal Issues

In the last issue of *Deeds and Dialogue*, we asked for comments on two issues which were hotly debated during the consultation period - judgments and adverse possession. We received some excellent submissions on both of these issues.

To supplement the feedback, we have commissioned two issue papers to outline the policy options and their implications. Richard W. Cregan, Q.C., a member of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society's Professional Standards Committee, is preparing a paper on judgments. Professor Philip Girard of Dalhousie Law School, is writing on adverse possession. They have both been provided with all of the comments from stakeholders on these issues, to assist them in exploring these complex topics. A third issue paper is being prepared to deal with the requirements for certification in the land registration system. John R. Cameron, Q.C. will be reviewing the options surrounding lawyers' certifying the legal effect of documents entering the system. The draft *Land Registration Act* contained in the original discussion paper required certification on initial registration but not on transfer of ownership. In theory, this could lead to errors where staff is left to interpret the legal effect of transfer documents. In the worst case this would result in a flawed guarantee of ownership.

The Registry 2000 Team appreciates the stakeholder input on these important topics. The three issue papers will be of tremendous assistance as amendments to the draft legislation are finalized.

Departmental Consultations

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations staff have been consulted and updated on Registry 2000's progress from the launch of the Discussion Paper in January, 2000. Presentations and province-wide visits to Registries of Deeds, Land Information Centres and the Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre have given our staff many opportunities to learn about the new system and what it will mean for the Department.

Any project of the scope of Registry 2000 has implications for other Provincial Government Departments as well. This is especially true given the fact that the draft *Land Registration Act* will impact on other Departments' business processes: almost all liens created under provincial legislation will have to be recorded in the parcel registers in order to be binding on those parcels. In addition, the draft legislation contains consequential amendments to approximately 70 provincial statutes, from the *Agricultural Marshland Conservation Act* to the *Workers' Compensation Act*. Each Department has been asked to review the consequential amendments and to provide input on the land tenure system which would be created by the proposal.

The departmental feedback has been both productive and positive. The sentiment that Registry 2000's 'time has come' has been expressed throughout the consultations. The changes also fit well into the government agenda of streamlined business processes and improved accessibility to government services.

HOW CAN WE REACH YOU?

Contact us by phone (424-5619), fax (424-5872) or e-mail (Reg-2000@gov.ns.ca) to let us know how you want us to reach you, or return this form to us by mail at the Land Records Reform Office, 1601 Lower Water Street, Halifax, N.S. B3J 2M4.

Please remove my name from your mailing list. My name is _____

Please send "Deeds and Dialogue" to me at my e-mail address: _____

If we don't hear from you we'll continue to send the Registry 2000 newsletter to you.

Proposed Milestones for Phase II

- Complete issue papers February 2001
- Complete revisions to proposed *Land Registration Act* February/March 2001
- Select Alpha Site April 2001
- Issue RFP on technology solution May 2001
- Acquire and test new technology Summer 2001-Spring 2002
- Prepare Alpha Site/Train Users and Staff Spring/Summer 2002
- Implement Alpha Site Fall 2002
- Begin Province-wide roll-out Spring 2003

Nova Scotia Property Records Online

Technology changes planned as part of Registry 2000 will augment the online access currently available to subscribers through Nova Scotia Property Records Online. Use of NSPRD Online is growing at an impressive rate: from its inception in 1998, there are now over 1600 users. It is becoming more and more necessary for those in the property administration community to have fast, easy access to property information 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, all part of the Registry 2000 vision.

Information on property ownership, size and location; topographic information, including maps for the entire province; and a link to assessment number and value are all available in a variety of formats on the internet-accessible NSPRD Online. Anyone with a commercial interest in property information, (e.g. bankers, lawyers, realtors, appraisers, resource companies, engineers, and surveyors) will benefit from this subscriber service which is available at a rate of \$75 per month for five hours use, plus \$15 per hour thereafter.

During the 2001 calendar year a user fee will be implemented for non-owners who call Assessment Offices to request property and related information over the phone. Tax payers who are calling the Assessment Offices about their own property will continue to be served free of charge. In order to provide a better alternative to calling the Assessment Office for similar information, Service Nova Scotia is promoting the use of the Property Records Online database.

Try a demo of the NSPRD Online at <http://geonova.gov.ns.ca/propmap>. If you would like to sign up for the service, please contact Dave Purdy at 1-800-798-0706.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION



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