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Recommended Best Practices for Municipal Address Assignment and Maintenance

Introduction

If you are involved in addressing at the local level, you have likely been contacted by the state's Office of Geographic Information ("MassGIS"). MassGIS is developing and maintaining a comprehensive statewide map and master list of addresses. Detailed address information is an integral part of the Next Generation 911 System ("NextGen") which is being deployed starting in 2016. MassGIS' work has generated considerable interest among municipal staff in municipal address assignment practices and requirements. In response, the State 911 Department and MassGIS have developed some recommended best practices for address assignment.

In addition, MassGIS has also developed two ways for communities to send information about new addresses to MassGIS; doing so helps ensure that new addresses are available in the NextGen system for your community. MassGIS can be notified of new addresses via email (or by mail if email not possible) or by building inspectors using a free quick and easy-to-use smart-phone application. Finally, MassGIS now also provides community-specific downloads of their master address information on its web site. See below for information on all these topics.

1. Best Practices for Address Assignment

- a) The street name in the address should be the one from which the property is accessed - either directly or via an un-named access road.
- b) Address numbers should be assigned based on where the structure driveway or other access intersects the named street. Address numbers should be assigned in sequence with odd on one side, even on the other, and numbers on both sides increasing in the same direction.
- c) If two or more developed properties are accessed via an un-named access road (i.e., a shared driveway), that road should be named and numbers assigned accordingly.
- d) Addresses accessed from streets in neighboring communities should respect the street name, address town name (i.e., the name of the neighboring community), numbering sequence, and parity of addresses in the neighboring community.
- e) Address numbers should be assigned to each building or at a minimum to each cluster of buildings on a single property that share access.

- f) Address numbers should not be assigned to individual units in a multistory building unless there is a clear ground level separation of unit entry such as a town-house or row-house configuration.

2. Keeping Addresses Current

The more quickly communities notify MassGIS of new or changed addresses they have officially approved or, better still, of the locations of those new addresses, the sooner they will be included in the Next Generation 911 system. Also, once MassGIS has added an address to the Next Generation 911 system, it will be available to communities as part of a standardized address list (see below for more information on this). There are a couple of ways communities can help keep their addresses current:

- a) Notify MassGIS of new or changed addresses by sending an email to notify911address@state.ma.us. If a community is unable to provide this information via email, it can also be mailed to MassGIS, 1 Ashburton Place, Room 804, Boston, MA 02108, ATTN: MassGIS Director
- b) Public safety building inspectors are usually among the earliest municipal staff to visit a new address location. MassGIS has developed a free smart-phone app (runs on both Apple and Android phones) for use by inspectors. In a couple of minutes or less, an inspector can use the app to capture a new address location, assign it to the correct street, and enter the house number or number range. This app is the quickest and most effective way to get your new addresses into the Next Generation 911 system. If you are interested in using this app, send an email to MassGIS at massgismail@state.ma.us: Please put “field data capture” in the subject of the email.

3. Obtaining Municipal Addresses from MassGIS

MassGIS is providing several exports for communities from the statewide master address database:

1. *Basic Address List* - This export is a list of addresses, not including unit or other sub-address information.
2. *Advanced Address List* - This export contains addresses to the sub-address (building/floor/unit level), when that information is available, and includes the MassGIS master address ID.
3. *Basic Address Points* - This export is address point locations for use in GIS software. Each point has an address to the building/floor/unit level, when that information is available. If multiple addresses are associated with the same location, the address points will be stacked.

These exports are available from the MassGIS www.mass.gov/itd/masteraddressdata. If you have trouble locating this page or if you have questions about any of the above, please send an email to massgismail@state.ma.us.