Why the Commission's GIS?

Our GIS was established in 1989 with funding from the NH Legislature to provide each of the nine Regional Planning Commissions with GIS hardware, software and staff training. The purposes for establishing a GIS at each planning commission include:

- To promote the use of GIS as a planning tool at the local and regional levels;
- To extend the resources of the State GIS Data Archive (NH GRANIT System) to the local level;
- To develop knowledge and understanding of GIS at the RPC level to be passed along to municipalities when they begin to develop their own GIS applications.

For more information about the Planning Commission, please check our website @ www.swrpc.org

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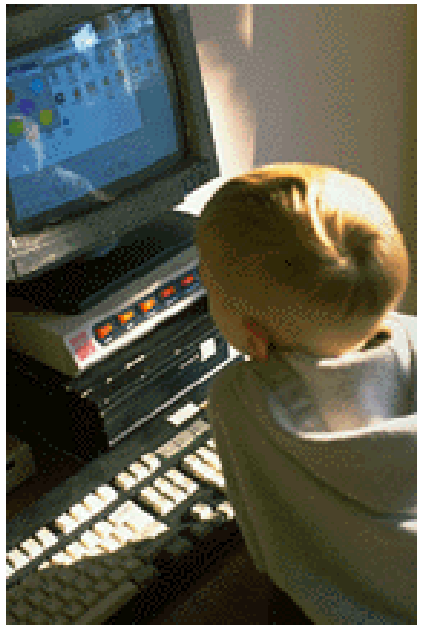
SWRPC

Geographic Information System (GIS)



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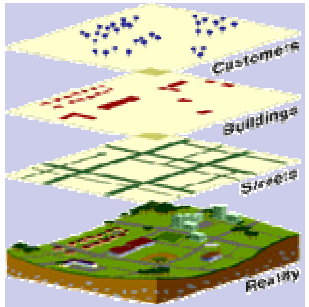
Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

What a GIS is

Simply put, a GIS combines layers of information about a place to give you a better understanding of that place. What layers of information you combine depends on your purpose - finding environmental constraints on one location, analyzing development potential, viewing commercial activities to detect a pattern, and so on. GIS provides:

- A method to visualize, manipulate, and analyze spatial data
- Answers to the 3 "W"s - What is Where? Why is it there and Why do I care?



Layers of Information
(Source: ESRI)

GIS is a system of computer software, hardware, data, and personnel used to manipulate, analyze, and present information that is tied to a spatial location.

- Spatial location - usually a geographic location
- Information - data about resources
- System - linking software, hardware, data
- Personnel - trained professional

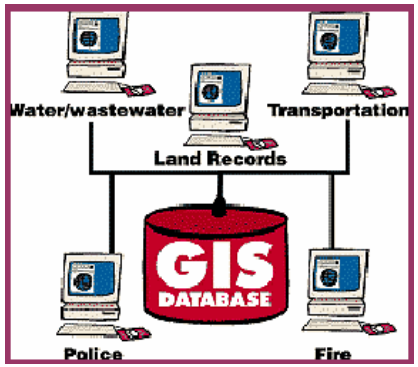
What a GIS is NOT

- GPS - Global Positioning System (a system which provides latitude and longitude information)
- A static map - Maps are often a product of a GIS, a way to visualize the analysis
- A software package on its own (such as ArcView)

What a GIS can do

Improve Data Integration

A GIS can link data sets together by common location data, which helps data sharing. By creating a shared database, one project can benefit from the work of another - data can be collected once and used many times.



Make Better Decisions

A GIS is not only an automated data management system but also a tool to query, analyze, and map data in support of the decision making process.

Make Maps

A GIS creates maps from data pulled from existing databases. A GIS map can be produced at any size and centered in any place.

Services Provided by the Commission's GIS

Map Production

The Commission's GIS can produce map products for a variety of applications and uses. Whether for Town Meeting, a presentation for a local board, supporting information for the Town's Master Plan, or an inventory of Town resources, the Commission's GIS can provide information in a professional and user friendly format.

Spatial Analysis

GIS results can then be presented in a variety of formats (i.e. maps, transparencies, web graphic files, etc.) for use in meetings, brochures, newsletters, Master Plans, or world-wide web pages.

Data Automation

In cases where the digital data needed does not exist in the Commission's GIS digital data library, automation services can be provided. These services can include: the automation of tax parcel maps, zoning maps, road conditions, open space, etc. In addition to spatial information, attribute information can also be created. For example, tax parcel data has location, size, and boundaries for each parcel which is spatial information. It may also have the owner name, address, and value of the property for each parcel which is non-spatial/attribute information.

Examples of Products

- Community Facilities Automation and Mapping
- Conservation Lands Analysis and Mapping
- Development Potential Analysis
- Highway Corridor Study
- Historic Building Inventory
- Land Resources Analysis and Mapping
- Land-Use Analysis and Mapping
- Regional Natural Resource Inventory
- Soils Analysis and Limits to Development Mapping
- Sensitive Resources Mapping
- Tax Property Automation and Maintenance
- Tourism Brochure
- Water Resource Analysis and Mapping
- Zoning Automation and Map Production