



June 07, 2021

**Annalisa Fipke**

City of Nanaimo  
455 Wallace Street  
Nanaimo, BC  
V9R 5J6

Dear: Annalisa Fipke

Re: **Changes to the Integrated Survey Area (ISA) Program**

The purpose of this letter is to explain upcoming changes to the Surveyor General's ISA Program.

The ISA Program was first introduced in 1967 to support local governments in surveying and mapping activities. ISAs are areas within participating municipalities where a network of permanent coordinate control monuments called integrated survey monuments (ISMs) have been installed, carefully surveyed, and had their precise coordinates registered in GeoBC's MASCOT system.

Under the ISA Program, land surveyors must connect their survey to at least two ISMs when conducting a legal survey. This allows a user of the plan to accurately locate its parcels in relative and georeferenced space. Further information on the ISA Program has been supplied in the *ISA Information For Municipalities* document which accompanies this letter.

The City of Nanaimo was established as Integrated Survey Area No. 20 in 1984.

After consultation with stakeholders of the ISA Program, the Surveyor General has identified two conflicting elements of the Program:

1. There is significant support amongst stakeholders in retaining the ISA Program; however
2. Some municipalities are unaware of/not fulfilling their responsibilities toward their ISA. As a result, some ISAs may be in a state of disrepair and are not functioning as they were originally envisioned.

The Surveyor General typically considers an ISA to be in a state of disrepair when many ISMs have been damaged or destroyed within the ISA, and no initiative has been made to maintain an adequate density of monuments within the ISA. This causes a burden on users of the ISA, as well as uncertainty among users of the system as to whether their remaining ISMs still have accurate published values.

Land surveyors who were consulted on the ISA Program noted that ISAs that are well maintained are a benefit to their surveying practice; conversely, ISAs that are in disrepair are an impediment to their practice. A poorly maintained ISA impacts all users of the province's coordinate control network, making it more difficult, more costly, and less reliable to do their work.

### **Change to the ISA Program**

The Surveyor General recognizes that despite stated support for the ISA Program, it is untenable to continue the Program without clarifying responsibilities within ISAs. It is believed to be in the best interest of all stakeholders to limit the ISA Program to those municipalities who are able and wish to commit to the upkeep required for a functioning ISA.

To move forward with the ISA Program, the Surveyor General will annul the ISAs of those municipalities that cannot fulfill the responsibilities of the ISA Program. The end result will be a smaller group of well-functioning ISAs that work as they were intended.

To achieve this, the Office of the Surveyor General has included a commitment letter, which outlines the responsibilities of the municipality in maintaining an ISA. Please review this agreement and decide whether your municipality is meeting/can meet the responsibilities of maintaining your ISA.

If your municipality wishes to keep its ISA, please review this information with the appropriate signing authority within your municipality, and return the signed commitment letter to the LTSA at your earliest convenience and no later than **January 15, 2022**.

Municipalities who are already meeting the commitments outlined in the commitment letter should return the signed letter to indicate their awareness of their responsibilities and ongoing commitment to the ISA program.

Those municipalities who are not currently meeting commitments to their ISA, but wish to retain the program, should return the signed letter and will have a two year period to organize internally and initiate the process of ISM replacement under the guidance of GeoBC.

If you are unsure of whether your municipality is currently meeting the responsibilities outlined in the commitment letter, or have further questions about these responsibilities, please contact the Office of the Surveyor General for further clarification.

Failure to return a signed commitment letter will be considered an indication that your municipality no longer wishes to participate in the ISA Program. You will be notified by the

Surveyor General of our intent to annul the ISA within your municipality, and be provided an opportunity for response before any further action is taken.

Under Part 2 of the *Land Survey Act*, the Surveyor General has the authority to create, redefine and annul ISA's.

## Understanding What Annulment of an ISA Means

It is important to understand that the ISA Program is limited in scope. Many aspects of your municipality's coordinate control network would continue to function if your ISA was annulled. The most important impact of annulling an ISA is that, while they remain coordinate control points, the affected monuments lose their ISM status with *no ongoing requirement for land surveyors to reference their legal plans to ISMs when conducting a legal survey within an ISA.*

Annulment of your ISA would mean:

- Surveyors would no longer be required to reference their legal surveys to the two closest ISMs within your municipality's ISA.
- Surveyors would still have a requirement to georeference their legal plans; this would simply revert to the provincial georeferencing requirements that already exist for areas outside of an ISA:
  - Surveyors would be required to georeference their legal surveys, but would now have the option to establish their own independent coordinate control for this purpose. They would also continue to have the option to use the former ISMs if they prefer.
  - Surveyors would be required to meet the provincial positional accuracy standard of 0.20m. In many cases, their positional accuracy may be better than 0.20m, though it would not be a requirement for their legal surveys.

An annulled ISA *would not* trigger any change to the availability of control monuments in your municipality, and existing monuments would continue to be published in MASCOT.

Most other aspects related to your municipality's coordinate control would not change:

- Other parties would continue to be able to use the coordinate control monuments in the same manner that they had previously.
- The municipality could continue to work with GeoBC to establish new coordinate control monuments, outside of the purview of the ISA Program, if they choose to do so.
- Municipalities would have the option to rejoin the ISA Program, at a later date, provided they could fulfill the responsibilities of the ISA Program at that time.

### **Demonstrating Commitment to the ISA Program**

The responsibilities of your municipality to its ISA are described in the attached *ISA Commitment Letter*. Further information on the ISA Program is available in the attached *ISA Information For Municipalities* document, as well as the [LTSA website](#). Please review these documents carefully and consider whether your municipality can and wishes to commit to these responsibilities in order to remain in the ISA Program.

To remain in the ISA Program, please return the attached commitment letter with signature by **January 15, 2022**. If your municipality is not willing to sign the letter of commitment, please inform the LTSA, and we can begin the process of annulling your ISA.

Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Regards,



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