

S.R.D. Task Force Report: Implementation Plan “A New Beginning”

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During the most recent A.O.L.S. Annual General Meeting, BMB Management Consultants submitted an audit report entitled “Assessment of the Survey Review Department” concerning the operations of the Department. The assessment results were found to be positive, in that the S.R.D. procedures are well documented and applied on a consistent basis during the Review process. The same elements are reviewed for each firm, with identical standards applied. BMB found the current perception amongst member firms is that the A.O.L.S. and public are receiving good value for their investment in the Survey Review Department.

However, there is always room for improvement in the operations of any organization and, as such, recommendations were submitted in the BMB report. The recommendations focus on the Comprehensive Review process, communication, education and management. It is anticipated that these improvements should enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of S.R.D. and increase the credibility and value of the Review process to the member firms.

The Survey Review Department Task Force was charged, by Council, with the responsibility to respond to the BMB Management Consultants’ assessment on a question-by-question basis. The Task Force Report has been reviewed, adopted by Council and submitted to the membership as executed by David S. Urso, O.L.S., C.L.S., Chairman, dated May 11th, 2000.

The S.R.D. Committee, jointly with Department staff and consultants, then took on the responsibility of implementing the Task Force Report. Ultimately, a new plan selection process was developed, together with a combined Checklist/Rating Scale and a Book of Explanation to assist the firm’s understanding of the Comprehensive Review process. These materials, jointly with a plan of implementation, were submitted to and endorsed in principle by Council during their meetings of September 18th, 2000. It is now incum-

bent upon the Department to provide these materials to the membership. These materials will be submitted to the membership during the month of October, 2000.

Methodology

At least once every five years, a Comprehensive Review is conducted on each firm in the province as defined by Section 40 (1) of Regulation 1026 under the Surveyors Act. The Review will involve five percent of the work completed by each firm or office during the prior year, subject to a minimum of five surveys per firm or office, up to a maximum of fifteen surveys.

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Each firm is required to maintain a “log” of all completed surveys that require the application of an A.O.L.S. “sticker”. This log records the firm’s project number, date of release, “sticker” number, as well as a code to identify the plan type. All plans are recorded, including plans entering the land registration system. A hard copy of this “A.O.L.S. Plan Log” is supplied in the membership submission and is available in digital form. At the commencement of the Review, S.R.D. contacts the firm to obtain a copy of the log, either in digital or hard-copy form. A period of two weeks is allotted for this response. As the log identifies survey type, the Department selects the required volume of plans to provide a representative cross-section of the work performed by the firm. The plan selection is performed by “sticker” number only, without plan inspection, thus any perceived bias on the part of S.R.D. is eliminated.

For each selected plan, the firm is responsible to provide a signed print of the survey, the support file information and any other pertinent data used during the performance of the survey. The specifics of this submission are set out in documentation attached to the letter of request. The submissions are required within three weeks of the request for the surveys under review.

Field examinations remain unchanged, wherein a group of plans are reviewed on site by an O.L.S. staff member and/or consultant, with the aid of an assistant. The field examination validates site conditions against the plan presentation, and is not a resurvey of the property. Field notes and digital photographs are taken as required within the Review process. Copies of these photographs are provided as part of the report to the firm.

For each selected plan, an in-depth examination is conducted by a staff member and/or contracting surveyor. A Checklist/Rating Scale is used to provide uniformity and consistency in the audit examination of the surveys. The Comprehensive Review Checklist/Rating Scale is a combined document that sets out the various elements reviewed within the process. Specific references are made to the pertinent Regulations and Interpretive Guides that apply to each element. A summary of applicable survey standards is set out in bold print beneath an outline of the respective Regulation and Interpretive Guide. A rating scale defines minor, moderate and major concerns that the reviewer may have with the apparent survey deficiencies and/or non-compliances. The rating scale is used as a guide due to the professional nature of the work under Review. (See table below).

A “draft” report is now submitted to the firm for their consideration. The content of this report is in the same form as previously provided. Shortly upon release of the report, an office visit is conducted to finalize the content of the report. In future, the meeting will be handled by the contractor who prepared the “draft” report

and, possibly, the Manager of the Survey Review Department. At least during the initial year of transition, the Manager will be in attendance at all office visits.

At the close of the office visit, any outstanding matters are identified to the firm for written response. It is always possible that the firm will be expected to conduct further investigations into matters not sufficiently addressed during the discussions. Upon closure of the Review, a copy of the final report is provided to the firm. A Post Review Evaluation Questionnaire is submitted to the firm for comment on the Review processes. Significant unresolved questions or issues can cause referral to the Registrar for further action.

Implementation

The new procedures are to be implemented on a trial basis. During this time, the S.R.D. Committee will monitor the effectiveness of the system and reaction from the membership, and make necessary modifications to the process. This implementation period will have to be upwards of two years to permit reasonable assessment of the new plan selection process as the "A.O.L.S. Plan Log" must be in use for a year prior to its activation. This time frame will facilitate collection of data concerning the new rating scale, whereby a threshold value can be defined for automatic referral of a Comprehensive Review to the Registrar. The determination of a "threshold" value is in keeping with the BMB report.

The Survey Review Department will provide the related documentation to all members of the profession. This documentation includes the following:

1. Book of Explanation/Synopsis;

2. Book of Explanation;
3. Checklist/Rating Scale;
4. Information Request Form, Schedule "A"; and
5. A.O.L.S. Plan Log.

Keep in mind, the Plan Log is available in digital form by request.

As part of the implementation process, presentations are available to the Regional Groups to eliminate any misunderstandings that the membership may have with the new processes, and to provide the practitioners full confidence in the changes. Once the implementation period has been completed, the final documentation will be submitted to Council for adoption.

Recruitment

As the membership is aware, the Department has been seeking an Ontario Land Surveyor to handle the full-time Survey Examiner position that has been vacate for the past year, as well as contractor(s) to handle the Comprehensive Review processes. We were successful to some degree with the addition of two contractors. Unfortunately, we were unable to hire a suitable candidate for the full-time position. These duties will continue to be handled by two consultants under the direction of the S.R.D. Manager.

Educational and Communications Recommendations

As previously stated, the S.R.D. Manager is available to the Regional Groups for a presentation on the new S.R.D. procedures. We seek to eliminate misunderstandings on the part of the survey practitioner.

A study was conducted into developing a manual/binder to provide all relevant

educational articles to the firm upon closure of a Comprehensive Review. This study assessed the costs to develop an all-encompassing educational support binder. The findings leaned towards presentation of this information on the "WEB" page. This information should prove more effective to the practitioner if available through the "WEB" page. At this time, the Department is unable to proceed in that direction due to costs and another study currently conducted by the Internet Committee. However, base information is being collected for the end purpose. In the short term, the Department will continue to provide support documentation focused on the major non-compliances and/or deficiencies reported within the Comprehensive Review.

The Department has developed a new statistical report based on the Third Round Review results of completed Comprehensive Reviews. This report identifies future educational needs within the continuing education process. This document specifies common areas of continued non-compliance by the membership.

Summary

The Department and S.R.D. Committee feels that it is timely to provide an update concerning the implementation of the S.R.D. Task Force Report. An emphasis has certainly been placed on the recommendations relating to the Review process, communication, education, as well as recruitment. We recognize that there are other areas within the Task Force Report that still require attention. These matters are to be monitored and dealt with during upcoming meetings of the S.R.D. Committee.



COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW CHECK LIST & RATING SCALE

Topic	Reference	Reference Synopsis	Rating Scale
Research Documentary Evidence	O.Reg. 42/96 S.3(a) Interpretive Guide S.1	Documentary evidence related to the land under survey and the land adjoining the land under survey must be examined. (Note: Documentary evidence may, subject to specific circumstances, include 40 yr. search, search for priority of severance, patent, field notes and plans of other surveyors, municipal by-laws, details for transfer of control and jurisdiction of King's Highway to local road authority, etc.)	0 - : Comprehensive search and supporting field notes. 1 - 4: Minor omissions in documentation of searches, i.e. relying solely on property index maps for extent of adjacent PINs. 5 - 10: Deficiencies in research sufficient to cast doubt on the re-establishment of a boundary. May vary from absence of copies of plans or deeds to unresolved discrepancies between conflicting descriptions in adjacent deeds. Absence of any research into field notes of other firms, etc. Survey based on description provided by client with no additional research, survey adopts conflicting found monummentation without knowledge of source of evidence, lack or character of research at level to suggest the resulting survey is incorrect. Also, lack of research for Notice(s) of Claim for 40 year old easements under the <i>Registry Act</i> .