

Policy Name: Statewide Geographic Information Systems

Effective: 09/17/1996

1.0 Purpose and Benefits of the Policy

The purpose of this bulletin is to establish a framework for the development of a Statewide GIS Program.

2.0 Enterprise IT Policy Statement

Section 2 of Executive Order No. 117 provides the State Chief Information Officer, who also serves as director of the NYS Office for Technology, the authority to oversee, direct and coordinate the establishment of information technology policies, protocols and standards for State government, including hardware, software, security and business re-engineering. Details regarding this authority can be found in NYS CIO/OFT Policy [NYS-P08-002, Authority to Establish State Enterprise Information \(IT\) Policy, Standards and Guidelines](#).

3.0 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all “State government entities,” as defined in NYS Executive Order 117.

4.0 Policy Statement

In its simplest form, a Geographic Information System (GIS) is an electronic map used to display data based on its location; in its more complex form, it becomes a powerful analytical tool with millions of pieces of data that are related geographically and can be displayed in a format that allows the user to make the inter-relationships between the data visually understandable.

GIS is currently being used by many State agencies for such things as emergency response planning, business development, real property tax valuation and analysis, health care (disease studies), and school district (school aid distribution) and political boundary mapping. It is used at the local government level for similar things as well as police, fire, sewer, water, development planning and engineering. It is used in the private sector by utility, insurance and real estate companies, as well as marketing firms. GIS is becoming an increasingly valuable tool for both State and local governments. Because up to 80% of its cost is contained in the capture and

maintenance of its data, it is important that we establish standards and maximize its reuse among government agencies at all levels.

4.1 Structure

The attached structure has been adopted to implement the Statewide GIS initiative and obtain broad representation among the State's varied GIS user community. It includes a 15 person Coordinating Body which shall act as a Standing Subcommittee to the Governor's Task Force on Information Resource Management. The Coordinating Body shall be charged with providing policy recommendations to the Task Force and establishing temporary work groups utilizing

Statewide GIS resources to investigate or resolve specific GIS issues. Members of the Coordinating Body shall be invited to serve for terms of one year. Advisory groups representing State and local government and the private sector shall also be established to provide forums for input to the Coordinating Body. Workgroups will be formed to address various issues, the results of which shall be Technology Policies in the 96-18 series.

4.2 Standards

A work group will be established to design GIS standards for New York State. These standards will be coordinated with the developing federal standards.

4.3 Data Coordination

A GIS Metadata Clearinghouse will be established in the State Library. The clearinghouse will be set up to provide descriptions of the data available to users and easy access to data currently residing within State and local agencies. Other data coordination issues will be addressed through a work group.

4.4 Cost/Access to Data

Much of the GIS data with Statewide applications is created by State agencies. The more detailed data is developed at the local level either because of local need or State mandate. Although the majority of the costs associated with GIS are attributable to gathering and maintaining the data, it is not often shared among agencies. This not only adds to the cost of GIS, but also inhibits its development around the state. The coordinating body will be charged with developing a statewide policy that will allow the transfer of digital data between State and local governments. The goal of this policy will be to provide easy access to the data at minimum or no cost.

4.5 Legal Issues

Legal issues for GIS involve FOIL, liability, licensing, and privacy. These will be addressed in a legal work group under the Coordinating Body. A work group will be responsible for drafting any necessary legislation.

4.6 Communication/Education/Financing

To be effective, communications structure must be in place to notify users of policies, directions, standards, innovations, and opportunities for sharing development efforts on projects. Also, education for users and program administrators on the effective uses of GIS will be necessary. Finally other potential funding sources will need to be identified. A work group will address each of these three areas.