Press Release

For Immediate Release

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OpenDataPhilly.org Wants Your Vote for the Most Important Data
for the City of Philadelphia to Release

OpenDataPhilly.org Launched *Open Data Race* to Enable Non-Profits to Nominate Municipal Data Sets to Support their Mission. The Public is Now Invited to Vote for the Data Sets. Winning Non-Profits to Receive Cash Prizes.

Philadelphia, PA, October 6, 2011 – In April, Azavea, a geospatial analysis (GIS) software development company, along with its partners – Technically Philly, WHYY Newsworks, NPower Pennsylvania, the William Penn Foundation, and the City of Philadelphia's Open Access Philly task force – launched OpenDataPhilly.org (http://opendataphilly.org/), a Philadelphia-centric catalog of online data, applications and APIs. Since April, several new data sets have been added to the catalog, and the project team has sought ways to both build a community around the topic of 'open data and government transparency' as well as prioritize advocacy efforts for the release of additional data sets. In September, these efforts resulted in the launch of the Open Data Race. This four-phase effort first enabled non-profits to nominate data sets that if released by the City of Philadelphia would further their missions and enable them to better serve their constituents. To date, more than 20 non-profit organizations have nominated data sets as varied as vacant and city-owned land, permit and license issuance, business starts, energy usage, tax revenue, and school BMI data. In the next phase, which starts this week, the general public is being invited to vote for their favorite data sets (and the non-profits that nominated them). Voting will remain open until October 27. At the conclusion of the contest, cash prizes will be awarded to the top three vote-winners.

 The primary purpose of the Open Data Race is to encourage citizens and advocates to get involved in the process of open government and to cultivate government transparency through the release of data. In that respect, the contest is somewhat different from other open data contests that derive from municipal initiatives. Here, consumers of the data get to nominate the data they need, which in turn will receive votes from the general public. Then, at the end of the public voting period, the Open Data Race partners will work with the City of Philadelphia to develop the mechanisms to release the winning data sets. Finally, in January to February, the OpenDataPhilly partners will organize hack-a-thons that will

invite civic hackers to build applications with the newly released data. The Open Data Race hopes to foster a dynamic dialogue between data consumers, the public, and the municipal government that holds the data.

Since the launch of OpenDataPhilly.org, Azavea has continued to add new data sets and applications to the online catalog. To date, OpenDataPhilly.org has cataloged over 150 data sets, applications and APIs from organizations as varied as the City of Philadelphia's Department of Records, Streets Department, Police Department, the U.S Geological Survey, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Temple University, University of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Information about zoning, mortgages and deeds, campaign finance records, polling places, locations of schools and libraries, bicycle networks, crime, and many other metrics are part of the catalog. Some data sets, including public transit APIs and land use data have been added since being suggested by users through the site suggestion system.

"Several major cities have released open data catalogs over the past few years. But they all have limited resources and struggle with prioritizing which data sets will be most useful. The Open Data Race is an experiment aimed at both building a community and constituency around open data and open government as well as helping the City to prioritize the inevitably limited resources it can apply to releasing data sets while also delivering social value." – Robert Cheetham, CEO and President of Azavea.

To cast your vote for your preferred data set, visit: http://opendataphilly.org/contest/

About Azavea - Azavea is an award-winning geospatial analysis (GIS) software development firm specializing in the creation of location-based web and mobile software as well as geospatial analysis services. Azavea is a certified B Corporation that applies geographic data and technology to promote the emergence of more dynamic, vibrant, and sustainable communities. Each of Azavea's projects, products and pro bono engagements showcases this commitment. Find more at http://www.azavea.com.

If you would like more information about Azavea or to schedule an interview with Robert Cheetham, Azavea CEO and President, please contact Amy Trahey at (215) 558 – 6184 or e-mail atrahey@azavea.com.

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