

FY2012-2013 GIS Budget Proposal

Transition to Consolidated Funding

The Montana Geographic Information Officer (GIO) and the Montana Land Information Advisory (MLIA) Council fully support the document entitled “A Consolidated Funding Proposal for Montana’s Spatial Data Infrastructure” ([link](#)). This document examines the problems that result from a funding model based on grants, concluding that “While MLIA funding has been critical to advancing MSDI in Montana, because of the reliance on these data for ongoing, critical public and private sector business practices, dependence on an unstable funding mechanism (i.e., grants) seems foolhardy.” and concludes that there is a significant need for holistic, long-term, and stable funding for all Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) themes. Further, we support the principle that while each base layer of geospatial data is valuable in its own right, but when merged together the information created is more valuable than the sum of the parts. This principle, coupled with the unequal and unstable level of current MSDI funding, supports the argument that all MSDI themes warrant full funding.

However, realizing the nature and difficulty of the present economic conditions, we are currently respectfully asking the State to fund only two MSDI initiatives, Cadastral and Imagery. The budget proposal includes partial funding for two statewide MSDI themes; imagery acquisition (\$200,000/year) and cadastral (parcels) on-going asset preservation (\$115,000/year). The Imagery and Cadastral themes are mature in the sense of use, documented value (Cadastral ROI = \$9 million/year - http://itsd.mt.gov/policy/councils/mliac/December_2009/default.mcp), and stewardship. Funding for the application hosting, data storage and distribution for these framework layers is already part of the ITSD rate structure. This funding request is aimed primarily at stabilizing data update cycles (imagery) and statewide parcel (cadastral) ongoing integration, enhancement, coordination and maintenance.

The proposal constraints do not imply that other MSDI themes are not of a maturity level deserving of funding stability. Because broad-based funding constitutes better and perhaps, more equitable financial support, the GIO and Council also recommend that they work with an ITSD Business Analyst to undertake a MLIA grant-funded study to determine other potential funding sources and that the results of that study be integrated into the FY 2014-2015 DOA budget recommendations. In the mean time, other MSDI themes should continue to receive MLIA funding consistent with the annual MLIA Land Information Plan.