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2nd Annual Westchester GIS Symposium Draws Crowd

User presentations and exhibitors highlight day-long event

Even in spite of rainy conditions, over 150 people attended the 2nd Annual Westchester GIS Symposium, which was held at Purchase College on June 13th. Hosted by both Westchester County GIS and the college's Environmental Science Program, the day-long event featured user presentations, map posters and displays, demonstrations, and vendor tables. Attendees included individuals from government, industry, business, utilities, and educators from university and high school levels.

The symposium started with a welcome from Dr. Yuri Gorokhovich who is on the faculty in the Environmental Science program. During the morning sessions, user presentations in the main auditorium cov-

ered GIS applications in the areas of floodplain mapping (NYS DEC & FEMA), election district mapping (City of New Rochelle), network management (Cablevision), and demographic mapping using 2000 census data (Westchester Community College). After a mid-morning break, Applied Geographics (AGI) and Chas Sells Engineering made an in-depth presentation on "GASB 34 Implementation with GIS" while a concurrent session highlighted applications being developed by Westchester County GIS (GIS for Assessors: Desktop and Web Mapping Programs) and Westchester County Department of Planning (Mapping Westchester County Water Quality). During lunch, short presentations were

made by the New York State Archives on GIS grant funding opportunities and by Alan Crosswell with the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES). Uri Foox, a senior at Horace Greeley High School, made a tabletop presentation showing maps developed with Westchester County GIS. His project focused on a traffic simulation model in downtown Chappaqua. The afternoon session included a "technology update" from both ESRI and Hewlett-Packard, field/hand-held data collection strategies by Bowne Management, and a GPS/AVL presentation by Waypoint Technologies and AppliedGIS.

Feedback from conference attendees was very positive. "These gatherings have always been a great place to network, not only with vendors but colleagues in other local governments and industries," notes Alan Portanova, Acting GIS Coordinator for the City of Yonkers. Jim Palmer, assessor for the Village of Mt. Kisco, added, "It was another useful GIS event for Mt. Kisco. It is always helpful to see how your peers are developing and managing their GIS needs and priorities." From an exhibitor perspective, David Hamilton of Bowne Management Systems adds "We were very impressed by the scope, knowledge, and level of expertise of the show attendees. The turnout was outstanding, and the range of presentations offered a clear and concise representation of current GIS technology."

The Symposium is held annually and is made possible by support from exhibitors and Purchase College, which provides the facility and meeting rooms. In addition to the annual symposium, half-day workshops covering current GIS/industry issues are being considered for the fall. Individuals interested in assisting with future Westchester GIS events should contact Ana Hiraldo at aeh2@westchestergov.com.



During breaks and at lunch, exhibitors provided an opportunity for symposium attendees to see new products and demonstrations, and to network with GIS colleagues. GIS posters and maps also provided a gathering point to discuss current industry trends and issues.

NYS GIS/LIS Association

An initiative is currently underway to create a professional organization for GIS professionals in New York State. Though many other states throughout the country have similar associations which promote GIS professional development issues, no single independent organization currently exists in New York State. It is anticipated the association, which would encompass GIS professionals in government, business, industry, academia/education, and utilities, would also work closely with other professional societies and organizations and augment the NYS Coordinating Program currently administered through the NYS Office for Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination. NYS Chapter affiliations with other national organizations such as GITA and URISA are also under consideration. An on-line survey form, which is being posted at the Spatial Information Technology Center at the Fulton-Montgomery Community College website, has been developed to gather feedback and comments from the NYS GIS community on the potential of forming such an organization. The survey form can be accessed at <http://www.sitc.cc/Survey.htm>. For more information on the NYS GIS/LIS Association initiative, contact Sam Wear at stw1@westchestergov.com.

GIS Events

NEARC

The Northeast ARC/INFO Users Group (NEARC) will hold its 18th annual conference at the Goat Island Hyatt Hotel, Newport, Rhode Island, November 2-5, 2003. With the theme "*Users Helping Users*," the conference will feature keynote sessions, vendor demonstrations, poster displays, workshops and user presentations. For more information and registration visit the conference website at <http://www.northeastarc.org>.

NYS GIS Conference

The 19th Annual New York State GIS Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Turf in Albany from October 2nd to the 3rd, 2003. With "*Essential for the Modern World*" as this year's theme, the conference will showcase GIS projects throughout the state at all levels of government, industry, and academia. A wide range of paper presentations is scheduled, including poster sessions, and pre-conference workshops. Leading industry vendors will also be presenting GIS hardware and software-related products, as well as professional services. For more information and registration, visit the conference website at <http://www.esf.edu/nysgis/2002.htm>.

GIS Development at Westchester County Airport

Initial work focuses on data integration and user applications

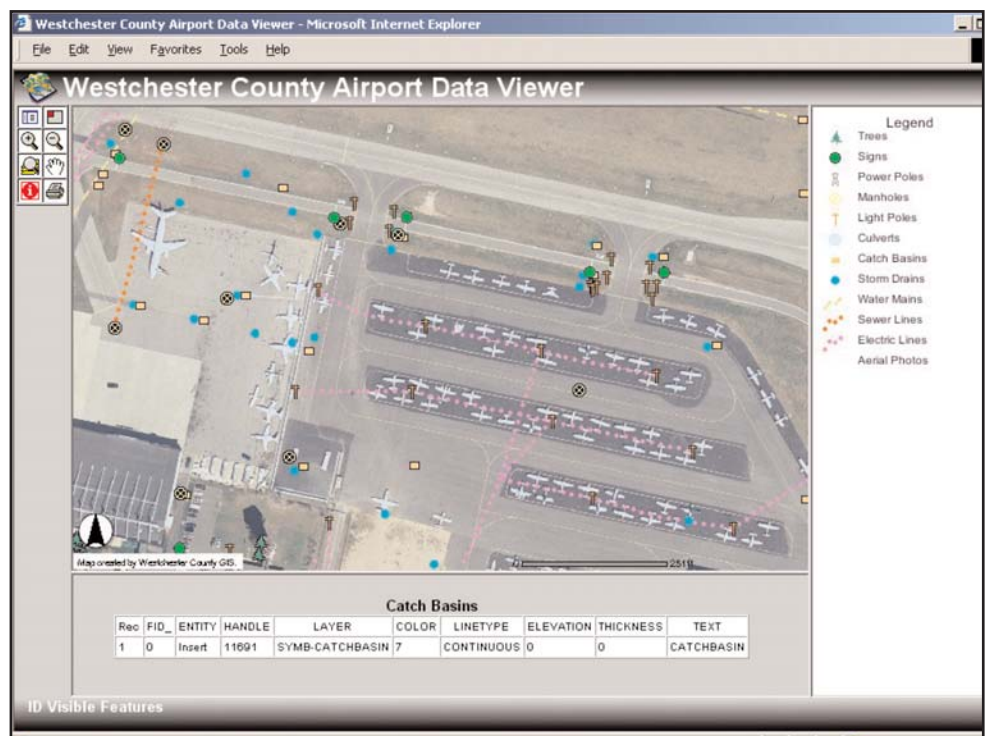
GIS staff has recently initiated work at the Westchester County Airport to inventory and coordinate data development projects which can be integrated into desktop and web mapping applications. Working closely with both county airport and Department of Transportation staff, this GIS effort will provide inter-departmental access to a wide range of GIS datasets to support environmental, facilities and property management; long range planning; and security/surveillance functions at the facility.

The project was initiated in early May when Sam Wear, GIS manager, made a presentation to a group of several dozen people including representatives from Westchester County Departments of Transportation, Public Works, and Planning, and airport service contractors in which GIS development objectives were outlined. Highlighting the presentation was an intranet Airport Data Viewer built with ArcIMS technology which includes digital orthophotos, planimetrics, environmental coverages, and computer aided design (CAD) files which had been converted from various airport inventory and construction projects. As long-term GIS development at the airport will include a variety of user applications, the intranet application was particularly useful in demonstrating how non-technical users can have quick and easy access to many spatial datasets using simple point and click functions within a browser environment. Initial results of registering databases (coverages) -

which have been obtained from different sources, contracts, or specifications - to the county's large scale base map has been encouraging (see example below). Thus far, spatial data from the airport Environmental Monitoring System's mapping program, including the locations of environmentally sensitive materials storage and handling, as well as features such as fences, light poles, culverts and catch basins that have been mapped from other asset/infrastructure mapping projects have been successfully registered to the county's basemap.

It is anticipated that data inventory and conversion will continue for the next several months. GIS staff will also coordinate software training and education efforts for airport staff as well as confirm hardware and network configurations. Airport user interface designs will focus on both ease of use and providing access to wide range and types of spatial data products.

GIS staff are also coordinating an effort to establish GIS and CAD data content and format guidelines for all spatial datasets developed at the airport. Concerns at the airport facility inevitably cross boundaries among the complex system of agencies responsible for its operation and management. Communication and coordination between these entities can be enhanced through the use of a common data portal such as GIS. For more information contact Deborah Parker at dape@westchestergov.com.



This screen image from the county's new airport ArcIMS intranet application shows infrastructure datasets overlaid on top of the orthophoto base map. Using standards and a database management framework being established by GIS staff, airport personnel will use the system to access and view spatial datasets from a myriad of planning, facility, and capital improvement projects.

GIS Mapping for Social and Human Services

ArcIMS application expanded to identify community service locations

With traditional GIS applications in the areas of planning, assessment, and public works established in county and local governments throughout the region, Westchester County GIS has slowly expanded its web mapping applications to include programs in the social and human services.

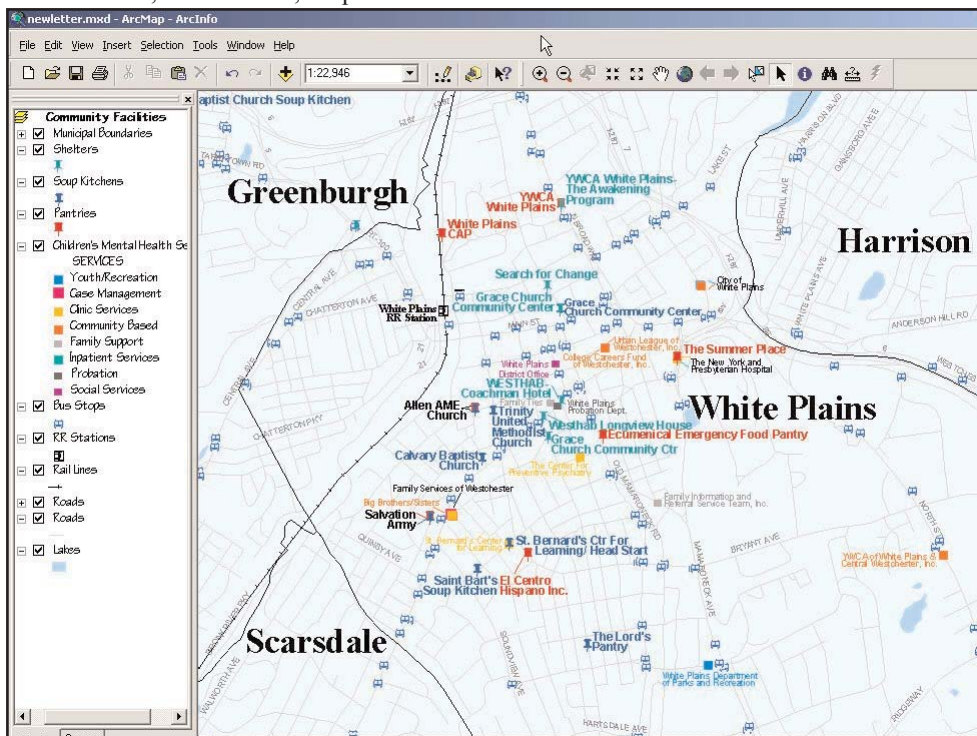
Service delivery locations are identified and built as GIS "point" coverages derived from address files obtained from agencies responsible for administering the service delivery programs. All point coverages are then integrated into the county's established ArcIMS-based web mapping environment. The on-line Community Facility Locator application, which is available for access at the county's GIS website, has recently been renamed the Community Facility & Services Locator (CFSL) to better reflect the expanded emphasis on "services" in the county's on-line mapping program.

Currently the CSFL application includes information for programs covering youth services (Westchester County Youth Bureau / <http://www.westchestergov.com/youth>) and children's mental health services (Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health / <http://www.westchestercommunitynetwork.com>), as well as information from Westchester Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless (WCHH). Coalition data contains information on the locations and contact information for area soup kitchens, shelters, and food pantries. Ms. Rosa Boone, executive director, of WCHH, explains "The

Westchester Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless, Inc. is proud of its partnership with the County of Westchester in making a difference in the lives of those citizens who are less fortunate. By providing up-to-date, current locations of the 72 food pantries, 38 soup kitchens and 33 shelters under its umbrella, we make access to such families in the 24 communities easier for those needing such services." GIS staff are also reviewing inquires from local governments to expand the on-line mapping to list neighborhood programs which serve residents in specific communities.

Additional background information on the advancements of GIS in the areas of social and human services can be found at <http://www.esri.com/industries/health/index.html>. Beyond basic data viewing and mapping functions, GIS provides a powerful framework for applications such as site location and patient distribution analysis or community needs assessments.

The county's application can be viewed and launched at <http://giswww.westchestergov.com>. After entering an address, zip code, and selecting both a search distance and facility/services type from a pull-down menu, the application will list those locations which match the search criteria. A mapping template and on-line help are also included in the application. For more information on the CFSL application, contact Tong Zhou at taz2@westchestergov.com.



Social service agencies throughout the county can increasingly be located with the Community Facilities and Services Locator application. This image of the greater White Plains area highlights shelters, soup kitchens, pantries, and youth service agencies among others. Users can extend the application to also show the location of public transportation components such as bus lines, bus stops, and rail systems.

GIS Day 2003

Westchester County GIS will hold its 2nd GIS Day event on November 20, 2003. County GIS staff anticipate holding the event in the main lobby of the County Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, in downtown White Plains. Designed to introduce the general public to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, Westchester County GIS users will display maps illustrating recent and on-going projects, hold demonstrations, distribute handouts and pamphlets, and highlight other GIS applications throughout the county in both local government, academia and business. Individuals or agencies interested in participating in the GIS Day event, contact Ana Hiraldo at ah2@westchestergov.com or visit our website <http://giswww.westchestergov.com> for updates.

GIS Data Sharing IMAs

County GIS staff continue to share and distribute base map datasets to local governments under the terms of the GIS Data Sharing Inter-Municipal Agreement (IMA). Under the terms of this agreement, the county provides both digital orthophotography and planimetric coverages from the Spring 2000 countywide base mapping project to the municipality in exchange for GIS databases which are being developed locally. This data sharing formula provides a "win-win" situation for both governments in terms of eliminating costly spatial data duplication efforts. A database design document is also included with the 100'-scale datasets that the county makes available to the municipality. To date, twelve municipalities have entered into the GIS Data Sharing IMA including Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Larchmont, Mt. Kisco, Pleasantville, Bedford, Cortlandt, Lewisboro, Ossining, North Castle, North Salem, and Yorktown. For more information contact Sam Wear at stw1@westchestergov.com.

Customized Mapping Services

As staff resources permit, Westchester County GIS provides customized mapping services to individuals and agencies on a first-come, first-serve basis. Fees for mapping services are based on the amount of GIS staff time required fulfill the request. A minimum of three hours is charged for any specific mapping request, with materials and shipping extra. Due to public safety issues, digital orthophotography or mapping cannot be provided in designated "sensitive" or "high security" areas of the county. Information on customized mapping services and/or data requests, costs, and related services can be obtained from Cindy Louie at luc4@westchestergov.com.

Local Government News

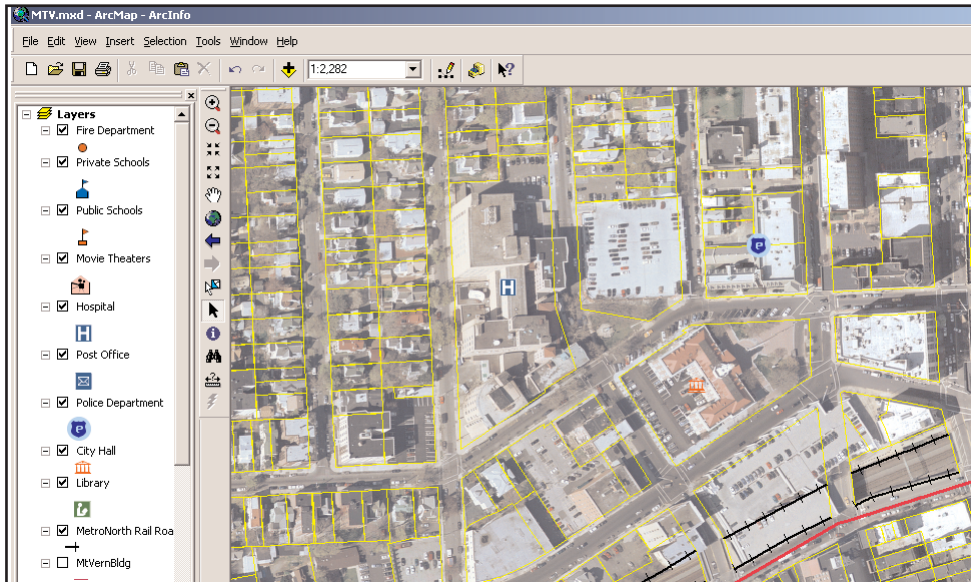
Within the last six months, several projects have been completed for local governments. GIS staff recently completed the *Village of Dobbs Ferry* User Needs Assessment (UNA) and will be initiating similar studies with both the villages of *Port Chester* and *Larchmont* over the next several months. Both projects are being funded by the New

York State Archives Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF). Other municipalities in the county received 2003-2004 New York State Archives funding which will be allocated for GIS development work. GIS staff assisted the *Village of Briarcliff Manor* in the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for

Infrastructure Mapping and Database Development towards GASB 34 compliance and assisted with vendor selection. The county anticipates assisting the village with reviewing data deliverables (ESRI Geodatabases) and the delivery of a desktop system. County staff has also recently met with representatives from the *Town of Mt. Pleasant* and the *Village of Sleepy Hollow*.

The villages of *Irvington*, *Pleasantville*, *Mt. Kisco* and the *Town of Lewisboro* continue to confer with the county on GIS initiatives building support through either a technical support contract or via the Westchester Telecom project (<http://www.westchestergov.com/westchestertelecom>). GIS staff recently assisted the *Village of Hastings-on-Hudson* with the mapping of local trail systems with GPS. In June, county GIS staff assisted the *City of Yonkers* in the development of a Request for Information (RFI) for ArcIMS Architecture and Application Development. The city is now reviewing consultant responses and anticipates application development efforts later this year.

For more information on local government GIS technical support, training opportunities, and related GIS/IT support functions to local government contact Ana Hiraldo at ah2@westchestergov.com.



The City of Mount Vernon is just one of several Westchester County municipalities which has used the county's digital orthophoto and planimetric base map to accurately register local tax maps to a photogrammetric base. This image shows properties surrounding city hall in downtown Mt. Vernon.



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