



From the **Surveyor General**

Surveyor General's Report

ABCLS AGM 2022

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I'm happy to provide you with a report on the activities of the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC (LTSA) over the past year. This report will highlight organization updates, operational metrics, ParcelMap BC developments and other significant projects.

Organization Updates

I continue to be supported by Dave Swaile, Katie Hannah and Chris Sakundiak in Operations and both Peter Haas and Tobin Pope in Policy. Thank you to the full Surveyor General team, including the technologists and records staff for your ongoing support of the land surveyor community.

Over much of the year, most LTSA staff members have worked remotely due to the pandemic. At the end of summer 2021 the LTSA introduced an optional hybrid work model where many staff now work in the office a minimum of two days a week and work remotely the remainder of the time. We will continue to adjust as needed during the pandemic, but the hybrid work model will persist post-pandemic. In fall 2021 we also re-opened LTSA front counters to visits by the public, by appointment only.

We have a retirement and a few promotions to announce for our land title colleagues. Dave Whittet is retiring this spring following a long career with land titles, most recently as Deputy Registrar in the Kamloops Land Title Office

(LTO). Val Cole has taken on the position of Deputy Administrator, Land Owner Transparency Registry (LOTR) Services following her years of experience as Deputy Registrar in the Victoria LTO. To fill the vacant positions, Lindsay Bealle and



Kamloops Office – Exterior: 'New Kamloops Office Location'

Chris Smith have been promoted to the positions of Deputy Registrar, working from the Kamloops and New Westminster offices.

The Kamloops office move is now complete, with the team moving from the Courthouse location to a centrally-located, modern workspace in downtown Kamloops. The Kamloops and Nelson land title records have been relocated to the Victoria vault. Significant work has been undertaken to pro-actively scan the bound volumes and Running Number Series records. The remaining hard-copy records can be accessed through Scan on Demand services. In addition to these digitization projects, the ongoing conservation of survey plans and field notes continues.

The project to convert Absolute Fee Book (AFB) records to indefeasible interests has been completed for all Land Districts. A small number (282) of AFB records will remain unconverted due to the challenges of describing remaining lands; such as the

remaining AFB title for the E&N Lands on Vancouver Island. We are working on digitizing land title microfilm records. The digitization is complete for the Prince Rupert and Prince George Land Title Districts and the team will be working on Victoria Land Title District microfilm reels next.

The Historic Records Advisory Committee continues to advise LTSA on conservation of, and accessibility to, all historic records, with a focus on records of significance to First Nations research. In addition, LTSA is working with partners to initiate the development of a comprehensive research guide to records of significance to Indigenous Peoples, which will provide a description and location of historical records of Indigenous interests including records from LTSA and other related organizations.

I would like to recognize ABCLS nominees Bronwyn Denton and BJ Houghton for their continued contributions serving on the LTSA

Board of Directors. Thank you also to Diane Friedman for her leadership as Board Chair; Diane was appointed to the LTSA Board in 2010 and has served for 12 years, the longest of any Director to date. Diane will continue to serve as Board Chair until the end of March 2022, when her maximum terms served will be reached, and a new Board Chair will be announced at the end of March.

Operations

This past year has remained very busy for the LTSA, with land title staff working several overtime shifts throughout the year to stay on top of transaction volumes. All LTSA operational turn-around targets have been met through the first three quarters of the year and throughout this time we've maintained myLTSA system availability at 99.9%. In addition, the ParcelMap BC team has continued to remain under their target of two business days for processing of datasets, currently at 0.9 business days.

The transaction volumes and revenues in the last year were significantly above our long-term trends. Volumes and revenues have now begun to decrease, but are still well above historical norms. Quarter 1 volumes and revenue were the highest recorded since the LTSA was established in 2005.

For Surveyor General operations, we've had relatively consistent volumes of both survey plans and applications throughout the year with an average of 180 plans and 82 applications each quarter. For land title operations, the number of survey plans was highest in the first quarter with 2,556 plans received and then the last two quarters were a little lower with an average of 2,360 plans.



Kamloops Office – Front Counter: 'Kamloops Office Front Counter'

From the Surveyor General

Surveyor General operations staff continue to support the survey of lands associated with various First Nation agreements with the issuance of survey instructions and review of final plans. We anticipate that the quantity of surveys will increase with the Province's commitment to reconciliation and steps to create multi-year survey strategies.

In the past fiscal year three surveys were undertaken in support of the BC/Alberta Boundary Commission. This included two inspection surveys including a total of 21 survey monuments at North Fork Pass and Tonquin Pass and the restoration of 35 monuments at Tent Mountain/ Crowsnest Pass. The next Commission

meeting is scheduled for April and we will determine survey activities for this next year.

The transition to Web Filing continued for the land title applications with the retirement of PDF versions of Forms A, B, and C in September. In November enhancements were made to Web Filing validation and ongoing improvements to the system will continue to be made over the coming months. The only remaining land title PDF forms are those that are plan related, which will be addressed as part of Survey Plan Services modernization; more on this later.

The LTSA also converted the Land Title Practice Manual to a free

publication online. In collaboration with Continuing Legal Education Society, customers can now access this resource to better understand what's required for applications under the *Land Title Act* in Volume 1, and annotated sections from over 20 other relevant statutes and regulations affecting land titles in Volumes 2 and 3. This resource is available at <https://ltpm.ltsa.ca>.

The Land Owner Transparency Registry (LOTR) search function was launched in April 2021. The deadline for filing transparency reports by pre-existing owners had originally been set by the Province as November 30, 2021, however, that has been extended to November 30, 2022.



Boundary 4: 'Monument 10R Tonquin Pass Inspection'

ParcelMap BC

I mentioned previously that turnaround times for ParcelMap BC remain at less than one day. The team has handled significant volumes over the past year, while continuing with spatial improvements and also tackling a number of projects to enhance the fabric. In addition, we've continued to focus on adoption efforts with municipal governments, utilities and other entities.

In December 2021, the BC Oil and Gas Commission announced that they had transitioned to ParcelMap BC and encouraged the use of ParcelMap BC by their customers and other organizations to support consistent language and communication around land ownership and parcel descriptions in communications and applications to the Commission.

We continue to grow the adopter community as we near the end of year

three of the strategic plan for adoption of ParcelMap BC, with a focus on large municipalities and utilities as well as Integrated Cadastral Fabric (ICF) retirement. Workshops continue to be held to assist municipalities with planning their transition to ParcelMap BC and making the most of data. As we transition to a new phase in these efforts, we will now focus on customer-driven product initiatives, which is expected to drive value for customers and additional adoption.

Current ParcelMap BC related projects, primarily based on customer requested product enhancement and data improvement efforts, include:

- ▶ **Interest Parcel Historical Back-Capture Pilot:** We've been working with the City of Kamloops to intake their spatial representation

of interest parcels, which were not part of the original build of ParcelMap BC, so that they have a more complete integrated dataset to work with that supports their needs in their adoption of ParcelMap BC. The work from this pilot is helping define a program that could be adopted by other municipalities and will be discussed with the stakeholder community at an upcoming workshop in April 2022.

- ▶ **Targeted Spatial Improvements:** The ParcelMap BC Operations team targets delivery of spatial improvements for 1-2 areas of interest each month. Areas of interest are prioritized to address those areas of the parcel fabric most in need of improvement. The spatial improvement app, available

through the LTSA website, provides transparency and insight into spatial improvement planning and a view of the assessed accuracy of the parcel fabric. Over the past year, we've prioritized a number of spatial improvement target areas based on collaboration with municipalities. Approximately 1,000 square kilometres of the Province is spatially improved each month.

- ▶ **Adding Vertical Benchmarks to Control Points:** We will be importing vertical benchmark control points into the fabric that are currently excluded. This is anticipated to be completed in spring 2022.
- ▶ **Active Titled Road Parcels Project:** The team continues to work on integrating titles that



Boundary 5: 'Monument 4R Tonquin Pass Inspection'

were not included in the initial build because they were tagged as road. The project started with a total of approximately 33,000 titles and the project is 75% complete. The titles within the City of Vancouver have all been integrated and the progress has now slowed as other areas of the province are more challenging; this slow-down was expected. The project will be complete at the end of the next fiscal year. Recently we've been engaging with the Land Surveyors Advisory Task Force to discuss potential changes to the parcel class for the titled roads, to provide more clarity to end users. Land surveyors should be aware that ParcelMap BC will do its best to assess and sort parcel class for these titled roads based on internally vetted rules, but it's still up to land surveyors to do adequate research to determine if the roads have been legally dedicated or not. Parcels that appear to be road but are not actually dedicated may create barriers for subdivision and would need to be dealt with.

- **Historic Highways Records Mapping:** The team has been engaged with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) on a project to map historic highway records, largely around gazetted, but unsurveyed, highways. This initiative serves a couple of needs: Primarily, to support MoTI's Property Information Management System (PIMS) project, building a comprehensive resource of mapped shapes aligned with ParcelMap BC as a new data layer for MoTI, linked with the defining highway records;

Secondly, incrementally enhancing ParcelMap BC by capturing those highways, that meet criteria, directly in the survey fabric. This is a significant multi-year project constituting over fifteen thousand records.

Survey Plan Services and myLTSA Platform for Land Surveyors

The LTSA is in the process of building a myLTSA platform for land surveyors that will focus on the services that land surveyors use the most. This will be built in an iterative approach taking into consideration customer feedback. The Land Surveyors Advisory Task Force has been engaged with this modernization project and in the fall of 2021 workshops were held with land surveyors and legal professionals.

The land surveyors' platform will include a dashboard with quick links to items such as:

- Starting a new plan assembly or submission
- Recent survey plan interactions
- Notifications
- ParcelMap BC Search Services
- Plan number request/management.

The most significant change in myLTSA for land surveyors will be the introduction of enhanced survey plan services. This includes the ability to assemble, validate, confirm and certify survey plans and dataset submissions for both land title and Surveyor General submissions. This will be a Web Filing experience that is focused on the needs of the land surveyor and addresses customer feedback.

The objectives of the first step of the project will be to modernize and streamline the way survey plans are

assembled by land surveyors and how plans, related forms and datasets are submitted to the LTSA. This is planned to be released in two significant phases, with the first being available in the fall of 2022.

The first phase will include the surveyor's dashboard and workspace, streamline plan and dataset assembly and introduce web form assembly for land title and Surveyor General submissions. The second phase will include modernization of the forms and improved submission workflow.

In the workspace, you will be able to use web form entry to populate information into the standard submission forms (such as SPC, DSPL or CLRS forms) instead of using offline PDF forms. Initially the system will still create completed PDF forms for myLTSA submission. In the future submission will be made directly from the workspace or handed off to a third party through the workspace. Key benefits to note include:

- Dashboard and workspace will track statuses and allow land surveyors and delegates to keep their own and their organizations' projects grouped together to help with file management.
- Land surveyors will share a link to the current plan version in the workspace instead of emailing the plan image to third parties for review or submission. The intent is to reduce the potential for the incorrect version of the plan being sent to approving authorities or to the LTSA.
- The dataset will be linked to the plan image however you will retain the ability to only correct one or the other if needed.
- The DSPL form will be populated

by information from the land surveyor, which should reduce errors on the form resulting in submission defects.

- ▶ The land surveyor will identify the signatures that will be required on the DSPL that correspond with notations on the plan. For example, if it's identified that the plan is a block outline survey, the Surveyor General's certification will be added to the DSPL. This should reduce occurrences of forms being submitted without required signatures.
- ▶ We will be working towards moving the plan certification form to the plan image and eliminating the SPC and CLRS forms.

Thank you to the land surveyors that participated in our consultation workshop this past fall; the feedback has helped inform the development. There will be additional consultation and communication before the new services are introduced this fall, and we will provide additional information as we get closer to the first release. Land surveyors will initially be able to continue using existing PDF forms throughout a transition period but I would encourage you to try the new services when they become available.

Plan Preview

Plan preview as it currently exists was originally developed and built in about 2011. The original goal was to provide a verification mechanism to allow customers to ensure that the correct plan had been located prior to plan purchase and retrieval. This was a direct result of requests from land surveyors, through LTSAs' Land Surveyors Advisory Task Force (LSATF), to have a way to review a

plan image prior to purchasing. This provides an easy way to ensure that the right prefix and suffix were added to the plan number in the search, so that the correct plan was obtained.

This feature was extended into ParcelMap BC Search Services menu options in 2017, again as requested by the land surveyor community as an important enhancement item to assist in research in an efficient graphical manner, instead of the text based plan search in myLTSA search services.

The technology for plan preview needs to be updated and we will be making some changes to address a few challenges that have arisen over the past few years. One of those challenges is mis-use of the service from some customers who have obtained copies of plans without ever purchasing any or very few plans from the LTSA. This mis-use will be addressed in a way that should not affect most land surveyors, although you will likely see some changes to the watermark and printing/saving functionality.

We have had several conversations with the LSATF on this topic and they have provided us with a really good overview of how they use the plan preview service. We are proceeding with ensuring that land surveyors can continue to access and utilize the service to assist with preliminary research. Excessive use of plan preview, without purchasing plans, will be flagged and investigated.

Please remember that, as the watermark states, plan previews are not to be printed and are not for official use. These plan previews should never form part of a statutory application or used for any other official purpose.

Integrated Survey Area (ISA) Program Review

The review of the Integrated Survey Area (ISA) program is complete and we are undertaking actions to revitalize the program. Following stakeholder consultation it was determined that there was still significant support for the program and support for revitalizing it. The Surveyor General is responsible for creating, amending or annulling ISAs, publishing ISA monument values and setting ISA survey requirements. Additional responsibilities related to ISAs lie with GeoBC and the ISA municipalities.

In the spring of 2021 we updated the graphical depiction of all ISA boundaries and set ParcelMap BC Search Services as the official source for boundaries. All PDF maps have been superseded. We also sent out information packages to ISA municipalities that provide information about the program and asked the municipalities to either commit to fulfilling certain responsibilities in maintaining the ISAs or to indicate that they no longer wished to remain as an ISA.

The commitments include:

- ▶ maintaining an adequate density of control monuments in their ISA (an adequate density is considered 500m-1km in urban areas and up to 2km in more rural areas);
- ▶ taking steps to protect control monuments from unnecessary damage or destruction due to development activities; and
- ▶ maintaining an accurate inventory of control monuments and reporting changes in monument condition to GeoBC.

The deadline for response has recently passed and we have responses from approximately 75% of municipalities and are following up with others. Almost all responses have indicated a commitment to fulfilling responsibilities to maintain their ISAs.

First Nations National Land Registry

The LTSA is supporting the Lands Advisory Board (LAB) to establish a First Nations National Land Registry. The vision for the land registry is to establish a shared, comprehensive, trusted, sustainable, and First Nations governed land registry for lands governed under a Land Code or self-government arrangement. The registry would be a new modern register operated by Framework Agreement First Nations, replacing the current register, which is operated by Indigenous Services Canada. The service delivery partners would include LAB's First Nations Land Management Resource Centre for registry training services, NRCan Surveyor General Branch for Canada Lands Survey records and plans, and LTSA for registry technical build and support.

This past year has involved stakeholder consultation and development of a proposal for stakeholder approval and funding. The results were presented at the LAB Annual General Meeting in December 2021 and a resolution was passed by First Nations to support the registry proposal in principle. The project team is continuing the planning and design work this year.

Disaster Recovery

This has been a challenging year across BC with hazardous weather events, including the wildfires and flooding. I anticipate that there will be a number of land surveyors engaged with determining boundary locations for affected land owners, whether it's related to rivers that suddenly changed course or surveys in support of rebuilding efforts for those affected by fires.

Following the devastating Lytton fire, and prior to subsequent clean-up activities, a survey was undertaken to tie in and flag existing survey evidence and set control around the community. A posting plan is now filed in the LTO showing all evidence found. These efforts are intended to assist with re-establishing boundaries for rebuilding the community. Following the Fort McMurray fire in 2018, it was found that a lot of survey evidence was destroyed, not by the fire, but by the subsequent clean-up activities, which made the re-establishment of boundaries more challenging and increased the chance of boundary disputes. We are learning from that experience and will continue to learn from the Lytton experience. We will work with Emergency Management BC to highlight the risk to the cadastre in these situations and the importance of protecting boundary evidence to support recovery.

Last year at this time we started consultation with land surveyors on establishing a post-quake plan for restoring boundaries after a significant earthquake. We are learning from experiences in other jurisdictions that a major earthquake is likely to move boundary evidence, often in a non-

linear manner. In order to support economic recovery after an earthquake, land surveyors will need to be provided with direction for resolving boundaries post-quake.

We are working on creating a handbook that will be used to guide the Surveyor General on what actions need to be taken in different stages post-quake. This will include actions such as:

- gathering information (from land surveyors, municipalities, imagery, etc.) to determine the geographical extent of affected parcels and the significance of the disturbances;
- working with GeoBC on tasks related to the Provincial Control Network;
- working with ABCLS and the Director of Land Titles on survey and plan rules;
- setting out survey requirements for the re-establishment of boundaries; and
- general communication with affected parties (municipalities, land surveyors, land owners etc.).

We anticipate that the focused work on this project will continue over the 2022/23 fiscal year, and will then transition into maintaining the handbook to keep it current. We will continue to engage with land surveyors and other stakeholders.

Thank you to the Land Surveyors Advisory Task Force for your feedback on project development as well as land surveyors who have participated on specific working groups. In addition, thank you to all land surveyors for your continued diligence in supporting a high quality survey fabric throughout BC. ❖