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S. Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary

Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
Tanya Marshall, State Archivist

January 30, 2025

To: Hon. Kornheiser, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means

From: S. Lauren Hibbert, Deputy Secretary of State
Tanya Marshall, State Archivist and Chief Records Officer

Re: Statewide Appraisals and Property Data

Act 171 of 2022 (An act relating to modernizing land records and notarial acts law) charged the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) with analyzing and reporting on:

- “Fiscal, governance, and operational sustainability of uniform approaches to the modernization of the acceptance, recording, and availability of deeds and other property records, regardless of format;”
- Current technologies used by municipalities; and
- Anticipated costs to municipalities to modernize their land records.

To report on current technologies and costs and anticipated costs, VSARA analyzed:

- Data collected by the Vermont Municipal Clerks’ and Treasurers’ Association (VMCTA) and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) to prepare the Consolidated Town Fee Report required under 32 V.S.A. § 6111.
- Data collected by the Vermont Department of Taxes to prepare the quarterly Property Transfer Tax Reports and the Annual Property Valuation and Review Report based on municipal grand list data.

VSARA submitted an [interim report](#) in January 2023 and a [final report](#) in January 2024. Act 171 of 2022 and Act 68 of 2023 both required recommendations and considerations related to information systems for property related information. Several of VSARA’s findings and recommendations are similar to those of the Department of Taxes’ [final report](#) relating to Act 68 of 2023. The Act 68 report also references the Act 171 report.

**Act 171 Modernization Steps as reported to the
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development on March 20, 2024**

First Step to Modernization | Policy Decision of Act 171 of 2022

Fully electronic (digital) process from submission to recording to post-recording management and long-term permanent digital access and preservation for all deeds and other instruments, and their associated data, required by law to be recorded by municipal clerks. Nationally, this is referred to as electronic recording or eRecording, which was enacted by other states starting in the 1990s. Vermont was the last state to do so.

Findings and recommendations for achieving this first step to modernization are what VSARA's January 2024 legislative report encompasses.

Second Step for Modernization (Future Policy Decision of the Legislature)

Integrated system/technologies for all records and data that “run with the land” ranging from those recorded by municipal clerks as “land records” to planning, zoning and permitting to appraisals and assessments to parcel mapping, etc.

- All records and data associated with a parcel are integrated, managed, and accessible digitally and online.
- Inclusion of adjacent types of records and information “filed” with municipal clerks (e.g. mobile home bills of sales).
- Allows for broader land development, land use, taxation, and related decision- and policy-making at the local and state level.
- Any and all property owners in Vermont have ready access to their deeds and conveyances; the property records and data used to assess taxes; and any restrictions or limitations on how their properties may be used.
- Streamline processes, information exchange, and, in most cases, associated costs.

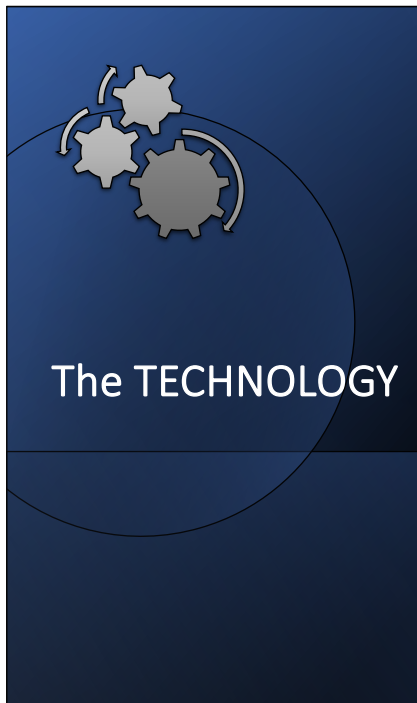
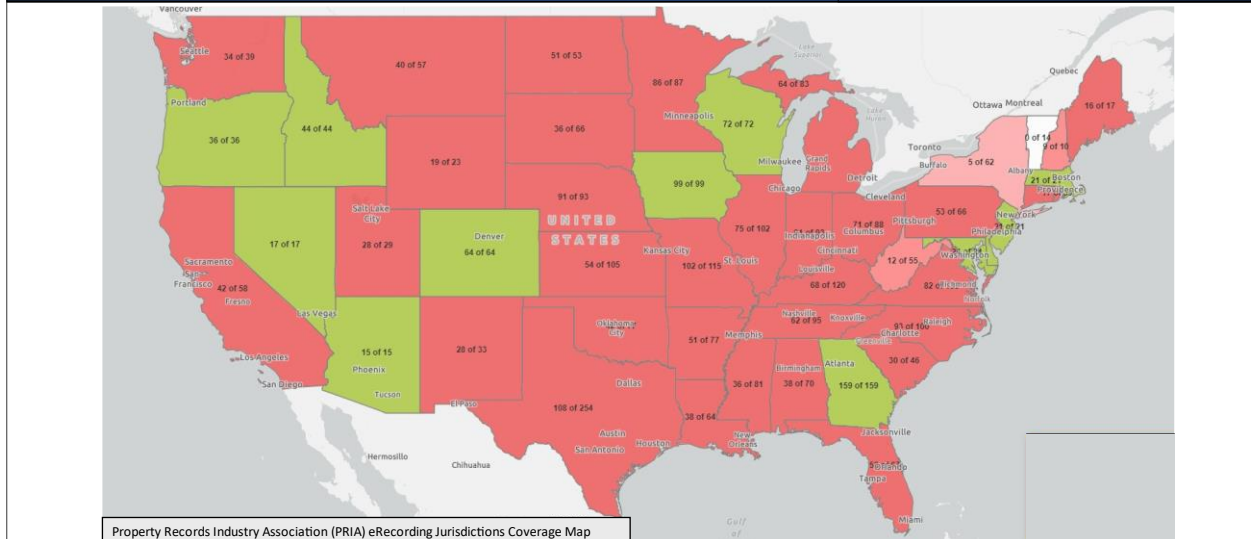
In Vermont, real property records and information include those created and maintained locally and at the state level. In addition to municipalities, we also have regional districts. Due to changes in laws over time, some functions previously performed at the local level are now done at the state level and related records and data are bifurcated for certain properties.

Third Step for Modernization (Future Policy Decision of the Legislature)

Transformational (aspirational for larger states and more feasible for smaller states): Single portal of entry to integrated land/property records and information management systems for streamlined management and access, improved and uniform processes; data and information exchange; and, in most cases, lower costs and staff time.

Excerpts of Act 171 Modernization Steps as presented at the Fall 2024 Meeting of the Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Association

Electronic Recording in the United States



Technology is the **tool that brings people and process together** and it has only gotten better over time. Being the last state has significant advantages!

Greater Efficiencies. Greater Accuracy. Greater Productivity.



**Excerpts of Act 171 Modernization Steps as presented at the
Fall 2024 Meeting of the Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Association**



When Can eRecording in Vermont Start?

Electronic recording will be enabled in Vermont in 2025 with the issuance of state standards and best practices and the availability of a LRMS for each town that wants to transition to eRecording.

For towns that want to transition to eRecording when enabled, state law (27 V.S.A. § 625) also requires demonstrated compliance with the state standards and best practices.

Remember: Technology *IS* the tool that brings people and process together!

