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Report and Prospectus on the
Organization of Land Information
Institute

By
The Orono Committee
Sept 15, 1977

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REPORT AND PROSPECTUS ON THE

ORGANIZATION OF

LAND INFORMATION INSTITUTE

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THE ORONO COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

The need for a Land Information Institute was identified by the 125 participants in the Symposium on User Requirements for Land Records and Resource Information Systems, held at the University of Maine at Orono on August 25 - 27, 1976. An inter-disciplinary committee of eight of the participants of the Symposium was appointed to study and report on this proposal by Ellsworth V. Stanley, Chairman of the Symposium, pursuant to a resolution voted unanimously at the final session. Copies of the resolutions and other proceedings of the Symposium are available from Professor David A. Tyler of the Department of Civil Engineering, University of Maine at Orono, who also serves as Chairman of the Committee.

Following a meeting in October, 1976, and circulation of successive drafts among Committee members and other interested parties, the Orono Committee circulated its preliminary report on February 1, 1977, to the widest possible audience of professionals who had been identified as interested in formation of a Land Information Institute. Meetings to receive comment and consider changes and additions to the report were held on March 1 and March 4, 1977 in Washington, DC in conjunction with the Symposium on Modern Land Data Systems held jointly by the American Society of Photogrammetry and the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping. Inputs were received at these meetings from representatives of the following organizations, some of whom are also members of the Orono Committee:

North American Institute on Modernization of Land Data Systems (MOLDS)

Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA)

Committee on Land Records, American Congress on Surveying and Mapping

Department of Surveying Engineering, Purdue University

Department of Civil Engineering, University of Maine at Orono

Environmental Monitoring and Data Acquisition Group, University
of Wisconsin at Madison

Department of Surveying Engineering, University of New Brunswick
at Fredericton, NB, Canada

Massachusetts Land Records Commission

The remainder of this report of the Orono Committee consists of a statement of findings of the Committee, and a prospectus for organization of the Land Information Institute. The Committee anticipates that the new Institute will be international in its scope from the outset, building upon the expressed interests of experts in this field in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States. Actually, the scope, directions, and general emphasis of this new program, at least in its formative period, will depend upon who responds to this prospectus in time to participate in the organizational meeting tentatively scheduled to be held in December 1977.

FINDINGS OF THE ORONO COMMITTEE

The automation of public records concerning the land is well underway in those counties, cities, and towns that are relatively large and have high rates of land development and change. Automation is making feasible an unprecedented level of exchange of data and information among the branches of local government whose land-related operations had been relatively insulated from each other. Building departments are being notified instantly of the approval of subdivision plans, so that processing of permits for development of the new parcels may proceed. Fire departments are planning the evacuation of burning buildings using the very latest reports from municipal inspections of the property up to the preceding day. Data on alternative land acquisitions for new public facilities, such as

total assessed values or conditions of both natural and man-made environments, are being compiled within minutes from computerized files.

Even those who are responsible for the legal records relating to land title, traditionally the most conservative among the local record keeping offices, are beginning to find advantages in linking their files with the files of other branches of local government. Indexing of all land title records by parcel identifiers, which is widely recognized as a requirement for a modern title records system, usually depends upon the maintenance of maps and identifier numbers by other branches of government. Automated indexing of this type is scheduled to come on line in 1977 in Forsyth County, North Carolina. Demonstrations of modern systems for title recording are scheduled to be funded at several locations in the United States in 1978 by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

A better network for sharing of technologies and strategies for modernizing land data systems is urgently needed. The usefulness of the rapidly developing banks of public data on the land for inter-state or national studies will depend upon the completeness of the local filing systems and consistency among them. Studies that are built upon the files of local land data in the United States must integrate the data of at least 3,142 counties or county equivalents. Further, the smaller jurisdictions must be aided in the selection and transfer of technology from the larger and wealthier counties and cities that already have incurred the system development costs.

Leadership in bringing new priorities to these recordkeeping institutions must be developed within their local constituencies. The improvements will depend upon individuals acting through the appropriate processes of governmental change in each state and region, drawing upon

the best standards and procedures that are available and feasible in that locality.

The leaders in this effort will need the support of a resource center having national scope, to provide a combination of research findings, model methods and systems, referrals to localities where these have been tested by experience and promotion of common interests at the national level.

The promoter of improved land record systems does not now have available an organization from which to draw adequate support for his efforts. A number of national associations represent the interests of individual professions that must play a role, and some of these are developing guidelines and model systems for land information to serve their individual purposes, notably the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, the Council of State Governments (in a study of computer assisted assessment), and the American Public Works Association. However, none of these is dedicated to the development of multi-purpose systems that pool the land records resources of all functions of government, to the mutual benefit.

There exists a consortium of representatives of many of these associations in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico; the North American Institute for Modernization of Land Data Systems, known as "MOLDS". It has provided a valuable forum for presentations of various points of view, and hopefully will continue to do so. The Orono Committee looks to the MOLDS Institute to muster and coordinate the interests of the national organizations and federal agencies concerned.

To provide the necessary support for the leadership of land record improvement efforts requires an organization, not of the other organizations and federal agencies, but rather of the individuals themselves. For example,

the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) for many years has been bringing together individuals from a great many disciplines, at its annual conferences and the workshops of its Special Interest Groups (SIG's). In fact, the current President of URISA announced the formation of a "SIG Cadastre" starting with the annual meeting of URISA in August, 1977. People who are interested in the work of a Land Information Institute should consider joining him in this effort.

Having reviewed these and many other recent developments in this rapidly changing field, the Orono Committee finds that there remains a need for a national or international organization dedicated to supporting the leadership of land records improvement efforts, free from the guidance of some larger organization of functional interests or constituencies. To this end, the Orono Committee presents the following Prospectus for the organization of a Land Information Institute.

THE LAND INFORMATION INSTITUTE

A PROSPECTUS

I. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

An understanding of the human relationship to and dependence upon the land is fundamental to the decision making processes in the political, legal, economic, social and environmental fields affecting the quality of human existence.

The pursuit of new knowledge regarding this relationship and the education of the public, as well as those responsible to the public, is the most effective way to bring about the institutional changes necessary to improve these decision-making processes.

The Land Information Institute will be an organization of individuals with a wide variety of professional and academic skills who are dedicated

to developing and promoting integrated systems for gathering, qualifying, storing, and retrieving non-confidential data concerning the land and its resources, along with data-information conversion systems, to enhance the ability of people to use plant Earth in a manner to insure the survival of the environment and the best feasible quality of life for the human race.

II. PROPOSED OBJECTIVES OF THE LAND INFORMATION INSTITUTE

A. Information Exchange

1. To maintain a clearing house and depository that actively circulates references to current projects, publications, etc., providing information on the philosophy, current status, proposed projects and legal requirements of modern land information systems.
2. To establish the identity of the Land Information Institute with the public and with officials who should be using its services, and to generate requests for assistance.
3. To provide referrals to qualified experts, informally, upon request.
4. To provide an institutional arrangement and contacts to maintain technical and multidisciplinary communications among the organizers, collectors, and users of land and resource information.
5. To publish a periodical newsletter, and sponsor a professional journal.

B. Education

1. To promote better understanding of the concepts of land information systems among potential users and beneficiaries.
2. To foster and sponsor seminars and other programs that prepare the individuals who must provide technical and policy leadership in organizing modern land data systems.

3. To foster viable university-level curricula in land information systems.

C. Research

1. To develop in-depth analyses of the potential impact of legislative and administrative reforms upon traditional land tenure arrangements.
2. To resolve technical problems relating to land information system development:
 - a. Descriptions of the general components of effective integrated systems for gathering, qualifying, storing, and retrieving data concerning the land, and data-information conversion systems, in a format that permits the installation of one or more selected components as appropriate in the improvement programs of each state.
 - b. Classifications and general characteristics of land information systems currently operating in the counties of the United States and the regional patterns of existing systems to which improvement programs must respond.
 - c. Classifications and standards for systems of land based information now in use by Federal government, arrangements for their administration and their relevance to state and local governmental operations.
 - d. The economics of programs to improve land information systems, including costs, general benefits, and prospective cost savings involved in the installation of components described above.
 - e. System designs and/or development of computer software for individual components described above, where requested by an operating agency or agencies as the client.
3. To identify sources of funding to support research and possibly act as a contracting agent or liaison between potential funding parties and researchers.
4. To supply task forces to work on specific problem-oriented research projects.
5. To assist in the development of background and guidelines for pursuit of the additional objectives of the institute listed under Education and Information above.

III. OPERATING POLICIES

It shall be the policy of the Land Information Institute to cooperate with other interested organizations and institutions toward interdisciplinary acceptance and promotion of these objectives among representative systems suppliers, administrators, and users.

IV. ORGANIZATION

A. General Approach

The Land Information Institute will make use of the methods of organization and decision-making developed by private business corporations. Advice will be sought from a management expert prior to the organizational meeting.

B. Policy Direction

1. The Board of Directors of the Land Information Institute will have 15 members, who eventually will be elected annually for one-year terms. However, to insure some continuity for at least the first 5 years, the 15 people elected at the organizational meeting will have terms of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 years, respectively (3 each). Re-election thereafter will be for only one year terms, without limit on how many times one person may be re-elected.
2. Membership in the Board of Directors will be based upon individual merits, not upon representation of some organization or interest group.
3. The membership of the Board of Directors will be required to include at least one skilled practitioner in each of the following disciplines required for a modern land information system: real estate law; surveying; systems design; and local government administration.

4. For the first election at the organizational meeting only, the Board may not include more than four members whose primary practice is in the same discipline.
5. Nomination and election of directors will be by those members in good standing in attendance at the annual meeting, who may collect and exercise the proxy votes of other members in good standing who are unable to attend.
6. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, to be elected by all members of the Land Information Institute, will have authority to appoint committees, hire staff, convene Board meetings, and manage the funds of the Institute according to detailed procedures to be presented at the organizational meeting. From the outset, however, the following decisions will require ratification by a majority of the Board of Directors, or by the membership of the Institute.
 - a. Setting of dues
 - b. Acceptance of grants
 - c. Adoption of the annual budget
 - d. Employment of auditors
 - e. Employment of chief staff officer
 - f. Contracts for more than \$5,000
 - g. Convening of meetings of the Institute

C. Personnel

1. An "Administrative Secretary" will be recruited to start up the organization for part-time pay. An office secretary will also be needed from the start, full-time.
2. Once the organization is established and an adequate, continuing budget has been obtained, a full-time position of Executive

Director will be created. The person who had served as the Administrative Secretary may become a candidate for this position but a different range of skills is expected to be necessary.

3. Project Director positions will be funded out of the separate budgets for individual research grant projects, publications, etc. They will play important roles in the direction of the Institute, but their financial support will be tied to the project budgets.

D. Location

An address in a major metropolitan center of the United States will be sought.

V. OUTLINE OF PROSPECTIVE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

A. Internal, from the membership

1. A donation of \$25.00 will be expected from each person participating in the organizational meeting.
2. Membership dues will be set at the organizational meeting with provisions for increases to accommodate inflation of the costs of business. It is anticipated that dues will be about \$25.00.
3. A schedule of higher levels of contributions should be established for contributing agencies, sustaining members, etc.

B. Grants or Donations (including materials)

1. Public interest sponsors
2. Private sponsors

C. Grants or contracts for research projects or conferences

1. Information system designs.
2. Feasibility studies or project designs.

D. Publications

1. Subscriptions, and sale or publications.

2. Grants for publication of specific research (see under Objective C)
3. Possibly a grant for publication of a journal.
4. Fees for documents delivered.

VI. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

A. Enlistment of Charter Members

To become a charter Member, a person must send his name and address, together with a donation of \$25.00 payable to the Land Information Institute, as soon as possible to: Dr. Terrence Keating, Dept. of Civil Engineering, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04473.

B. Convening of the Organizational Meeting

When the number of people enlisting as Charter Members reaches 80, Dr. Terrence Keating shall notify Professor David Tyler, Chairman of the Orono Committee, who shall thereupon convene the organizational meeting of the Land Information Institute and serve as chairman of said meetings until the election of a Chairman of the Board of Directors has been accomplished. Professor Tyler shall proceed no later than November 1, 1977, to convene said meeting even if the number of people enlisting as charter members has not reached the target by that date. A notice of the time and place of said meeting, together with a form for a proxy vote for the Chairman and the members of the Board of Directors, a list of the names and addresses of all Charter Members to date and other information as appropriate, shall be mailed to each person enlisting as a Charter Member at least 30 days before the date of the meeting. People enlisting after the date of said mailing, but before the organizational meeting will also be considered Charter Members, but will be sent notices and other materials for the meeting only as their applications are received. Proxy votes may be collected and exercised at the organizational meeting by any

Charter Member.

C. Conduct of the Organizational Meeting

Election of the Chairman and the members of the Board of Directors shall be conducted during the organizational meeting by the Chairman of the meeting, following the rules set forth in this Prospectus. Election shall be by a majority of the votes cast for each position, to be counted by whatever method is deemed appropriate by the Chairman of the meeting. The Chairman of the Board of Directors, upon election, may present any plans or proposals that are within his authority to the membership for ratification by a majority of those present and voting. The Chairman, or any other Charter Member, also may offer interim by-laws, or any amendments to the rules set forth in this Prospectus, for adoption by a majority of the Charter Members present and voting. However, the latter may not include amendments to Section I (the Statement of Principle) which, together with this sentence, may be amended only by the adoption of permanent by-laws or Constitution.

D. Constitution and By-Laws

A By-Laws Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors and confirmed by the Board within 60 days after the organizational meeting. The Committee shall prepare a draft of the By-Laws of the Land Information Institute and a Constitution if it so chooses, and arrange for mailing of the draft or drafts to all members in good standing of the Institute no less than 180 days after the organizational meeting. The Board of Directors shall convene a meeting no less than 30 days, but no more than 90 days after the mailing of said draft or drafts for the purpose of adopting the By-Laws and the Constitution if proposed. Said draft

or drafts may be amended by majority vote during the meeting but adoption of the By-Laws or Constitution shall require a two-thirds of the members in good standing of the Land Information Institute who are present and voting.

In preparing the drafts of the By-Laws or Constitution, the Committee shall consider the requirements of the Federal Internal Revenue Service for qualification as a non-profit organization.

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