

*Interim Project Report - NSDI CAP Grant Category 5*  
**MetroGIS Quantify Public Value Study**  
*Reporting Period: April 1 to June 30, 2011*

**Report Date:** July 1, 2011

**Agreement Number:** G10AC00239

**Project Title:** Measuring Public Value of Geospatial Commons: A MetroGIS Case Study

**Organization:** Metropolitan Council

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MetroGIS

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**Executive Summary** (*165 words. Revised from the original submittal*)

This study proposes development of a methodology capable of quantitatively measuring public value (QPV) created when organizations actively participate in a geospatial commons. The territorial focus is Hennepin County, Minnesota; the 32nd largest county in the United States by population, and the local government jurisdictions within it. The study involves interviewing representatives of all forms of government, non-profit, utility, industry, and academic interests serving the seven-county, Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area - the MetroGIS community.

Understanding public value created, when public producers of geospatial data openly share their data, is a key issue in discussions surrounding spatial data infrastructure (SDI) development and continued support. The scope of this prototyping effort has been limited to parcel data (spatial and tabular), in particular, parcel data that adheres to standards that support interoperability. The proposed QPV methodology, which is to be developed as a component of the study, will attempt to account for public benefit created through reuse and chaining of parcel data by others who use these data.

**Project Narrative**

Our focus during this reporting period has been on regrouping and defining a QPV Study methodology from scratch. This regrouping process began in earnest in December 2010. As reported in our two previous project status reports, this regrouping was necessitated following the September 2010 finding that the originally required GITA ROI methodology is not appropriate for our objectives.

Notwithstanding the significant setbacks encountered to date, the positive side of our work this past quarter is that our team has had the opportunity to coalesce, rethink the objectives, and reach

agreement on a revised methodology. We believe that the new approach will better provide the information needed by policy makers to effectively assess the value that can be realized by placing parcel data into the public domain versus revenue received with current access policies.

No grant-eligible expenses were encumbered this reporting period. However, due to the unexpected delays encountered last quarter to set accounting protocols under the new federal ASAP system, the attached Form 425 for this quarter shows an expenditure of \$4,831.53 for a total of 23,951.26 in grant-eligible funds spent to date or 47.9 percent of the \$50,000 grant awarded to the project.

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, along with authorization of a project completion time extension to April 29, 2012, FGDC grant administrators also authorized stopping our tracking of in-kind contributions, given that our pledged obligation was exceeded in March. At that time of the time extension request, we had documented a total of \$54,808.74 or \$15,558.74 (139.6 percent) more than our \$39, 250 pledged in-kind obligation. The need to redesign our methodology from scratch was, in large part, the reason for the higher in-kind support expenses than originally anticipated.

Major outcomes accomplished during this reporting period included:

**Administrative:**

- a) Coordinated with the Council's Finance Office and federal staff to set up protocol for a new federal ASAP grant funding processing system. This process took in excess of 6 weeks to complete, during which time we could not process payments for services provided in February.
- b) Coordinated with the Council's Finance Unit to finalize payments for grant-eligible services incurred in February, totaling \$4,831.53, which were delayed due to unexpected delays setting up protocols to draw again our grant funds via the federal ASAP system.
- c) Coordinated with FGDC staff and the Council's Procurement/Contracts Unit to execute a formal contract amendment to extend our project completion deadline to April 29, 2012. This amendment was authorized by FGDC grant administration staff on March 24, 2011 and was formally put in place on April 28, 2011.
- d) Prepared and submitted the 1st Quarter 2011 Project Report<sup>1</sup>.
- e) Updated the public facing project [website](#).
- f) The QPV Study Administrative Coordinator, with input from the QPV Study Research Coordinator, developed the "Defining Values" [Request for Proposals](#) (see Task 2 below) and published it with assistance from the Council's Contracts Unit.

**Project - Task 1- Measure Benefit to Hennepin County of Geo-Enabling Parcel Data (Complete):**

The results were not what we expected – the GITA ROI methodology required to be used as a condition of grant funding was found to be not appropriate for our study objectives. (See the July to September 2010 Quarterly Project [Report](#) for the issues encountered).

**Project - Task 2 – Define "Outward Looking" OPV Methodology (In progress):**

On April 25<sup>th</sup> the QPV Study Advisory Team agreed on design objectives and general methodology for a radically revised Task 3, following investigation of multiple options. The Team considered several options, but ultimately selected a design that focuses on policy makers and values important

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to permission received from the FGDC grant administrators, we ceased tracking in-kind contributions in March. At that time, we had contributed in excess of 1.5 times that of our total in-kind contribution commitment.

to them in their leadership of their respective institutions, as opposed to programs managers and technicians who utilize parcel data to support decision-making.

The objective of the revised design, entitled “Defining Values Component”, seeks to define values important to policy makers that, if met, would provide sufficient public value creation to justify placing parcel data into the public domain. The previous design involved interviews to define uses of parcel data that the users believe are capable of creating public value.

As with our original study design, the new design also requires supplemental support resources but process and deliverable differs significantly from the design that was to have supplemented the GITA ROI methodology. Notwithstanding the problems encountered with the GITA ROI methodology, the QPV Study Advisory Team believes that directly involving the policy maker, as currently proposed, is a better fit to accomplish the original study objective #8 stating:

“The results generated by the desired QPV methodology must be structured in such a way that local government **policy makers** can readily compare and contrast them to the costs of supporting their operations with and without participating in a geospatial commons”.

Although the newly conceived study method differs substantially from that described in our grant application, the objective for the Outward Looking QPV Study Component remains the same as originally conceived and explained for our awarded project. The new design involves facilitating a series of focus groups, comprised of policy makers from the same interests as previously targeted - variety of public, private, non-profit and utility interests that serve the geographic extent of Hennepin County and:

- a) Whose operations do/could benefit from access to parcel data produced by Hennepin County.
- AND**
- b) Who believe their value added data/web service/ application(s) do/could improve the cost - effectiveness of:
    - (1) Hennepin County operations.
- AND/OR**
- (2) Operations of one or more taxing jurisdictions that serve Hennepin County’s citizens.

A Request for Proposals (RFP), to secure the needed supplemental support resource, was published on June 3. The refined Task 3 study objectives are outlined in the RFP. July 15 is the response deadline.

**Project-Task 3– Implement “Outward Looking” QPV Methodology (Pending):**

Assuming that at least one qualified proposal is received in response the Defining Values RFP, our expectation is that the study will resume in August 2011. Francis Harvey, QPV Study Research Coordinator, has an obligation in Europe from mid-May through early August.

**Other information requested in / for the interim project report:**

- 1. Draft ROI Case study and related documents - Premature***
- 2. Photographs, graphics, or illustrations) - Premature or not possible to provide at this time.***

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Standard Federal Form 425**  
*(Reporting Period: April 1 to June 30, 2011)*

*(See Next Page)*

