

Rural Parcel Mapping *Tax Parcel Mapping and Surveys*

Town tax parcel maps are a compilation of parcel data from many sources that can include new subdivision plans, original town plat surveys, block, or lot lines, digital aerial orthophotography, older tax parcel maps, historic atlases, etc.

Towns are surveyed on a lot-by-lot basis. Several surveys from different dates may use different methods and common landmarks between adjacent surveys may not be properly identified on surveys taken several years apart. As a result, survey data for adjacent parcels may not properly align in areas with vastly different survey information, dates or techniques. Through the tax parcel map compilation process, tax parcel maps rectify these discrepancies and may result in parcels whose area and configuration are not identical to their corresponding survey.

Because of these differences, towns may use surveys to calculate lot area for assessment and utilize tax parcel maps for zoning, abutter information, assessment valuing by neighborhood location and proximity of natural features, etc. Tax parcel maps should never be used as a source for legal boundary information or survey data that includes bearings and distances. Tax parcel maps are suitable for small-scale neighborhood or town level inventory and analysis mapping applications. These projects could include land use surveys, downtown designation, and zoning delineation.

Survey data, when available, should be the basis for tax parcel mapping. Towns should try to collect as much high quality survey data as possible for the tax parcel map compilation process. High quality survey data is valuable because the surveyor may have tied it into Vermont's geodetic reference network. This high quality survey data then can be used as a backbone to tie in all of the other smaller surveys. Examples of parcels with high quality survey data include public utility rights-of-way, a state or federal highway, or national or state land or related trail rights-of-way.