

## Land Titles – The Basis of Opportunity

AREA believes there is a unique opportunity to enhance the use of the robust Land Titles system by incorporating property information currently stored and managed separately by municipalities. Building off the reliable system already in place, this would result in one centralized system where all property records (e.g. building permits, environmental assessments, etc.) would be recorded and maintained, and increase the usefulness and efficiency of the system for all users of its information. The system could be structured in such a way that there is no extra burden placed on government staff for record administration, while creating a new revenue stream for the Government of Alberta.

### Background: Alberta's Land Titles System

Land Titles runs on a system called SPIN II. The essence of the system is a fundamental building block called the LINC number. Every title in Alberta has a unique LINC number, from a quarter section to a parking stall in a condominium. Unlike an addressing system, there are no repeats and no duplication. The entire province is covered with the exception of national parks and reserve lands.

### Background: Role of Municipalities & Additional Property Information

Municipalities are in charge of permitting for all developments and improvements (plumbing, electrical, structural, etc.). Regardless of size, each municipality is required to house, archive and retrieve these documents on demand.

The Environmental Site Assessment Repository (ESAR) is an online search tool. Using Alberta Registries' Land Titles SPIN II technology, the ESAR allows you to search for a site by legal land description, municipal address or map. If information on a site is available, users can download, e-mail and print relevant information and documents.

- ESAR (<http://www.esar.alberta.ca/esarmain.aspx>) was begun as an initiative between the Alberta Real Estate Association and the Environmental Law Centre, and presented to Alberta Environment.
- Environmental site assessments determine the quality of soil and groundwater of a site, particularly at retail gas stations and other commercial and industrial sites. A site assessment does not necessarily mean a site is, or ever was, contaminated.
- Reclamation certificates issued for upstream oil and gas well sites, gravel pits and other specified lands on private land and the associated file information for the certificates (applications, reports) are also available on ESAR. Reclamation certificates issued for sites on public lands of the province are available through Sustainable Resource Development ([crownlanddatasupport@gov.ab.ca](mailto:crownlanddatasupport@gov.ab.ca)).

### Summary

- Under a sharing agreement with the Government of Alberta, build a component into the existing Land Titles registry to create a single source for all property documents. Each municipality would still be responsible for issuing and filing permits. Instead of filing in its own independent database, the municipality would simply upload the information to the central database.
- Each time a document is requested that was issued by the municipality, similar to a land titles search, there would be a retrieval fee which would be allocated between the municipality and the GOA, according to a revenue sharing agreement. Municipalities would no longer have to house these documents in situ and could rely on access via the province, increasing reliability of the system and information. Instead of front office staff dealing with issues relating to permit retrieval, they can focus their time more productively serving clients and ratepayers. Additional opportunities to enhance and create revenue share opportunities exist:
  - Condominiums are required to produce documents for each corporation. Retrieval of these is, has been and will continue to be painful if they are managed and retrieved by individual corporations.
  - Alberta New Home Warranty (ANHW) program tracks New Home Warranty by address, seldom a satisfactory way to follow up.
  - The LINC# and the SPIN II offer a natural solution set for tracking properties. This would eliminate issues and concerns of when the ANHW expires and what is included, as it would all be accessible online. It would also eliminate the duplicate tracking of ownership changes.

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The Alberta Real Estate Association (AREA) represents the interests of 10 Real Estate Boards, more than 10,000 licensed REALTORS® and the consumers they serve.