

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This document contains MGP responses to questions that we anticipate communities will get from their decision makers when seeking membership or renewing their annual contract. **This document is not intended for publication, but rather to be pulled from by the Client Account Managers as needed during the contract renewal process.**

Please submit questions that you consider important to this shared FAQ to Maria Muceito at mmuceito@mgpinc.com.

VERSION HISTORY

VERSION	AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION
2017A	Thomas Thomey Maria Storm	This is the first year for this document. We envision the list of questions and responses to evolve each year.
2018	Tom Thomey	Layout simplification and addition of new offerings including the Shared Workstation for all members.
2019	Maria Muceito	Completed updates of all questions and added the Leveling System innovation where relevant to emphasize collaboration and program value.
2021	Maria Muceito	Paired back and simplified question set.

Question	Response
1) Why GIS at all?	<p><u>Integration and Accessibility of Community Data</u></p> <p>One thing all departments share across the community is geography. A geographic information system (GIS) allows our department information to be integrated and easily shared across the entire community. The accessibility of our data across departments increases staff efficiency. Without it, our data would be decentralized and very challenging to find when needed.</p> <p><u>Retention of Historical Institutional Knowledge</u></p> <p>Another reason a GIS is important is to ensure that our data is organized and improved over time. It can be disruptive when a staff member leaves the municipality and using a GIS ensures that our very most important data lives in a structure that others can access.</p>

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2) What does membership in the GIS Consortium include?	<p data-bbox="588 243 2007 349"><u>Intergovernmental Collaboration</u> Whenever we participate in management conferences like the Illinois City Manager’s Association (ILCMA) they encourage municipalities to create intergovernmental partnerships and that is what the GIS Consortium is. It includes:</p> <p data-bbox="588 373 2007 479"><u>Shared Technology and Solutions</u> Access to the shared hardware and software that is owned by the Consortium. Purchasing the required technology independently would cost us considerably more.</p> <p data-bbox="588 503 2007 609">Access to solutions that enable staff efficiency and enhance community outreach. Solutions configured or developed by the service provider including: myGIS, Community-Portal, Asset Management, Financial Projections Analysis, County Public Notification, Story Maps, and much more.</p> <p data-bbox="588 633 2007 738"><u>Proven Professional Staffing Model and Services</u> GIS requires a specialized skill set and other municipalities tell us that being a member of the GIS Consortium is the best way they have found to provide these services and do so affordably.</p> <p data-bbox="588 763 2007 868">The staffing model provided through MGP for the GIS Consortium is sustainable and protects our investment in GIS because the foundation of standardization is cascaded across all GIS Consortium communities, and everything that is important is documented.</p>
3) Is there a startup cost?	<p data-bbox="588 893 2007 933">To join the GIS Consortium there is a one-time initiation fee, payable to the GIS.</p> <p data-bbox="588 958 2007 1039">The service provider (MGP) does not charge a startup fee. There is an onboarding period of 90 days where the service provider works with our staff to get the foundation of our GIS established which includes address, corporate limit, and utility systems.</p>
4) How many hours of Analyst time does our annual contract include and how is this determined?	<p data-bbox="588 1055 2007 1169">The hours for all staffing roles on this contract are based on our municipality’s geographic size. There are four roles that support the program, and the agreement includes allocations of hours for each: Site Analysts, Shared Analysts, Client Account Managers and GIS Manager.</p> <p data-bbox="588 1193 2007 1260"><i>[Your municipalities breakdown of hours for all job function can be found in the GIS Consortium Service Provider Agreement, Attachment 1, Statement of Work, Item 4.]</i></p>

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5) Can we do this cheaper in-house? Why don't we hire our own staff?	<p>No, we cannot do this cheaper in-house. There are two critical components provided by this contract, 1) staffing and 2) technology.</p> <p><u>Staffing</u> GIS requires a specialized skill set and being a member of the GIS Consortium is a better way to deliver these services. Doing it in house would require us to build and maintain our own team of specialized staff or to take on multiple vendors.</p> <p>The staffing model provided through MGP for the GIS Consortium is sustainable and protects our investment in GIS because it uses standards that are implemented across all GIS Consortium communities. When a community has an internal GIS person, their investment in their system takes a significant hit when that person retires or leaves. The standards offered by the shared staffing model prevents this from occurring.</p> <p><u>Technology</u> We also save money each year because we share hardware and software with the rest of the members of the Consortium. Purchasing the required technology independently would cost us considerably more.</p>
6) What is the value of this contract? Explain the value.	<p>The contract is valuable to us for three reasons:</p> <p><u>Staff Efficiency</u> The service provider's expertise in data management and visualization allows our entire staff to be more efficient because the data is centralized and accessible for analysis and decision-making. This improves everything a staff member does day in and day out. Not having a geographic information system would mean we would have to rely on manual processes for our data analysis and decision-making.</p> <p><u>Intergovernmental Collaboration</u> Whenever we participate in management conferences like the Illinois City Manager's Association (ILCMA) they encourage communities to create intergovernmental partnerships and that is what the GIS Consortium is. This is the best way we have found to provide these services which enables us to partner with 40 different municipalities to get a good value for our dollars.</p> <p><u>Solutions Built for Local Government</u> Solutions from the service provider are created for local government and this enhances our entire staff's effectiveness. If we do not have this contract, we would have to find replacements for these solutions and pay for them on our own.</p>

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7) How much time will staff spend on GIS once we hire this company?	<p data-bbox="588 243 2013 349">As a user of the system, and not a builder of it, we anticipate manageable levels of staff time to support the service provider. The service provider does most of the data management and technical work to deliver solutions, so every staff member has access to the GIS on their desktop to discover and analyze data to make decisions.</p> <p data-bbox="588 373 2013 446">In addition to using the solutions, where we see our staff investing time is in activities related to improving the quality of the data. A consistent investment will provide positive, long-term benefits.</p>
8) How is this different from an ERP system? How does the GIS work with our existing systems?	<p data-bbox="588 479 2013 609">GIS is both a critical contributor to all our distinct ERPs and an integration platform to bring those systems' data together. The ERPs we use are applications that support distinct department business processes like issuing a permit, billing water and sewer consumption, or doing a building inspection. These processes all rely on data with a geographic component best managed in GIS (e.g. address). The GIS also allows us to bring information from disparate systems into one place for viewing and analysis.</p>

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9) What is the ROI?	<p data-bbox="588 251 1365 284">This program creates a benefit for our community in the following ways:</p> <p data-bbox="588 316 903 349"><u>Strategic Initiatives Support</u></p> <p data-bbox="588 349 2013 381">The GIS program provides value for the initiatives that are most important to the community at any given time. Examples include:</p> <ul data-bbox="651 414 1302 576" style="list-style-type: none">• visualizing data to project long-term funding needs• analyzing and evaluating infrastructure project priorities• integrating our enterprise systems• modernizing processes and our workforce• capital improvement planning <p data-bbox="588 609 934 641"><u>Business Process Effectiveness</u></p> <p data-bbox="588 641 1743 673">Staff access to the GIS data improves the customer experience and saves time including but not limited to:</p> <ul data-bbox="651 706 1438 950" style="list-style-type: none">• answering inquiries from residents, business owners, and developers• infrastructure maintenance and repair• issuing a building permit• drainage complaint investigation and remediation• development work• records management• financial audits and FOIA <p data-bbox="588 982 1039 1015"><u>Maintaining the Value of the Data Asset</u></p> <p data-bbox="588 1015 2013 1079">The consistent maintenance of our data improves the quality, efficiency, and confidence of our decision making and financial forecasting. Some of the structures that make this possible include:</p> <ul data-bbox="651 1112 1417 1343" style="list-style-type: none">• data standards• data quality reports• stakeholder teams for address, utility systems, and corporate limit• data confidence surveys• a Utility Leveling System• mistake proofing• solutions designed to retain institutional knowledge

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10) If we had to reduce our program costs, how would we?	<p>The GISC model was created to provide member communities with flexibility while ensuring program continuity in difficult times. If funding cuts are required, we would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, eliminate data acquisition programs including base mapping• Next, reduce community software licenses• Finally, reduce onsite staffing <p>This allows continuation of the program without losing staff access to the shared intellectual property of the GISC. If we left the GIS Consortium entirely, we would lose access to applications we use every day.</p>
11) It seems like it would be more cost effective to purchase this service as needed. Why can't we take an "a la carte" approach?	<p>An a la carte or project approach would be more targeted, but come at the cost of data quality, staff efficiency, and timeliness of decision-making. The success of one-off projects relies on current and high-quality data. The development of that data increases project costs or staff time. Consistent and timely data management by the service provider allows for on-demand solutions when our staff need them without the need to bid projects.</p>
12) Has this service been put through a public bidding process?	<p>The GIS Consortium Board of Directors, on which we would have a representative, reviews the performance of all service providers annually. The GISC Board does not think a competitive bid would improve cost or services at this time.</p>
13) What is the relationship between MGP and the GIS Consortium (GISC)?	<p>Municipal GIS Partners, Inc. (MGP) and the GIS Consortium work together very closely and collaboratively. However, they are two distinct legal and operational organizations. The GISC is a public entity; MGP is private company and the primary service provider to the GIS Consortium. MGP created the shared-services model idea, and the founding members created the Consortium.</p>
14) How would you describe the GIS Consortium and what its purpose is?	<p>The GIS Consortium is an organization of Chicago-area communities unified by a common goal: to share resources, information, staffing, and technology so that municipalities can optimize the value of geographic information systems (GIS).</p> <p>The GIS Consortium (GISC) is a public entity formed under Section 10 of Article VII of the Illinois Constitution of 1970 and Section 3 of the Illinois Intergovernmental Cooperation Act which authorize and encourage the entering into of Intergovernmental Agreements between units of local government.</p>
15) Who owns the data?	<p>Each municipality owns their data.</p>
16) What happens if we want to leave the GISC?	<p>The GIS Consortium (GISC) looks for municipalities who have a long-term commitment to the model, but should we decide to leave voluntarily the GISC Membership Agreement contains specific language about ending terms with the GISC. There is an Offboarding Policy that clarifies responsibilities, a transition plan, and delivery of data and documentation. Since the founding of the GISC in 1999, no member communities have chosen to leave.</p>