

Judging from the variety and importance of the foregoing uses, the value of parcel data appears to be immeasurable. Every organization we interviewed regarded parcel data as a crucial resource. Nearly all of the interviewees indicated that without parcel data, their work would either be greatly hindered or not possible at all. Parcel data is integral to the missions of many different organizations and many different functions within them. The value of parcel data, in terms of mission-oriented benefits, can be seen in everything from smart growth to public safety. However, because parcel data use is so deeply embedded in these various functions and programs, it is difficult to quantify its direct economic value.

"Parcel data is factual data and is the foundation of accurate assessments. As assessments have gone up, there is an extra \$130,000 on the tax roles. This expands the tax base levy which has improved the town bond rating."

~ A Town Assessor

Parcel data is extremely valuable to assessors, who use it every day to assess the value of real property. All of the assessors who participated in this study indicated that without the use of parcel data, they would either not be able to function or the quality of their assessments would be greatly diminished. Conversely, the more detail that goes into parcel data, such as ownership, zoning, and tax information, the more valuable that data becomes. In some instances, good parcel data can serve as a revenue generator, because if assessors can show that the town tax base is rising up, they can increase the revenue for the municipality.

"With parcel data, there is more information for making decisions, which has led to efficient processes. If we could not use parcel data in our jobs that would be "catastrophic" because people in every department within the town depend on it to do their work. It is vital to show people everything about a specific parcel to make decisions for planning, zoning, and other functions."

~ A Municipal Planning Department

Just as assessors are more dependent on good parcel data, their municipalities also rely on the data for economic development. Through the use of GIS applications more and more town planners are able to delineate the layout of the region and project how new building projects will affect the area. One town planner said, "The value of parcel data is potentially 'tens of thousands' of dollars in savings to the town." He also indicated that by better use of parcel data, through a GIS application, the productivity of their town planning board has gone up tremendously. The application has allowed them to more easily answer questions about wetlands, zoning, and acreage, and focus more on advanced planning activities, such as scenario building

County real property tax offices noted that they would not exist without parcel data. In addition, the value of parcel data for others is greatly enhanced by these offices when they turn descriptive data into tax maps. Parcel data is also essential to many other county function, such as marketing, demographic studies, allowing citizens to challenge assessments, and providing tax roles to school districts. For counties who sell parcel data, the value includes an economic return in the form of direct revenue.

"The availability of parcel data is a huge time and money saver for our clients because it lets them do scenario building, which results in the reduction of planning and development time."

~ A Private Company

Parcel data is also of great value to the private sector. Like County RPTS and assessors, the majority of the private companies who participated in this study would be either greatly hindered or unable to function without it. One interviewee said, "Everything is tied to parcel data, so it would be difficult to accomplish anything without it." Parcel data helps in scenario building and reduces development and planning time, which saves money and supports better decisions by companies and their clients. One private sector company stated, "It is not an option to **not** have parcel data. If we could not get it from others, we would have to collect it ourselves."

For non-profit organizations, parcel data has become more mission-critical over time. As environmental and community development organizations gained expertise in using information technology to carry out advanced planning techniques, parcel data rose in importance and value for many of their services.

Parcel data is invaluable to state agencies because it supports a wide range of public services, such as transportation, environmental protection, and homeland security. One state agency said that although they could try to carry out their core functions without parcel data, the lack of it would lead to inaccurate and haphazard decisions. Another reported that in addition to the work they do inside the agency, they field about 20 calls per day with questions that need some type of parcel information for an adequate answer.