



Legislative Priority: Eliminating institutional barriers to geospatial data at all levels of government in Wisconsin

Background

The Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA) believes data produced with public funding should be available in the public domain. For this reason, the WLIA supported the creation of the Wisconsin Land Information Council (WLIC) and has been engaged in the development of the "WLIP Program Plan: 2016-2021." This Plan sets a benchmark for making all WLIP-funded geospatial datasets open and accessible. We support this initiative and believe the same standard should apply to all geospatial data created using public funding sources.

Value of Geospatial Data

The importance of geospatial data and software tools has grown exponentially over the last 10 years. Businesses, government agencies, institutions, and utilities need and rely on access to electronically created and maintained geospatial data (e.g., civil boundaries, property parcels, addresses, centerlines, right-of-ways, zoning, wetlands, floodplains, land use, aerial imagery, elevation contours) to effectively manage their operations and support decision-making on a daily basis. These datasets have become crucial for emergency response, NG911, land ownership and assessment, transportation planning, broadband mapping, redistricting, and voter registration. By making publicly funded geospatial data accessible, Wisconsin can stimulate our local economy, attract businesses and new jobs to our state.

Existing Barriers to Open Geospatial Data Exchange

Sharing of geospatial data has been handled ad hoc, inefficiently, and inconsistently across jurisdictional boundaries at all levels of government in Wisconsin. Barriers include: time-limited formal agreement contracts to share or access data, inconsistent redistribution policies, funding for distribution infrastructure, lack of standards and specifications, and inability to identify an authoritative data source.

Benefits of Open Geospatial Data Exchange

Eliminating the barriers to sharing geospatial data will boost economic development, increase government efficiency, reduce overlapping data creation, and provide a single source of authoritative data and a common operating picture. Eliminating barriers will open opportunities for using geospatial data in new and innovative ways.

WLIA's Request

WLIA asks legislators to: 1) Support open data initiatives that make government geospatial data available without licensing, fees or other impediments to sharing. 2) Support the creation of a single point of access for geospatial data maintained at all levels of government.