

## Land-Based Classification Standards

### Five Dimensions for Classifying Land-Use Data

#### Activity

- 1000: Residential activities
- 2000: Shopping, business, or trade activities
- 3000: Industrial, manufacturing, and waste-related activities
- 4000: Social, institutional, or infrastructure-related activities
- 5000: Travel or movement activities
- 6000: Mass assembly of people
- 7000: Leisure activities
- 8000: Natural resources-related activities
- 9000: No human activity or unclassifiable activity

#### Function

- 1000: Residence or accommodation functions
- 2000: General sales or services
- 3000: Manufacturing and wholesale trade
- 4000: Transportation, communication, information, and utilities
- 5000: Arts, entertainment, and recreation
- 6000: Education, public admin., health care, and other inst.
- 7000: Construction-related businesses
- 8000: Mining and extraction establishments
- 9000: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting

#### Structural Character

- 1000: Residential buildings
- 2000: Commercial buildings and other specialized structures
- 3000: Public assembly structures
- 4000: Institutional or community facilities
- 5000: Transportation-related facilities
- 6000: Utility and other non-building structures
- 7000: Specialized military structures
- 8000: Sheds, farm buildings, or agricultural facilities
- 9000: No structure

#### Site Development Character

- 1000: Site in natural state
- 2000: Developing site
- 3000: Developed site -- crops, grazing, forestry, etc.
- 4000: Developed site -- no buildings and no structures
- 5000: Developed site -- non-building structures
- 6000: Developed site -- with buildings
- 7000: Developed site -- with parks
- 8000: Not applicable to this dimension
- 9000: Unclassifiable site development character

#### Ownership

- 1000: No constraints--private ownership
- 2000: Some constraints--easements or other use restrictions
- 3000: Limited restrictions--leased and other tenancy restrictions
- 4000: Public restrictions--local, state, and federal ownership
- 5000: Other public use restrictions--regional, special districts, etc
- 6000: Nonprofit ownership restrictions
- 7000: Joint ownership character--public entities
- 8000: Joint ownership character--public, private, nonprofit, etc.
- 9000: Not applicable to this dimension

**Activity** refers to the actual use of land based on its observable characteristics. It describes what actually takes place in physical or observable terms (e.g., farming, shopping, manufacturing, vehicular movement, etc.). An office activity, for example, refers only to the physical activity on the premises, which could apply equally to a law firm, a nonprofit institution, a court house, a corporate office, or any other office use. Similarly, residential uses in single-family dwellings, multi-family structures, manufactured houses, or any other type of building, would all be classified as residential activity.

**Function** refers to the economic function or type of enterprise using the land. Every land use can be characterized by the type of enterprise it serves. Land-use terms, such as agricultural, commercial, industrial, relate to enterprises. The type of economic function served by the land use gets classified in this dimension; it is independent of actual activity on the land. Enterprises can have a variety of activities on their premises, yet serve a single function. For example, two parcels are said to be in the same functional category if they belong to the same enterprise, even if one is an office building and the other is a factory.

**Structural character** refers to the type of structure or building on the land. Land-use terms embody a structural or building characteristic, which suggests the utility of the space (in a building) or land (when there is no building). Land-use terms, such as single-family house, office building, warehouse, hospital building, or highway, also describe structural characteristic. Although many activities and functions are closely associated with certain structures, it is not always so. Many buildings are often adapted for uses other than its original use. For instance, a single-family residential structure may be used as an office.

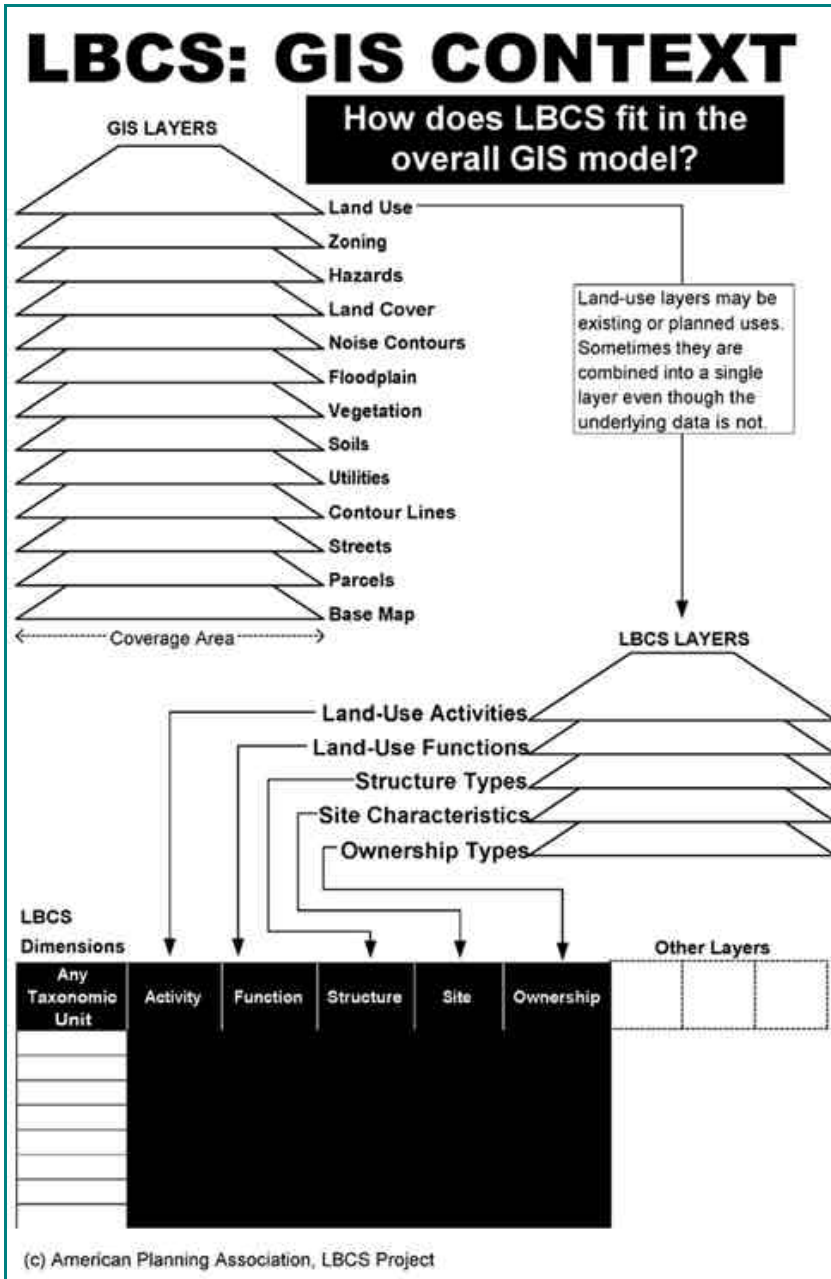
**Site development character** refers to the overall physical development character of the land. It describes "what is on the land" in general physical terms. For most land uses, it is simply expressed in terms of whether the site is developed or not. But not all sites without observable development can be treated as undeveloped. Land uses, such as parks and open spaces, which often have a complex mix of activities, functions, and structures on them, need categories independent of other dimensions. This dimension uses categories that describe the overall site development characteristics.

**Ownership** refers to the relationship between the use and its land rights. Since the function of most land uses is either public or private and not both, distinguishing ownership characteristics seems obvious. However, relying solely on the functional character may obscure such uses as private parks, public theaters, private stadiums, private prisons, and mixed public and private ownership. Moreover, easements and similar legal devices also limit or constrain land-use activities and functions. This dimension allows classifying such ownership characteristics more accurately.

# Land-Based Classification Standards

An update of the 1965 Standard Land Use Coding Manual  
for  
Describing, Classifying, and Sharing Data about Land Uses

LBCS provides a consistent model for classifying land uses based on their characteristics. The model extends the notion of classifying land uses by refining traditional categories into multiple dimensions, such as activities, functions, building types, site development character, and ownership constraints. Each dimension has its own set of categories and subcategories. These multiple dimensions allow users to have precise control over land-use classifications.



Classifying land uses across multiple dimensions, in database terms, means adding new fields to the land-use database. The total number of land-use fields in the database should equal the number of dimensions, that is, every record in the database is classified in not just one land-use field, but several—one for each dimension. The number of dimensions, in turn, will depend on the purpose of the data. When the purpose of the data changes, dimensions may be added or dropped as needed. For local planning purposes, LBCS calls for classifying land uses in the following dimensions: Activity, Function, Structure Type, Site Development Character, and Ownership.

The underlying principle of the LBCS model is its flexibility. It addresses flexibility in adapting the model to a variety of planning applications, data collection methods, data-sharing and data-integrating methods, and color coding and mapping. The flexibility also makes it possible to assign new categories for new land uses, to accommodate new methods and technologies for analysis, and to customize the model for local needs without losing the ability to share data. Each of these aspects of LBCS calls for applying a variety of standards or conventions to maintain consistency in land-use classifications.

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