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MEMORANDUM

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Honorable Norman H. Conway, Chair
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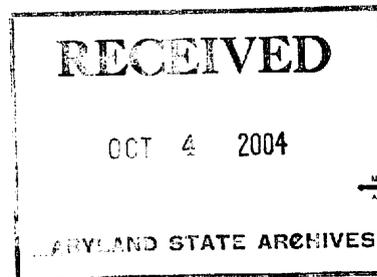
From: Edward C. Papenfuse, Ph.D., State Archivist ECP
Frank Broccolina, State Court Administrator FB

Date: September 30, 2004

Subject: Report to Budget Committees - Integration of State
Archives mdlandrec.net and the ELROI Systems

The Joint Chairmen's Report of April 2004 required the
Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the Maryland State
Archives (MSA) to examine the feasibility and the extent to which the
recently developed mdlandrec.net may be integrated into the Judiciary's
present land records imaging system (ELROI). Specifically, the
examination was to include the following:

- Electronically transferring all land record images to
mdlandrec after they are scanned in the courthouse land
record offices, not just records over ten years old;
Using the system currently deployed by MSA to scan the
records for the backfile conversion of the eleven jurisdictions
currently installing ELROI as a replacement for the current
ELROI Optix and non-Optix system to scan all land records
in the land record offices;
Using the current ELROI non-Optix and/or Optix system to
scan all records but electronically transferring the records
once they are scanned to mdlandrec rather than maintaining
ten years of records on the land records servers;
The cost and security issues involved in deploying ELROI
and/or mdlandrec so that title service agents and/or the
general public can access the records from the Internet as a
web-enabled application.



Background

The ELROI system provides Clerk of Court Offices with an electronic imaging system for the recording and retrieval of real property transactions that serves as a principal means of performing title searches in Maryland. With the subsequent development by MSA of *mdlandrec.net* to serve as a web-based repository for land record images, it became necessary to determine how to take full advantage of this new technology. The effective integration of ELROI and *mdlandrec.net* would combine the robust imaging and indexing features of ELROI with the comprehensive archival preservation and access features of *mdlandrec.net* to create a single comprehensive technology system. Such a seamless system could serve as a model to provide effective and efficient recordation and retrieval for land record images.

The Administrative Office of the Courts, through its department of Judicial Information Systems, and the Maryland State Archives formed a project team to evaluate the feasibility of this integrated approach detailed in the Joint Chairmen's Report. From the inception of the partnership, all parties have expressed a shared interest in achieving a seamless and fully integrated system for the recordation and retrieval of land records. The need to relocate the Howard County land record office presented an opportunity to implement and evaluate such an alternative as a pilot project. The result demonstrates the clear feasibility of an integrated judiciary/archives approach to recording and accessing land records in Maryland.

Results and Recommendations

The technology that *mdlandrec.net* provides is an enhancement to the present system and will make the retrieval of images through the internet more convenient for the title industry. Like any new system, while the technology associated with the pilot project appears more than fully capable of supporting the intent of the Budget Committees, there remain several issues that will need to be addressed in order to ensure an effective integration of the product: (1) the provision of sixty years of back-up images in each Clerk of Court office in the event that the system is disrupted; (2) the establishment of a committee appointed by the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks to represent Clerk of Court interests and to participate actively in project decision-making related both to recordation and retrieval; (3) the adoption of system service, support and security standards; (4) the need to maintain the integrity of the original verified indexes; and (5) the legal clarification as to the custodial responsibility and authority related to the records processed and maintained within these systems. These proposed actions are applicable both to ELROI and *mdlandrec.net* and will require a review of the present contract with the ELROI contractor SAIC and a new memorandum of understanding with the Maryland State Archives relating to the nature and extent of support services to be provided by the Archives.

With agreements in place, it is recommended that the migration of *mdlandrec.net* continue to the remainder of the jurisdictions including the scheduled ELROI installations in Garrett, Allegany and Talbot Counties and Baltimore City. When these are complete, and the requisite service and support systems are in place, the recommendation is to install *mdlandrec.net* in the next round of jurisdictions that need to be upgraded to improved recordation systems, including Montgomery, Baltimore, Kent, Queen Anne's and Cecil Counties.

The Howard County pilot project demonstrated the potential of an enhanced land record system that is capable of providing: (1) improved access to land record images through an intranet/internet service; (2) consistency to land recordation procedures; (3) timely generation of archival and security backup copies; (4) clear service and support responsibilities; and (5) cost-effective services to the public.

cc: Chief Judge Robert M. Bell
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
House Appropriations Committee
Judicial Cabinet
Judicial Council
Conference of Circuit Judges
Conference of Circuit Court Clerks
Conference of Circuit Administrators
William Honablew, Esq., Legislative Analyst