

Right of Way Inventory Program

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Abstract

Hillsborough County, located in west central Florida, has a land area of over 1,074 square miles. Within Hillsborough County are the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City which account for approximately 150 square miles of the county. The remaining unincorporated area has a wide variety of land uses from urbanized (commercial and residential), to agricultural use, to heavy industrial (mining). Urbanization is occurring throughout the County, but in significant concentration along the I-75 corridor and the adjacent coastal waters of Tampa Bay. Approximately 66% of the 1,147,140 (estimated 2005) population live in the unincorporated areas of Hillsborough County. Population growth is projected to continue at a rate of approximately 3% per year.

Hillsborough County government is responsible for providing municipal services to the majority of the residents of the county. For over 15 years, the Capital Improvement Program has funded improvements in the areas of transportation, stormwater, water and wastewater, fire/rescue, parks, and other municipal facilities. All of these programs require the acquisition of land and/or right of way to implement.

In the State of Florida, the rights of way for public roads are established and described by deed, plat, right of way map, or use as defined in the Florida Statutes. At the end of 2005, the Public Works Department reported maintenance of over 3,000 miles of roadways, including subdivisions and other major roadway systems. Recognizing that continued growth will require increasing utilization of the rights of way for transportation and utility service improvements, the Survey Division of the Real Estate Department identified the need to centralize information regarding the classification of right of way. A proposal was submitted with the budget process for Fiscal Year (FY) 2002, to fund a

five year program to research and collect data, perform survey field work, and develop a single point source for right of way information. The program was approved for FY2002 beginning October 1, 2001 and will be completed in 2007. The program will transition from full scale data collection to maintenance and ongoing operation in 2007.

Need for an Inventory

With continued growth and the need for improved services, requests for right of way information have increased. Additionally, the Public Works Department in an effort to control the use of public right of way has established a Right of Way Permitting process. The process utilized to gather information was unorganized and disjointed to the extent that a customer would have to contact several different departments and possibly cover extensive territory in the county to gather information. To improve efficiency and customer service, the Survey Division saw a need to centralize the point of contact for this information.

Identifying the Process

The initial phase of the program was to identify the steps in the current process to gather the right of way information. This included identifying who the users are, the type of information requested, the source of information, the location of the information, and the user's need for the information.

Users:

- Internal departments.
- Public utility companies.
- Private engineering and surveying firms.
- Property owners.

Type of Information:

- Deeds
- Plats
- Vacated Roads

- Road Transfer Maps
- Maintenance Records

Source and Location:

- Clerk of Court (Official Records)
- Real Estate Department
- Survey Division
- Engineering Department
- Public Works Maintenance Units (various locations)
- Other government agencies

Use of Information:

- Design of Public Works Projects: bridges, intersections, signalization, sidewalks, road widening, pipelines, etc.
- Use permits for electric, gas, communications, etc.
- Land Development.
- Driveway entrances.

Redefining the Process

The main goal established early in the program was the ability to quickly research and disseminate information regarding classification of the right of way. Ultimately, a GIS viewer will provide access to the vast amount of data collected. The customer will be able to contact the Survey Division and obtain information quickly for smaller projects.

Collecting Data

The five year program to build a countywide database of right of way information required establishing performance measures to control budget and monitor progress. The base unit of measure was completion of right of way information on a section basis with intermediate milestones established within each. Intermediate measures include: document research, mapping right of way, maintenance location and mapping, database

construction, and map compilation. Initially, mapping information has been compiled in a CADD format with additional information contained in a database.

The areas identified for inventory exclude the municipalities and local platted subdivision roads. The county was subdivided into 5 areas to coincide with funding for the 5 years of the program, with higher priorities set on areas of potential growth.

Current Status

The data collection phase of the program is approximately 78% complete. In a joint effort with the Information Technology Department, a GIS viewer application is being developed to have a single file source for line work and database information on a countywide basis. CADD information is being transferred from the section files into the Right of Way GIS application.

From the beginning, customer service efficiency has increased and the customer base has grown. The information is being used as a planning tool for preliminary design and engineering studies, site location studies and long term planning.

This paper and the technical presentation can be accessed at the Hillsborough County Survey Division Website: <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/realestate/resources/publications/>