

The Center for Technology in Government worked with the New York State Office of Real Property Services to conduct this reconnaissance study of the use of parcel-level data in New York State. The study documented the current and potential uses of this data, and their value to organizations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. It also identified the issues associated with the collection, use, and sharing of parcel data. Thus study was conducted from September 2004 through February 2005.

The study data consist of 35 interviews as described below plus background information provided by the Office of Real Property Services, and official publications and web sites pertaining to parcel data that were prepared by federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private sector organizations. The interviewees were selected to provide the investigators with an understanding of the logical, purposive flows of data from original data collectors to other organizations, as well as the value and issues associated with this data flow.

To do this, NYS Office of Real Property Services (NYS ORPS) selected five demographically, operationally, and geographically diverse counties in New York State to be the starting point for the study: Chemung, Dutchess, Erie, Saratoga, and Suffolk. In order to identify individuals in public, private, and non-profit organizations within each county, a representative of NYS ORPS asked the Real Property Tax Official within each County to suggest people to be interviewed who use or otherwise interact with that county's parcel data. Accordingly, interviewees were identified in public, private, and non-profit organizations that collect, prepare, and use parcel-level data created by the real property tax administration in each county

New York State agencies were also included in the study. They were selected by identifying agencies that collect and use parcel-level data as a major part of their responsibilities. CTG staff contacted each agency's representative to the NYS GIS Coordinating Body and asked him or her to identify the person in each agency who had the most knowledge about that agency's collection and use of parcel-level data.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the interviewees' offices at their convenience. Telephone interviews were used for those who could not participate conveniently in a face-to-face interview. Each interview was tape-recorded (unless the interviewee declined to be taped) and lasted approximately one and a half hours. During each interview, the investigator also sketched and verified a diagram showing the main flows of parcel data between the focus organization and others. Topics covered in the interviews included:

- Mission & programs of the organization pertaining to parcel data
- Uses and potential uses of parcel data
- Collecting and obtaining parcel data
- Dissemination or supply of parcel data to others
- Value of parcel data to interviewees and their programs
- Data sharing methods and policies
- Data management and maintenance practices
- Data forms and formats
- Data storage and preservation
- Costs associated with parcel data
- Issues and barriers associated with parcel data collection, use, and dissemination
- Data flow between the focus organization and others.