Economic Development Today

As an economic development professional, you seek to promote economic growth and a high standard of living for your citizens. Housing, tourism, business, fiscal management, marketing, jobs, development, startups, and planning are all important aspects that support this, but these workflows are complex, especially when they’re being implemented all at once and with a limited budget. As a result, brochures are printed and never handed out, tourists are unaware of what your community really has to offer, and businesses don’t see the benefit of relocating to your region. Isn’t it time your organization took a modern approach to economic development—one that promotes your community as a place where people want to live, work, and play?

Economic Development Starts with GIS

Economic development requires a strategic plan and a set of initiatives to grow your economy, create jobs, and promote a unique brand. This vision should start with geographic information system (GIS) technology. GIS is a location platform that allows you to connect all your workflows and data in one unified system. With the ArcGIS® platform, you are able to carry out analysis, market profiles, and strategic planning in order to distinguish your community. GIS fits into everything you do. It can be the foundation of all your economic development processes and programs. GIS provides insight and opportunity and drives communication. Informing stakeholders internally and externally is easy with applications and information that can be extended to everyone involved. Everyone operating on the same information ensures that smarter, better decisions are made.

GIS—Supporting Economic Development Objectives

- Understanding your community
- Securing investments
- Retaining and expanding business
- Providing strategic planning
- Branding your destination
Business Attraction
GIS gives you everything you need to start attracting businesses, employees, and investors to your community. Help prospective businesses find the best locations for growth and expansion by using site selection tools. Fuse maps with detailed demographic, business, and market-potential data to show investors why they should do business with you. Esri® tools help you attract and retain business for the betterment of your community.

Destination Branding
What is your community best known for? Better yet, how would you like your community to be known? Show people outside your area why they need to visit, and keep locals entertained in the community. Brand your region as a destination where people want to live, work, and play. Free applications from Esri allow you to show businesses and residents what sets your community apart. Are there any local attractions you want to highlight? Are there any upcoming community events you can promote that will draw in tourists? When you strengthen your community’s identity, you unlock new tourism and investment opportunities. Show the world all that your community has to offer with ready-to-use interactive mapping templates.

Community Demographics
GIS is founded on the idea of our gaining a better understanding of the world in which we live. With extensive demographic data, you can understand your citizens’ motivations: their preferences, jobs, and habits. Explore your region’s spending habits and retail preferences to see where a new store might prosper. Determine local socioeconomic trends and education levels to find out whether a new factory or a large corporate office would succeed in your area. Is a sophisticated art gallery more important to your citizens than sporting events? Lifestyle data can help you understand how you can best invest your time and effort to show your citizens that you know what they truly care about.

Sustainable Growth
Do you have the tools to plan for a brighter future? Part of building an economic development strategy is having a comprehensive long-range plan. This means acquiring the data you need to make better decisions for your community, performing in-depth analysis, and planning for sustainable growth. Esri’s provided data allows you to analyze and report on demographic shifts, at-risk populations, trade areas, employment growth, and more. Will a proposed development support consumer-to-expenditure demand? Are you losing income to a neighboring community’s new retail center? With Esri solutions and data, you are able to run leakage reports and trade-area analyses and create a long-range plan that will ensure a well-balanced and sustainable community for the future.

How do you attract a well-known retailer or company to your region? How can you encourage tourism in your small town? Where will you promote entrepreneurial sites or available properties for development? Using GIS, all these objectives can be achieved with little to no expertise.
Economic Development in Action

Miami Downtown Development Authority

The Miami Downtown Development Authority (Miami DDA) uses GIS to track and manage developments within a dense, two-square-mile area of the city of Miami. With more than 10,000 condo units currently under construction, interactive maps help the Miami DDA visualize changes to the city skyline and overall density. The Miami DDA uses maps to showcase the area’s many amenities and existing businesses to developers and business owners looking to relocate. GIS also helps Miami DDA understand and address issues ranging from congestion and public transportation to taxation and sanitation. Miami DDA has also started using 3D maps to better understand the visual impacts of proposed developments in the area.

State of Oklahoma Department of Commerce

To help attract business to the Sooner State, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce worked with Esri partner GIS WebTech to create the LocateOK app. The app shows available properties throughout the state and lets prospective business owners run demographic reports for various communities. Visitors can search a variety of demographic and community data and filter available properties by square footage, type, and more. Visitors can view the locations of existing businesses throughout the state and generate on-the-fly buffers or drive times to better understand their proximity to other amenities.

County of Riverside Economic Development Agency

The County of Riverside Economic Development Agency (EDA) has used GIS for nearly a decade to manage local programs and adhere to various federal requirements. More recently, the agency has embraced ArcGIS Online and Story Maps to generate buzz about the county’s business environment and numerous programs and services. Starting with a story map of the booming Temecula wine country, the county has begun using ArcGIS Online to profile various regions and amenities, such as eco-friendly transportation and population diversity. ArcGIS Online has even helped save time and money by reducing the number of printed promotional materials and brochures the county used to produce in favor of creating interactive mapping apps.

“A story map brings pictures and data to life.”

Robert Moran
EDA Development Manager
County of Riverside
Getting Started

The ArcGIS platform gives economic development organizations the power to make better and more informed decisions. Take advantage of this open platform to quickly create mobile apps and interactive maps that provide real-world solutions that meet your economic objectives. Leverage the following tools and solutions to create a successful strategy that positions your community as the next great success story.

ArcGIS for Desktop

The foundation of the ArcGIS platform, ArcGIS for Desktop gives you the fundamental tools you need to create data, plan sustainable growth, and analyze scenarios. Use advanced data management and analysis tools to create redevelopment districts, conduct thorough analyses, and understand trends and dynamics shaping your community.

ArcGIS Online

ArcGIS Online sets the stage for information sharing and collaboration. This cloud-based mapping platform allows you to extend and share your data, content, reports, and applications with those who need it. It also gives you access to the free, advanced data you need to better understand your community and gain an advantage over the neighboring regions you compete with. Visualize projected population growth, urban systems, and community infrastructure—all in one place.

Esri Business Analyst OnlineSM

You’re trying to attract businesses and investment to your region. Why not use the same technology that well-known retailers and Fortune 500 companies use to run their businesses? An add-on to ArcGIS Online, Esri Business Analyst Online (BAOSM) provides a specialized set of tools for market analysis, site selection, trade area reporting, and more. With access to detailed data, you are able to forecast demographic changes, discover socioeconomic trends, identify spending habits, and understand the lifestyles of citizens. Attract more businesses and retain the ones you have by understanding where and what types of industries would be successful and then sharing this information with prospective businesses.
Do people know what makes your community so special? Highlight local attractions, from restaurants and public art to recreational and entertainment options. Promote buy local initiatives and community events. Ensure that tourists, businesses, and even your own citizens know how much you have to offer. Esri Story Map allows you to present this information in a compelling and interactive way that can be shared with prospective investors, businesses, or the public at large.

To learn more, visit esri.com/econdev.
Esri inspires and enables people to positively impact their future through a deeper, geographic understanding of the changing world around them.

Governments, industry leaders, academics, and nongovernmental organizations trust us to connect them with the analytic knowledge they need to make the critical decisions that shape the planet. For more than 40 years, Esri has cultivated collaborative relationships with partners who share our commitment to solving earth’s most pressing challenges with geographic expertise and rational resolve. Today, we believe that geography is at the heart of a more resilient and sustainable future. Creating responsible products and solutions drives our passion for improving quality of life everywhere.

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