



**MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF ASSESSING OFFICERS,
INC.**

***Affiliated with the International Association of Assessing
Officers***

Established 1890

Incorporated 1980
2709997

Tax ID. #04-

President: Michael P. Flynn, MAA Newton

President-Elect: Ellen Blanchard, Carver

Immediate Past President: R. Lane Partridge, Concord

Executive Director: Robert J. Ellia, MAA

Secretary: Marion A. Fantucchio, MAA, Quincy **Treasurer:** Deborah J. Robbins, MAA, Westwood

September 25, 2014

To whom it may Concern:

At the Executive Board meeting of the MAAO held on September 16, 2014 the Board voted unanimously to issue the attached Statement on Standardized Assessor Tax Mapping.

The MAAO is dedicated to providing assistance and advice, along with strong educational programs, to aid the local assessor in the performance of their professional duties. The Executive Board of the MAAO feels strongly that standardized tax mapping will help to provide the tools necessary to assist local assessing jurisdictions in providing the tax payers of their community the type of service that they expect and deserve.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Ellia
Executive Director, MAAO

Executive Board: Peter M. Caron, MAA, Lynn; Barbara F. Miller, MAA, Montague, Paul J. Sullivan, MAA, Brockton, Eric Josephson, MAA, Weston, Richard W. Finnegan, MAA, Plymouth, William Mitchell, Leominster

*CMA - Certified Massachusetts Assessor RMA - Residential Massachusetts Assessor
MAA - Massachusetts Accredited Assessor*



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Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers Statement on Standardized Assessor Tax Mapping

Many cities and towns in Massachusetts have, in the last 15 years, started using the computer mapping capabilities of GIS software. These efforts have usually included creating digital versions of the assessor tax maps. At the same time, society as a whole has moved to heavy reliance on the Internet for accessing information. These changes have substantially altered how many assessors conduct their day-to-day work and also the expectations from citizens on how they access assessor maps and related information. The MAAO has actively assisted assessors with this technology transition by offering training and educational programs.

The MAAO is also fully aware of and has closely followed and assisted the efforts of the state's Office of Geographic Information (Mass GIS) to fund and promote standardized GIS-based assessor tax mapping in the Commonwealth. Standardization, in this context, means compliance with the Mass GIS Standard for Digital Parcel Files; it also means using the standard's unique locational identifier, the "LOC_ID," in CAMA databases. The LOC_ID makes possible enhanced linking of parcels to CAMA records and vice-versa.

Mass GIS' standardization initiative has benefitted many communities by providing them with computerized assessor maps that they would not otherwise have been able to afford. Standardization has also resulted in 1) a significant improvement in the quality of computer-based mapping and, 2) improved capabilities for associating a property tax record with its associated map parcel and vice-versa. Because of Mass GIS' project and the initiative taken by many communities, the tax maps for a large majority of municipalities are now maintained using GIS software.

The MAAO recognizes that there are many benefits of standardized tax mapping. Besides the municipal property tax assessment function, standardization benefits property appraisers, makes it easier to identify comparable sales for unusual properties, and benefits the real estate industry in general. In addition, the MAAO recognizes that having current standardized tax mapping available through Mass GIS yields significant benefits for emergency response and recovery, economic development, resource protection, and transportation planning. Therefore, recognizing the many benefits, the MAAO endorses standardization of tax mapping as the best practice for assessors, including:

- 1) Maintaining maps that comply with Level 3 of the Mass GIS Standard.
- 2) Working with CAMA vendors to have the unique parcel identifier ("LOC_ID") from the standardization added to and kept current in the CAMA database.
- 3) Annually providing Mass GIS with updated standardized mapping and with a current "Mass GIS extract" or "Banker and Tradesmen extract" from the CAMA database

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