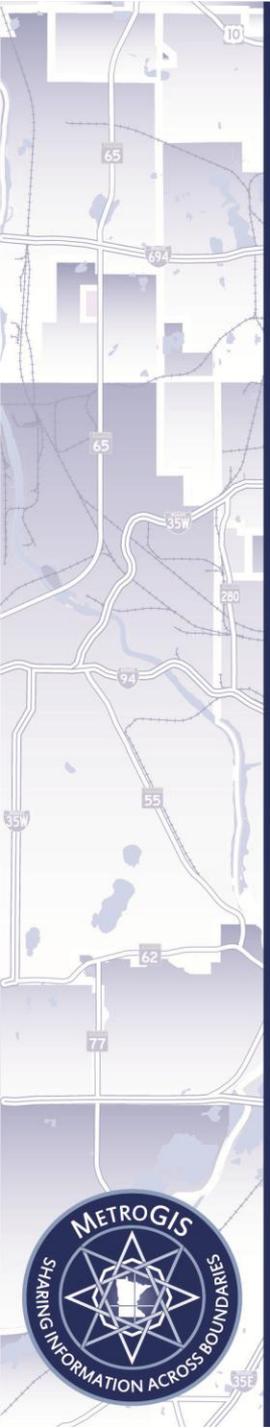


Free & Open Data Context

Geoff Maas, MetroGIS Coordinator

Presentation to MetroGIS Policy Board
October 23, 2013





Free & Open Data: Context

At Issue:

**#1 - Demonstrate the Benefits
Of Making Data Freely Available;**

**#2 - Understanding the Legal Framework
Governing Data Availability;**

#3 - Covering the Issues of Liability;

#4 - Potential for Change to Existing Policies;



Free & Open Data: Context

#1 - Demonstrate the Benefits Of Making Data Freely Available;

'White Paper'

'Blue Single Sheet'

'Existing Practice Interviews'

Other articles and research...

Making Public Data Open and Freely Available

This fact sheet is provided by the MetroGIS Data Producers Work Group to assist policy makers and elected officials understand the benefits of making non-sensitive, publicly-produced data freely available to the public.

What are the benefits to a County Government in making its data open and freely available?

- (1) **Transparency**
Making non-sensitive government operations that is a byproduct of publishing digital staff time requires.
- (2) **Better use of resources**
Publishing digital staff time requires.
- (3) **Fostering entrepreneurship**
Private usage of public data can lead to growth of the local economy and quicker decisions.
- (4) **The authoritative information**
Providing consistent maps, services, and information.
- (5) **Pro-actively meet the demand**
The demand from the public and ready access to other analytical tools.
- (6) **Indirect Benefits**
Making public data available to the public enables them to quickly find information for applications, analysis, and more.

Q: Do county governments benefit from making public data open and freely available?

Revenue from geospatial data is a significant source of income for business organizations and the public. A long-term form of core data is a valuable asset. Organizations need to avoid the expense of understanding the public's needs and the expense of providing the data.

Q: Does making public data open and freely available help discover and resolve issues?

Government agencies must release information to help discover and resolve issues and improve usability.

Q: Is this becoming a trend?

Government agencies are supporting internal business core economic activities of navigation systems, analysis, and more.

Key Themes

Transparency of Government Operations
Improved Public Service

Geospatial Data Sharing Guidelines for Best Practices

Geospatial data

identify and relate the geographic location of features and boundaries. They are stored in databases that include descriptive attribute information about locations, allowing the information to be mapped. Geospatial data enable government, consumer and business applications. These data are accessed, manipulated or analyzed through Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Introduction

The National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) strongly believes that open sharing of geospatial data is in the best interest of our communities, states and nation. One of our goals is to make all non-sensitive geospatial data, produced or maintained using taxpayer funds, a part of the public record.

To realize this goal, NSGIC recommends that spatial data providers work to change any existing policies that inhibit geospatial data sharing. All states have public records laws that govern how data can be used. These laws require public access to government data and apply to local as well as state governments. NSGIC encourages data custodians to become acquainted with their state's public records law and to work toward its broad, open interpretation.

Savvy organizations creating geospatial data recognize the value of these data to the decision-making process. They also appreciate the need for current and accurate geospatial data in decisions affecting economic development, social services, public safety, emergency management, human or environmental health, agriculture, natural resources, planning and transportation.

Now is the time to change existing policies which might be outdated or based on incorrect assumptions. Organizations can accrue tremendous value through the open sharing of geospatial data.

Government administrators, geospatial professionals and concerned citizens will continue advancing the use of public geospatial data assets in new areas. This effectively increases their agency's return on investment.

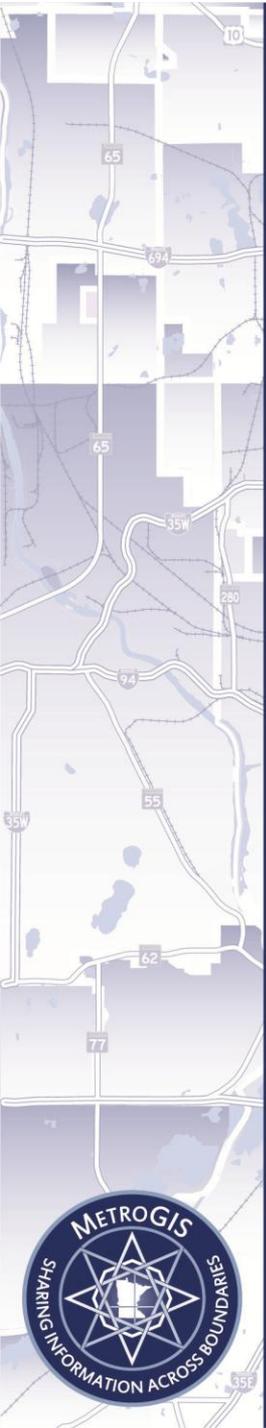
NSGIC will work to remove the obstacles that prevent open access to geospatial data, and help to develop data and technology standards and partnerships that support and enable a sustainable data sharing model.

The Value of Accessible Geospatial Data

Access to public records is an essential component of our democracy that keeps citizens informed and our government accountable. These records include geospatial data produced or maintained using taxpayer resources. For this reason alone, and with certain narrow exceptions, geospatial data should be made available to the general public in the format that government analysts use, including computer readable and GIS-compatible formats.

Easy public access to the most current and relevant geospatial data provides a number of other societal benefits as well. One such benefit is economic, because reference to the information contained in geospatial data greatly facilitates economic improvements. For example, geospatial data enables online mapping services, navigation systems, planning, building and managing physical infrastructure, preserving the environ-

(Continued on page 2)



Free & Open Data: Context

#2 - Understanding the Legal Framework Governing Data Availability;



Case law examples;

*Lack of applicable case law examples in Minnesota;
Are there useful lessons for Minnesota from other states?*

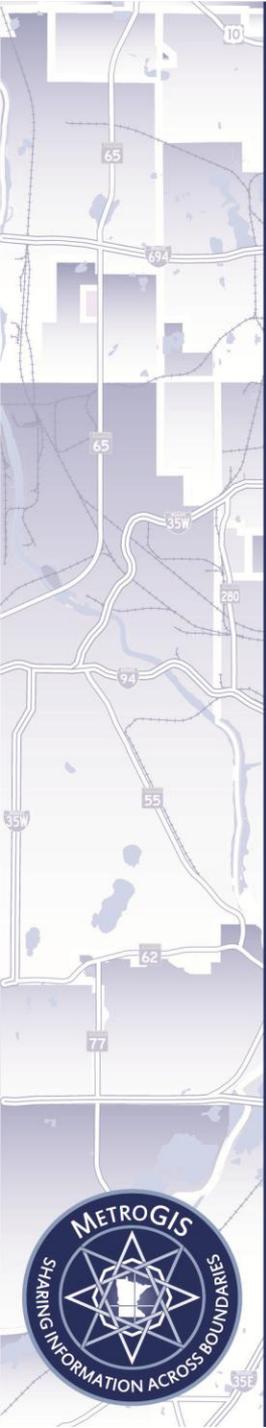
Existing statute language governing data access:

Chapter 13 (Data Practices Act);

Chapter 16E, Section 30, Subd. 11 (Gov-To-Gov);

Trying to avoid...

Numerous different (possibly conflicting) interpretations of state statutes to apply locally; wide variation in practices and data availability;



Free & Open Data: Context

#3 - Covering the Issues of Liability to Data Producers;



Clarity for Data Producers

Ensure that data producers are covered from liability;

Responding to requests, voluntary publishing of the data, etc.;

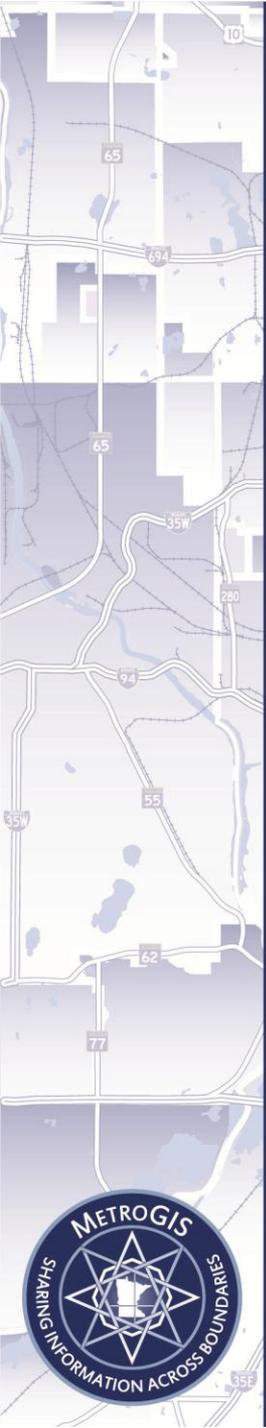
Specific Exemption for GIS data in statute:

Chapter 466, Section 3, Subd. 21(a)

Exempts a municipality from claims to the alleged or actual inaccuracies in its data;

Chapter 466, Section 3, Subd. 21(b)

*GIS data is subject to the presumption of Chapter 13, Section 1, Subd. 3
Government data are public data;*



Free & Open Data: Context

#4 - Potential Change to Existing Policies;



If a county or municipality wishes to pro-actively and voluntarily make its data freely available...

What legal authority does it have to do so?

Start here:

Chapter 13, Section 1, Subd. 3;

Chapter 13, Section 3, Subd 1;

Chapter 13, Section 3, Subd 2(a);

Chapter 16E, Section 30, Subd 11

Chapter 466, Section 3, Subd. 21(a)

Chapter 466, Section 3, Subd. 21(b)

'Gov data are public and accessible...'

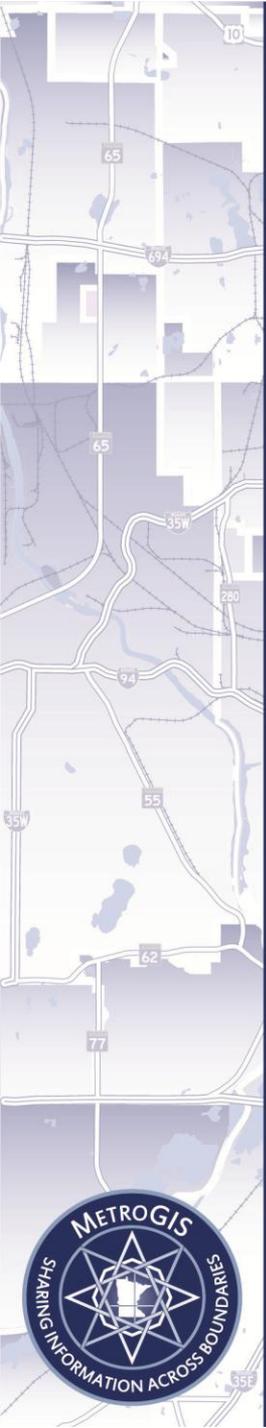
'All data shall be public...'

'Establish procedures...'

'Government to government...'

'GIS data exempt from tort liability...'

'GIS data subject to '13.01.Subd 3'...



So what does 'Free & Open Data' look like?

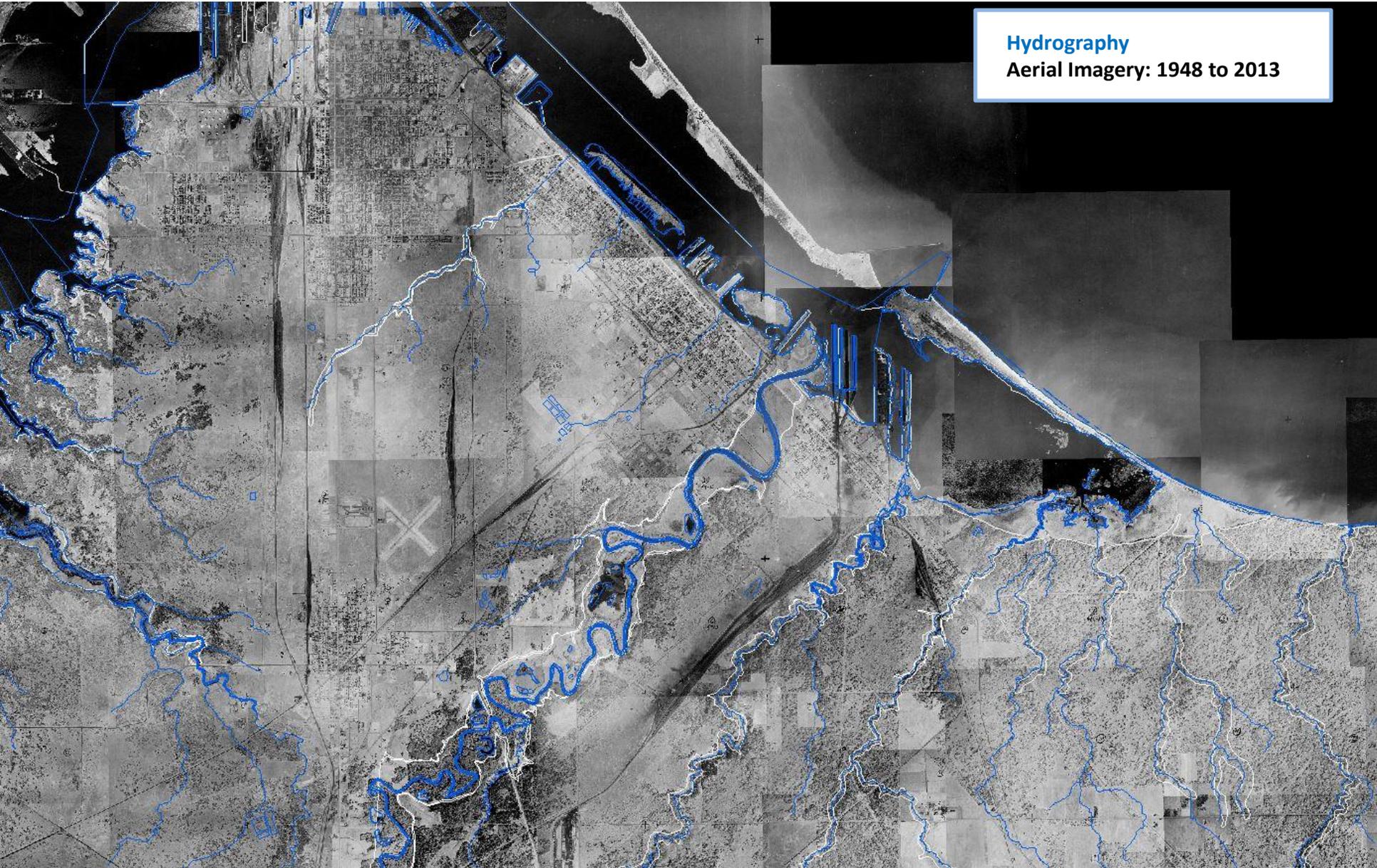


Case Example:

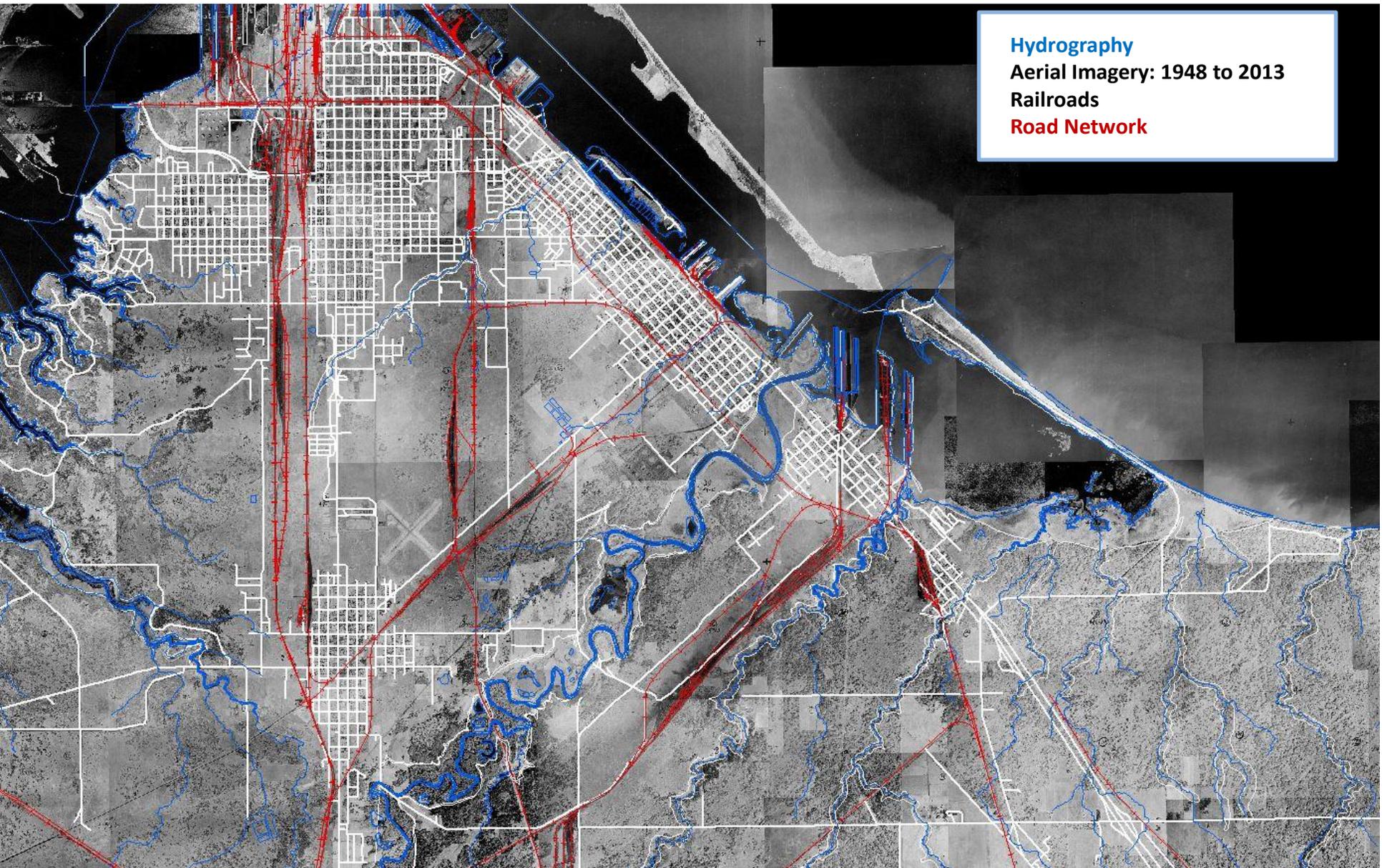
City of Superior/Douglas County, Wisconsin



Hydrography
Aerial Imagery: 1948 to 2013

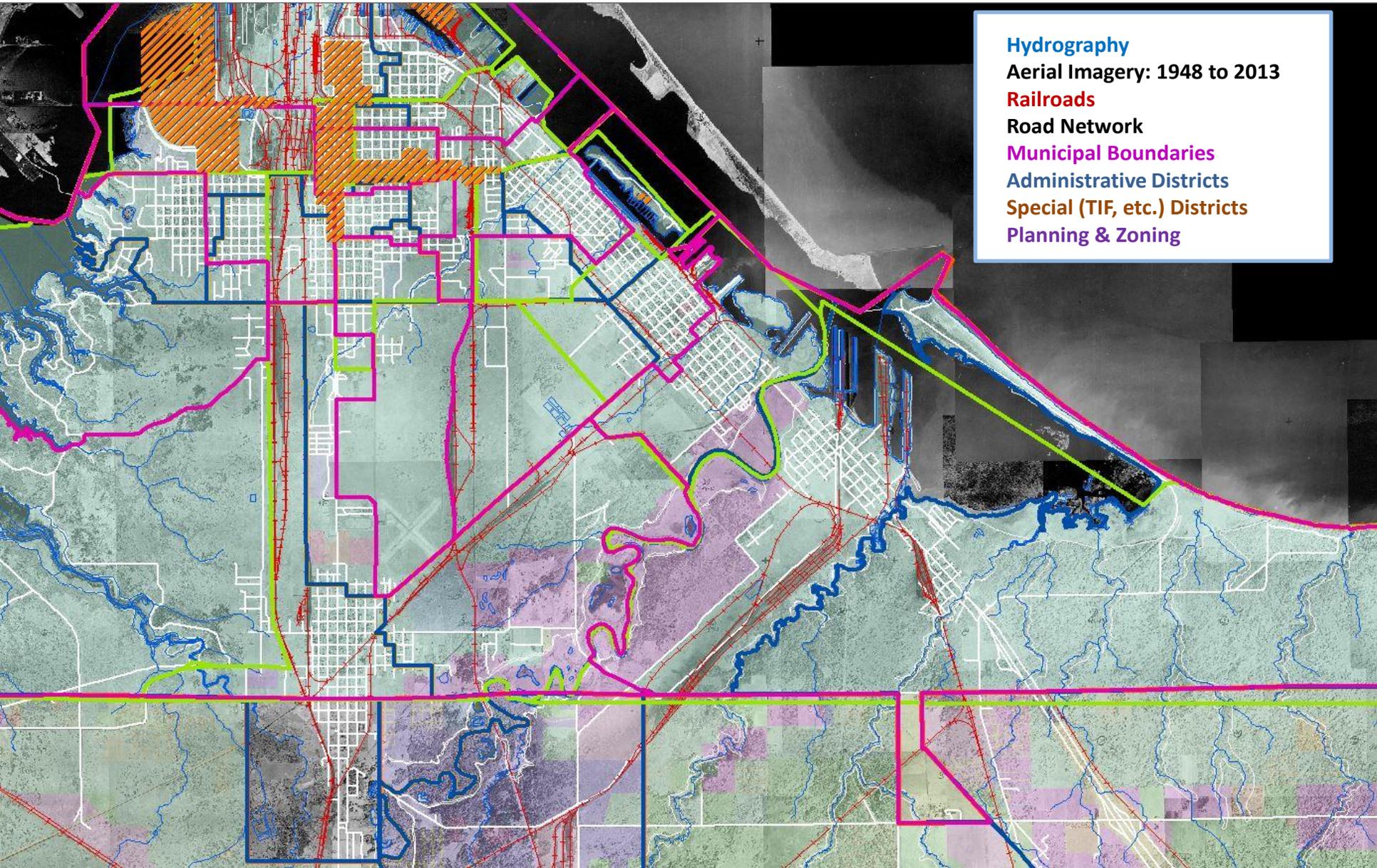


City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



Hydrography
Aerial Imagery: 1948 to 2013
Railroads
Road Network

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



Hydrography

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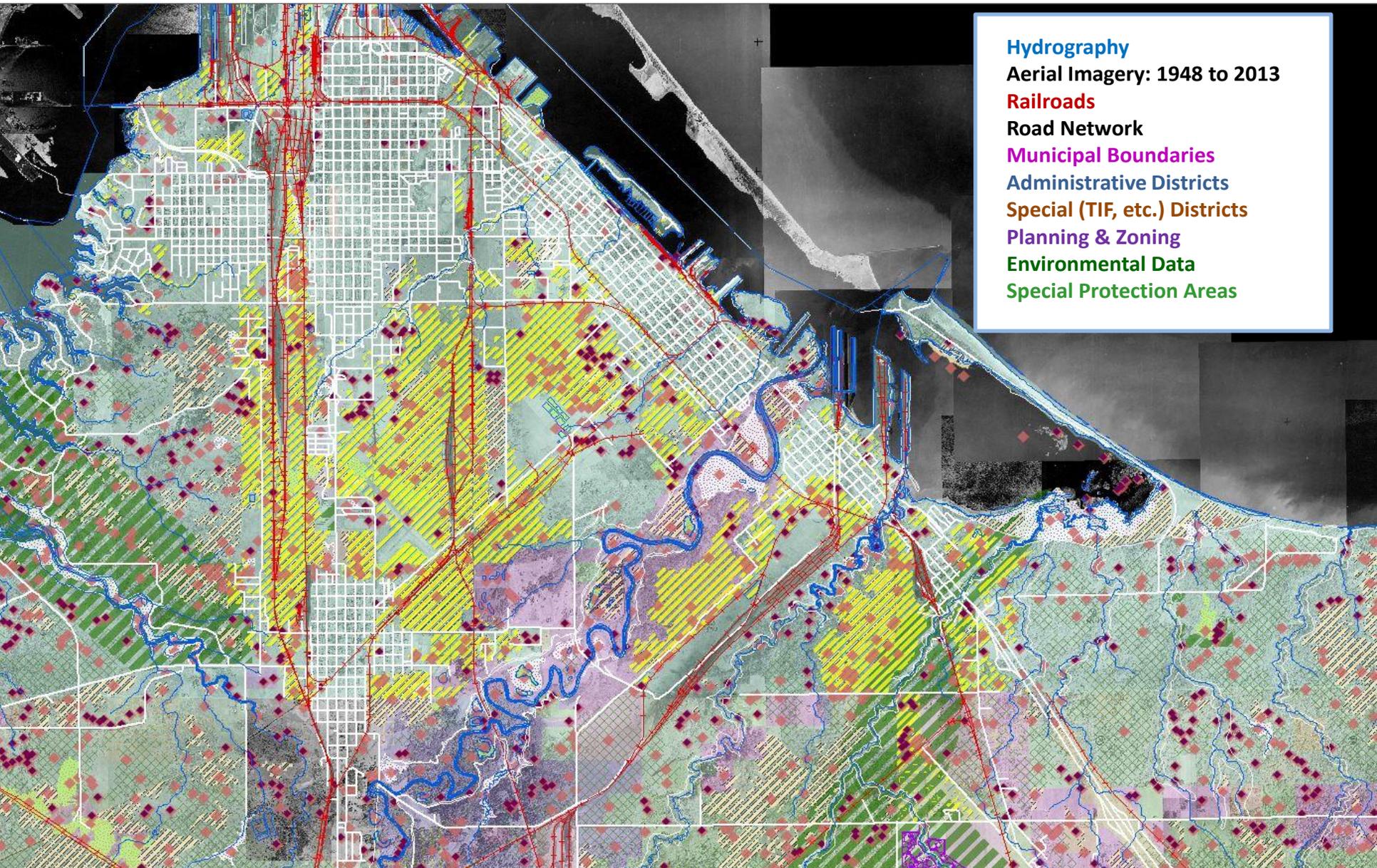
Municipal Boundaries

Administrative Districts

Special (TIF, etc.) Districts

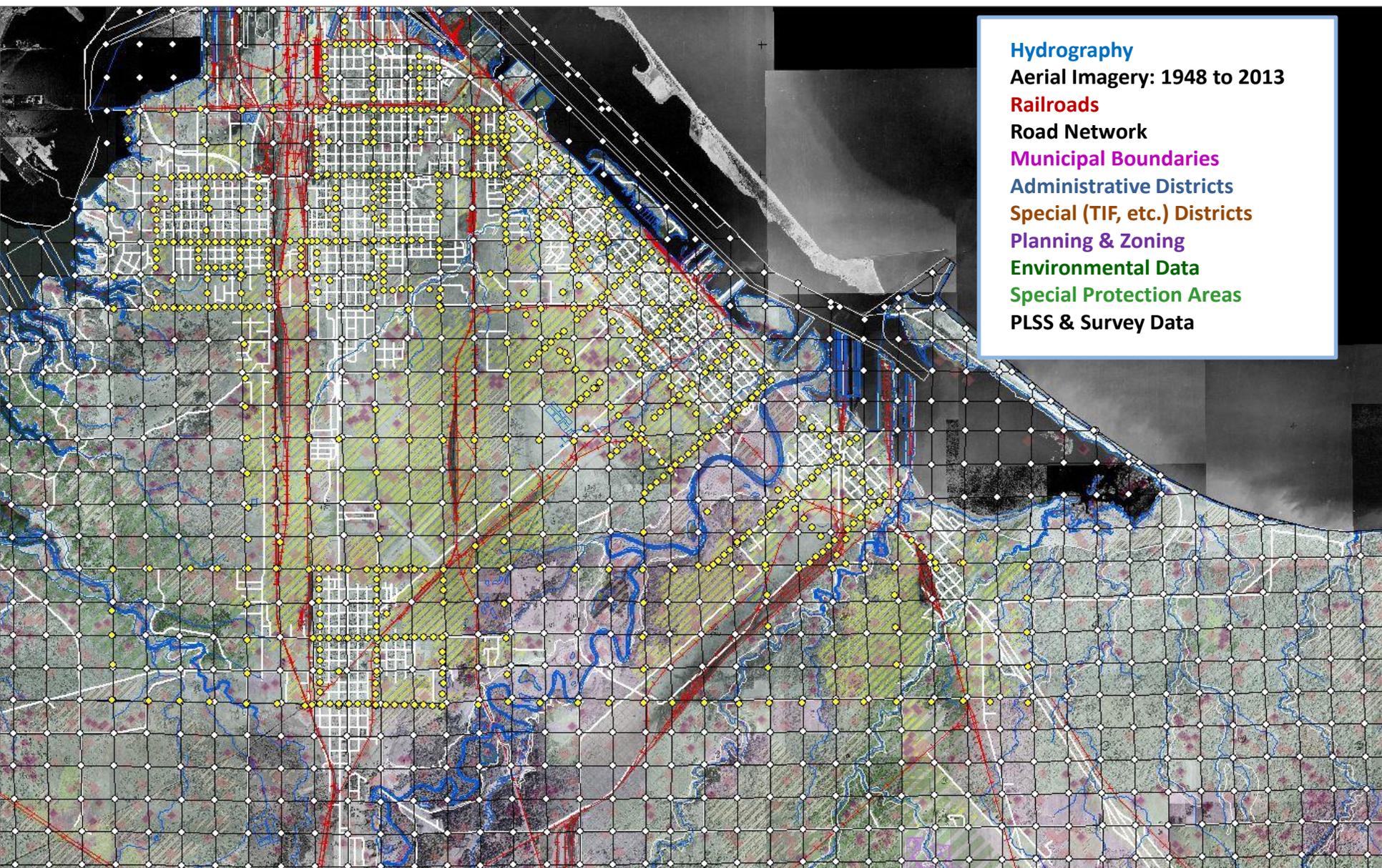
Planning & Zoning

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



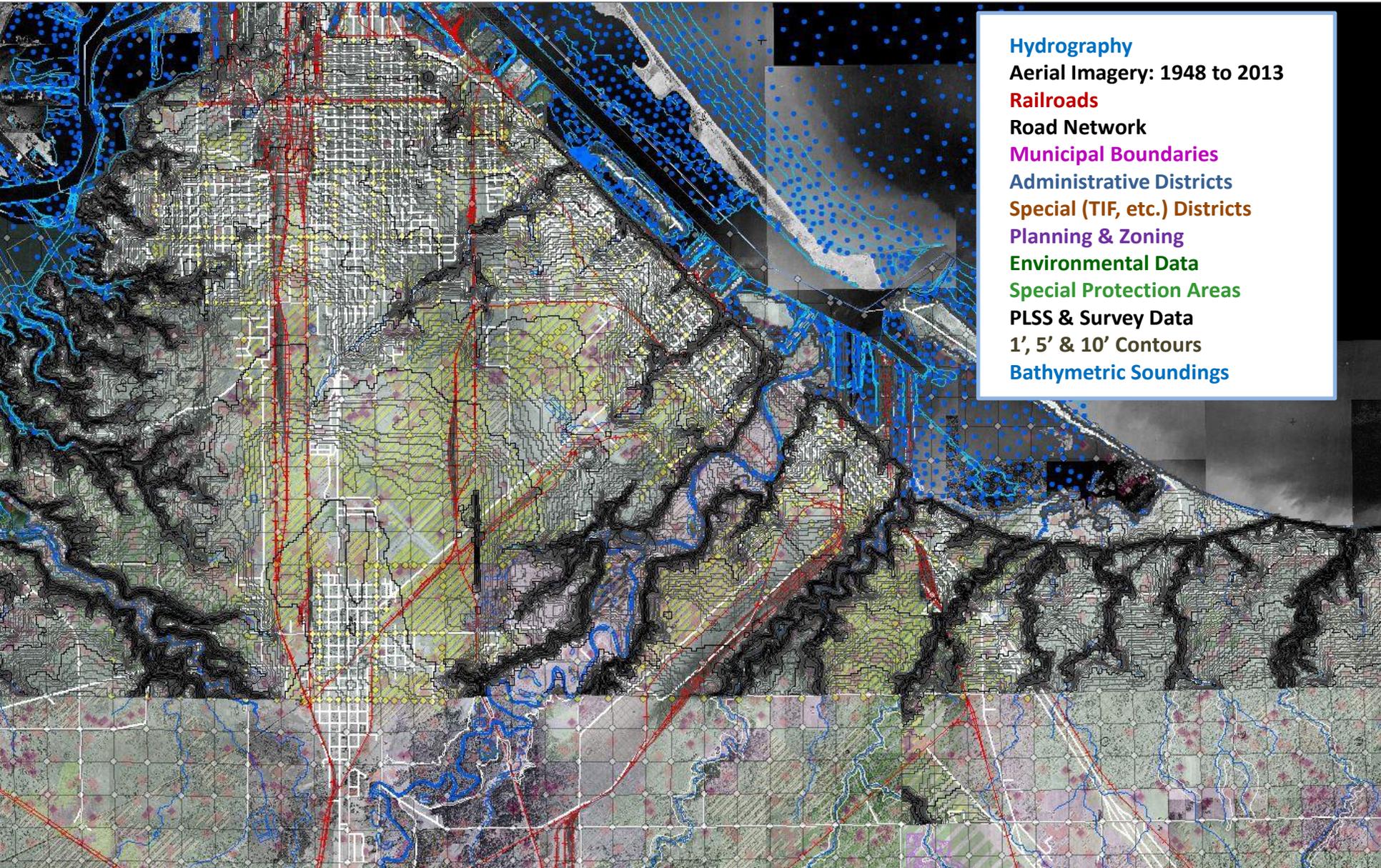
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- Environmental Data**
- Special Protection Areas**

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



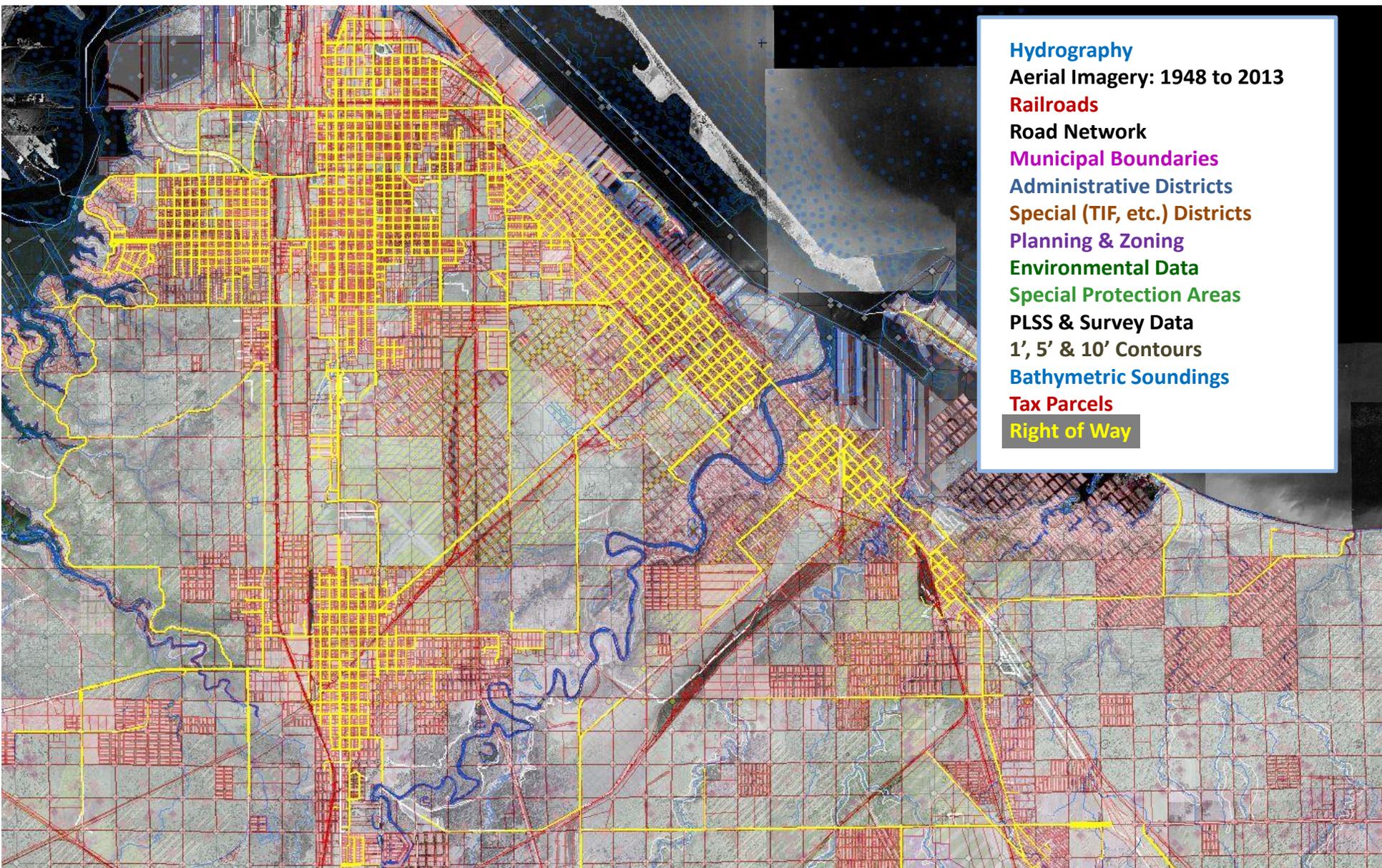
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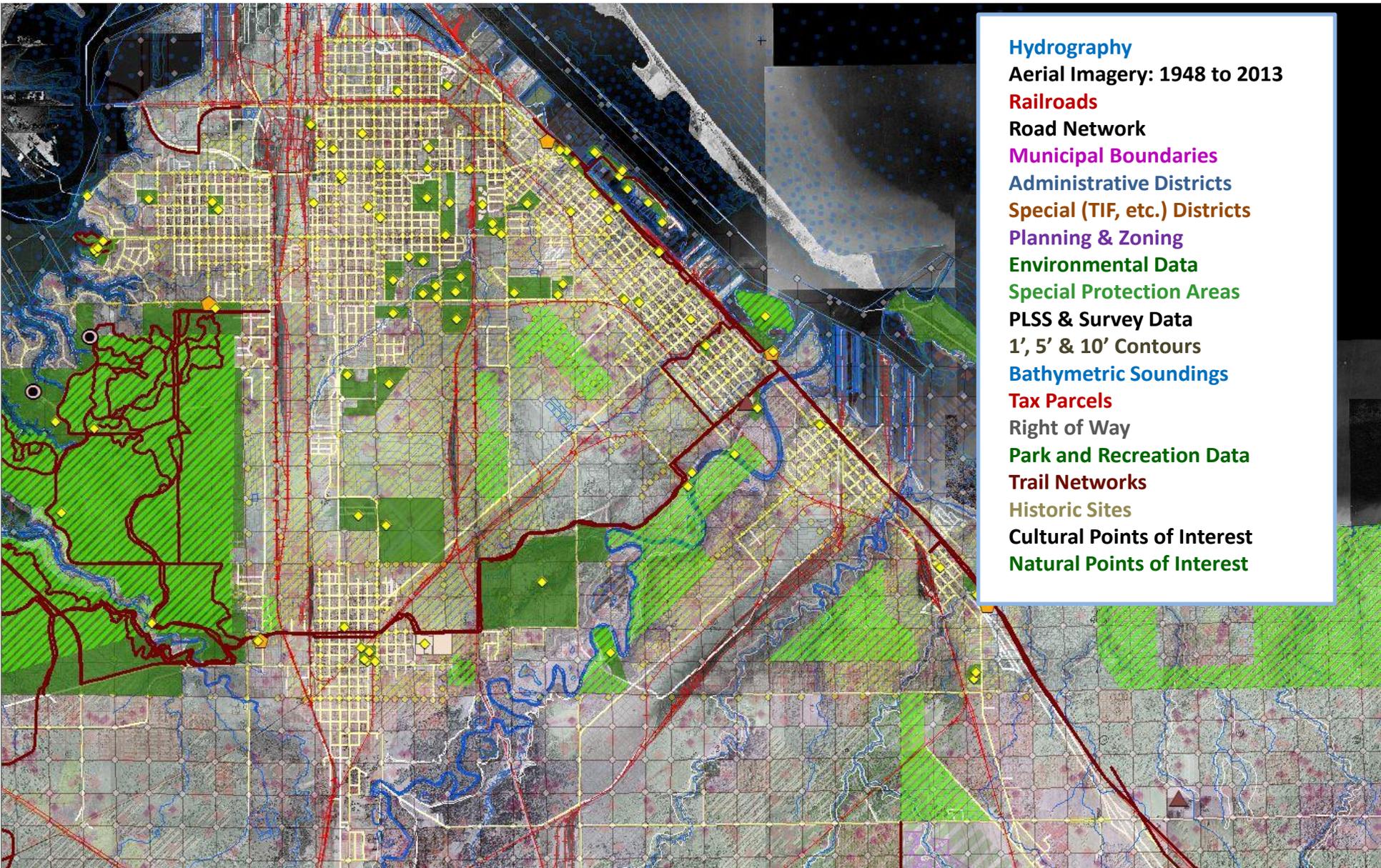
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- Bathymetric Soundings**

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- Right of Way**

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



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Park and Recreation Data

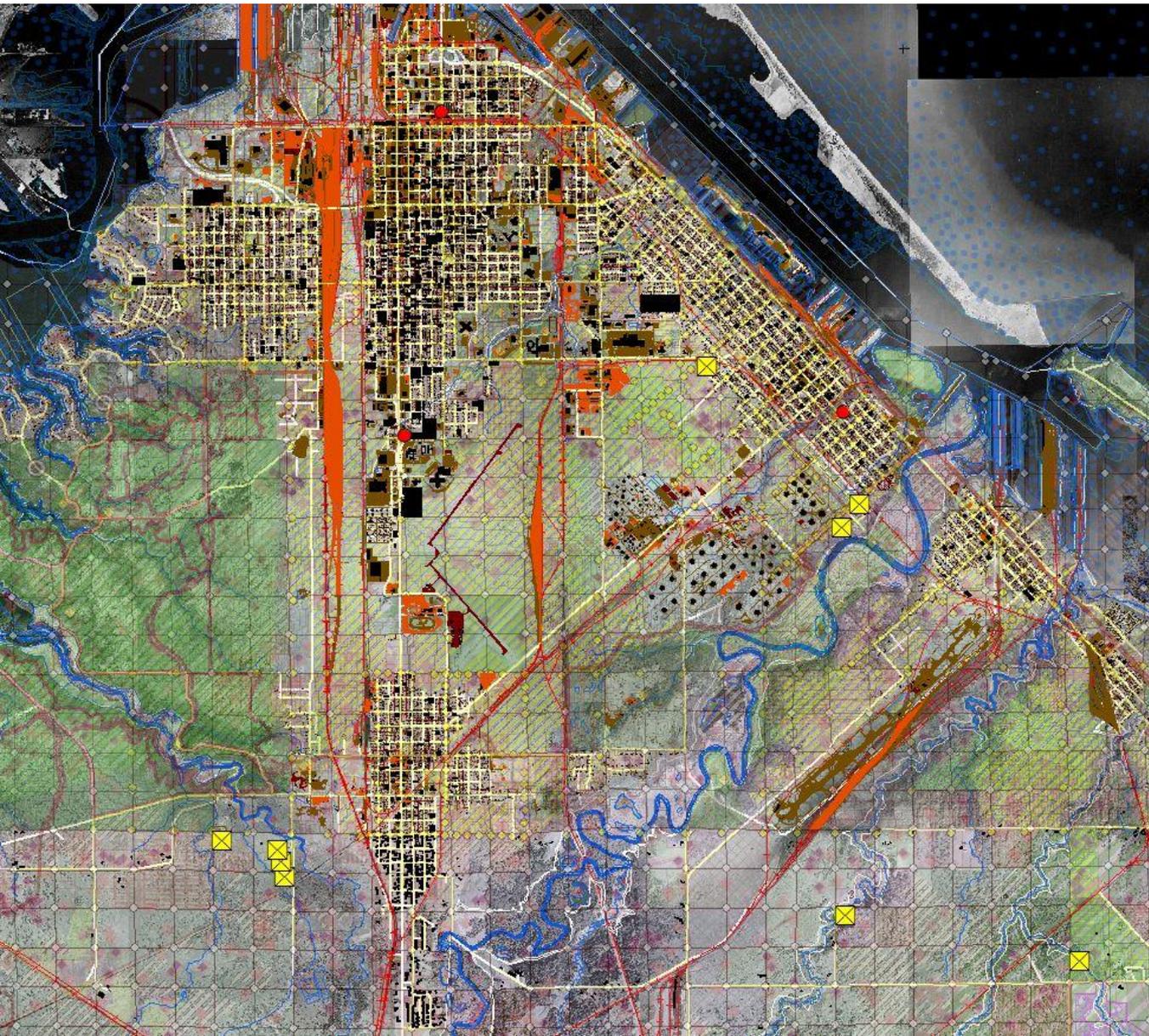
Trail Networks

Historic Sites

Cultural Points of Interest

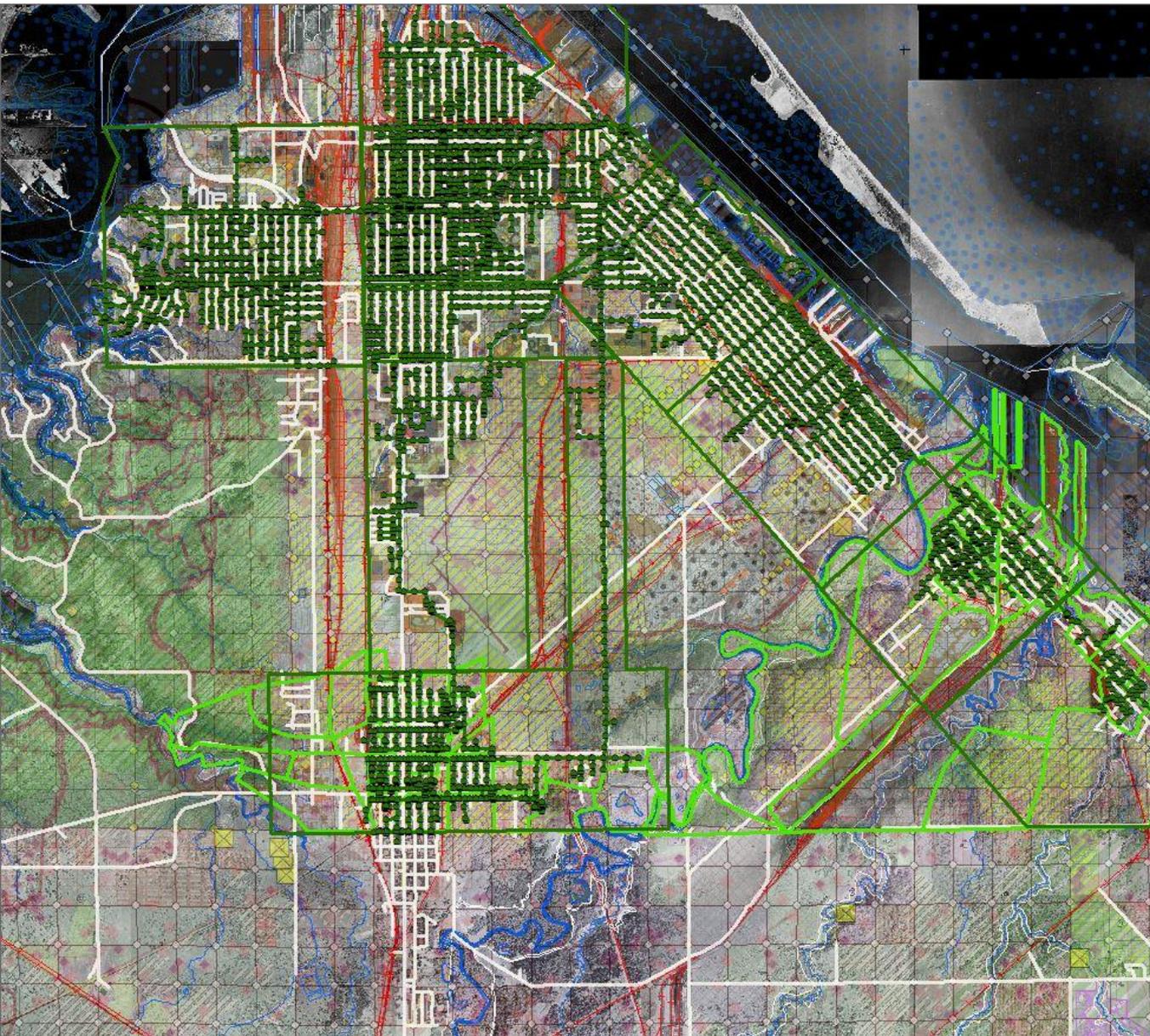
Natural Points of Interest

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



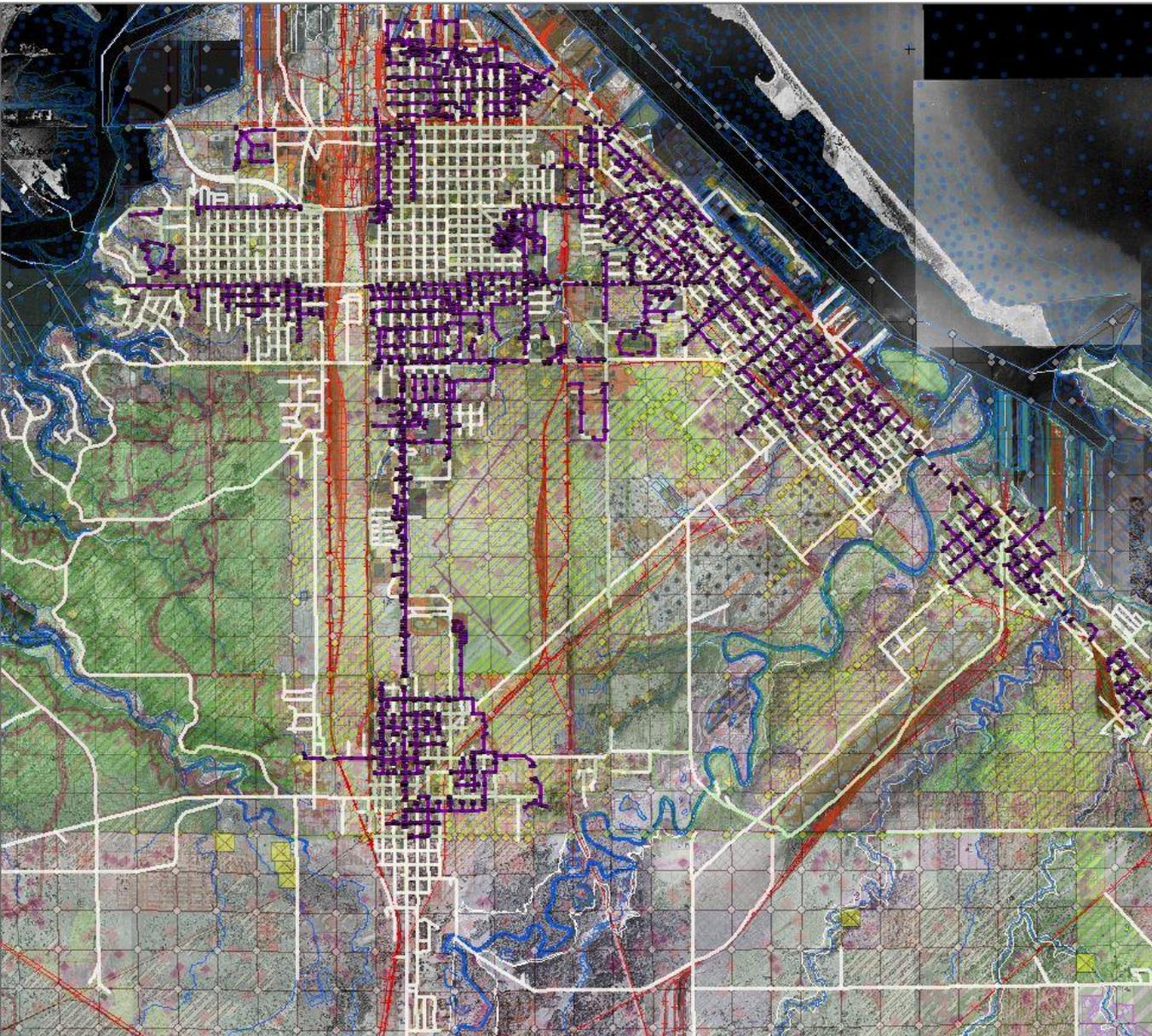
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- Cultural Points of Interest**
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- Impervious Surfaces**
- All Building Footprints**
- Cemeteries**
- Public Buildings**

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- Sanitary Sewer**
- Sewersheds + Service Districts**

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin



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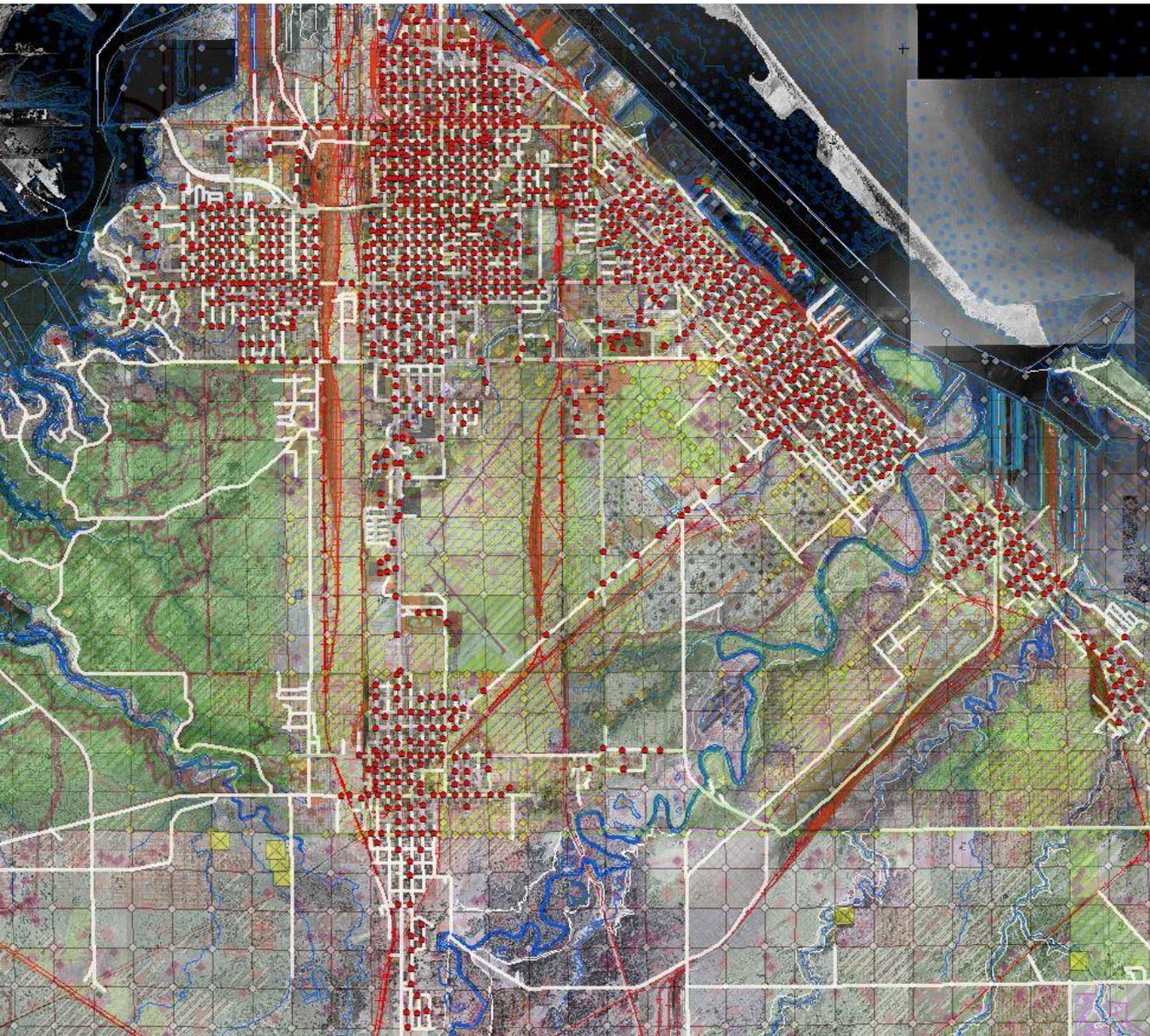
Public Buildings

Sanitary Sewer

Sewersheds + Service Districts

Stormsewer Network

Stormwater Outfalls



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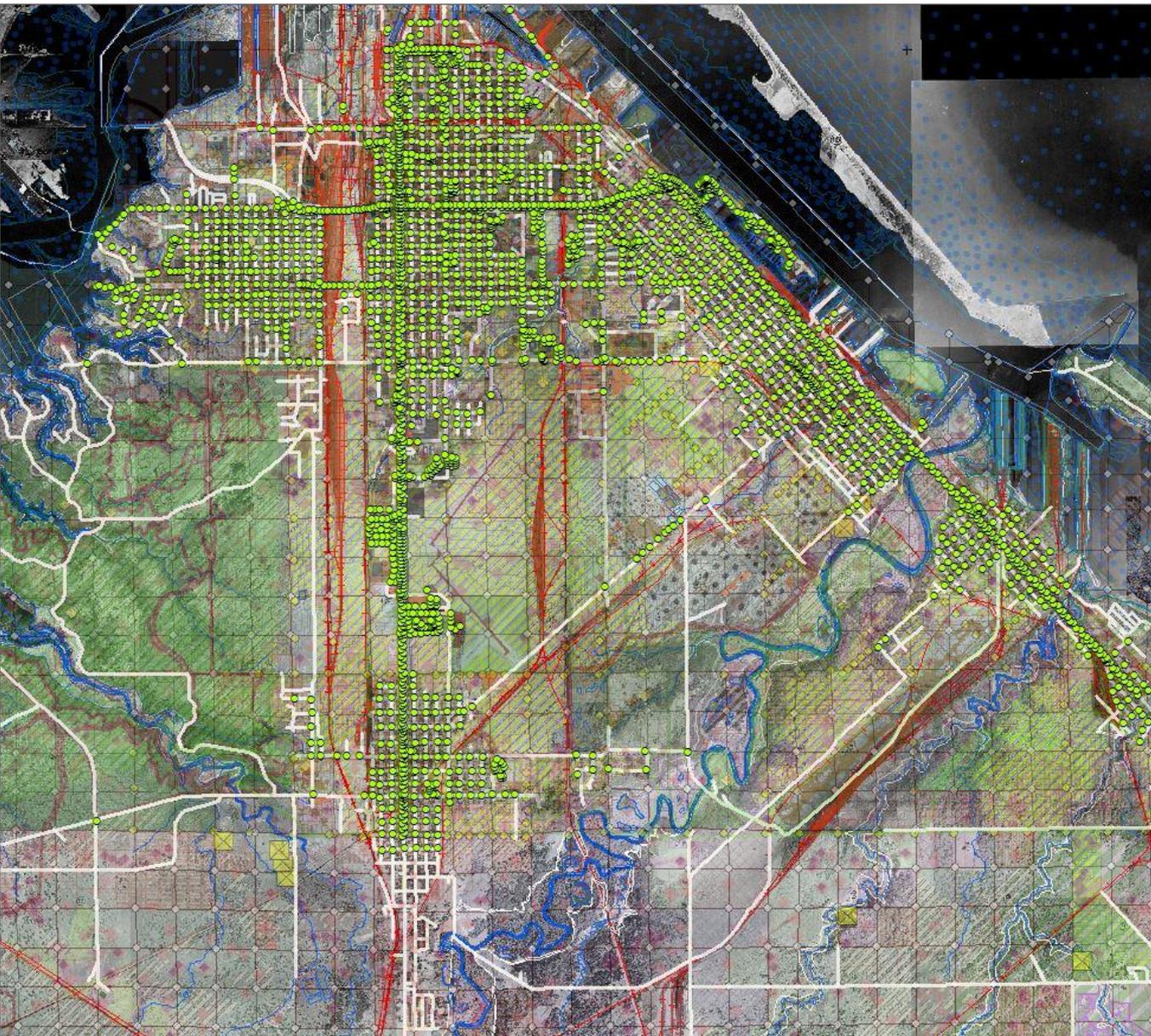
Sanitary Sewer

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Stormwater Outfalls

Fire Hydrants



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Stormwater Outfalls

Fire Hydrants

Streetlights

City of Superior & Northern Douglas County, Wisconsin

Free & Open Data *practices encouraged and supported by the legal counsel of both the City of Superior and Douglas County, Wisconsin*

Significant benefits to a wide consumer base:

- **Railroads**
- **Telecommunications/Cellular Tower businesses**
- **Major Pipelines**
- **Real Estate**
- **Electric and Gas Utilities**
- **Insurance Agencies**
- **Duluth Seaway Port Authority & Port of Superior**
- **U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Vessel Yard)**
- **U. S. Coast Guard (Duluth Marine Safety Unit)**
- **Regional Historical Societies**
- **Colleges & Universities of the region**
- **Commercial & Industrial Forest businesses**



“Data Is Infrastructure”

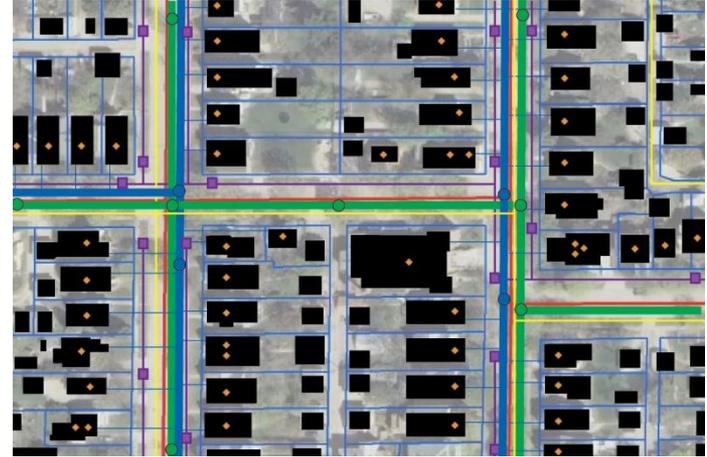
Real World Features



Roads, pipes, buildings, parcels, manholes, sidewalks, hydrants, etc.

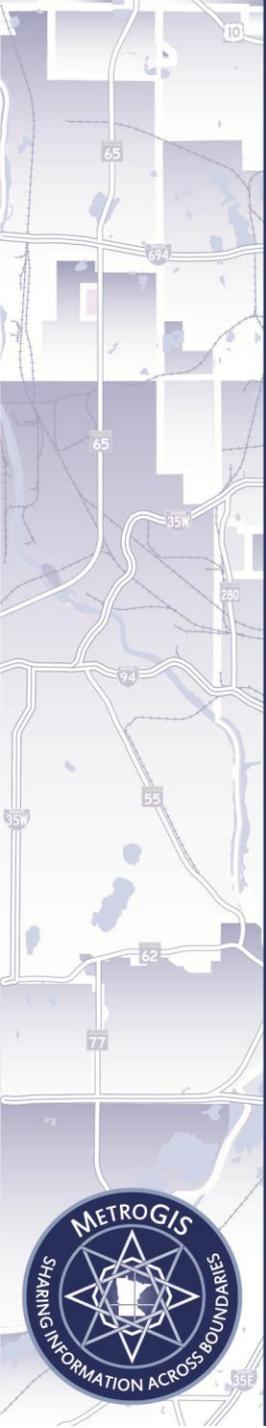
All the physical assets of a the city, county, agency or jurisdiction;

Virtual Representations



The virtual representations (and the data that accompanies them) are a form of infrastructure themselves used for tracking, mapping, modeling, applications development, routing, analysis, mapping, etc.





Creating a “data rich” environment...

Benefits to government:

- *Transparency of operations;*
- *Increased level of public service;*
- *Pro-actively (vs. reactive) meeting the demand for data;*
- *The authoritative data is the norm;*
- *Less staff time handling licenses, fees, data transfer, etc.;*

Benefits to businesses:

- *Facilitates the ‘information economy’/‘app economy’*
- *Data consuming industries can operate more efficiently and cost-effectively (insurance, real estate, telecom, utilities, pipelines, etc.)*
- *Enables our region and our state to be more competitive economically;*

