

# Transparency and Accountability

for State and Local Governments



## The Government-Citizen Partnership

Today, people are more connected than ever through technology. They are connected to family; friends; social groups; and, increasingly, government. Mobile technology and web applications empower them to engage with government and find clarity on issues that touch their lives.

Governments are heeding the call to deliver information in a way that creates transparency and demonstrates accountability. Providing citizens with a way to see plans for services and infrastructure, spending, and the evolution of public policy starts with providing access to information.

While transparency creates a window into the world of government operations, accountability provides a measure of how government is performing. When a government holds itself accountable to citizens, it shows them how and why decisions are made, offers measures of whether public policy is successful, and presents areas where business and citizens can get involved to help government meet goals. Accountability builds confidence in government.





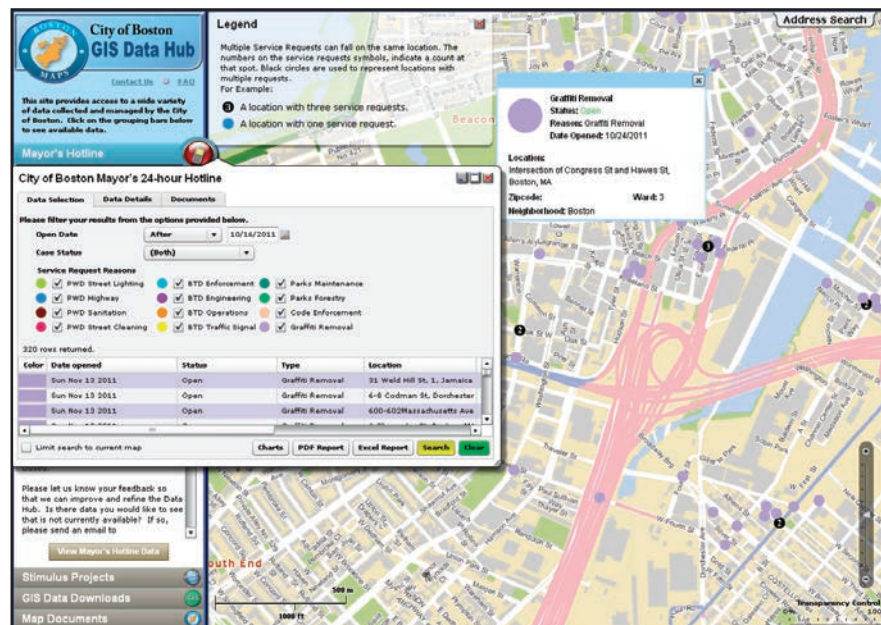
## Providing Context

With dynamic maps, government leaders and citizens can engage in productive conversations. Maps tell stories that provide context for citizens so they gain a greater understanding of the world around them. Showing where workloads are heavy along with status requests immediately conveys progress and explains delays; it shows citizens the big job governments have every day.

People can look at a neighborhood to see where money is allocated and why, for example, building a new road in one part of town takes priority over other areas in need. Presenting ideas and policies in relation to where people work, live, and play helps citizens understand the decision-making process. In turn, citizens can communicate their comments and concerns about government activities through the same maps.

## Delivering Information 24 Hours a Day in Boston

The City of Boston, Massachusetts, makes it easy for citizens to see where services have been requested and daily status. With data from the mayor's 24-hour hotline available on a web map ([hubmaps.cityofboston.gov/datahub](http://hubmaps.cityofboston.gov/datahub)), citizens can track the progress of graffiti removal, park improvements, streetlight maintenance, street cleaning, and more.

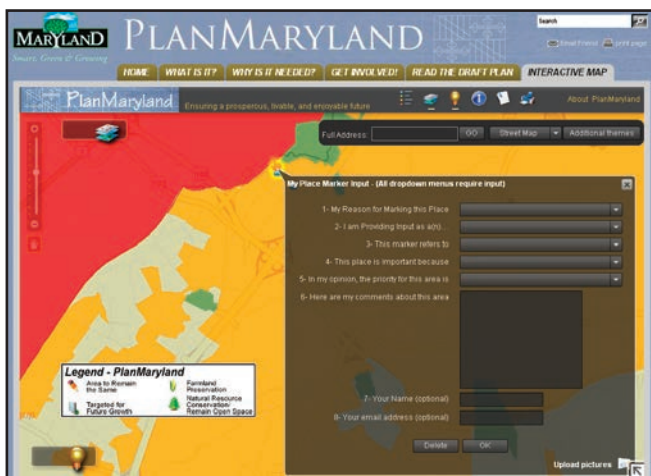


## GIS Transforms Government

For decades, governments have used geographic information system (GIS) technology to see a clear picture of operations and understand comprehensive plans. Now they use the same technology to share information with citizens. Though they have many options, leaders choose GIS because it shows a clear view of complex issues.

Displaying information on maps instantly communicates the many factors under consideration for an issue. Putting best ideas forward, revealing processes, and gathering input from the public delivers the transparency and accountability citizens expect.

When people can report the places and issues that are most important to them, they see that government values their input. This valuable feedback helps establish successful plans and processes that best serve communities.



### Encouraging Participation in Maryland

Maryland expects substantial growth by 2035. In preparation for an additional 1,000,000 residents, 500,000 new households, and 600,000 new jobs, the state created PlanMaryland, a comprehensive plan to address issues that arise with increased population and growth. Leaders encouraged citizens to share their thoughts and ideas through an interactive map ([plan.maryland.gov](http://plan.maryland.gov)). Citizens could then explain why areas are important to them, prioritize places, and offer comments.



### Advancing Redistricting in Utah

In Utah, the state legislature's 2011 redistricting committee created a mapping application that allowed citizens to draw congressional, state legislative, and state school board districts for consideration in the redistricting process. Citizens had to adhere to the same strict standards as the redistricting committee. The legislature adopted a state school board plan largely based on a citizen-generated map.

[esri.com/citizenengagement](http://esri.com/citizenengagement)

## Delivering Effective Maps

As governments work toward achieving goals, GIS technology provides a way to measure performance and report it to citizens. Whether showing the percentage of roads cleared of snow or areas that have been conserved for wildlife, maps let citizens see concrete data reflecting the good work governments do in their communities.

To create applications that demonstrate transparency and accountability, begin with authoritative data. Then, ensure those apps work seamlessly with existing GIS workflows and back-office systems. Once the apps are developed, market their availability.

As you look for the best way to develop your maps, consider these options:

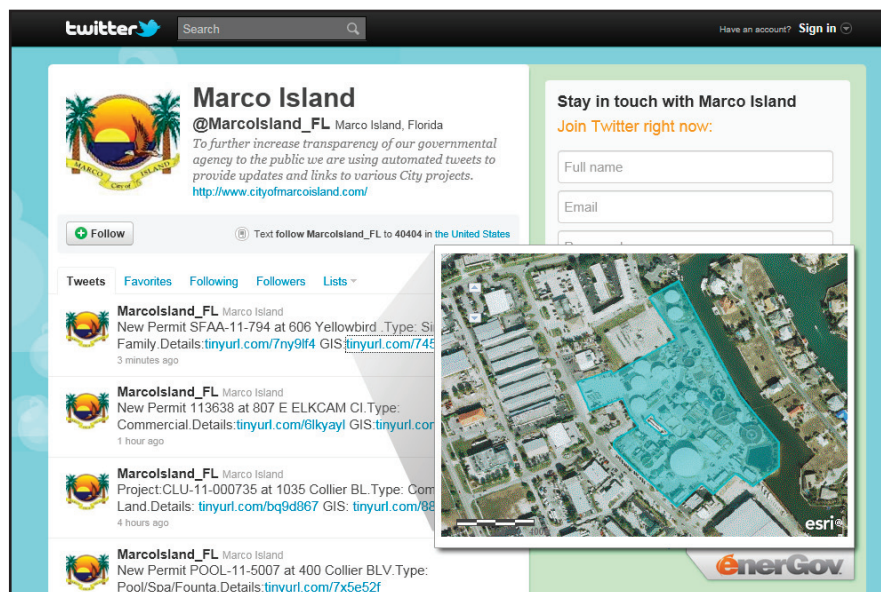
**Create apps in-house** with Esri's web mapping APIs that support the creation of rich, interactive applications using JavaScript™, Flex™, or Silverlight®. Embed applications in web pages or launch stand-alone web apps from a web page.

**Work with Esri partners** that have experience building GIS-based web applications that tie in to existing systems.

**Make your data available to third-party developers** who are eager to build interactive applications that meet citizen needs.

## Finding New Ways to Communicate in Marco Island

The City of Marco Island, Florida, worked with Esri® partner EnerGov to deliver information through social media and mapping. EnerGov's Social Intelligent Object Engine extends government data and GIS to social media platforms as part of the city's workflow. Now, when the city issues a new building permit, a Tweet from the Building Services Division notifies citizens of the news along with links to the permit and a map of the permit location.





Esri inspires and enables people to positively impact their future through a deeper, geographic understanding of the changing world around them.

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