

### III. Changes introduced in the service system

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The first statewide policy on GIS was issued in September 1996. Technology Policy 96-18 established a framework for the development of a statewide GIS Program and created a broadly representative GIS Coordinating Body drawn from state and local government and the private sector. Working Groups and Advisory Committees were initiated to focus sustained attention on such issues as data sharing, education, communication, and private sector concerns. The Coordinating Body sponsored several initiatives that would put the policy into action.

#### **Data Sharing Cooperative**

The Data Coordination Working Group of the Coordinating Body developed an overall Data Sharing Policy for GIS which has been issued as Technology Policy 97-6. This policy directs that a NYS GIS Data Sharing Cooperative be established in order to provide an organized mechanism to share GIS data easily. It further directs that all NYS agencies join the Cooperative by signing the **NYS GIS Cooperative Data Sharing Agreement**, created by the Legal Working Group. Through the Cooperative, public agencies gain access to GIS data of all the members at virtually no cost. Agencies do not need to own data to join the Cooperative; however, as Cooperative members, they are obligated to contribute corrections and enhancements that they make to any data set obtained through the cooperative. State agencies signed the Data Sharing Agreement beginning October 1997. A comparable data sharing agreement for local governments and not-for-profit organizations was released in February 1998 and all local governments were invited to join. Agreements with federal government agencies have also been signed. Data sharing agreements between public agencies and consultants are currently under development.

#### **Designation of Primary GIS Data Custodians**

The Data Sharing Agreement defines two levels of custodianship. A Primary Custodian is a member that developed or owns a data set made available for sharing. A secondary custodian is a member of the Cooperative in possession of data acquired from a Primary Custodian. Each data set has only one Primary Custodian designated by the Coordinating Body. The designated agencies are responsible for the maintenance of these data sets as well as their distribution to other agencies needing to use them. The intent is to eliminate duplication of GIS data sets across agencies.

#### **GIS Clearinghouse**

The NYS GIS Clearinghouse was created and established on the World Wide Web (<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/gis/>) by the New York State Library. It includes a metadata repository describing GIS data sets held by many different organizations as well as information about how to obtain the data. It also has extensive information about New York's GIS Data Sharing Coordination Program; information on and links to GIS education and training opportunities; other state and federal GIS resources; GIS user groups throughout New York; and GIS-related listservs. In addition, members of the Cooperative can have direct access to selected data sets from the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Office of Real Property Services (ORPS), the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) and most recently, Cornell University, who have made their GIS data available through the Internet. In addition, work is currently underway to make data from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) also available electronically.

#### **Metadata Repository**

The Metadata Repository was created to allow producers of geographic data to describe the data sets they have available so that members of the Cooperative can identify existing data before they attempt to create new data sets. The Metadata Repository is an enhanced version of the Center for Technology in Government prototype. Data producers describe their data sets using the Federal Geographic Data Committee Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata. It includes information about who produced the data, the geographic area covered, the data set category or theme, scale, accuracy information, and how to obtain the data sets. Users access metadata by doing a search online. A list of data sets is returned as the result of a search and the complete metadata record for each of these data sets can be viewed to determine the relevance of the data to the user's need. Users can then contact the data owners to obtain the data they want.

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