Steps in making a computerized map

1. Surveyors paint 3-foot-long Y's in the road at electronically measured intervals of 4,000 feet to guide the aerial survey.

2. Cameras mounted under airplane take overlapping photos to provide stereoscopic coverage of area to be mapped.

3. A photogrammetrist uses a stereoscopic viewer and traces the lines of streets and buildings, which are drawn by mechanical arm and stored on disks or magnetic tape.

4. A cartographer summons the information onto two computer screens (one for pictures, the other for text) and supplements it with previously stored data such as property lines.

Layers of information

Computer users then have access to dozens of "layers" of information, from the location of streets and highways and property lines to the places where most traffic accidents occur.

Sources: Bellevue City Hall, Northwest Cartography Inc. Rob Kemp / Seattle Times