

**VCGI Quarterly Operational Overview**  
For the Board of Directors of the  
**Vermont Center for Geographic Information, Inc.**  
September 2014 (FY 2015)

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**Funded Projects**

**Vermont Agency of Transportation:**

VCGI provides technical assistance to VTrans in the form of GIS support services, RFP development, and other technical support services that enhance Agency and State objectives. VTrans is making a decision on the award of an ROI and parcel lifecycle study contract for the collection of statewide parcel data. It is anticipated that VCGI would play some coordinating role in a statewide parcel data effort. This is all dependent upon the findings of the ROI and the decision by the state on how, or if, it wants to move forward.

**Vermont Emergency Management, Homeland Security and Dept. of Public Safety:**

VCGI continues to provide project design and emergency data support to DEMHS and the Dept. of Public Safety for their operations. Ivan Brown is the designated support individual for VCGI to DEMHS data and the Public Safety community.

In November of this year VCGI received approval to proceed on the support contract with DEMHS. The final contract value is still under consideration by DEMHS. Activities include;

- Continue support for development and utilization of the GIS capabilities within the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
- Support GIS functionality of DisasterLan system.
- Maintain software and system configuration in Virtual Vermont infrastructure.
- Address DPS GIS resource needs.
- Support ongoing DPS mapping and analysis needs.
- Continue support to maintenance of the Critical Facilities data set.

FY15 Contract Value: Unknown at this time, discussions are ongoing. DPS has also shown some interest in using VCGI support capacity.

**VT E-911 Board:**

VCGI continues to work with E-911 on the standardization and distribution of their data.

### **VT Dept. of Agriculture:**

VCGI is working with personnel at the VT Dept. of Agriculture to help them develop their internal GIS data and services organization and capacity. Ag is renewing their data services agreement with VCGI.

### **VT Sustainable Jobs Fund:**

VCGI is working with the VT Sustainable Jobs Fund to define, access, collect and organize their geospatial information in support of their alternative energy development goals. Mike Brouillette is the project manager for this project. VSJF management has asked VCGI for an estimate of the cost to do local solar siting evaluations on a large scale using available LiDAR. MOU Value: \$10,000 (Estimated)

### **Northern Border Region Commission Grant:**

The goal of this program is to increase municipal parcel data infrastructure in the northern 6 counties of Vermont, by providing information, support, and funding to a limited number of priority towns to enable them to create or update parcel data and ensure that it meets the state GIS parcel data standard. Many towns have out of date GIS parcel data, many have only CAD data, some have only paper maps, and some have no parcel maps or data of any kind. The program is a partnership between VCGI and the three northern RPCs: Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC), and the Northeast VT Development Association (NVDA). Initially, the RPC GIS specialists in each region contacted towns that they felt were priorities (no data, no maps, or out of date data) to alert them to the grant opportunity.

In August VCGI received a requested extension of the grant to March 30, 2016. The extension is necessary due to:

- The time necessary for the digitization work to be completed in towns that currently have only paper parcel maps.
- The time necessary to allow towns to coordinate the grant approval, budgeting and RFP processes in their organizations.

As of the end of July the project partners have worked towards the project objectives in the following ways:

- Provided Request for Proposals (RFP) template used by grantees to solicit bids from mapping contractors.
- Answered grantees' questions as they chose mapping contractors and developed/revised contracts with those contractors.
- Communicated with grantees and Regional Planning Commissions frequently to encourage them to submit information about mapping contractors chosen, to finalize and sign contracts, and to notify 5 grantees that VCGI had provided incorrect information about the match requirements (see summary below for explanation).

- Communicated with mapping contractors to clarify project requirements and data product requirements.
- Drafted and provided grantees with contracts to finalize relationship with VCGI, amount of grant, and procedures related to requesting reimbursement.
- Received signed contracts (between grant recipients and VCGI) from 8 of the 14 towns.
- Revised grant amounts based on information about bids and match requirement adjustment.
- The following towns have signed agreements with VCGI to digitize or update their parcels.

<b>Town</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>	<b>Contract w/VCGI?</b>
Eden	\$ 5,000	Yes
Wolcott	\$ 3,635	Yes
Elmore	\$ 4,100	Yes
Enosburgh	\$ 4,100	Yes
Sheldon	\$ 22,500	Yes
Franklin	\$ 1,925	Yes
Berkshire	\$ 10,000	No
Derby	\$ 12,163	Yes
Jay	\$ 19,500	Yes
Glover	\$ 21,000	Yes
Holland	\$ 9,250	Yes
Waterford	\$ 2,500	No
Burke	\$ 3,284	Yes
Troy	\$ 4,600	Yes
<b>Total</b>	\$ 123,556	

**Partners:**

Each Regional Planning Commission has at least one staff member who serves as a GIS specialist/planner. This mapping expert will serve as technical support to the municipalities who participate in this project. The Outreach Coordinator at the VT Center for Geographic Information will serve as project manager and education lead. The RPC GIS Specialists and VCGI’s Outreach Coordinator will also work together as a steering committee.

- Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)
- Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC)
- Northeast Vermont Development Association (NVDA)
- Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC)

Total proposed value of the grant is \$338,000 with half contributed from participating towns and half from the NBRC. The final amount allocated will depend upon the ability of towns in the northern border region to participate.

### **NTIA State Broadband Initiative (SBI) Grant Updates:**

The VT Broadband Mapping Team continues to maintain the BroadbandVT.org (www.broadbandvt.org) website. The contract is now in the final year of the grant. While there are still issues that need attention for every delivery the processes in place have stabilized.

The team is working on submission of the October 1 data submission to the NTIA. This will be the last statewide broadband availability coverage data collected for the state. Two of the contractors, VTA and Dept. of Public Safety will complete work by Jan 30, 2015. All other contractors will complete their work by September 30, 2014. After the data delivery VCGI will be working on final data analysis activities and contract closure. VTA and DPS will be completing their outreach activities and integrating the October 1 delivery data into the statewide data models currently held by the state.

Continuance of the effort, supported only by state resources, beyond Jan 31, 2015 has been discussed, but no decisions have been made. Many other states have committed to very robust broadband mapping continuation plans because they recognize the value of doing so. Total SBI Grant Value: \$3,542,996

### **Core Activities**

#### **Staff:**

The staff are hanging in there. The process of VCGI's potential and then eventual transition into the state has been in discussion for over two years. As specifics about the transition are being known it helps the staff a great deal.

#### **Board of Directors:**

There were no changes to the Board of Directors in the past quarter.

#### **VCGI/ACCD Transition Activities:**

VCGI personnel are focused on continuance of existing programs, data distributions, improvements to the data access features of the website, and maintaining project revenue at a level that will sustain the organization to July 1, 2015 and beyond.

VCGI and ACCD personnel meet regularly to discuss transition plans and issues. Both organizations appear to be working well together as needed. The transition of operational activities and technical infrastructure was made much more sensible by the Legislature's decision to recognize the date of full transition as March 30, 2015. VCGI and ACCD management are making every effort to establish a feasible funding model for the organization for FY16.

## **Imagery Data Program:**

The statewide orthophoto imagery is made available free to the RPCs, and Towns in uncompressed format. The public has access to the same data in compressed format through our free data download capability and anyone may purchase the data in uncompressed format on a hard drive at very reasonable prices.

Color and infrared ortho imagery was successfully acquired in the Spring of 2014 in the NE section of the state. All of the 2014 imagery has now completed orthorectification and is in final production. Delivery for first QC is expected in early October. Initial planning with the VT Geodetic Survey crew for the 2015 acquisition over Bennington and Windham counties has already started.

Next year's acquisition is the 5<sup>th</sup> and final coverage for the state. VCGI will convene the EGC Orthophoto Working Group to take up the discussion of next generation plans for statewide imagery beginning this Fall. Higher resolution imagery will definitely be on the agenda.

## **Enterprise Geospatial Consortium Activities:**

VCGI continues to provide coordinating support to state agency related Enterprise GIS activities. Recent EGC activities include the following;

- The EGC has initiated a process to review & revise the State's Enterprise GIS Strategic Plan.
- A MAPS.VERMONT.GOV homepage has been created.
- The ESRI MPA has expired. BGS/ESRI have been prodded to move forward on getting a new one signed. After signature of the MPA a statewide licensing agreement with ESRI should be pursued. The EGC has already began discussions with ESRI to that end.

Several of the EGC's action items are on hold until there is final disposition of the status of VCGI within state government. A more complete and up-to date coverage of EGC activities is available at the state's Geopoint GIS Portal to be found here:  
<https://outside.vermont.gov/sites/egcgeo/Pages/Default.aspx>

## **Data Initiatives:**

### **Statewide Parcel Data**

After many years of discussion among the VT GIS community about the necessity for statewide parcel data, there is real movement toward accomplishing that goal. A Statewide Parcel Data Initiative Work Group has been created with representatives from VCGI, several agencies, RPCs, VLCT, and others. In addition, VTrans has discussed providing funding for this effort. They have decided any potential funding would be held for a year pending a formal analysis of the costs and benefits of the project. It was suggested that additional funding be provided by the stakeholders in this project and VTrans cost-shares this effort. The other key consideration is having a plan for

maintenance in place before the work on the project commences, as there is a large risk to develop a dataset without having future updates fully considered.

Organization of the effort is still in preliminary planning stages, but the involvement of so many interested parties across the community combined with the potential for funding makes this effort very promising. Managing the creation of a sustainable statewide parcel data will be a significant effort.

The working group representatives have had discussions with representatives from other states that have achieved the goal of statewide parcels. The effort will require an enormous outreach and coordination effort to be successful. The effort needs to be clearly defined, project phases have to be agreed upon and achievable goals have to be established for each phase. None-the-less the potential for a statewide parcel data set is a very promising development and all parties need to keep the effort moving forward.

**LiDAR Data**

The state currently has LiDAR data or funded projects for LiDAR data over approximately 40% of the state. The EGC's LiDAR data working group has created a Statewide LiDAR Plan and an informational brochure intended to draw out funding to support LiDAR collection in the remaining 60% of the state. Estimated cost for the effort is \$2.1M.

As of late August the VT LiDAR team, working with representatives from USGS and NRCS, has secured all the funding needed for the Fall 2014 LiDAR acquisition. The final amount VT received was about \$925,000 and will cover a little over 2000 square miles. This coverage will complete the Lake Champlain Basin LiDAR coverage along with additional areas in the center of the state. Special appreciation goes to Lin Neifert, VT's USGS rep for working out this acquisition agreement with USGS. The remaining areas of the state still requiring LiDAR coverage are in the eastern sections of the state from Caledonia down to Windham.

There is a FY15 federal Broad Area Announcement that has been released to accept proposals for LiDAR coverage in the 50 states. Focus will be on federally designated priority areas of the proposing state. Current designated priority areas in VT are Windsor and Windham counties. VCGI will work with the VT LiDAR team to put together a proposal for acquisition in those areas. Success on any proposal will be heavily dependent upon any matching funds the state can provide to support the requested funding.

**Conserved Lands**

The conserved lands working group is finalizing the conserved land data standard draft. After that is complete VCGI will create an aggregated geodatabase model for population by the contributing organizations.

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## **NTIA State Broadband Initiative Grant Overview**

VCGI, as prime contractor representing the larger team from VT, was awarded Broadband Mapping Grant by NTIA for 3.5M over 5 years. The original award was for 5 years, but only the first 2 years were funded. Subsequent to the first award, in late September 2010, NTIA awarded additional funding for years 3 thru 5 as an Amendment to the existing grant. VCGI's partners in this grant are the VT Telecommunications Authority, UVM- Center for Rural Studies, VT Dept. of Public Service and VT E911. There is also a significant role for private sector contractors. The full grant covers broadband telecommunications data collection, verification, and display for federal fiscal years 2010 thru 2014.

- VCGI awarded the wireless voice and data propagation mapping and verification contract to a team lead by Pericle Communications Inc.
- VCGI awarded the contract for the development of a BroadbandVT.org Website to a Team lead by Applied Geographics.
- VCGI awarded the contract for marketing support for the project to Marketing Partners.
- The last full delivery of Broadband data, with limited verification, was provided to NTIA in mid-November, 2010. Provider coverage data is being compiled and integrated by VCGI with support from DPS and the Providers themselves.
- DPS, VTA and VCGI have each hired a full time employee, with benefits, to support the State Broadband Data and Development grant activities. The latest data and information relating to the NTIA Broadband Mapping Grant is available at;  
<http://www.vcgi.org/projects/bmi/>
- When the Team was awarded the Amendment in September 2010, all of the proposed initiatives were accepted at the requested funding level with the exception of the e-Vermont School Modernization Initiative which was not funded at all.

The initiatives that were funded thru the Amendment are as follows;

1. Data Collection, Integration, Verification, and Display – Vermont's Broadband Mapping Initiative (BMI) is a collaborative broadband data collection and verification effort involving partners from the public, private and academic sectors. The Team will collect broadband availability data from the Providers and from public sources. Broadband availability data will be verified by drive testing, field checking, public surveys (offline and online), and through interaction with the providers. Data and broadband related information will be made available through the BroadbandVT.org website. The requested amount for this effort is \$1,562,000.
2. Broadband Capacity Building – The Vermont Telecommunications Authority will create a position for a Director of Broadband Coordination and Outreach. The Director will act as a liaison between Providers and government and the bodies they serve to instill the broadband vision, preserve its consistency and create an atmosphere of common mission. The liaison will be a bridge between state offices and regional planning agencies to convey information in both directions about infrastructure, aggregation, adoption and policy efforts. The proposed Director will accelerate opportunities to achieve the outcomes set forth in the VT Telecommunications Plan. The requested amount for this

effort is \$531,900.

3. **Regional Broadband Planning** - Vermont's participating Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) will develop a network of contacts in communities and local sectors to assess where promising opportunities are available to develop broadband adoption and/or access. Regional Technology Planning Teams will be formed to plan and realize these opportunities. Through these partnerships, groups will have new opportunities to access various technical assistance programs available for others. The Regional Technology Plan will offer the State and other groups a plan for rolling out broadband technologies at the local and regional levels. The requested amount for this effort is \$250,034.