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Winter 2026

Tallahassee Maps Storm Damage with Geospatial AI

By Adam Carnow, Public Works Industry Specialist, Esri

Tallahassee’s story begins with its trees. Shaded tunnels lined with moss-draped live oaks, sweet gums, and hickories trace centuries of history from pre-Columbian trails to Spanish missions and antebellum plantations.

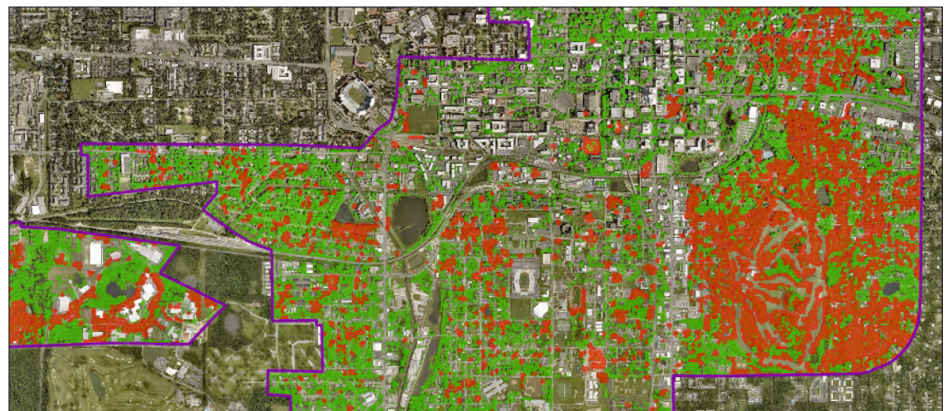
Storms—hurricanes, derechos, and tornadoes—take their toll on this green crown. When severe weather hits, public works crews with the city and county follow close behind to start repairs. But manual inspections can take weeks, even months, to assess the damage. Conventional aerial image analysis and hand digitization is not much faster.

Recently, Jason Cox, a systems analyst with Tallahassee–Leon County Geographic Information Systems Department (TLCGIS), developed a new technique to expedite tree restoration. He uses AI models in geographic information system (GIS) software to detect changes in tree density after storms. The model flags damage patterns found in before-and-after aerial images. The data and analysis feeds into GIS maps decision-makers can use to calculate repair costs and pinpoint resource allocation.

First responders are also using this powerful combination of GIS and AI, known as geospatial AI, to get in a better position during emergencies. Cox supplies rescue crews with smart maps that utilize geospatial AI datasets. These can recognize lanes in parking lots, alleyways, and commercial spaces to bring first responders closer to people in need.

“It was something that we were able to generate en masse,” Cox explained about the map improvements. “It took a couple of weeks of cleaning up the geometry and adding attribute information, and then we serve it to the public and to emergency

fresh-faced temp with a new degree from the University of South Florida. Weisman brought Cox onto the team to help Leon County develop a faster, more accurate way to bill for solid waste and stormwater services. The work involved maintaining a large dataset—all the



↑ This AI-generated tree damage assessment map shows storm impact patterns across Tallahassee.

response partners. It represents a big advancement—providing that extra context that we didn’t have before.”

Just a few years ago, integrating those pathways into first responders’ navigation systems seemed like a far-off possibility. “We couldn’t afford to do it,” said Scott Weisman, head of TLCGIS and a 31-year veteran of the program.

“We would have to hire people to do that manually, and we never had the resources to do it—until now.”

Encouraging Experimentation

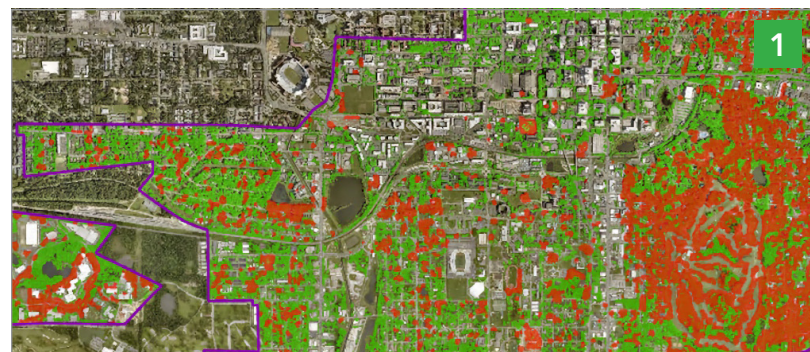
Cox’s path to geospatial innovation started 14 years ago when he was a

residential buildings in the county and relevant classifications for service rates. The data needed regular updates, edits, and audits.

A knack for geoprocessing earned Cox a full-time position. He expanded his scope to other large datasets that needed frequent checks and updates. For a time, he managed the record of all the addresses in the county.

Esri’s ModelBuilder and Python programming whetted his appetite for automation. He devoured all the training and information he could find, eventually arriving at a blog post about the Building Footprint Extraction—USA pretrained

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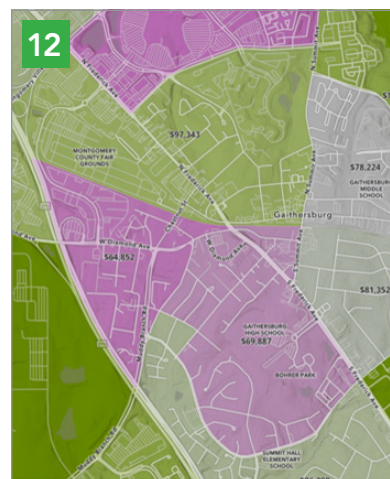


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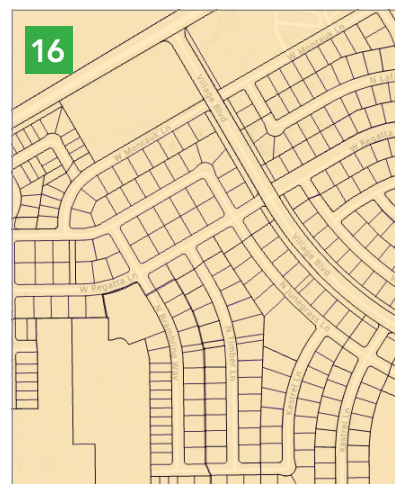
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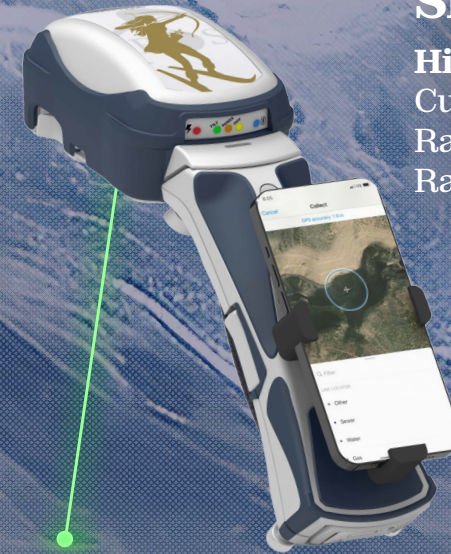
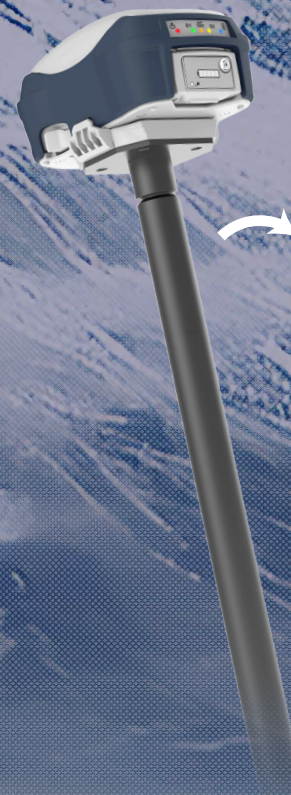
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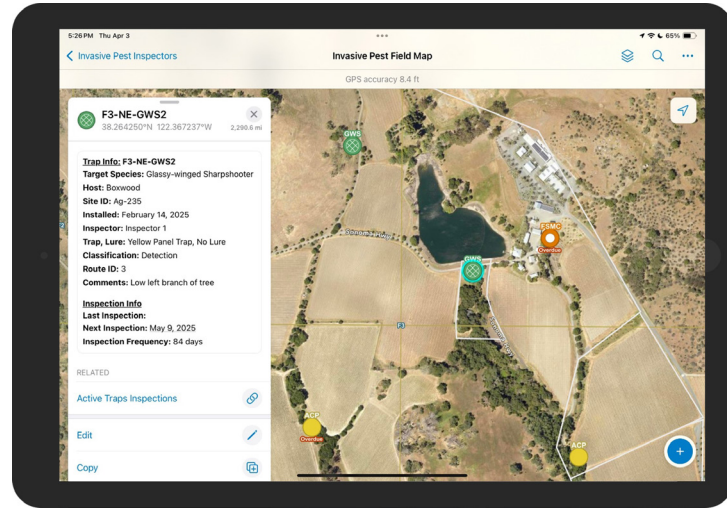
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Optimize Pest Detection Operations with the Invasive Pest Management Solution

According to the US Department of Agriculture, the impacts of invasive pests can result in billions of dollars in expenses and critically threaten our agricultural industry and food supplies. Persistent monitoring and efficient management can go a long way toward minimizing the damage these invasive pests cause, but detecting potential threats in a vast landscape can be challenging. As the spread of invasive pests broadens, organizations responsible for managing invasive pests need a streamlined, technological approach to manage the threat these pests represent.



↑ The Invasive Pest field map is used by pest inspectors to collect invasive pest information and perform inspections in the field.

Enter the Invasive Pest Management Solution

The Invasive Pest Management solution delivers a set of capabilities that can help you develop pest trapping plans, perform field inspections, monitor program metrics, and share program information with the public. This proactive approach to invasive pest management can prevent infestations and help preserve agricultural systems and native landscapes.

Streamline Pest Detection Operations

Various methods are used to detect pest presence, including setting traps and conducting visual inspections. If your organization is challenged with establishing and routinely inspecting pest monitoring traps, the Invasive Pest Management solution can help! The solution includes several preconfigured apps that help facilitate pest detection workflows:

Invasive Pest Field Map

Pest inspectors can use the ArcGIS Field Maps mobile app to collect invasive pest information and perform inspections in the field. They can also collect potential host points and use optimized routes to travel to sites.

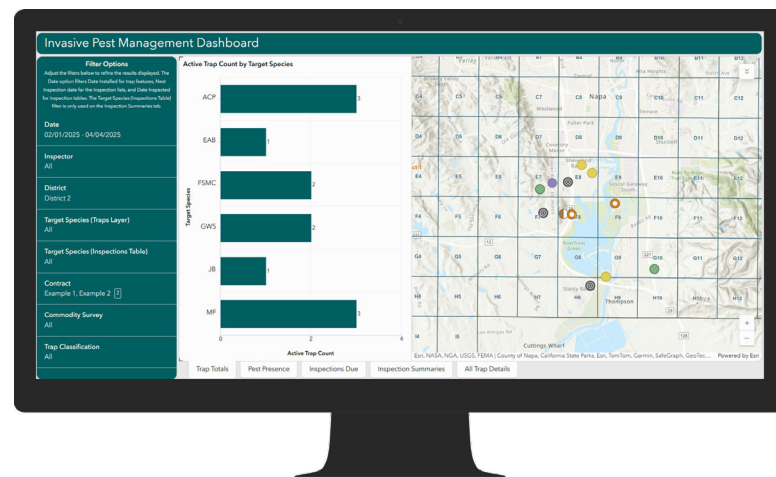
Invasive Pest Management Dashboard

The Invasive Pest Management Dashboard makes it easy for pest program managers to monitor and organize pest inspection activities, which in turn helps them understand

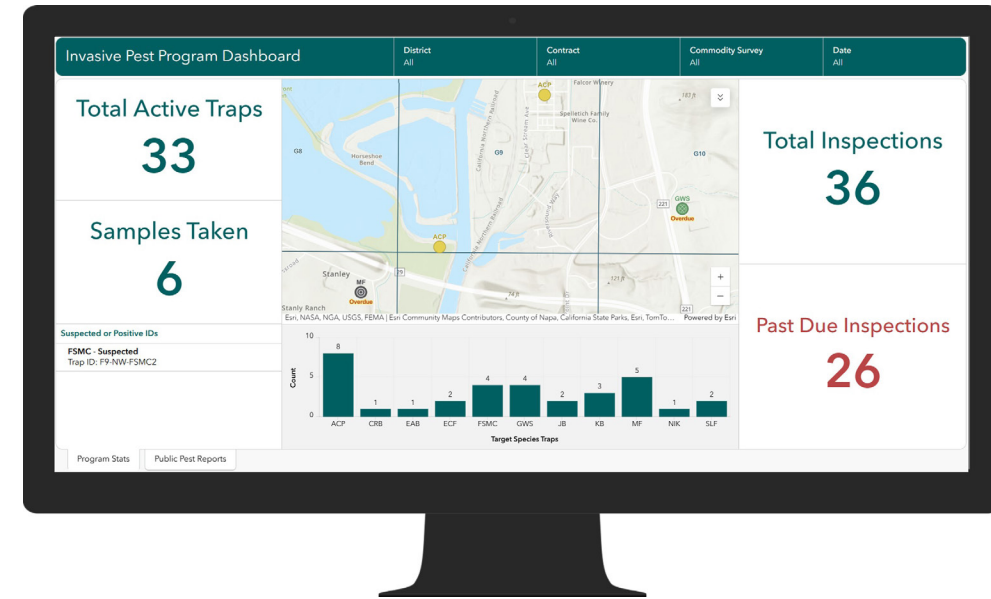
and respond to potential threats. The dashboard highlights trap totals, pest presence, inspections due, and inspection summaries, and offers a downloadable view of all trap details.

Invasive Pest Program Dashboard

Pest program directors can use the Invasive Pest Program Dashboard to monitor key program metrics and make sure requirements are being met to prevent pest infestations in the local jurisdiction. The dashboard summarizes general trapping metrics and public pest reports.



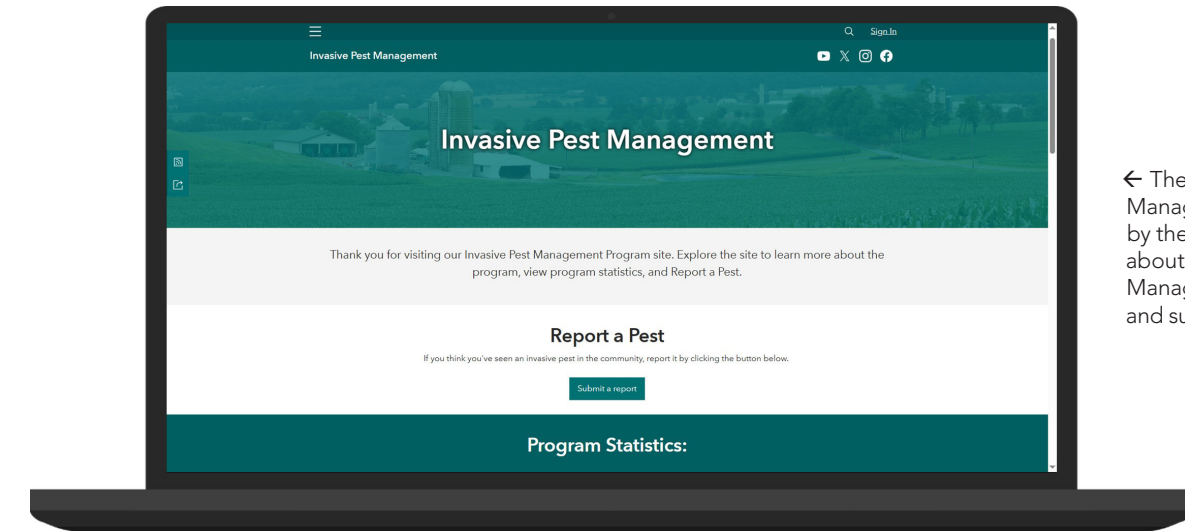
↑ The Invasive Pest Management Dashboard can be used by pest program managers to monitor and organize inspection activities.



Enrich Public Engagement

Public engagement is a vital part of preventing pest infestations in a community. Taking a collaborative approach and inviting the public to learn more about the program, identify pest species, and submit sightings can help enhance early detection efforts.

← The Invasive Pest Program Dashboard is used by program directors to monitor key pest and inspection metrics.



← The Invasive Pest Management site is used by the public to learn about the Invasive Pest Management Program and submit pest reports.

Invasive Pest Management Site

The solution includes the preconfigured Invasive Pest Management site, which residents can use to learn more about your invasive pest management program. Additionally, residents can submit pest reports with the Report a Pest form in ArcGIS Survey123.

Detecting and managing invasive pests is an immense challenge, but geospatial technology can help introduce efficiencies and workflows to mitigate threats. By embracing this technology and public engagement, we can help safeguard

our agricultural and natural landscapes. The Invasive Pest Management solution is a powerful tool that can be used to help conquer this challenge.

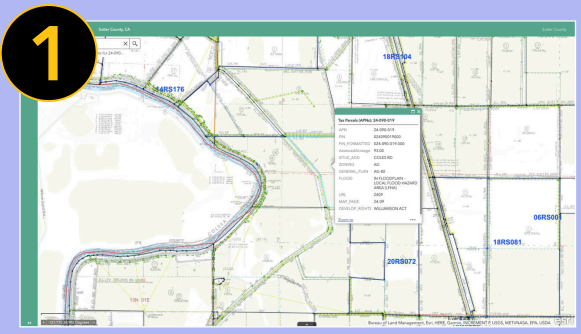
ArcGIS Solutions helps you make the most of your GIS by providing purpose-driven, industry-specific configurations of ArcGIS.

To learn more about ArcGIS Solutions, please visit go.esri.com/PestSolutions.

4 Reasons to Migrate Your Parcels to ArcGIS Parcel Fabric

Does your organization have complete land information readily available to inform critical decisions? Are your parcel maps always up to date, accurate, and accessible to all stakeholders? Can you easily see a parcel's history and legal transactions without extensive research? If you answered "no" to any of these questions, it is time to migrate to ArcGIS Parcel Fabric.

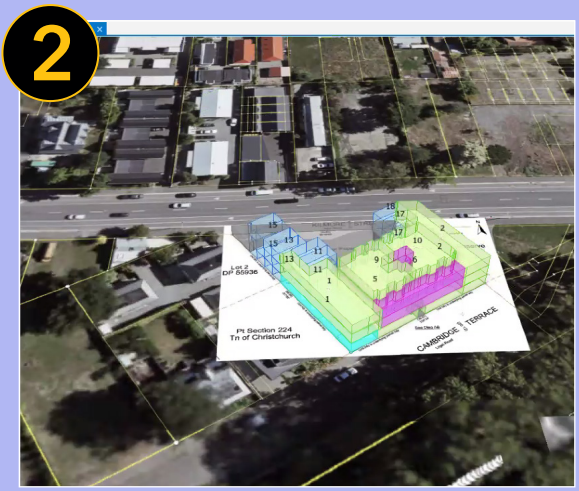
“When the wildfires hit, the critical nature of parcel data immediately became clear. Recovery would be impossible without it.”
Ellen Deleissegues,
GIS Analyst for Maui County



1 Future-Proof Your Parcels

Land is complex, and its transactions are cumulative. Why keep throwing away all your work by only managing a snapshot in time?

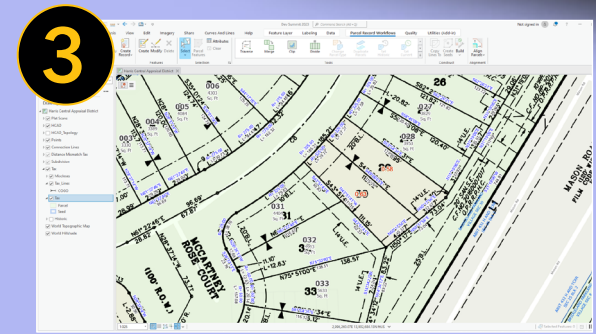
Sutter County, California, migrated to the ArcGIS Parcel Fabric and is future-proofing its parcels by leveraging features such as historical parcel tracking and storage of the legal record for a complete land records solution.



2 Increase Revenue

Don't let inaccurate or incomplete data cost your organization money. By maintaining accurate and complete representations of your parcels, you can fully realize the value they bring to your organization.

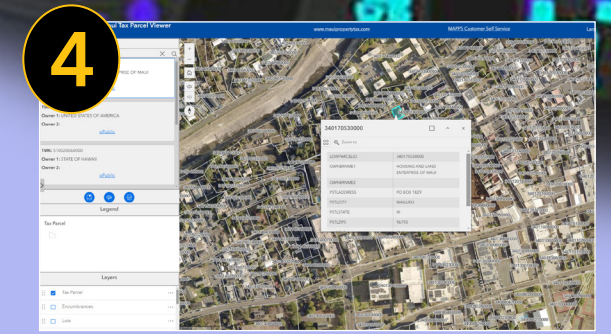
For example, by leveraging the 3D capability of ArcGIS Parcel Fabric, appraisers can more accurately determine characteristics of a property that may affect its value.



3 Maximize Your Resources

Take advantage of the built-in efficiencies of ArcGIS Parcel Fabric to reduce editing time and minimize errors.

For instance, the Harris Central Appraisal District (HCAD), Texas, which manages over one million parcels, has seen up to a 75 percent time savings in addressing common data challenges through the use of ArcGIS Parcel Fabric.



4 Better Serve Stakeholders

Have confidence that your land information is accurate and accessible to all stakeholders. Know that if disaster strikes, your parcels are ready to respond as part of your resilience plan.



Are You Ready to Migrate?
Please visit link.esri.com/ParcelforSLG.
Coming in 2026
ArcGIS Parcel Fabric for ArcGIS Online

How Child Care Aware® of America Moves from Maps to Action

Parenting young children is a thrilling journey filled with milestones and big decisions—especially concerning childcare. For working parents, finding reliable childcare can be overwhelming and time-consuming. But where are the high concentrations of these parents? And what federal, state, or local policies might be affecting the supply and availability of care across the United States? That’s where Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) steps in. By leveraging geographic information system (GIS) technology, the organization helps industry leaders and policymakers easily visualize the landscape of the childcare system in their state or region, empowering decision-makers to craft data-informed strategies so every family can find the quality, affordable childcare they need.

Based in Arlington, Virginia, CCAoA is a national nonprofit dedicated to serving as “a hub for all things childcare,” according to Alex Cooper, the organization’s director of GIS research. CCAoA is the only national organization that supports every part of the childcare system. Its mission is to advance a childcare system that effectively serves

all children and families. CCAoA also supports and strengthens the state and local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) organizations across the United States, which give busy working parents quick and easy access to available childcare options, especially when time constraints make searching on their own difficult. Because understanding where childcare providers are in relation to community demand is inherently geographic, CCAoA uses ArcGIS to turn spatial data into actionable insight.

Innovative GIS Applications for Childcare

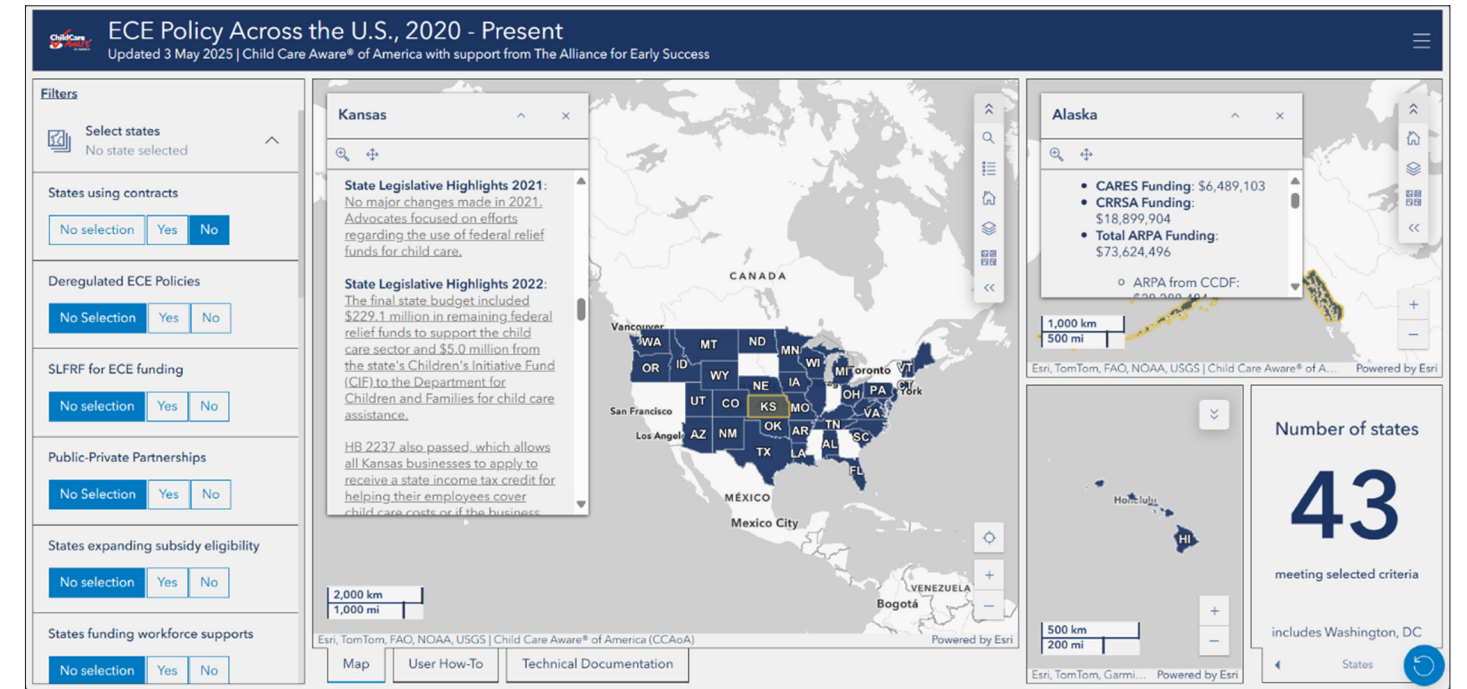
With so many different administrations of childcare services across the nation and even within states, it can be a struggle to stay in the know about important updates and changes. By acting with a geographical perspective, CCAoA positions itself as a leading resource for researchers, parents, and relevant stakeholders to obtain insightful and location-based data to improve access. For instance, by using ArcGIS Dashboards, CCAoA can present location-based analytics as intuitive and interactive data visualizations.

Communities can share such dashboards with policymakers to showcase existing gaps between families in need and childcare providers, helping paint the picture of where improvements are needed to strengthen their childcare system in their regions.

However, not only is childcare rooted in policy, but it is also compassionate and personal. When talking about his experiences, Cooper says, “As I’ve gotten older, a lot of my friends and colleagues are starting to have families, and I’ll tell them about the work we do at Child Care Aware® of America to support CCR&Rs and how they can help them find childcare while they’re trying to work. A lot of people don’t know about the no-cost referral services CCR&Rs provide, so we’re always trying to raise awareness. Working parents are a very tired constituency who often lack the time and energy to advocate for the better services they need.”

CCR&Rs rely on accurate data and insights in order to offer quality referral services and consumer education, but staying up to date in a world in which childcare availability is constantly changing is a challenge. CCAoA aims to empower CCR&Rs and other early learning advocates by getting that hard-to-find information quickly to the people who need it to drive change.

One of CCAoA’s many initiatives is the Child Care Access in West Virginia: Mapping the Gap™ dashboard that highlights both the potential demand (families in need of childcare) and supply (nearby providers) through ArcGIS Dashboards. By providing these visualizations, advocates and state policymakers are more aware of local resources and gaps in access without having to undergo time-consuming research.



↑ Child Care Aware® of America’s State Policy Dashboard

With this dashboard, users can filter through the counties of West Virginia and better understand how many providers are available within a county, the area’s licensed capacity, and the type of care available—in-home family childcare, childcare centers, school-age programs, or Head Start programs—all while interacting with a map that visualizes the displayed data in a clear, user-friendly way.

In addition, the project showcases the need for more childcare access within a certain area by providing a supply-and-demand metric that tracks how many children under the age of six are in potential need of childcare but have no providers with available capacity nearby. Policymakers can use these metrics to gauge where more attention and resources should be allocated. Furthermore, the dashboard can be used by advocates or researchers looking to gain insights to inform discussions with policymakers and legislative recommendations.

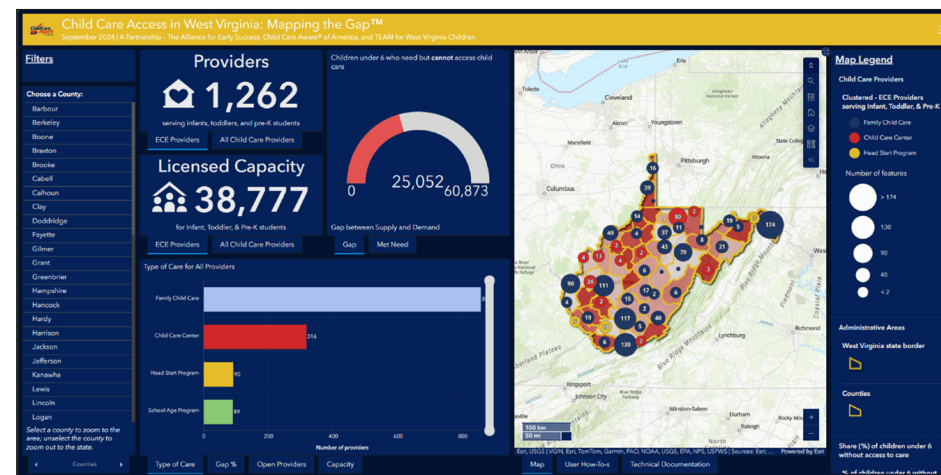
Advancing Childcare Policy with GIS

On the topic of policy, childcare regulations differ considerably on a state-to-state basis. The United States’ fragmented childcare system can make the childcare environment cryptic and confusing for parents to navigate. CCAoA’s policy analysts initially tracked state administrative and legislative policy changes manually in a spreadsheet to stay on top of any new developments in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cooper saw an opportunity to not only highlight and visualize these state policies on a dashboard but also to make the process more efficient. The policy team today continues to input data into the same spreadsheet, but now through Cooper’s automated GIS workflow, that data is joined to a spatial layer that is fed into an ArcGIS Online dashboard showing state funding, legislative highlights, and more state-specific policy information. Through this dashboard, childcare policies are organized into one

easily navigable platform where national and state partners and policymakers can become aware of how other states are moving toward more accessible and affordable childcare systems.

These two initiatives are a few of the many ways CCAoA has utilized ArcGIS to boost awareness of not only childcare service resources but also investments and policies being implemented around childcare and early learning at the state and local levels. By housing, organizing, and mapping spatial data, CCAoA transforms geographical insights into action to help every family be able to find quality, affordable childcare, while also contributing meaningful statistics to policymakers to drive improvement.

To learn more about how GIS can be leveraged in your not-for-profit organization, please visit: link.esri.com/GISforNPO.



↑ Child Care Aware® of America’s West Virginia Childcare Dashboard

model. This early geospatial AI model could automate a key workflow—checking field images against recorded values in the dataset.

Cox wanted to experiment, but at the time, TLCGIS computers didn't have the discrete graphics cards needed for early AI work. Using a gaming computer, Cox ran the model on an image of the entire 7,000-plus square miles of Leon County. It took four days to process, but he found the feature output to be incredibly accurate.

Doing More with Less

The promise of AI-powered digital tools—to do more with less—is a familiar refrain for local government administrators. Often challenged to deliver services with reduced or stagnant budgets, officials look for ways to optimize. Over the years, TLCGIS has laid the track for dozens of departments to innovate with location intelligence. With geospatial AI, Weisman and Cox have a work multiplier—an innovation high-speed rail of their own.

Tallahassee's recent AI-powered innovations join an already prodigious portfolio of projects:

- Permit Finder integrates data from both the city and county permitting systems, offering a unified source for

permit information. Users can access details on active permits, residential and nonresidential permits, and specific data by entering a permit number or address. This consolidation streamlines the permitting process and enhances transparency.

- The Flood Resource App (internal only) includes detailed basin data and layers related to flooding and storm surges. It is a crucial tool for planners and permitting offices, helping them make informed decisions about flood-prone areas and stormwater management. The app provides real-time information on water levels and potential flood risks, enhancing emergency preparedness and response.
- The highly utilized Land Information App provides essential property-related information, such as ownership, zoning, and land use. It is a valuable resource for residents, businesses, and planners, offering detailed data that can be accessed easily and quickly.
- The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Dashboard (internal only) offers live data during emergencies, ensuring timely and informed decision-making. It features real-time maps of traffic accidents, road

closures, and damaged buildings, which are critical for coordinating emergency response efforts and communicating with the public.

GIS Superpowers: Operationalizing Innovation

Few local GIS offices can boast such a well-executed set of public sector GIS apps and tools.

Even fewer take on the responsibility of creating content for their city's bicentennial celebrations.

Weisman explained, only half in jest, that TLCGIS staffs a resident historian. Marcus Curtis is an expert GIS analyst and insatiable history buff. In 2024, he built the History in Your Hands program for the 200th anniversary of the city's founding. The map-guided exploration of Tallahassee neighborhoods garnered national media coverage and awards from historical societies. It brought about new and transformative connections.

"Marcus has reestablished plantation boundaries from old census maps and deeds," Weisman said. "He's catching the eye of real historians."

Passion projects are part of an approach designed to raise the profile of TLCGIS across departments in Leon County. This visibility is crucial, given how the Tallahassee–Leon County government is structured.

As a city office, TLCGIS serves the City of Tallahassee, the Leon County government, and the county property appraiser. They also collaborate with state agencies and provide mutual aid to other counties when called upon. Program costs are shared between partners. The more the offices collaborate and drive value outside the program, the more its recognition grows and expands into new projects.

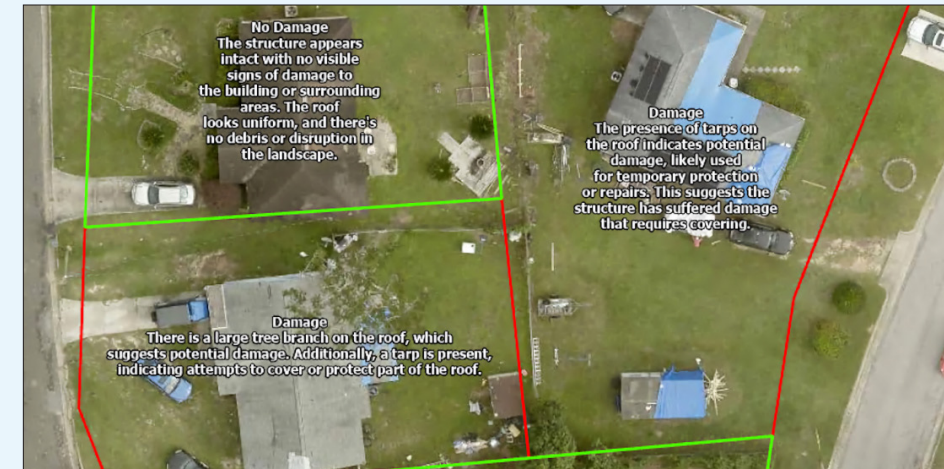
"One of the advantages of the structure we have in place—it includes an executive level, a steering committee, and a user

group level," Weisman explained. "Data sharing is streamlined because no memorandums of understanding are required. The trust within the program facilitates this process."

The city employs other GIS professionals outside of TCGIS. Weisman—and his dedicated team of 13 full-time employees and two interns—

CPUs suited to geospatial AI workloads. Using pretrained geospatial AI models from ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World, Cox developed applications for partner agencies: coloring historic aerial images and calculating service fees and tree densities with geospatial AI.

"The biggest benefit to us at TCGIS is that geospatial AI significantly lowers



↑ This aerial view shows how geospatial AI automatically categorizes storm damage. Green zones indicate no damage, while red areas highlight structures needing attention, complete with detailed analysis that would take human inspectors hours to complete.

evangelize about the technology and push the envelope of what GIS can do.

Weisman takes great care in curating the TCGIS team, handpicking individuals who have demonstrated a deep passion and creativity in their work.

The formula keeps morale high and turnover low. "Everyone has what I call a superpower, a special skill—they are a subject matter expert," Weisman said. "People who can dig into a particular topic and become experts in it."

Cultivating the Geospatial AI Superpower

Superpowers may take a few years to develop, but the signs are always there. Jason Cox, who designed the geospatial AI tree restoration assessment tool and first responder basemaps, demonstrates this evolution.

Eventually, Weisman equipped Cox with workstation PCs from Lambda Labs designed for AI and machine learning workloads. Other office computers were upgraded with video cards and

the barrier to entry for updating our datasets," Cox said. "It saves me about three weeks of manual review every year just with building footprint extraction models alone."

The time saved is reinvested into the superpower. "There may be lots

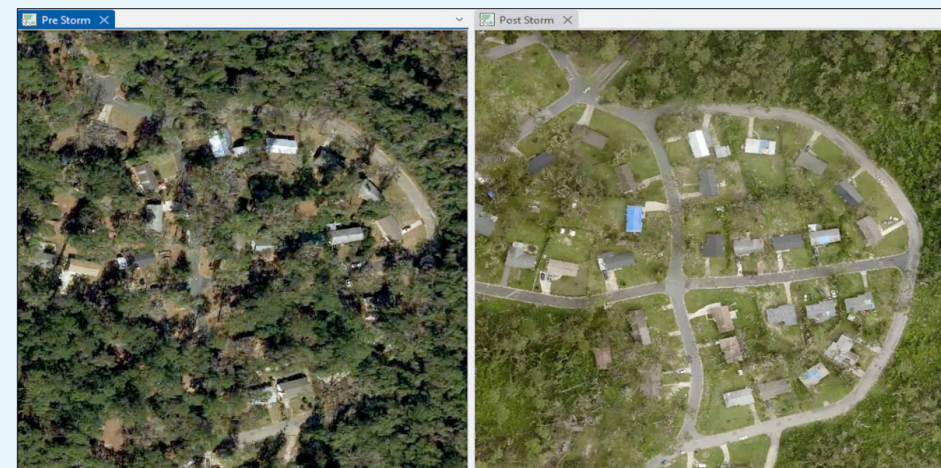
of organizations that are dipping their toe into AI and are doing some similar things," Weisman said. "Most people are treading water to keep up with the requests they have come in, but we are fortunate to manage workloads and innovate at the same time."

The next frontier? Generative AI. Already, Cox has begun experimenting with large language models in ArcGIS Pro. Specifically, the Vision Language Context-Based Classification model, using GPT-4 to query imagery to build out classifications and features. Cox adds, "The ability to kind of describe ground conditions—not just extract features, identify features, but actually describe the condition of features and imagery—I believe is nothing short of amazing."

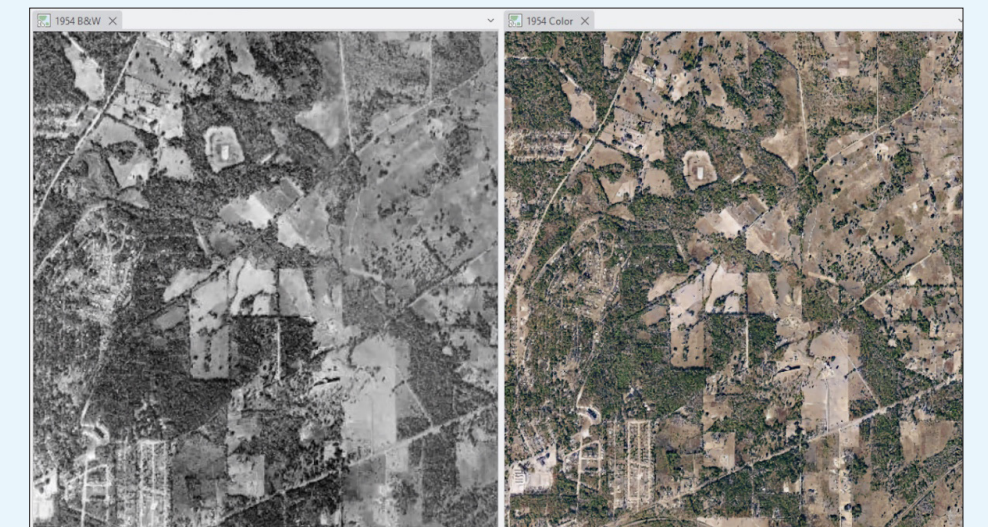
While terms like "superhuman" describe how geospatial AI works, it's important to remember that silicon and algorithms alone don't solve problems.

TLCGIS reminds us that humans drive innovation. Humans with GIS superpowers who put geospatial AI to work to accomplish more.

To learn more about how artificial intelligence in GIS, please visit link.esri.com/GeoAIOverview.



↑ Before-and-after aerial images reveal storm damage that AI can detect instantly. The pre-storm image (left) shows dense tree coverage, while the post-storm view (right) shows significant canopy loss. TCGIS uses these comparisons to prioritize recovery efforts.



↑ TCGIS uses AI to colorize historical aerial images like this 1954 black-and-white photo (left) transformed into full color (right). This geospatial AI application helps historians and planners visualize how Tallahassee's landscape has changed over decades.

Esri Demographics in ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World

By Jim Herries, GIS Engineering Team Lead and Geographer, Esri

The people who live and work in your community are a crucial part of decision-making for government and business leaders. A new collection of free US demographics feature layers and maps is now available in ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World. Every ArcGIS user has free access in ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World. Updated demographic estimates for 2025 and projections for 2030 from the Esri Demographics team.

ArcGIS Living Atlas provides dozens of layers and maps with key demographic information about your community's people, their income, and housing—already symbolized to show the most popular topics at a variety of map scales. The layers and maps show the information for the US overall as well as for states, counties, ZIP codes, and census tracts. As you zoom in to local levels, more detail is revealed.

The current-year estimates and five-year projections for demographic data are all available in ArcGIS Living Atlas of the World to help support the geographic information system (GIS) community bring current

demographic trends into the light.

The Esri Demographics data joins the many US Census Bureau layers and maps in ArcGIS Living Atlas.

What Is Esri Demographics?

Esri provides an advanced demographics dataset for the United States. This dataset is developed by Esri and includes source material supplied by the US Census Bureau, its American Community Survey, and public and private data sources.

The Esri Updated Demographics dataset is a suite of annually updated US demographic data containing current-year estimates and five-year forecasts for more than 2,000 demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Included are tables that cover key characteristics about the US population, households, housing, age, race, income, and more. Esri Updated Demographics consists of point estimates, representing July 1 of the current and forecast years.

The full suite of Esri Updated Demographics attributes is made

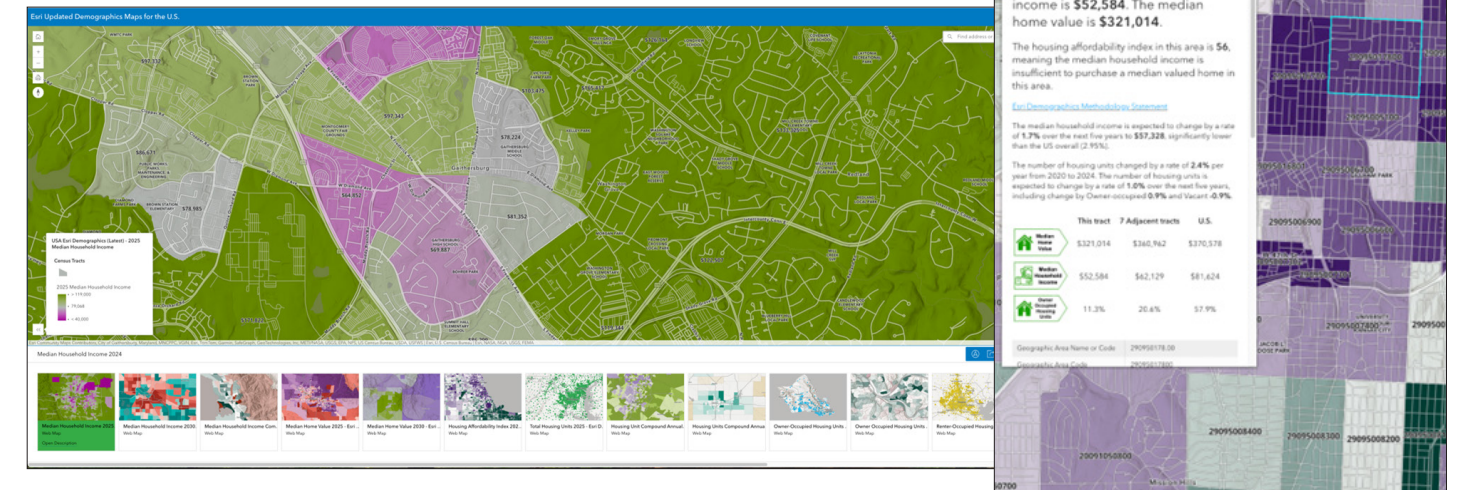
available in ArcGIS Business Analyst™, ArcGIS GeoEnrichment™ in ArcGIS Pro, and Map Viewer.

The free layers in ArcGIS Living Atlas are a small subset of 24 attributes. An additional 400 attributes of most interest to state and local government GIS users are available in a premium demographics layer. This layer is available for a small annual subscription fee for unlimited use by state, county, or city GIS analysts.

What the Layers and Maps Include

The new USA Esri Demographics (Latest) layers and maps provide detailed demographic information for understanding your population by tract, ZIP code, county, or state.

- 2025 Total Population
- 2025 Total Housing Units
- 2025 Owner Occupied Housing Units
- 2025 Renter Occupied Housing Units
- 2025 Vacant Housing Units
- 2025 Housing Affordability Index
- 2025 and 2030 Median Household Income



- 2025 and 2030 Median Home Value
- 2025 Population Density per Square Mile
- 2020–2025 and 2025–2030 Population Compound Annual Growth Rate
- 2020–2025 and 2025–2030 Housing Unit Compound Annual Growth Rate
- 2025–2030 Owner Occupied Housing Units Compound Annual Growth Rate
- 2025–2030 Vacant Housing Units Compound Annual Growth Rate
- 2025–2030 Median Household Income Compound Annual Growth Rate
- 2025 Land Area in Square Miles
- Informative attribute field aliases, field descriptions, and field types
- Scale-dependent layers that show more detail as you zoom in
- ArcGIS Arcade expressions that show how information in the symbology or pop-ups is calculated
- Labels that appear at useful scales
- Layers that cover the entire US but can be filtered to focus only on your community
- The ability to change any of the above settings and save your changes
- Use any of the 43 layers and maps as a backdrop to other topics such as locations of transit stops, business corridors, and future development.
- Make their own map from the 20 attributes available or Arcade expressions they create using those attributes.
- Compare Esri Demographics current estimates to official census data in ArcGIS Living Atlas from the 2020 Census or American Community Survey.
- Integrate data with demographic and traffic volume layers for risk analysis.
- Create compelling data visualizations and interactive maps.

How You Can Use This Layer

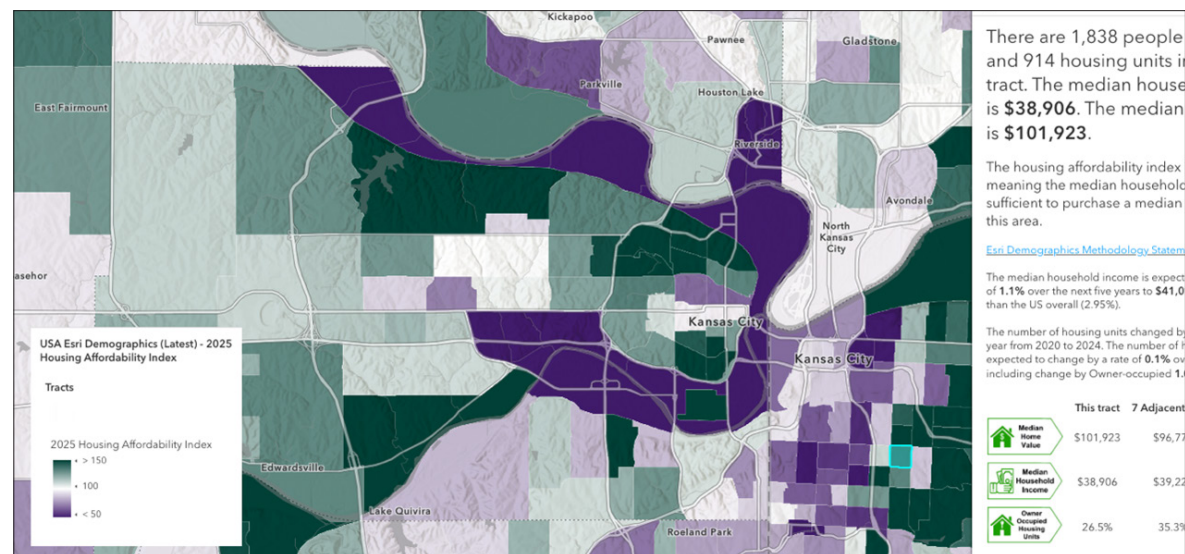
With Esri Demographics layers and maps, planners, public safety analysts, transportation analysts, economic development analysts, education officials, and GIS professionals can:

- Use the web maps in their apps and dashboards.
- Add the layers to web maps and ArcGIS Pro projects.
- Identify where the population and housing are concentrated.
- Visualize where growth has occurred in the past.
- Visualize where growth is projected to occur in the future.

ArcGIS Living Atlas—Your Partner in GIS

ArcGIS Living Atlas expands the reach of your GIS department by providing you thousands of layers and maps you can use immediately, saving you time: hours, days, or even weeks. The Esri Demographics feature layers and maps have all the details and enhancements you'd expect from ArcGIS Living Atlas content:

← The USA Esri Demographics (Latest)—2025 Housing Affordability Index layer and map include a pop-up that compares the census tract you click on to the adjacent tracts and to the US overall.



Enhancing Mississippi Beach Water Monitoring Through GIS Technology

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has long prioritized the safety of the state's beaches. Traditional methods of tracking water quality, which involved field scientists collecting samples, conducting lab tests, and manually issuing advisories, proved time-consuming and often delayed needed warnings. These lags exposed the public to health risks before advisories could be released. With the growing need for a more efficient and timely response, MDEQ turned to geographic information system (GIS) technology to transform how water quality data is collected, analyzed, and shared.

MDEQ, in collaboration with Esri partner The Geospatial Group, implemented a cutting-edge GIS solution that streamlined the entire process. This ensured that water quality data was not only collected in real time but also made accessible to both the public and decision-makers instantaneously.

Innovating Beach Water Quality Management with ArcGIS Enterprise

The new system integrates ArcGIS Enterprise with real-time data input, allowing MDEQ scientists to monitor water quality conditions as they evolve throughout the day. Using an intuitive application built by The Geospatial Group, MDEQ staff can now quickly access and input the latest bacteria sample readings.

The automated system immediately processes this data and updates public-facing maps, powered by ArcGIS Maps SDK for JavaScript™, alerting beachgoers about potential health risks when bacteria levels exceed safe thresholds. Selecting a specific beach on the map triggers a pop-up display of pertinent information, sourced from the feature layer and custom fields in ArcGIS Arcade. These updates happen almost instantaneously, meaning that the public has up-to-date information at their fingertips, making it possible to reach informed decisions on where to swim and when to stay out of the water.

This integration of GIS technology eliminates the need for slow, manual processes like cross-checking spreadsheets and compiling advisory reports. Instead, MDEQ staff can focus their time on the analysis of environmental trends and the formulation of data-driven decisions. The data is written to the feature layer using ArcGIS REST APIs that catalog and update the information, enabling efficient user features. With just a few clicks, scientists can verify data, cross-reference it with automated warnings, and issue advisories, ensuring that no one is exposed to harmful bacteria without being informed in a timely manner.

The program's efficiency also extends to the management of monitoring stations. MDEQ can easily activate or deactivate stations as needed, ensuring that the network of monitoring sites remains responsive to the real-time needs of the community. Historical data is neatly organized and fully searchable, making it simpler to analyze trends over time and identify long-term changes in water quality. The ability to export this data further enhances the department's ability to make informed policy recommendations and refine environmental management strategies.

Moreover, the GIS allows MDEQ to enhance transparency and improve public communication. With the system in place, the public can access water quality data directly through the Mississippi Beach Monitoring Program's interactive map. This map not only provides real-time data about bacteria levels but also offers historical trends, letting the public see how conditions have changed over time. The built-in text alert feature allows users to receive notifications when water quality advisories are issued, ensuring

Through the Beach Monitoring Program, MDEQ is able to provide the latest water quality results, helping people make informed decisions about where to swim. This ensures that visitors can choose safe, clean locations based on real-time and up-to-date information. We are proud to do our part in helping the public enjoy the Mississippi Gulf Coast with confidence.

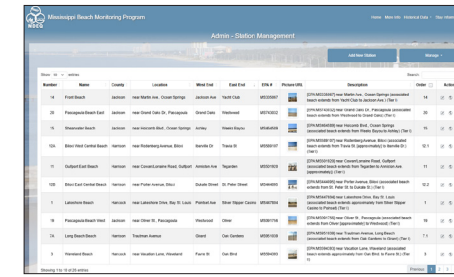
Emily Cotton,
Supervisor, Biology Section, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

that beachgoers always have the latest information. Local families utilize this tool in preparation for a day at the beach, giving them peace of mind about their health and well-being. This transparency builds trust between MDEQ and the community, showing how both data and the science behind it are accessible to everyone.

The benefits of this system also extend to local businesses. Hotels, restaurants, and other coastal vendors rely on clean beaches to attract tourists. With accurate and timely water quality reports, businesses can provide assurances to visitors, contributing to the region's economic health and reputation as a prime tourist destination. Additionally, MDEQ's system has helped government officials, policymakers, and environmental scientists analyze long-term trends, fostering collaboration across agencies and enabling data-driven decisions that support both environmental protection and economic interests.

MDEQ's GIS-Based Water Monitoring: Now and Next

For MDEQ, the partnership with The Geospatial Group and Esri has not only transformed the way water quality monitoring is conducted but has also significantly improved the department's ability to respond quickly and effectively to public health concerns. This GIS-based method of tracking water quality has become an indispensable tool for local and state governments. It enables



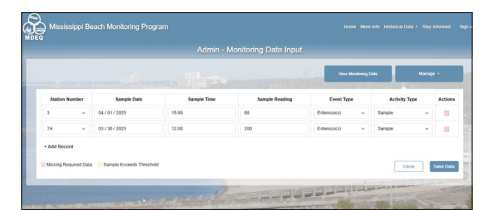
Administrative feature of station monitoring and management.



MDEQ staff member collecting ocean water samples for analysis.



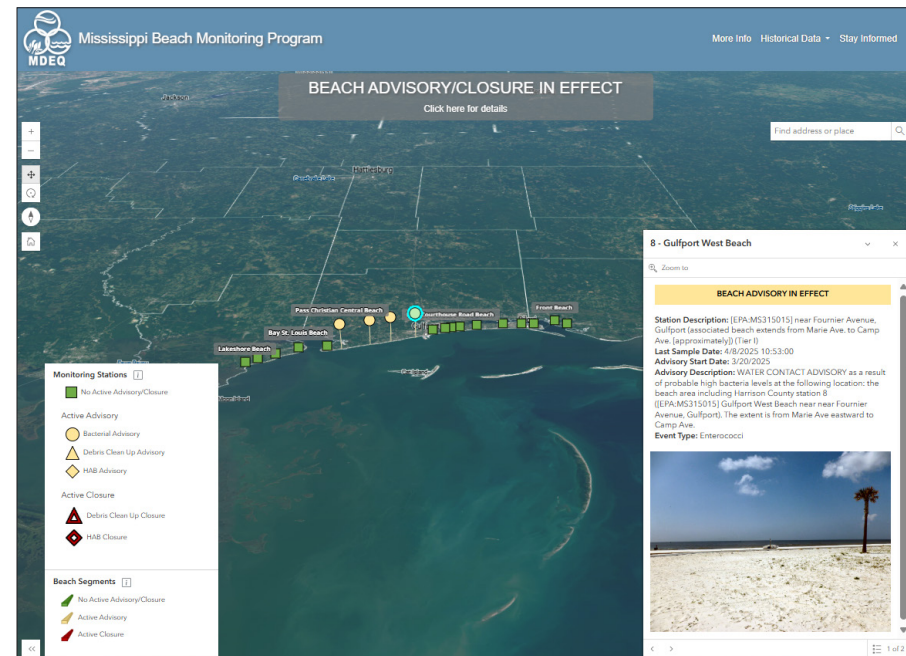
Packaging samples for transport back to the lab.



Data collection dashboard.



Users can sign up for text alerts to stay informed on current conditions and advisories.



Interactive map displaying real-time data of current beach conditions.

them to manage beach safety with a higher level of efficiency and precision than ever before.

Through the integration of real-time data, GIS mapping, and advanced analytics, MDEQ has created a comprehensive solution that improves both the environmental monitoring process and public health outcomes. The Mississippi Beach Monitoring Program now stands as a model of how innovative technology can be applied to protect natural resources, support economic stability, and enhance public safety.

Building on the success of the Mississippi Beach Monitoring Program, MDEQ continues to expand its use of GIS technology to support additional environmental initiatives. New workflows are being implemented to monitor freshwater quality, track watershed health, and assess impaired water bodies across the state. By leveraging GIS in these areas, MDEQ continues to strengthen its environmental oversight, streamline data collection and reporting, and provide more timely and accurate information to stakeholders.

"Through the Beach Monitoring Program, MDEQ is able to provide the latest water quality results, helping people make informed decisions about where to swim. This ensures that visitors can choose safe, clean locations based on real-time and up-to-date information," said Emily Cotton, supervisor of the MDEQ Biology Section. "We are proud to do our part in helping the public enjoy the Mississippi Gulf Coast with confidence."



To streamline environmental protection with GIS, please visit link.esri.com/EnvironmentProtection.

Modernizing Land Records Management with ArcGIS Parcel Fabric in Tooele County

Moving forward with streamlined parcel editing and automated plat map production.

In Tooele County, Utah, local government officials found themselves struggling to manage parcel data with outdated technology. The editing process was fragmented, with two departments working in separate environments, lacking standardization. To update plats, county staff manually drew edits before they were scanned and stored as physical maps. This labor-intensive approach often led to missing line work and data loss, particularly during a previous migration from AutoCAD.

While the county was technologically forward-thinking, it lacked the budget of some larger entities. The county needed a solution that would allow editors to be more productive with taxpayer dollars. Recognizing the need for a more streamlined modern approach, the county, under the leadership of a recorder who was a staunch advocate for

technological advancement, partnered with Esri partner Pro-West & Associates to implement a geographic information system (GIS).

Staff from both organizations embarked on a two-phase project. The first phase involved migrating to ArcGIS Parcel Fabric, while the second phase focused on implementing a map series to automate the creation and management of plat maps. This initiative was designed to consolidate all editing and decision-making within a single department, automate processes, streamline workflows, and standardize and organize the county's maps.

Moving Forward with ArcGIS Pro and ArcGIS Parcel Fabric

Tooele County and Pro-West staff first began by migrating existing parcel data to ArcGIS Pro and Parcel Fabric. This would allow errors to be corrected and

line work to be filled in over time. It also enabled the team to start incorporating the workflow efficiencies and technical capabilities of Parcel Fabric without delay.

Before they began working in Parcel Fabric, county parcel editors completed on-site training with Pro-West, supported by Esri's wealth of online video resources, to learn key tools, best practices, and workflows in ArcGIS Pro.

"Our training was tailored to our unique needs and scenarios that we encounter, which kept it focused and gave us the skills to begin working with confidence in the new environment," explained Emily Jones, director of operations for the Recorder/Surveyor's Office. "Our entire team has found ArcGIS Pro to be user-friendly and it has allowed us to completely change how we work for the better." Jones has become the go-to team member for technical expertise among the county's parcel editors.

The Impact of Efficiency

Working with ArcGIS Pro has brought many advantages to Tooele County's mappers. The team can work concurrently, with the ability to incorporate editors' updates while others continue to work in Parcel Fabric. This includes team members working remotely, who can now perform tasks in any location instead of only when they are in the office.

One of the most important efficiency improvements is the ability for editors to be more productive. They now perform two to three times the amount of work they could complete previously, delivering better value for taxpayer dollars and enabling more timely updates.

With parcel data maintained in Parcel Fabric, a script was implemented to automatically publish up-to-date parcel data every night. This has saved more time and improved access to authoritative information.

"We have confidence in our data because we've been able to clean up errors, perform maintenance, and publish updated data much more efficiently. We know our users are seeing accurate data now when they view our maps," said Jones.

Tooele County mappers are embracing the benefits of the ArcGIS Parcel Fabric environment, including:

- User-friendly tools
- Remote data editing capabilities
- Concurrent editing
- Improved visualization of property information
- Enhanced search capabilities
- Increased productivity
- More efficient editing practices
- Parcel history tracking

Automating Plat Map Production with a Map Series

To complete the transition to a modern parcel management workflow, the county collaborated with Pro-West & Associates to implement a map series in ArcGIS Pro.

The map series provided the capabilities the county needed to automate and standardize the publication of over 2,000 plat maps. It also eliminated the difficult process of updating and storing individual maps.

Parcel updates made in Parcel Fabric are automatically published to the map series, where they are used to generate new plat maps that reflect accurate data. A standardized layout developed for Tooele County is applied to all maps, ensuring labels display and behave in a way that works for the various scales required by the county.

Further Embracing Emerging Technology

Tooele County remains focused on benefiting from advancing technology to further improve productivity in the Recorder/Surveyor's Office. For example, the county recently opened 24-hour recording submittal to offer flexibility outside of office hours for users in any location, and is looking to artificial intelligence to process those submittals more efficiently and improve the services and information available to users.

"We want to do as much as possible with the resources we have, and technology is an important part of that."

For counties facing similar challenges, both Jones and Houghton offered key

“Migrating to ArcGIS Parcel Fabric and map series has provided a foundation to take advantage of other technologies to meet our users' expectations while operating within our budget.”

Jerry Houghton,
Tooele County Recorder/Surveyor

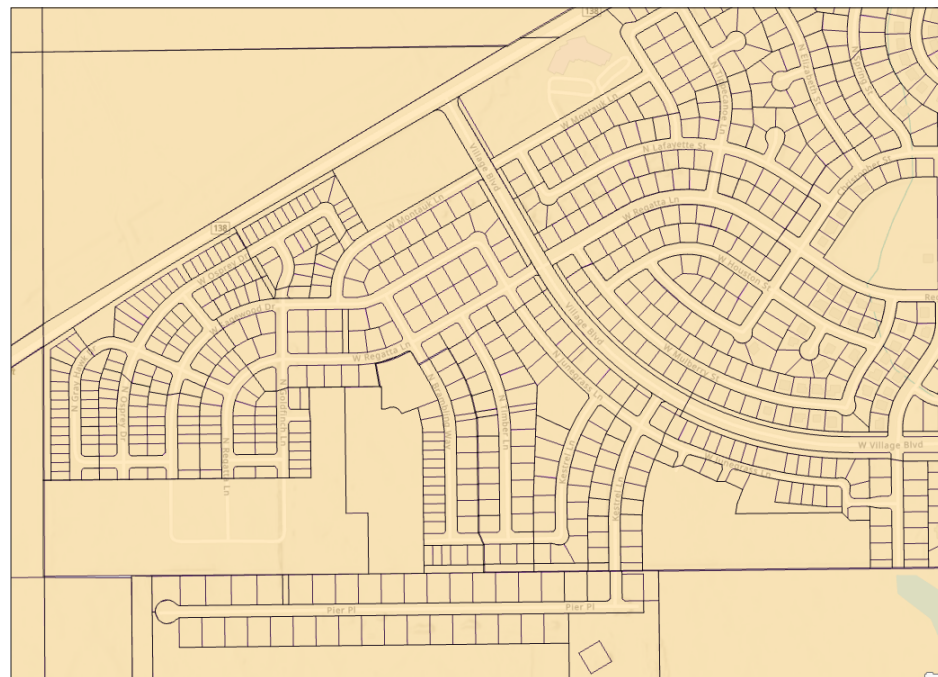
advice. Jones emphasized that finding the right technological partner can help speed the process.

"Find a partner who will help you reach your goal," said Jones. "Working with experts will get you there faster and give you the right training and support during an important transition. For Tooele County, having a partner has been nothing but beneficial."

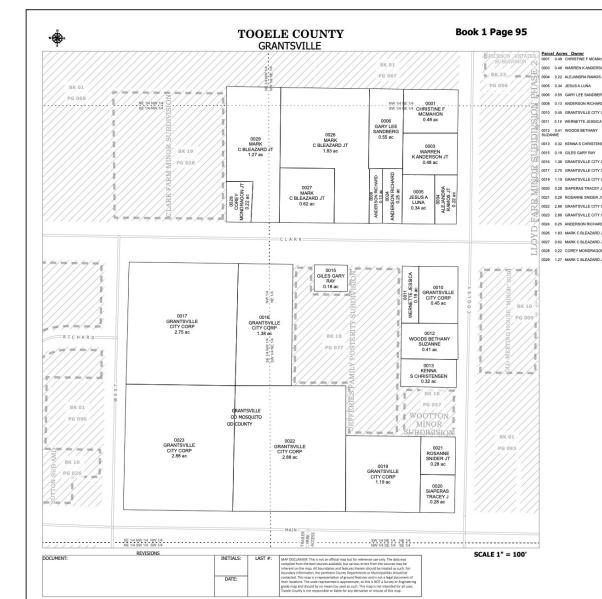
Houghton added that hesitation with new technology is inevitable. "So, anything you can do to get ahead of it now is beneficial—it will only get harder later," Houghton said. "Once you do that, it starts to get exciting, and more and more ideas emerge about how to become more efficient."

"Using the map series process has transformed the way in which we produce plat maps," said Jones. "Our maps used to be out of date because making updates to 2,000 plus maps was so time-consuming, but now it's a highly streamlined workflow that allows us to easily share up-to-date information."

The county can visually identify data errors, such as overlaps in parcel boundaries on the maps produced by the map series, and quickly make updates in Parcel Fabric.



↑ Tooele County's parcel data in ArcGIS Parcel Fabric.



← ArcGIS Parcel Fabric data showing a residential subdivision in Tooele County.



Modernize your land records management.

If you want to learn more about parcel solutions, please visit link.esri.com/ParcelSolutions.

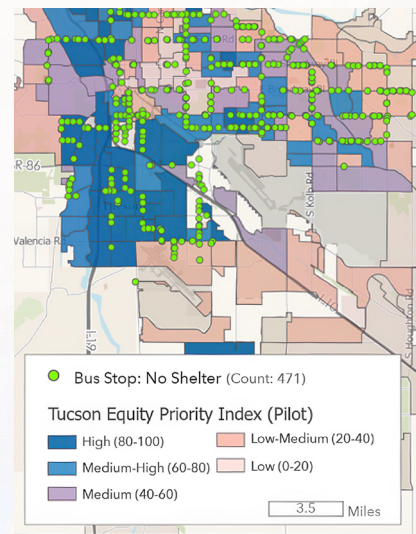
Lessons Learned for Developing an Equity Strategic Plan with GIS

Taking Action: Creating Safe Routes to School with Smart Mapping

As organizations implement GIS to enhance their equity strategic plans, five recurring patterns have emerged that can be embraced by all. These lessons reflect proactive steps that jurisdictions are taking to address inequities directly. GIS is more than a mere tool; it is a fundamental component of the overall strategy, enabling state and local governments to analyze disparities, allocate resources efficiently, and assess outcomes systematically. Applying these lessons enables ongoing learning, adaptability, and responsiveness to community needs. Learn how to establish your strategy, advance economic mobility, and successfully implement these proven patterns.

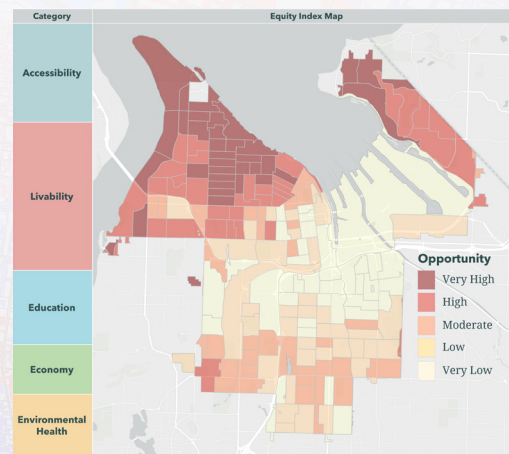
1. Bringing Together Two Disciplines: The Strength in Partnership

Governments frequently address complex issues from the perspective of individual departments, which may result in limited cross-departmental collaboration. Tackling large, complex government challenges requires an interdisciplinary approach, where equity professionals and GIS professionals collaborate by combining their respective areas of expertise—human experience and data analysis. This “team of two” concept emphasizes the merging of two disciplines, not necessarily two individuals, to create a solid foundation of technology and practice that implements GIS into all areas of work.



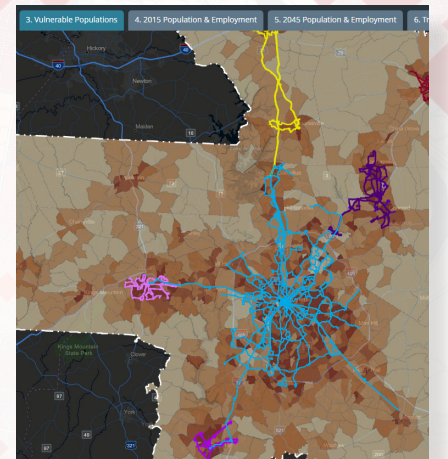
2. Creating an Equity Index: Prioritizing Areas of Need

An equity index, particularly when applied through GIS mapping, is a powerful tool for analyzing and visualizing disparities across demographic, socioeconomic, environmental, and resource access factors. It incorporates various measures of vulnerability—such as income, education, health outcomes, insurance coverage, age, rent burden, poverty levels, homeownership, and access to the internet and other resources—to offer a comprehensive assessment of social equity within a specific area. By integrating multiple factors into a single score displayed on a map, the vulnerability index provides an overview of the locations and proportions of communities identified as vulnerable or marginalized.



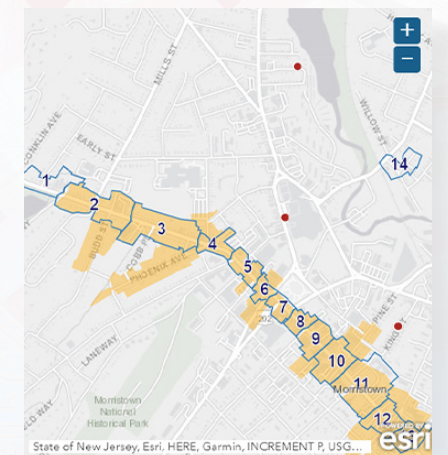
3. Developing a Data Hub: Breaking Down Silos

A data hub provides a geographically referenced way of maintaining data and organizing it by index theme or departmental priorities, enabling departments to access information that supports applying equity in their work. By breaking down traditional data silos, the platform allows stakeholders to obtain information that was previously inaccessible. Built with ArcGIS HubSM, this interactive platform allows the public and stakeholders to access data and applications as well as learn about progress made on equity initiatives.



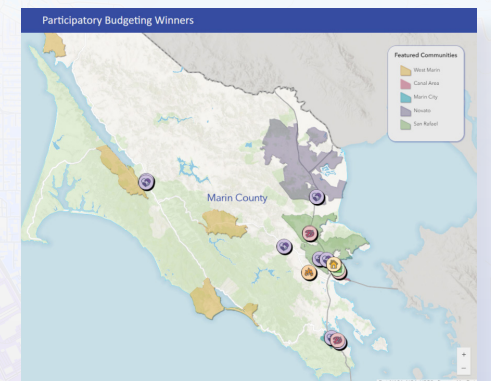
4. Operationalizing Equity Across Departments

Governments can operationalize equity by embedding GIS into their day-to-day work. By being prescriptive in applying GIS—such as mapping mayoral priorities, tracking inequities, and using dashboards to monitor indicators like broadband access—governments can clearly show where resources are allocated and where progress is made. This approach moves equity from words to action. Successful governments integrate GIS across departments, embedding it into strategic initiatives so equity is not just discussed in town halls but actively advanced through coordinated, data-informed decision-making.



5. Providing Transparency and Accountability

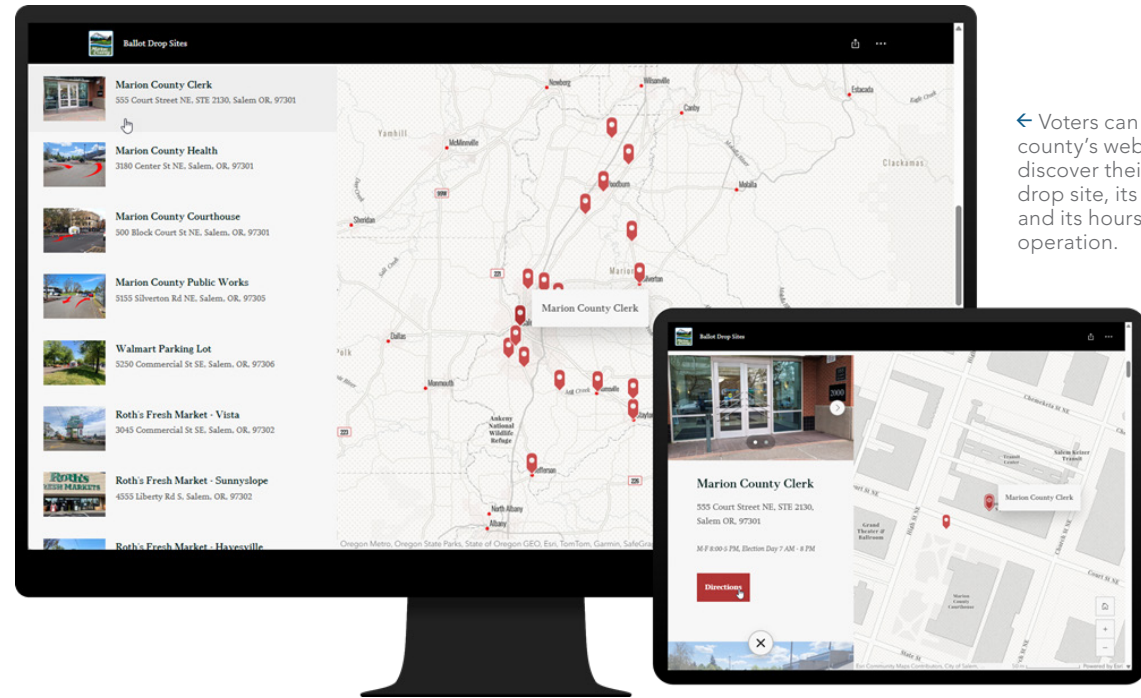
GIS provides a unique vehicle for government organizations to share the work they do. Using GIS-based tools such as dashboards, interactive maps, and resident response surveys enables organizations to ensure transparency and accountability in their work. By openly sharing data via dashboards on public websites, organizations clearly demonstrate progress or the lack thereof. Interactive maps provide a visually appealing narrative for the government to share what is going on in the community and to explore why the government takes certain actions.



Learn More at link.esri.com/EconomicMobility

Marion County, OR, Transforms Ballot Security with the Election Management Solution

By Mindy Longoni and Mike Dagle



← Voters can visit the county's website to discover their nearest drop site, its location, and its hours of operation.

ArcGIS Solutions helps you make the most of your geographic information system (GIS) by providing purpose-driven, industry-specific configurations of ArcGIS.

When voters drop their ballots at a polling location or drop box, they are placing great faith in their local election officials, a responsibility that officials—often under intense scrutiny—do not take lightly. Yet many election organizations still rely on outdated paper-based processes to manage ballot chain of custody, creating gaps in accountability.

The Election Management solution by ArcGIS Solutions was designed to help organizations run efficient election operations and monitor election day performance. The solution integrates location intelligence and real-time data

collection, facilitating secure operations, informed voters, and trusted outcomes—before, during, and after election day.

One of the most important parts of an election is documenting the handling and transfer of ballots. Transparent and trustworthy elections rely on ballot chain of custody, which can be especially challenging for counties managing mail-in ballots and multiple drop boxes across a voting district. Here's how one forward-thinking county is using Election Management to significantly improve how they track ballot chain of custody.

Finding Solutions

Marion County, Oregon, is nestled in the heart of the Willamette Valley. Home to Salem, the state capital, its population—two-thirds of whom are

registered voters—is spread across nearly 1,200 square miles, as are its 21 ballot drop-off locations.

For years, county election officials used paper forms to track supplies and ballot chain of custody, but it was a challenge to maintain verifiable documentation and efficiently archive records. Later, they began digitizing communication using text messages, but to archive records, staff either had to take screenshots of the messages or use software to export them into PDF files.

Election officials began exploring ways to improve ballot chain of custody and provide better security for their drivers. Then, in early October of 2024, they learned about the Election Management solution, a configurable set of maps and apps available within the county's

existing ArcGIS organizational account. The county deployed, set up, and configured the solution, and had it up and running within a day and a half. By the November election, the solution was in place and ready to go.

Voters can visit the county's website to discover their nearest drop site, its location, and its hours of operation.

Transforming Processes

Organizations that deploy Election Management receive several configured apps that can be customized as necessary to fit each organization's needs. For example, the Marion County GIS team easily adapted the solution's ArcGIS Survey123 collection form to include a drop-down list of different ballot box types and configured the form to work with QR codes.

"The solution has dramatically improved our ability to manage our drop site pickups and keep a detailed record of ballot chain of custody," said Phillip King, election support specialist.

Now, when a driver arrives at a drop-box location, they pull up the form on their mobile device and scan the QR code affixed to the drop box, capturing the date, time, location, and other important data. The driver enters their departure time and taps to send the form. The data is immediately visible on a live dashboard monitored by drop-site coordinators, who can then track ballots from the minute a driver picks them up at a drop site.

The Ballot Collection Dashboard app allows drop-site coordinators to track a driver's route and see exactly what time they arrived and departed each drop site they visited.

Election officials are thrilled with how well the solution has improved the accuracy, reliability, and speed of the county's data collection. "[This] solution increased our effectiveness in deploying staff for ballot processing

in the office," said acting elections manager Mesa Confer. "We experienced minimal downtime thanks to the ability to monitor the status of incoming ballots in real time."

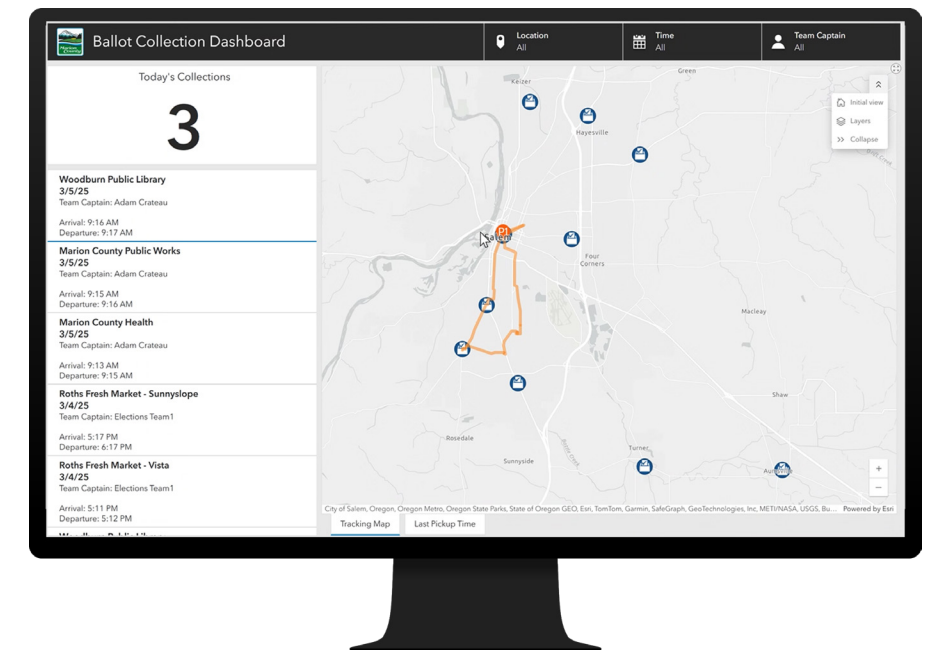
Improving Security

Streamlining the ballot collection process has helped election officials ensure better security for their volunteer drivers. "With mail-in balloting and the use of multiple drop boxes, in order to assist in ballot security, it is vital to have some form of 'chain of custody' to provide the maximum amount of ballot security possible," said Ron Hall, a drop-site coordinator. He added that the county's adoption of the Election Management solution is a huge step forward in ensuring that the county's electoral processes are as secure as possible for everyone involved. "Not only

are citizens assured that what they have deposited into a drop box is securely and timely retrieved and processed," he said, "But . . . ballot couriers tasked with ballot retrieval are protected from possible maleficence and accusations."

Confer agreed. "This solution allowed our team to generate a live and easily accessible record of ballot chain of custody," she said. "It also enhanced our drivers' confidence in their personal safety by documenting and allowing on-site staff to view the location of drivers in the field, which is especially important given the increasing threats to election workers."

For more information about the Election Management solution with ArcGIS, please visit link.esri.com/ElectionsGIS.



↑ The Ballot Collection Dashboard app allows drop-site coordinators to track a driver's route and see exactly what time they arrived and departed each drop site they visited.

Sherburne County Modernizes Permitting with GIS Technology

Why One Minnesota County Turned to GIS to Automate Permitting

Sherburne County, located in central Minnesota, has seen its population more than triple since 1980. This rapid growth has placed increasing demands on county services—especially in the Planning and Zoning Department, where permitting is the backbone of development and land management.

By 2021, county leaders recognized that their legacy permitting system was no longer equipped to support the needs of a rapidly expanding community. Like many local governments, Sherburne County faced a pivotal question: How could they modernize permitting to keep pace with growth and improve services for residents and developers?

That's where Jenna Walz, senior geographic information system (GIS) specialist at the county, stepped forward with a solution. "GIS was the obvious choice," Walz recalls. "It's not just about mapping; it's about connecting people, processes, and data to make smarter decisions across the county."

Walz and her team didn't just use GIS to streamline operations and improve efficiency—they built a permitting system designed for the future. The result: a digital platform that empowers staff, serves the public, and positions Sherburne County for sustainable growth in the years ahead.

Building Sherburne County's Blueprint for Modern Permitting

In early 2022, Sherburne County's GIS team, along with the planning and zoning team, began a deep dive into the existing permitting workflow. Over two days, staff from both departments mapped out every step, identifying bottlenecks and opportunities for improvement. Walz then spent seven

months immersed in the planning and zoning processes. Not just replicating them in a GIS environment but also rethinking how the process could be streamlined.

The transformation began with the adoption of ArcGIS Enterprise. This secure, centralized platform enables the county to manage, analyze, and share spatial data across departments. The platform gave Walz access to a suite of tools to address key challenges—most notably, delayed permit reviews.

To ensure timely reviews, Walz developed Python scripts using ArcGIS API for Python. These scripts run nightly to flag permits that haven't been reviewed within the required 10-day window.

Other scripts verify that new homes receive their certificate of occupancy (CO) once approved. Every few hours, automated scripts scan the system data for accuracy and alert staff to critical situations, such as unlicensed self-contractors doing work. Additional scripts generate permits, record forms, invoices, and emails, and calculate permit fees based on review responses and quantities—all with the click of a button.

Launching the Permit Portal

With the success of the automated scripts, the next step was building a web portal accessible to county staff, developers, and residents. The portal's goal was to present a permitting system that would be used for customer submission, tracking, processing, permitting, and payment of fees.

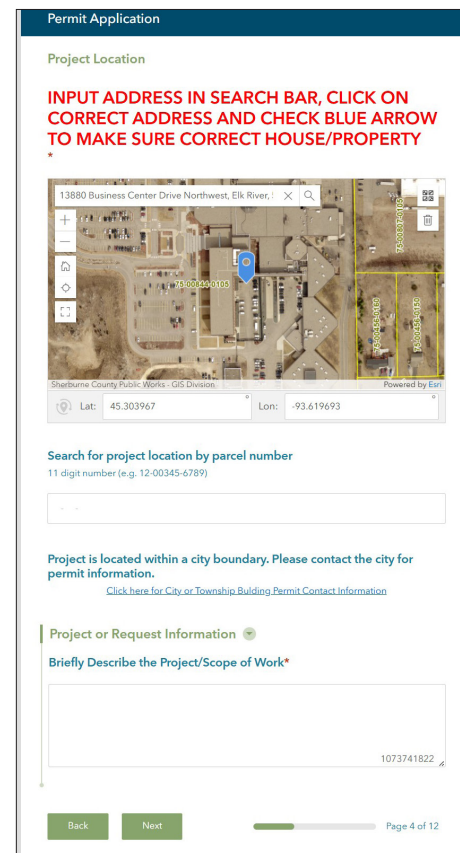
In January of 2024, Sherburne County launched the Planning and Zoning Permit Portal. Built with ArcGIS Enterprise, it also benefits from other tools such as ArcGIS Field Maps (for building and other inspections), ArcGIS Experience Builder (as the user interface for the public), ArcGIS

Survey123 (for permitting applications), and ArcGIS Pro to provide a seamless experience for both staff and residents.

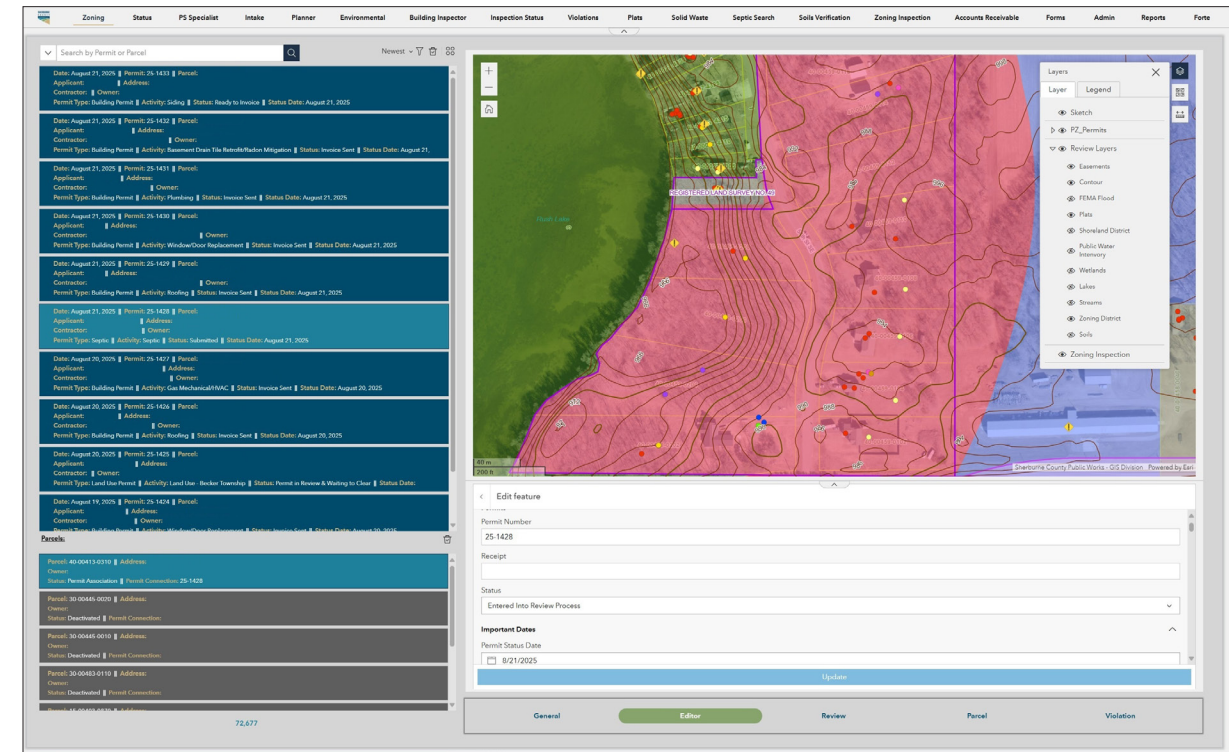
Over the next six months, the planning and zoning team made continuous improvements, adding new features and streamlining workflows based on user feedback.

Today, the system allows the public to apply for over 50 types of permits online—including building, environmental, and land use permits, as well as septic searches. Payments are made online, and customers can track the status of their applications at any time.

"This pivotal GIS project revolutionized the county's Planning and Zoning Department by digitizing its permitting



↑ An online application in the Planning and Zoning Permit Portal uses ArcGIS Survey123.



↑ Web maps in the permit portal apply geography to permits for better review.

services, creating an automated online portal," said Gary Gray, Sherburne County board chair.

The public can now also monitor the status of their permits online, without having to call the Planning and Zoning Department. "This system [allows] residents and contractors to apply for, track, and receive various permits from the comfort of their homes or offices," Gray added.

Additionally, the system reminds staff of important deadlines in the process. This is critical, because permits could get automatically approved if an internal staff deadline was not met. Finally, there is no longer the worry of paper copies of permits being misplaced or destroyed. This all helps ensure a more consistent and justifiable review process for applicants.

Success and Future GIS Development

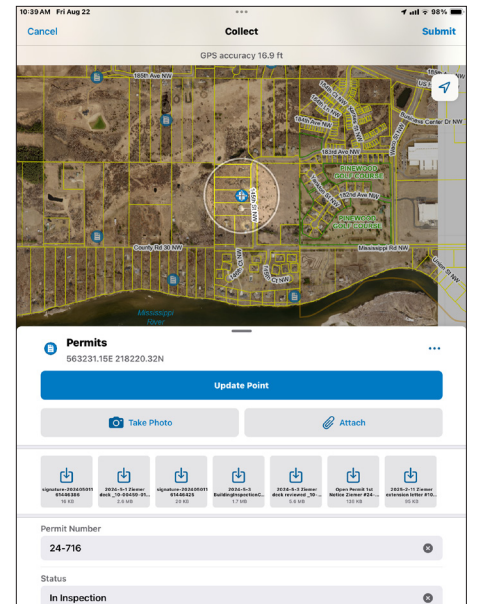
By nearly any metric, the permit portal has been a success for Sherburne County. Planning and Zoning estimates that permitting data entry time for staff has

been cut by 50 percent. Moreover, the automated online payment functionality has also halved the time spent collecting funds, while reducing errors that were inherent in the previous manual process.

"We are so proud of our GIS staff," said Gray. "The county was able to achieve this at a fraction of the cost of outsourcing, as the GIS project leveraged existing data and infrastructure to streamline workflows, reduce manual processing, and improve overall efficiency."

The portal's success has inspired further innovation. Walz and her team are in the process of adding a solid waste permitting module to the system for the Solid Waste Division of Planning and Zoning.

By centering the permitting process around location and optimizing legacy review workflows, Sherburne County has deployed a system that serves the modern needs of developers and the public and will help their Planning and Zoning Department ensure sustainable growth for years to come.



↑ A field app for building inspectors is a key component of the permit portal.



To learn more about how to plan for smarter, stronger communities with GIS, please visit link.esri.com/EbookDownload.



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