

**Response to 2005-2006 Ventura County Grand Jury Report
Entitled "Geographic Information Systems Data Sharing"**

August 24, 2006

Findings:

Based on County Counsel's opinion that GIS data is covered under the PRA, I materially concur with all the findings documented in the report. However, I do feel it is important to briefly discuss the financial impact to the PWA if the subscription fee model is eliminated.

The subscription fee model was developed as a way of creating broad based support for GIS whereby the costs for updating, enhancing, and maintaining the data would be shared by the benefiting parties. At the time the model was developed, staff was under the assumption that enhanced GIS data was exempt from the PRA requirements. However, based on the April 28, 2006, County Counsel opinion that requests for GIS data are covered under the PRA, I anticipate that lost revenue from the subscription fee funding will result in higher GIS costs to PWA and will impact our resource allocation priorities.

It is hopeful that additional discussion will take place regarding this issue. That aside, PWA will comply with County Counsel's opinion and work with the GIS Oversight Committee to establish the necessary processes identified in the Grand Jury's findings.

Recommendations:

R-1. The County should develop a specific GIS request format for anyone to use when requesting GIS data from any County agency, division, or section.

Currently, PWA handles requests for GIS data in an informal manner – generally via e-mail. Most requests for GIS data are for Watershed Protection District's (WPD) LiDAR data and aerial photos. We are agreeable to working with the GIS Oversight Committee to establish a common form and process for responding to GIS data requests.

R-2. The County should develop a price list or some other means that makes clear to anyone requesting GIS data the exact cost of reproduction and any other fees that may become available. The cost of reproduction could include making GIS data available on CD, DVD, or other electronic storage means depending on the size of the GIS data requested. The availability and cost of the data in a printed format should also be identified.

Currently, the local data that has been provided by WPD has been done without charge. The local GIS data that WPD maintains is made available to the public by allowing the public to use a computer and instructing them on how to retrieve the data. Often, the requestors provide their own CD, DVD, or other electronic storage device. PWA will review costs and develop a fee structure for FY 08 in accordance with County Ordinance No. 4339 – Establishing Fees Pertaining to Copying Public Records.

R-4. The County should develop procedures to ensure that responses to GIS PRA data requests are made in a timely manner consistent with PRA legal requirements.

PWA is committed to providing all GIS PRA data requests in a timely manner and consistent with PRA legal requirements. We will work with the County Geographic Information Officer on standardizing procedures, requirements, and forms utilized in fulfilling the PRA requests.