

Improving City property management in Virginia Beach

Virginia Beach expects six-month savings per year using GeoMedia® Smart Client

Profile

CITY: Virginia Beach, Virginia

Website: www.vbgov.com

Description: Virginia Beach is the 39th largest city in the United States and encompasses 307 square miles, with 35 miles of beaches. The city's

Center for GIS (CGIS) manages the core GIS services. The primary role is to support GIS operations and spatial information needs. CGIS manages this responsibility by providing the common and core GIS layers and enterprise GIS services to each stakeholder.

Industry: Government

Country: United States



Product used

- GeoMedia®Smart Client
- Oracle Spatial

Identifying goals

Just like any other municipality, Virginia Beach owns a certain amount of properties and roadways; in this case, those parcels are spread over an area of 307 square miles – and 35 miles of beaches. The city has more than 2,000 different properties, and these parcels have as many as five different municipal departments tracking information such as size, value, usage, condition, and future development, with each department owning responsibility for maintenance in its particular area of operations.

Virginia Beach needed spatially enabled technology to replace its paper-based property records. The hardcopy system in place was well-organized and well-populated, but very time-consuming to access, share, or update information. The city reviewed each property annually, and then would contact each department separately, via telephone, to ensure each department had an updated record of every parcel in its manually maintained spreadsheet inventory.

The city also needed to control user access regarding what information each department could enter or edit in the database regarding its area of responsibility on a given parcel of land, while being able to share that one unified view of information across departments. Additionally, Virginia Beach wanted to be able to tailor access to individual users, based on their particular workflows and level of responsibility.

Overcoming challenges

- Maintain and manage city-owned properties
- Develop one unified information source for each municipally owned property
- Decrease time spent editing and entering property data
- Allow citywide access to property information, with strict usage permissions, based on individual workflows, support fast data capture.

Realizing results

The City of Virginia Beach chose GeoMedia Smart Client to maintain city properties. For example, the city is using GeoMedia Smart Client to track the condition and maintenance needs of city properties such as schools and parks. The information contained within GeoMedia Smart Client can be as obvious as whether a property has been sold, and as granular as the last time the grass was mowed on a particular parcel. The city will have a clearer understanding of every parcel which enhances planning efforts and drives maintenance efficiency.

According to Rob Jessen, GIS Coordinator for the City of Virginia Beach, “We expect a savings of about a half a year’s worth of work annually as a result of implementing GeoMedia Smart Client. And we know the data we are collecting is highly accurate, because the various departments are putting the data in themselves.”

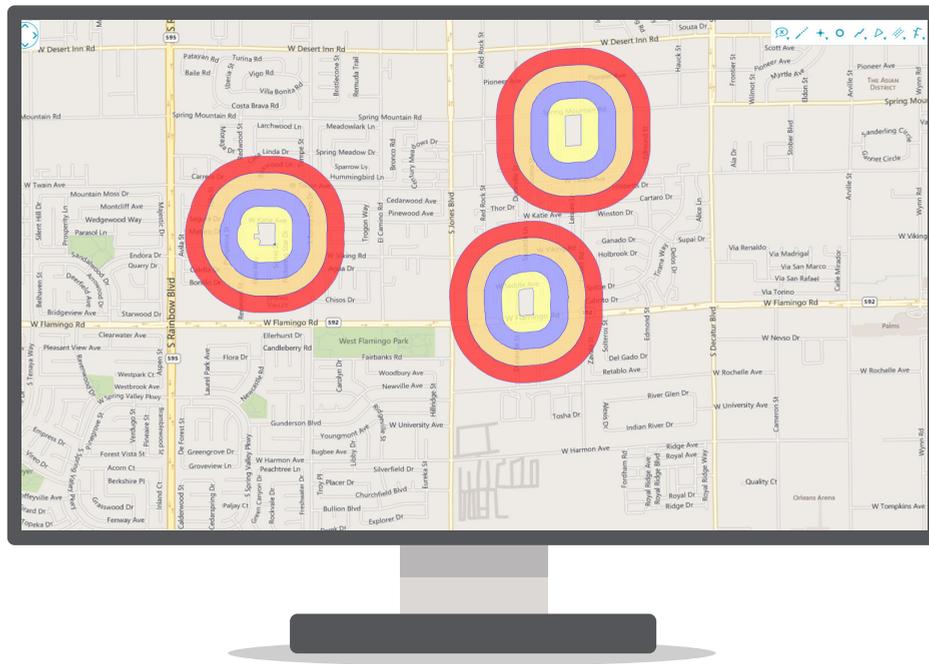
The city’s GIS enterprise database has been in Oracle Spatial since approximately 1992. Various city departments access and update data in the Oracle database using GeoMedia technology. The advantages include real-time access to spatial data across the enterprise, very secure data, and a universal format for viewing and updating spatial data and non-GIS application access to the data.

“There’s nothing in the middle – no file transfer. All departments have information available to them immediately. Everybody is on the same page, and we are all reading the same map. The combination of Oracle Spatial and GeoMedia Smart Client makes information available to non-GIS users across the city,” explains Jessen.

He continues, “Another advantage of Oracle Spatial as the enterprise database is the Hexagon software can be used to access and update the same information in a universal format.”

“GeoMedia Smart Client has really raised the level of communication and collaboration between city departments, which has raised our efficiency overall,” Jessen continues. “All our geospatial information is available online, 24/7, to approved users. If a roof is repaired on a school building, or a lawn is mowed in a park, the administrator for that department

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includes that information on GeoMedia Smart Client. Using business workflows in GeoMedia Smart Client, which are based on standard XML, our users can use the system without extensive training. The Workflow Editor configuration tool also makes it very easy for us to adjust individual workflows.”

GeoMedia Smart Client enables users to update city property information, edit feature layers that display city property on a map, query data repositories, and analyze that data. Users can also easily add related documents, drawings, and photos, as well as review any related information added by others. “The availability of geospatial intelligence is particularly useful when we are selling a property, such as a parcel in an industrial park,” Jessen notes. “All the information we need to market that parcel is right at our fingertips.”

The information on GeoMedia Smart Client is secure, and only certain users can access or change the information regarding a property. “Oracle has many different options for implementing security – both proactive and reactive. Proactive security measures prevent mistakes from happening and reactive measures allow us to audit anything that has happened,” Jessen explains, “There’s also a huge security

benefit in using GeoMedia Smart Client, as it’s granular enough to control access by a single user. It’s all Web-based, and can be accessed through the city’s network, or remotely with the proper permissions.” Users in remote areas can work in disconnected mode and when they reconnect and restart GeoMedia Smart Client, data edits will be automatically uploaded.

“We have many more infrastructure uses planned for GeoMedia Smart Client, including road engineering and realignment, new construction planning, telecommunication cable management, and expansions,” Jessen concludes.

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