

#10-003 Public Land Survey System – Re-monumentation Policy

Section: Public Works

Department: Public Works

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Related Policies:



STATEMENT

The original basis of the rectangular land system in Minnesota is the United States Ordinance of 1785. This ordinance set forth the principles for dividing, designating, and describing the land in the public domain. In February 1805, an act of Congress gave us the “United States System for the Survey of the Public Lands” which is the basic system of land subdivision in use today.

The Public Land Survey System (PLSS) in Minnesota started in 1847 and was nearly completed by 1910. Minnesota was originally surveyed into sections of land (+/- 640 acres) by surveyors contracting with the federal government. These surveyors set over 300,000 monuments marking the boundaries of these sections. All boundaries of land ownership in Minnesota, both public and private, depend upon and are related to these monuments.

The positions of the PLSS corners are permanent by congressional legislation, but the monuments identifying the corners were not permanent. The original monuments were objects of stone, wood and/or mounds of sod or other types of materials that were readily available at the time of the survey. When/if the monuments marking the corners have been destroyed and the corner positions obliterated, the accurate retracement of property boundaries becomes extremely complex and costly.

The solution is a re-monumentation program for the identification and preservation of the corner positions. With the use of the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS), we can now obtain a geodetic coordinate on the corner position with relative confidence in precision. The use and precision of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping is growing. Parcel maps depend on an accurate PLSS. Without certified PLSS corners with known geodetic coordinate values on the PLSS corners, a parcel map is at best an inaccurate picture. Parcel mapping can only be improved with an accurate PLSS framework.

POLICY

It is in the best interest of Waseca County and its citizens to re-monument and certify the PLSS corners with a geodetic coordinate. Re-monumentation of PLSS corners may occur by dedicated county efforts for public purposes and/or by private surveyors contracted by private parties. Reimbursement for costs associated with the re-monumentation and certification of PLSS corners needed for a private survey may be attained in accordance with this policy.

PROCEDURE

This policy applies to all private surveyors seeking payment to re-monument and certify PLSS corner(s), not previously certified with geodetic coordinate(s), in Waseca County and as needed for a private survey.

Qualifications

To qualify for payment, the following criteria must be met:

- a. The private surveyor must be a Minnesota licensed land surveyor, in good standing with the Minnesota Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design.
- b. The land surveyor must have prior approval from the Waseca County Public Works Director/County Engineer, the Waseca County Surveyor, or a surveyor designated to perform the professional duties of the county surveyor before excavating, restoring, re-establishing, and/or relocating any PLSS corner in Waseca County.
- c. Where excavation of a corner is required, the use of county forces is the first choice. If the surveyor cannot or elects not to wait for county forces' availability, the surveyor must obtain a permit from the Public Works (Highway) Department and further is responsible for private services to excavate and restore the corner location, in accordance with issued permit(s).
- d. The land surveyor shall reference their Certificate of Location of Government Corner to the HARN 96, NAD 83 Waseca County Coordinate System in feet.
- e. A copy of the Certificate of Location of Government Corner and Statement of Evidence shall be filed in the offices of the County Recorder and the Public Works Director/County Engineer prior to or at the time of request for reimbursement.

Reimbursement

- a. A written request for reimbursement (invoice) shall be submitted to and approved by the Public Works Director/County Engineer. The invoice must be submitted within six months of physical re-monumentation at the PLSS corner location.
- b. The payment amount per PLSS corner will be per the fee schedule approved by the Waseca County Board of Commissioners, as revised from time to time, and will be limited to the amount of funds that are available in the county's account designated for PLSS re-monumentation.
- c. Eligible costs incurred by the Department for the excavation of PLSS corners, including but not limited to labor (overtime only), equipment, and materials are reimbursable/transferable to the Department from the account designated for PLSS re-monumentation, provided that sufficient funds exist within the account.
- d. Expenses incurred by the Department for the perpetuation and/or re-monumentation of PLSS corners impacted by the Department's Road & Bridge construction program are reimbursable/transferable to the Department from the account designated for PLSS re-monumentation, provided that sufficient funds exist within the account.