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A World of Innovation: Readers Share their Geospatial Applications

Aug 1, 2004
Geospatial Solutions

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Finding Developable Land - Instantly

Five years ago in the economic development profession, it was common and reasonable to expect city staff to respond within a 24-hour period to an inquiry about developable land within its bounds. Today, however, with the advancement of technology and the Internet, investors now expect instantaneous responses to their inquiries. For this reason, early in 2001, the City of Hamilton (Ontario, Canada) Economic Development Department

approached the city's GIS Services Section to provide a solution. The result was the MAP.Hamilton.ca Web site, which launched in February 2003, and the site's Economic Development Site Selection application, which went live in January 2004.

The Economic Development Site Selection application is a promotion and marketing tool providing data about land ready for development and brownfields available for redevelopment. The site supplies business reports, aerial photography, realtor contact information, and data about infrastructure services, traffic volumes, bus routes, and demographics. The application also promotes downtown renewal, furnishing tax assessment data, parcel mapping layers, street-level building photos, development incentive program information, and business improvement-area details.

Users can access the application, maps, and other data at map.hamilton.ca/interactivemaps.asp after downloading a small plug-in (an Active CGM control) for Windows Internet Explorer. Users simply select a map size of choice, and then they can pan, zoom, and search the map to obtain and print detailed information about available developable land.

The Web site application and data are also integrated with two external Internet portals -- the Hamilton Business Directory (www.hamiltonbusinessdirectory.ca), a site containing more than 14,000 Hamilton-area business profiles, and the ICX (www.icx.ca), a site maintained by the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) on behalf of its National Commercial Council that lists and categorizes developable land throughout Canada. Integrating commercial real estate listings through these external sites has helped the Hamilton real estate community when marketing the city to potential investors.

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The GIS-based system and site has likewise allowed Hamilton, and by extension Canada, to compete on a global basis for investment. The system allows for 24-hour access to information, which is especially advantageous to foreign investors who may not be able to call during regular business hours. It also reduces wait time for preliminary information requests.

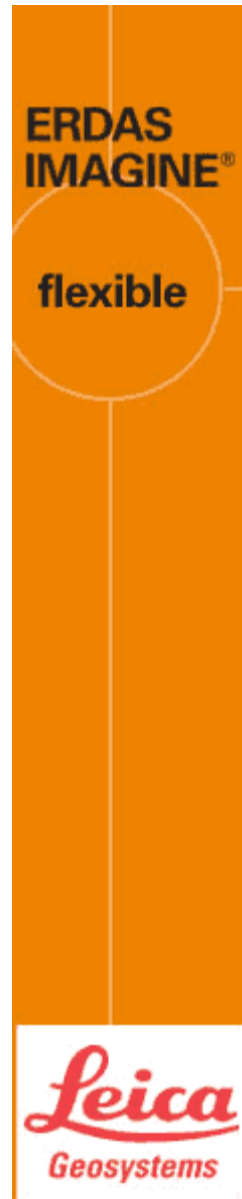


In addition, city staff and local real estate professionals are using the system daily to facilitate their business needs and realizing other benefits, such as increased collaboration between departments and reduced duplication of effort. Lastly, the site extends knowledge about the city's current GIS capabilities to citizens, businesses, and the rest of the world.

Heather Howe, City of Hamilton, GIS Services Section

The City of Hamilton developed MAP.Hamilton.ca using Intergraph Mapping and Geospatial Solutions' (imgs.intergraph.com) GeoMedia Version 5.0, GeoMedia WebMap Version 5.0, and GeoMedia WebMap Publisher Version 5.0. The site pulls data from a central Oracle (www.oracle.com) database configured with Oracle Spatial 8i. The system also integrates with other nonspatial data coming from systems, such as Hansen Information Technologies' (www.hansen.com) enterprise products, which provides tabular data linked to graphics by on a common field. Additional software used for development of the site consists of Microsoft's (www.microsoft.com) IIS Version 5, Visual InterDev Version 6.0, and Visio Version 2002.

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