



## VCGI PROCUREMENT OF VGIS DATA, SERVICES, AND PRODUCTS

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### I. PURPOSE OF POLICY

This document details the policy of the Vermont Center for Geographic Information, Inc. (VCGI) in regard to procuring VGIS-compatible data, services, and products for VCGI customers and for the VGIS community from public agencies and commercial GIS service providers. VCGI recognizes the importance and usefulness of all such public and private sector providers to the Vermont Geographic Information System (VGIS).

### II. STATEMENT OF POLICY INTENT

VCGI will concentrate on coordinating VGIS data development and the functions of data review, quality assurance, standards development, and data management, seeking financial support for development of spatial data and applications, research and development. Whenever VCGI's commitments to assure data quality, adherence to standards, and responsible data management are met, VCGI will seek to acquire data, products and services from qualified suppliers. In doing so, VCGI will assure that:

A. VCGI efforts to "Promote the efficient development and use of geographic information by agencies of the state, its political subdivisions, Vermont businesses and citizens" are consistent with and supportive of the missions assigned by statute or other authority to state agencies, regional planning commissions, and other publicly-supported entities.

B. VCGI and its prospective partners seeking GIS data, products and services can choose among multiple qualified suppliers.

C. VCGI works to foster demand for products and services which could reasonably expect to be provided by public-sector and/or commercial suppliers.

D. VCGI performs the responsibilities assigned to it by Vermont statutes, in order to assure that Vermont's spatial information assets are "compatible with, useful to, and shared with" all VGIS participants.

E. VCGI maintains and promotes a mutually supportive relationship with regional planning commissions in Vermont's multi-level GIS system.

### III. BACKGROUND

A. **Section 122(a) of 10 VSA, Chapter 8** states that “The State of Vermont shall support *a comprehensive strategy for the development and use of a geographic information system,*” requires that *“all data, relevant to a geographic information system, that is gathered by state agencies shall be in a form that is compatible with, useful to, and shared with the geographic information system,”* and establishes *“a nonprofit public corporation to be known as the Vermont center for geographic information, hereinafter called the center, as a body corporate and politic and a public instrumentality of the state.”*

**Section 124(e) of 10 VSA Chapter 8** states that *“The corporation . . . shall be subject to the provisions of 1 V.S.A. sections 312-314 with respect to the right of the public to receive notice of and attend meetings, 1 V.S.A. sections 315-320 with respect to the access of the public to its records and documents, and 1 V.S.A. section 172 regarding joint authority of the board.”*

B. **VGIS Handbook**, Part I, Policies, Section A., The Roles of VGIS Partners: Regional Planning Commissions, State & Local Government, and Others promotes the utilization of regional planning commissions (RPCs) as service centers to provide local government access to the VGIS. This policy is based on the role of RPCs set forth in the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act - as amended (24 VSA, Chapter 117). This policy also discusses the role of commercial contractors state agencies, and others in providing products and services to municipalities and RPCs.

C. VCGI believes it is important for Vermont agencies to adopt policies which are consistent with those of similar federal agencies, to the extent possible. VCGI has studied policies related to commercial contracting adopted by the U.S. Geologic Survey (National Mapping Division) -- Policy 92-NMD-3 (April 13, 1992) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. VCGI has also considered Circular A-130: "Management of Federal Information Resources" (Issued December 1985 and revised April 1992) published by the federal Office of Management and Budget.

### IV. POLICY

VCGI's statutory mission includes development of standards, production of base cartographic data, and other mapping-related activities. VCGI believes that our limited resources are best applied in developing databases that are state-wide in scope, and in providing the following functions for development of any VGIS data:

- development of technical specifications,

- selection of service providers,
- review and quality control of deliverables, and
- communications about user needs.

VCGI will cooperate in work-sharing activities with federal, state, regional or local public agencies, or private concerns when such activities contribute directly to the fulfillment of VCGI's responsibilities.

VCGI will actively seek to increase public and private utilization of spatial data-related contracting and emerging spatial data technologies pertinent to GIS. To accomplish this goal VCGI will consult with institutions of higher learning, local government, local and regional planning, private business and industry, and the public. VCGI Board, staff and committee(s) will maintain a dialogue with appropriate representatives of all potential GIS service providers who can serve Vermont customers.

The VCGI service role lies in providing management support to other public agencies cooperating in VGIS development. VCGI data development, quality assurance and contract management capabilities are exercised to protect the public interest. They complement the expertise of other agencies in implementing their program responsibilities. Some agencies lack the technical capability necessary to plan for and manage the spatial data needs inherent within their missions. Some have insufficient capability to effectively manage product or service contracts with GIS service providers. VCGI will seek to fill that void.

### **Public-Private Partnership**

VCGI relies heavily on a partnership with public-sector and commercial GIS service providers to accomplish its mission. Therefore, the Board will review VCGI projects continuously to avoid actions or the appearance of competition with these partners.

VCGI Board and staff will focus VCGI activities on components of its public service mission, and avoid providing services that could be provided by GIS service providers. They will seek opportunities to explain how VCGI involvement in projects and programs enhances, rather than diminishes, the interests and involvement of public-sector and commercial GIS service providers. They will publish information about all VGIS procurements of which VCGI is aware, on a timely basis, utilizing print and digital media.

VCGI will support its local, regional and state public agency partners in information development, analysis or mapping when such activities are integral to the exercise of their missions. VCGI will also encourage these partners to examine commercial contracting or agreements with other agencies as means through which these activities can be performed, so long as agency needs can be met.

VCGI intends to use the majority of future budget increases, as appropriate, to expand contracted development of public data and applications. VCGI will assign employees to those operations which directly support contracting and/or the evaluation and update of digital data from other cooperative sources, as workload and resources permit.

**General Criteria**

VCGI plans to utilize GIS service providers in instances whenever contract procurement can:

- ▶ assure a high quality of data, products, and services for VCGI customers and the VGIS community,
- ▶ provide data, products, and services that meet user needs at applicable standards in a timely manner,
- ▶ provide information that would not otherwise be available due to its highly technical nature, and
- ▶ allow VCGI to maintain the technically qualified work force needed to monitor the quality of contracted activities and to perform the VCGI mission.

**V. VCGI  
CONTRACTING  
PROCEDURES**

When funds to procure data, products, and/or appropriate services are available, VCGI will contract with public agencies and/or commercial contractors as an effective method of achieving VGIS objectives. The contracting option will be considered during the planning of all VCGI programs and projects.

VCGI will retain current information on all individuals, public-sector and commercial concerns who wish to provide GIS products and services for VGIS. Annually VCGI will issue a generalized "*Request for Qualifications*" in order to assess the capabilities and experience of prospective service providers. As deliverable products or services are identified -- along with related funding sources -- VCGI will request cost and technical proposals from pre-qualified contractors whose capabilities and experiences are most suited to the deliverables.

Alternatively VCGI will issue a specialized "*Request for Proposals*" to

solicit particular proposals for products or services which are of greater magnitude or technical challenge. VCGI will assure that all assignments contracted in excess of \$10,000 meet applicable State contracting requirements.

VCGI will ask the following questions in determining when public-sector and commercial GIS providers of products and services will be asked to submit proposals:

- ▶ Is funding available?
- ▶ Do laws, regulations, and procedures governing VCGI contracting or VCGI employment present any obstacles?
- ▶ Would contracting be consistent with the missions assigned by statute or other authority to state agencies, regional planning commissions, and other publicly-supported entities?
- ▶ Are GIS service providers likely to have the capacity to provide the spatial data, products, and/or services required, and is VCGI likely to obtain services from such providers more economically than through in-house performance?
- ▶ Does VCGI have the in-house technical and managerial capability needed to oversee GIS service providers effectively?
- ▶ Can VCGI execute its responsibility to assure that data and products meet all applicable standards?

If all questions can be answered in the affirmative, VCGI will contract with public sector and/or commercial GIS service providers.

VCGI will conduct its activities in a manner that creates and supports contract opportunities for such providers.

## VI. DEFINITIONS

**GIS service providers / suppliers / contractors** -- Individuals, commercial entities, not-for-profit organizations, and public agencies (including Vermont's regional planning commissions) which provide GIS data conversion, analysis, mapping and other services to government entities, businesses, and the public.