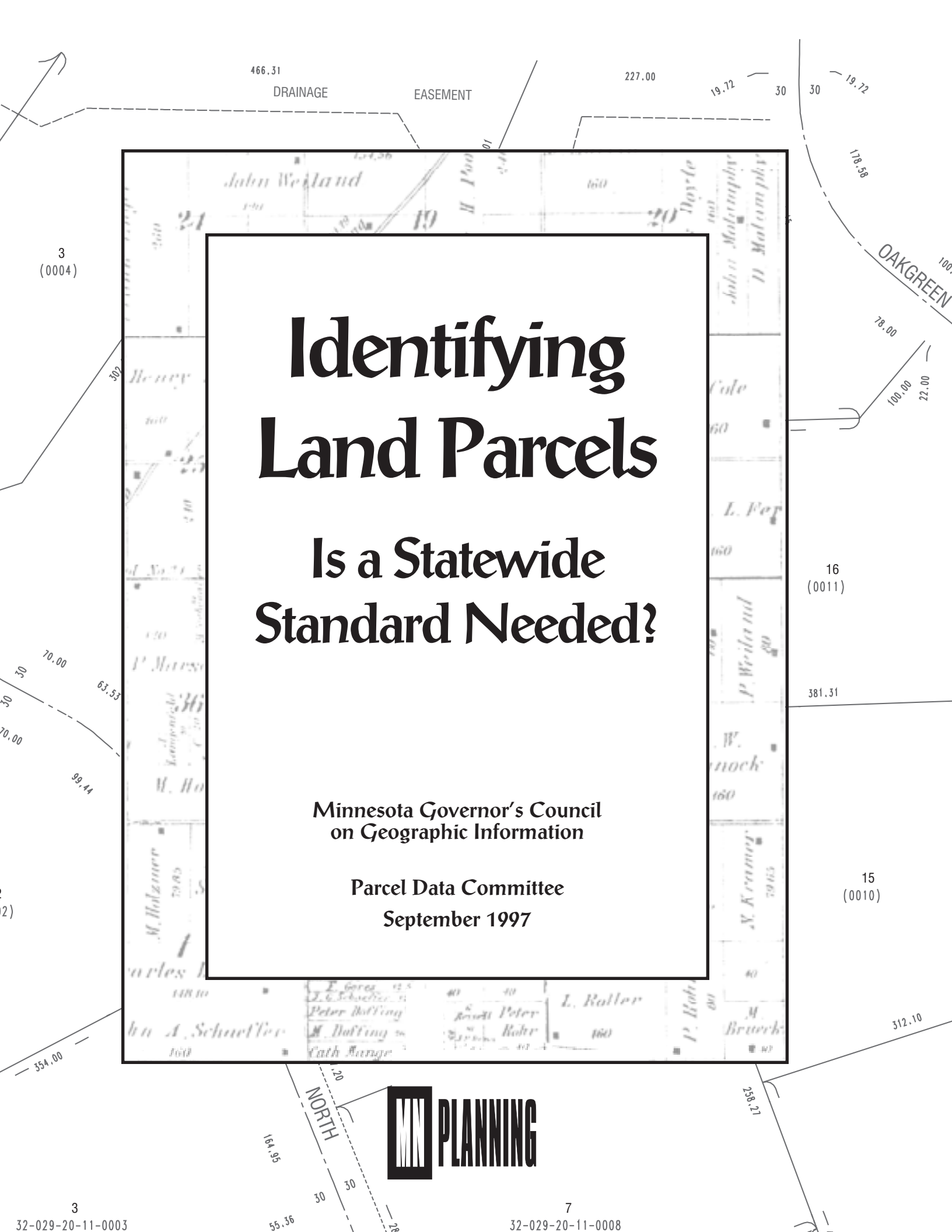


# Identifying Land Parcels

## Is a Statewide Standard Needed?

Minnesota Governor's Council
on Geographic Information

Parcel Data Committee

September 1997

MN PLANNING

**The Governor's Council on Geographic Information** was created in 1991 by Governor Arne H. Carlson to provide leadership in the development, management and use of geographic information and related technology. With assistance from Minnesota Planning, the council provides policy advice to all levels of government and makes recommendations regarding investments, management practices, institutional arrangements, education, stewardship and standards.

**Minnesota Planning** is charged with developing a long-range plan for the state, stimulating public participation in Minnesota's future and coordinating activities with state agencies, the Legislature and other units of government.

Upon request, *Identifying Land Parcels: Is a Statewide Format Needed?* will be made available in alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at (800) 627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.

MN PLANNING

658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55155
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September 1997

For additional information or copies of *Identifying Land Parcels*, contact the council staff coordinator at (612) 296-1208 or via e-mail at gc@mnplan.state.mn.us. An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Governor's Council on Geographic Information's World Wide Web home page: www.lmic.state.mn.us/gc/gc.htm.

Cover Map: Washington County Surveyor's Office
Cover Inset: Historical Plat Map, Dakota County Historical Society

## Identifying Land Parcels


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# Summary


Parcels are the basic unit of land ownership in Minnesota. Approximately 2.5 million exist within the state. Uniquely identifying and accurately locating parcels is a daily task for governments at all levels. Counties assign each parcel a unique parcel identification number; this PIN identifies a parcel but may not contain information about its location.

The Governor's Council on Geographic Information created a Parcel Data Committee to promote understanding of the complicated issues surrounding the use of parcel identification numbers. *Identifying Land Parcels: Is a Statewide Format Needed?* lays out these issues and presents the findings and recommendations of the Parcel Data Committee regarding the need for a statewide parcel identifier standard.

The committee investigated the use of parcel identification systems throughout Minnesota and developed a list of parcel identification code formats used by each of Minnesota's 87 counties. It found that while developing a standard PIN format might be advantageous for many users of statewide GIS data, it has minimal benefits for others, primarily because changing existing PIN formats would be prohibitively expensive for most counties.

The council recommends, therefore, that unique PINs statewide be created by attaching each county's unique numerical code to each parcel identifier. This simple solution creates a statewide PIN format that is unique for every parcel in the state. It does not require counties to make changes to their existing PINs and places the burden of reprogramming on those who have the most to gain — statewide and regional parcel data users.

In addition to identifying parcels, it is important to be able to geographically locate them. This can and has been done in several ways, including with geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude), Public Land Survey descriptions (township, range, section, quarter-quarter section, government lot) and other legal descriptions such as plat, block and lot.

Some counties incorporate locational information into their PIN formats. While this practice can be useful, it is also possible to use database technology to link geographic information to a parcel without having a geographic reference embedded in the PIN. Any technique can be used to locate a parcel, as long as the locational references are linked to the PIN.

The council strongly urges that counties that do not yet have an operational GIS layer or are considering changes to their current parcel identifier format consider linking Public Land Survey information to their parcel identification numbers. This capability, along with the availability of low-cost PLS GIS layers, would allow counties to map and analyze their parcel attribute information at a quarter-quarter section or government lot level. Though this is far more limited than what can be done with a complete parcel GIS layer, it would still enable useful countywide planning and analysis.

# Glossary

Below are generally accepted definitions for terms used in this report.

**Attribute** — A code used to describe the characteristics of a geographic feature.

**Character field** — Type of column in a table or database that contains letters or numbers.

**Federal information processing standards** — Standards adopted by the U.S. government and approved for use by federal agencies. FIPS deal with a wide range of computer system components, including data files, codes, documentation, storage media, hardware, software engineering and security.

**Government lot** — Unit of the Public Land Survey system that designates a quarter-quarter section that is not exactly 40 acres. These units resulted from imperfections in the early Public Land Survey, the curvature of the earth and other factors. Quarter-quarter sections that contain a meander line are also given the designation of a government lot.

**Land parcel** — Publicly recorded right, title or interest in real property.

**Meander lines** — Approximate boundaries of water bodies encountered by the surveyors who conducted the Public Land Survey.

**Parcel identification number** — Code assigned to a land parcel that distinguishes it from other parcels.

**Public Land Survey** — Gridlike system of defining lands in much of the western and central portions of the United States, known generally as the township, range and section system. In Minnesota and many other states, most legal descriptions are based on the PLS system.

**Right-justified** — Type of table or database format where codes are moved to the right, eliminating any spaces along the right margin.

# Parcel Data Committee Members

Mar Alojado, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Jill Bornes, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Richard E. Elhardt, Northern States Power Company (co-chair)
John Gellatly, St. Louis County
Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council (co-chair)
Jay Krafthefer, Washington County
Jim Krautkremer, Minnesota Department of Administration,
Intergovernmental Information Systems Advisory Council
Lee Meilleur, Minnesota Legislative Coordinating Commission
Lowell Pommerening, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Michael Pressman, 4Ever Land Conservation Association
Lisa Skipton, Dakota County
Kenneth Whitehorn, Itasca County
David Windle, City of Roseville

# Introduction

The need for a unique, statewide parcel identification number has been an issue for many years within Minnesota's geographic information system community. Some users want a standard format for identifying and locating land parcels, while others maintain that this would be costly and disruptive for many local governments. Needed now is a discussion that includes the views of those interested in a standard and the local governments that would be affected by such a standard.

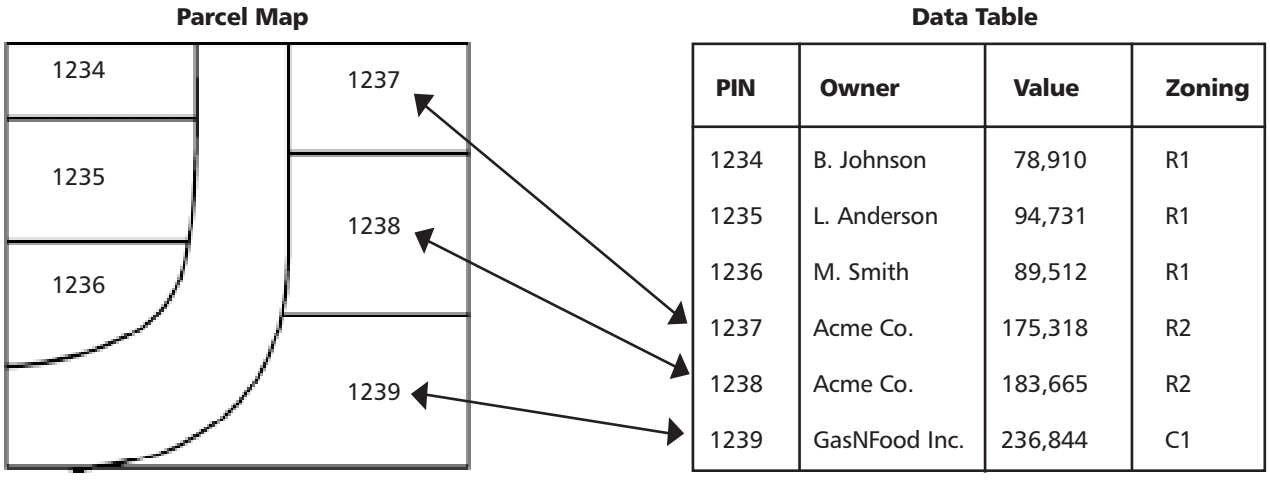
The Governor's Council on Geographic Information created a Parcel Data Committee to promote understanding of the complicated issues surrounding the use of parcel identification numbers. *Identifying Land Parcels: Is a Statewide Format Needed?* lays out these issues and presents the findings and recommendations of the Parcel Data Committee regarding the need for a statewide parcel identifier standard.

Parcels are the basic unit of land ownership in Minnesota. Approximately 2.5 million exist within the state. A parcel may be defined as a right, title or interest in real property. For a parcel to be mappable, it must be recorded in the county recorder's office and have a defined spatial extent.

Uniquely identifying and accurately locating parcels is a daily task for governments at all levels. Counties assign each parcel a unique parcel identification number, which they may call a PIN, PID or parcel ID.

The PIN identifies a parcel but may not contain information about its location. If a county uses a geographic information system, the PIN can be used to link the graphic representation of a parcel to such descriptive information as ownership, assessed value and zoning designation, allowing county departments and organizations to map parcel information stored in their databases. Because many different people, departments and organizations may have data relating to the same parcels, having the PIN as an element of the parcel database will give each of these data holders the ability to map their data as well as the data of others.

## Using the PIN as the link to a geographic information system




| PIN | Owner | Value | Zoning |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1234 | B. Johnson | 78,910 | R1 |
| 1235 | L. Anderson | 94,731 | R1 |
| 1236 | M. Smith | 89,512 | R1 |
| 1237 | Acme Co. | 175,318 | R2 |
| 1238 | Acme Co. | 183,665 | R2 |
| 1239 | GasNFood Inc. | 236,844 | C1 |

PINs are commonly used to link the graphic representation of a parcel stored in a GIS to descriptive information about that parcel stored in a data table.

# Identifying Parcels

Each of Minnesota's 87 counties has a heavily used parcel identification system with PINs that are unique within each county. Many counties use similar formats:

■ All but seven counties start their PIN with a code — usually two digits — for the civil jurisdiction (city or township).

■ In 71 counties, the PIN is nine digits. The next most common PIN length (in five counties) is 12 digits.

■ Thirty-five counties use a nine-digit PIN consisting of a two-digit municipal code, a three-digit Public Land Survey section number or plat/subdivision code (depending on whether the parcel is platted) and a four-digit code to uniquely define the parcel within the section or subdivision. These last four digits may or may not have built-in geographic references such as a quarter-quarter section code or lot and block.

■ Another 17 counties use a nine-digit PIN consisting of a two-digit municipal code, four-digit unique number and three more digits for parcel splits, where a parcel is divided into more than one.

■ Counties using a PIN with more than nine digits usually have a large population and, consequently, a large number of parcels. Some of these counties had used a nine-digit PIN but began running out of numbers.

Although many of these formats are similar, the significant variations among them would make changing to a different system difficult and expensive for most counties.

## Pros and Cons of a Statewide PIN Standard

A standard PIN would be advantageous for many users of statewide GIS data because it would:

■ Prevent problems that arise when the same PIN is assigned to parcels in different counties.

■ Simplify parcel-related database development for organizations that work across county boundaries and encourage use of parcel data for regional and statewide planning and analysis.

■ Enable software and system design vendors to develop parcel-related GIS products for multiple cities and counties, instead of customizing products for each client.

In addition, a standard PIN that includes township, range, section, quarter-quarter and government-lot information would allow mapping of all parcels statewide at the quarter-quarter section or government-lot level using readily available GIS base maps. Because of the variety of PIN formats in use today, this type of statewide mapping is not possible.

On the other hand, a statewide PIN standard would require most counties and many cities to change the way they store parcel data in their computer systems. Reprogramming these systems would be costly, time-consuming and disruptive. Also, a standard PIN would not necessarily standardize the descriptive information attached to parcels, which is critical to any consistent regional and statewide planning and analysis. Finally, some observers are concerned that a state standard may eventually be superseded by a federal standard, making it inefficient to develop a state standard first.

## Council Findings

In reviewing the need for a statewide PIN standard, the council arrived at the following findings:

■ **A parcel identification numbering system that uniquely identifies every parcel in Minnesota is needed.** Such a system would allow access to both geographic and descriptive data for parcels that lie in more than one county.

■ **County and local governments have the least to gain from a statewide PIN standard.** A standard PIN format would provide long-term benefits much more to statewide and regional users of parcel data than to county and local governments.

While several counties have expressed interest in having a PIN standard or guideline available, most seem satisfied with their existing PIN formats. Counties and municipalities with PIN formats not in line with the state standard would face substantial reprogramming costs.

■ **It is unrealistic and inappropriate to demand that counties change**

**their existing formats.** Without funding from the state, most counties probably could not afford to change their PIN formats, even if they were mandated to do so. Moreover, such funding likely will not be available.

## Council Recommendation

Based on these findings, the council recommends a simple solution that would create a statewide PIN format which is unique for every parcel in the state. Because every county maintains a unique parcel identifier for the parcels within its borders, anyone using data from more than one county simply would need to add the three-digit county code to the front of each county's PINs to create unique statewide parcel identifiers. This approach would not require counties to change how they structure their PINs — a major benefit. The GIS community immediately would gain a unique statewide parcel identifier, and the now-lower costs of reprogramming would be placed on those who have the most to gain — statewide and regional parcel data users.

This approach would increase the size of the PIN and, because parcel identifiers may have different formats and lengths, require that PINs be dealt with as character strings of a standard length equal to the longest PIN in the state plus the unique county code.

# Locating Parcels

In addition to identifying parcels, it is important to be able to geographically locate them. This can and has been done in several ways, including with geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude), Public Land Survey descriptions (township, range, section, quarter-quarter section, government lot) and other legal descriptions such as plat, block and lot.

### Available Public Land Survey Information

One PLS GIS layer, developed by the Land Management Information Center at Minnesota Planning, is complete for the entire state. This layer defines the Public Land Survey system to the quarter-quarter section, based on 1:100,000-scale U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps. Another layer, being developed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, includes government lot and meander lines based on original survey notes and subsequent surveys. The DNR layer is based on 1:24,000 USGS topographic maps and more accurate section corner control points, where they are available. The DNR layer is complete for much of northern Minnesota and should be complete for the entire state within a few years.

While many PINs are simply unique, randomly generated numbers, some counties have chosen to embed geographic reference codes in their PINs. This allows users to know generally where a parcel is located and can be particularly useful when counties do not have the ability to map their parcels with a GIS.

It is also possible to use database technology to link geographic information to a parcel without having a geographic reference embedded in the PIN. The PIN can be linked to a data table containing the township, range, section, plat, and so on.

When the PIN is printed, other locational information can also be printed, giving the user the desired geographic references.

## Council Recommendations

■ **Counties that do not yet have an operational GIS layer or those considering changes to their current parcel identifier format are urged to strongly consider linking Public Land Survey information to their parcel identification numbers.**

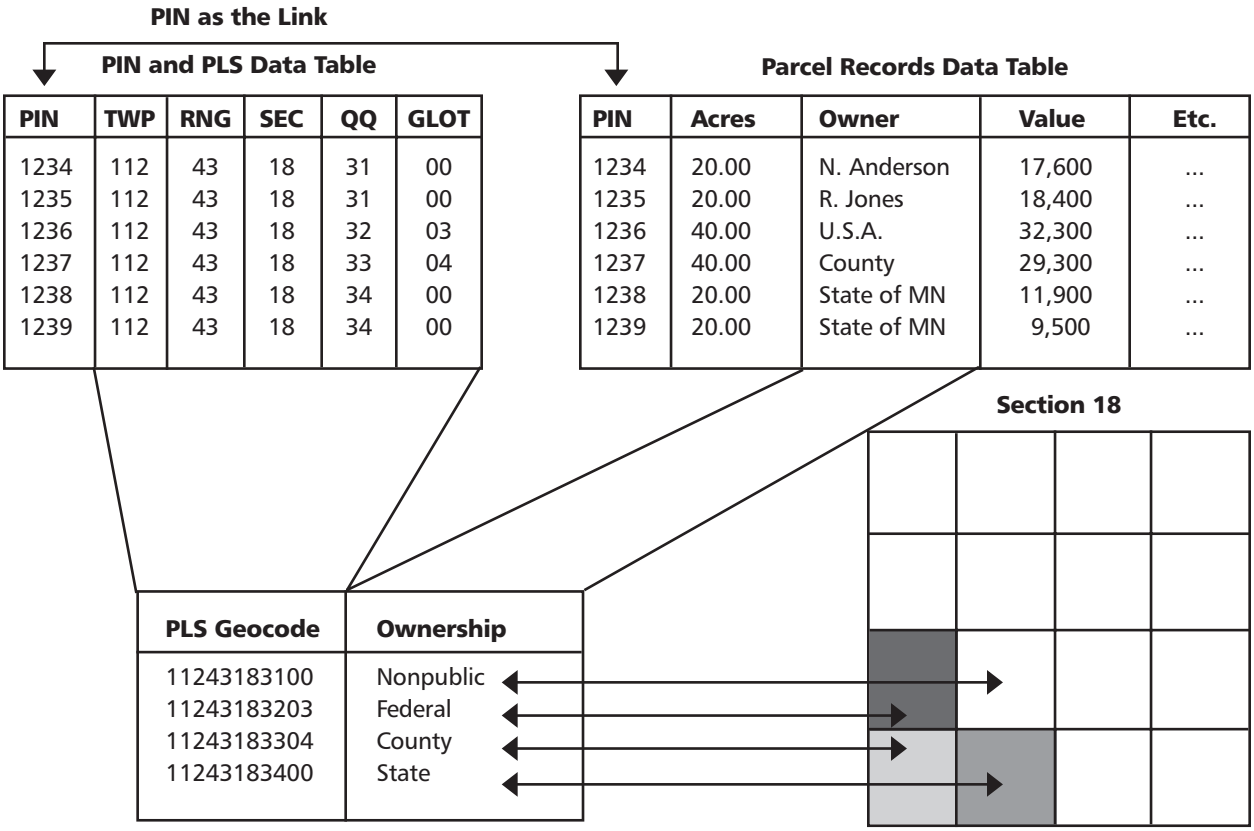
This capability, along with the availability of low-cost PLS GIS layers, would allow counties to map and analyze their parcel attribute information at a quarter-quarter section or government lot level. Though this is far more limited than what can be done with a complete parcel GIS layer, it can still enable useful countywide planning and analysis. Counties could do in-house mapping of quarter-quarter section parcel attribute data with desktop GIS software.

For example, they could analyze property value trends and land use and ownership patterns. They also could use the results of parcel mapping and analysis done by state and regional organizations.

Finally, the PIN-to-PLS link would let municipalities, business groups, academic institutions and other organizations within the county's borders map and analyze the public parcel information maintained by the county.

Some counties may find it easy to create a data table linking each PIN to the county's PLS information,

### Mapping can occur even if Public Land Survey data is not embedded in the PIN




| PIN | TWP | RNG | SEC | QQ | GLOT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1234 | 112 | 43 | 18 | 31 | 00 |
| 1235 | 112 | 43 | 18 | 31 | 00 |
| 1236 | 112 | 43 | 18 | 32 | 03 |
| 1237 | 112 | 43 | 18 | 33 | 04 |
| 1238 | 112 | 43 | 18 | 34 | 00 |
| 1239 | 112 | 43 | 18 | 34 | 00 |

| PIN | Acres | Owner | Value | Etc. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1234 | 20.00 | N. Anderson | 17,600 | ... |
| 1235 | 20.00 | R. Jones | 18,400 | ... |
| 1236 | 40.00 | U.S.A. | 32,300 | ... |
| 1237 | 40.00 | County | 29,300 | ... |
| 1238 | 20.00 | State of MN | 11,900 | ... |
| 1239 | 20.00 | State of MN | 9,500 | ... |

| PLS Geocode | Ownership |
|---|---|
| 11243183100 | Nonpublic |
| 11243183203 | Federal |
| 11243183304 | County |
| 11243183400 | State |

If PLS data is in a table linked or related to the PIN, attributes can be mapped using existing PLS base data layers.

and some have already done this. For many more counties, however, this will require some work, from reformatting data to looking up each parcel on a map and entering it into a database to going out into the field to check the location of parcels. While the potential benefits of developing a PIN-to-PLS relationship data table may entice some counties to invest resources in this effort, many others will not find these benefits worth the effort or will simply not have the required resources. State funding and technical assistance will be necessary if every Minnesota county is to gain this capability.

■ **The Public Land Survey data elements linked to the parcel identification number should be the township number, range number (and range direction in Cook County), section number and quarter-quarter section or government lot number or both.** The DNR has outlined its best-practices guidelines for coding and formatting PLS information in *Public Land Survey Geocoding Standards for New Systems and Data File Interchange*. Copies of this document may be obtained from Jill Bornes, DNR Minerals Division, 500 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155-4045; (612) 296-1879.

# Developing County PIN Formats

To increase the usefulness of their data, counties that have not yet developed a computerized parcel identifier system or are reprogramming their system may want to consider using PIN formats that incorporate the following specifications. In talking with county employees in each of Minnesota's 87 counties, the Parcel Data Committee identified three important considerations in developing and selecting a PIN format:

■ **Provide room to grow.** PIN formats can be useful for a long time if they can handle future growth without running out of numbers. For example, a PIN format that allows only 999 unique parcels within a section or subdivision may run into trouble with such developments as large trailer parks or condominiums, where many legal parcels are located in a small area.

■ **Provide for parcel splits.** Some PIN formats have geographic references built into them, but these references can be corrupted by parcel splits. For example, a PIN may contain a three-digit number that equates to the counterclockwise sequence of parcels within a township or section. Once parcels are split, however, this sequence can be destroyed. For this reason, it is useful to have a unique number within the PIN that has no geographic reference. This number can be used to handle parcel splits and other situations that may corrupt the locational references within a particular PIN format.

■ **Be aware of varying needs.** Different counties may have very different kinds of parcels and may use PINs for a wide range of applications. The best PIN format for Hennepin County may not be the best for Kittson County. Counties planning to change their PIN format should review the list of PINs used in Minnesota and consult with neighboring counties. The needs of all county departments with a stake in the PIN format should be determined, since they may vary. Finally, counties need to understand how technology can help. What was impossible 10 years ago may be a routine process today.

## Guidelines for Regional and Statewide Users

Users of PIN data on a statewide or regional basis may find the following guidelines helpful as they manipulate county parcel identifier codes.

■ **PIN length.** For a statewide unique PIN format, the Parcel Data

Committee recommends a length of 21 characters. While the longest county PIN is currently 15 characters, the 21-character length allows county PINs to expand to 18 characters. At least one county is already planning to develop an 18-character PIN. The 21-character identifier should be treated as a character field type, because some counties use, or plan to use, alpha characters in their PINs. Use of the character field type also recognizes that a 21-digit integer is not allowed or recommended in many software packages and computer platforms.

■ **Suggested PIN format.** The first three characters of a statewide unique PIN should consist of the three-digit federal information processing standard county code for Minnesota, as detailed in FIPS Publication 6-4. This code has been approved as an official state data standard by Minnesota's Information Policy Office. The three-digit county code should be zero-filled (e.g., 001). The county PIN portion of the identifier should be right-justified to the last 18 spaces. Any blank spaces between the county code and the county PIN should be filled with zeros, as should any other blanks in the county PIN. Filling spaces with zeros promotes a consistent format, for example:

001000000000123456789 = a hypothetical statewide parcel identifier for Aitkin County, which has a nine-digit county PIN format

035000123456789012345 = a hypothetical statewide parcel identifier for Crow Wing County, which has a 15-digit county PIN format

## PIN Format Notations

The Parcel Data Committee developed the following notation scheme for the PIN format table on page 9:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BK | = | 2-digit block number/code |
| CO | = | 2-digit county number |
| F | = | 1-digit code to differentiate fractional lot |
| GL | = | 2-digit government lot or railroad lot number |
| LT | = | 2-digit lot number |
| LOT | = | 3-digit lot number |
| P | = | 1-digit plat code, or to indicate platted versus unplatted |
| PL | = | 2-digit plat code |
| PLT | = | 3-digit plat code |
| PLAT | = | 4-digit plat code |
| PLAT5 | = | 5-digit plat code |
| Q | = | 1-digit quarter section code (1-4 MLMIS standard; e.g., 1 = NE, 2 = NW, 3 = SW, 4 = SE) |
| QQ | = | 2-digit quarter-quarter code (11-44 MLMIS standard; e.g., 11 = NENE, 43 = SWSE) |
| qq | = | 2-digit quarter-quarter code (not MLMIS standard) |
| qq# | = | 3-digit code, ranges of which relate to specific quarter-quarter sections |
| REM | = | 3-digit code for remarks (e.g., specifying personal property or mobile home) |
| RG | = | 2-digit PLS range number |
| SC | = | 2-digit PLS section number |
| SEC | = | 3-digit PLS section number (the first digit will always be 0) |
| S | = | 1-digit number used to keep track of parcel splits |
| SP | = | 2-digit number used to keep track of parcel splits |
| SPL | = | 3-digit number used to keep track of parcel splits (also may be used for lot number) |
| TC | = | 2-digit township or city (political taxing jurisdiction) code (also called "district" or "taxing district") |
| TCC | = | 3-digit township or city (political taxing jurisdiction) code (also called "district" or "taxing district") |
| TP | = | 2-digit PLS township number |
| TWP | = | 3-digit PLS township number |
| ## | = | 2-digit unique number |
| ### | = | 3-digit unique number |
| #### | = | 4-digit unique number |
| ##### | = | 5-digit unique number |
| ###### | = | 6-digit unique number |
| ####### | = | 7-digit unique number |

## PIN Formats Used by Minnesota Counties, 1996

| County | Digits | Format | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aitkin | 9 | TC P ###### | |
| Anoka | 12 | SC TP RG QQ SUFF | |
| Becker | 9 | TC SC ## SPL (unplatted)<br>TC BK LT SPL (platted) | |
| Beltrami | 9 | TC ##### SP | |
| Benton | 9 | TC ##### SP | |
| Big Stone | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Blue Earth | 12 | CO TC SC qq# ### | The TC code here is a unique code for each Public Land Survey township and range in the county. |
| Brown | 14 | TCC SEC qq# ## SPL (unplatted)<br>TCC PLT BLK LT SPL (platted) | "qq#": e.g. NE = 001, NW = 002, etc. |
| Carlton | 9 | TC SEC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | Last 4 digits may be some other unique number instead of "QQ ##" or "BK LT". |
| Carver | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Cass | 9 | TC SEC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | |
| Chippewa | 9 | TC SEC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Chisago | 9 | TC ##### SP | |
| Clay | 9 | TC SEC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | Some variations on the QQ code do not match MLMIS (5 = N1/2, 6 = W1/2, 7 = S1/2, 8 = E1/2). |
| Clearwater | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Cook | 9 | TC P BK LOT S (organized)<br>RG T SC QQ SP (unorganized) | "P" = plat number; "T" = last digit of PLS township number; "S" = parcel splits. |
| Cottonwood | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Crow Wing | 15 | TC SEC QQ GL ### SPL (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BLK LOT F SPL (platted) | |
| Dakota | 13<br>12 | SC TWP RG qq #### (surveyor)<br>TC PLAT5 LOT BK (assessor) | The surveyor's office uses a new code. A lookup table exists to match the old PIN (assessor's) to the new one. Eventually all county departments will change to the new PIN. |
| Dodge | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Douglas | 9 | TC #### SPL | The 4-digit number is the section or parcel number. |
| Faribault | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT LT BK (platted) | Last 4 digits may be some other unique number instead of "LT BK". |
| Fillmore | 8 | TC ###### | |
| Freeborn | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |

## PIN Formats Used by Minnesota Counties, 1996

| County | Digits | Format | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Goodhue | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Grant | 9 | TC #### SPL | The 4-digit number is parcel number by location in city or township. |
| Hennepin | 13 | SC TWP RG QQ #### | |
| Houston | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Hubbard | 9 | TC SC ##### (unplatted)<br>TC PL ##### (platted) | |
| Isanti | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Itasca | 9 | TC SEC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | Last 4 digits may be some other unique number instead of "QQ ##" or "BK LT". |
| Jackson | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Kanabec | 9 | TC ##### SP | The 5-digit unique parcel number represents chronological order of parcel creation; geographic reference for every parcel has been lost over time. |
| Kandiyohi | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Kittson | 9 | TC ? SC #### | The "?" indicates if a parcel is in traction. |
| Koochiching | 9 | TC SC QQ ### (unplatted QQ)<br>TC SC "0" GL ##<br>(unplatted government lot)<br>TC PL BK LT # (platted) | |
| Lac qui Parle | 9 | TC ####### | |
| Lake | 11 | TC TP RG ##### (unplatted)<br>TC PLAT ##### (platted) | |
| Lake of the Woods | 9 | TC SC QQ ### (unplatted)<br>TC PL BK ### (platted) | |
| Le Sueur | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT LT BK (platted) | The 4-digit unique number involves ranges of numbers that relate to parcels within a particular quarter section (e.g., 0100 - 2500 = NW). |
| Lincoln | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Lyon | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| McLeod | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Mahnomen | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Marshall | 9 | TC #### SPL | |

## PIN Formats Used by Minnesota Counties, 1996

| County | Digits | Format | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Martin | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Meeker | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Mille Lacs | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Morrison | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Mower | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Murray | 9 | TC SEC ### S (unplatted)<br>TC PLT ### S (platted) | "S" = parcel splits. |
| Nicollet | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | The county uses a map number in conjunction with the PIN on tax records to help locate the parcel. |
| Nobles | 9 | TC #### REM | |
| Norman | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Olmsted | 10 | T R SC ##### | "T" = the last digit of the PLS township number;<br>"R" = the last digit of the PLS range number. |
| Otter Tail | 14 | TC REM SC #### SPL (unplatted)<br>TC REM PL #### SPL (platted) | The TC code is a unique code for each Public Land Survey township and range in the county. |
| Pennington | 9 | TC SC ### SP (unplatted)<br>TC PL ### SP (platted) | |
| Pine | 9 | TC #### SPL | The 4-digit unique parcel number represents chronological order of parcel creation; geographic reference for every parcel has been lost over time. |
| Pipestone | 9 | TC SEC #### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Polk | 9 | TC ##### SP | The 5-digit unique parcel number is ordered by section, but randomly within sections. |
| Pope | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Ramsey | 12 | SC TP RG QQ #### | |
| Red Lake | 4 | #### | |
| Redwood | 9 | TC SEC Q ### (unplatted)<br>TC PLT #### (platted) | |
| Renville | 9 | TC ##### SP | The 5-digit unique parcel number is grouped in numerical ranges based on school district area. |
| Rice | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Rock | 9 | TC ####### | |
| Roseau | 9 | TC ####### | |

## PIN Formats Used by Minnesota Counties, 1996

| County | Digits | Format | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| St. Louis | 12 | TCC "0010" ##### (unplatted)<br>TCC PLAT ##### (platted) | The 5-digit unique number started in northeast corner of the northeast-most section and went counterclockwise around each section. This system has broken down due to the sheer number of splits and passage of time. Severed mineral rights, railroad leases and so on are identified by plat numbers greater than 7000. |
| Scott | 9 | TC SEC ####<br>TC PLT #### | |
| Sherburne | 9 | TC SEC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | Last 4 digits may be some other unique number instead of "QQ ##" or "BK LT". |
| Sibley | 9 | TC SC ## SPL | |
| Stearns | 11 | TCC ##### SPL | |
| Steele | 9 | TC SEC ####<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | |
| Stevens | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Swift | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Todd | 9 | TC #### SPL | |
| Traverse | 9 | TC #### SPL | The 3-digit "SPL" indicates a split in a parcel or a lot number. |
| Wabasha | 9 | TC ##### SP | |
| Wadena | 9 | TC SEC Q ### | The 3-digit unique number is a counterclockwise counter for the quarter section starting from NE1/4-NE1/4. |
| Waseca | 9 | TC SEC ####<br>TC PLT #### | |
| Washington | 13<br>9 | SC TWP RG QQ ####<br>PLAT5 #### (old PIN) | In transition from old 9-digit to new 13-digit format. |
| Watonwan | 9 | TC SEC ####<br>TC PLT #### | |
| Wilkin | 9 | TC SEC ####<br>TC PLT #### | |
| Winona | 9 | TC PLT #### | |
| Wright | 12 | TC1 TC2 SC QQ ## (unplatted)<br>TC1 PLT BLK LT # (platted) | "TC1" = the city or civil township, "TC2" = a unique code for each PLS township and range. |
| Yellow Medicine | 9 | TC SEC Q#Q# (unplatted)<br>TC PLT BK LT (platted) | "Q#Q#" = similar to MLMIS standard; "#"s used for tract numbers and splits (e.g., 1020 = NW-NE). |