GISette

City of Marlborough Massachusetts GIS

A quarterly newsletter to broaden people's understanding of mapping, geography and the City's Geographic Information System

Volume 3, Issue 4 **Fall 2013**

Marlborough's Public Information Mapping Application (*PIMA*): http://gis.marlborough-ma.gov

Welcome to this edition of the *GISette!* Summer has come and gone and we are in the midst of another beautiful New England Fall! It's my great pleasure to present you with our latest newsletter. Marlborough's geographic information system is chugging right along and there are some notable improvements to tell you about. Our GIS mapping website continues to be hit with developers, engineers and realtors alike. I never realize just how much people use it every day until it goes down for maintenance! But that's a good thing. It helps me gage how much and for what it's being used. In short, it helps us make it better for you.

Remember, *PIMA* Allows Users to:

- Create customized abutters lists
- Identify property and ownership information
- Utilize Google and Bing for enhanced viewing
- Create and print maps to scale that are fully customizable
- Access scanned utility plans

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Play Ball!

GIS analysis in sports.

My oldest son is playing fall baseball this year. That's right, *fall* baseball. Apparently, my fair city has decided that its youth baseball teams are slightly lacking in the skills department. In an attempt to break the pattern of often lop sided victories by the opposing community's teams; they have instituted a fall baseball league. Most of the kids are having fun and they really are learning some valuable skills. All of that aside, in my own humble opinion, the way to fix this perceived dilemma may be to institute the concept of 'try-outs' at a younger age. Some people just weren't meant to play baseball.

In the midst of all of this, I was made aware of some great new software that allows the coaches to display game stats and display live game information to anybody with a smartphone. If you can't attend the game, you can watch it unfold live. Numbers are all well and good, but there is a mapping component too! You can see where the kids are playing and where each hit goes. This just got kind of cool! It made me start to wonder about how GIS is used in the industry of sports. As it turns out, GIS plays a very important role behind the scenes.

What you have to remember about GIS, is that it can apply to anything with a "where" component. Where are sports teams located? Where are the boundaries of the different markets for neighboring sports teams? To see this first hand, just take a drive through southern New England. Where does the Red Sox broadcast turn into the Yankees or the Mets broadcast?

Continued on page 2

Play Ball! cont.

By plotting the location of the different fan bases on a map you can begin to see where New York fans start to outnumber Boston fans. Radio and television stations who need to sell advertising need to know this. By mapping the fan bases, you can then target businesses that have a market in those areas and that want to spend advertising dollars to reach the demographic you have identified with your map. Most people reading this have seen the Dunkin' Donuts ads featuring Rob Gronkowski. They're on television and radio and in larger than life cardboard cut-outs in every local shop. But, take a ride south. As you approach enemy territory, Gronk is no longer the spokesperson for Dunkin' Donuts. Everywhere you look its Eli Manning. Same adds, same placement, same cardboard cut-outs. What's different? It's the 'where'. By spatially analyzing the fan base vs. their customer base, Dunkin' Donuts has identified the optimal locations to change spokespersons. Lots and lots of resources go into figuring this out. Using GIS has increased accuracies and cut costs.

On a more local level, any parent with more than one child playing organized sports will tell you that driving all over creation to games and practice is a complete pain in the butt. Why can't they just make the games closer to home? Well, in some communities (not mine) they are starting to use GIS to map and spatially analyze the locations of the participants and the community's assets. The historical policy has been to assign practice fields without regard to location and based solely on need and availability. Practice schedules are often variable and you end up wherever a field happens to be available. However, that is starting to change. Communities are recognizing that parents are very busy people and running around not only effects mom and dad's sanity, but it cuts into playing time and has general quality of life consequences.

By taking a look at the geographic distribution of players and families as well as athletic facilities, communities can start to organize teams based on specific predefined areas. Kids can now play with their neighborhood friends or it can be based on school districts. Once you have isolated areas of population, you can begin to assign locations based on that distribution. Fields for practices or games can be more localized and consistent. Families that once spent half an hour in the car getting to practices can now spend those precious extra minutes eating dinner, doing homework or just spending more time together. It can facilitate carpooling with local families all having the same destination. Playing time can also be increased by cutting down on travel times. These are just some of the improvements we discover when we take the time to examine people's hectic lives from a geographic perspective.

So, the next time you tune into the Sox game or you're rushing across town on an empty stomach trying to get to whatever sporting practice you are on your way to, take minute to think about GIS. It definitely impacts your daily life and might one day make your weeknight practices a little easier.

TIPS AND TRICKS
PRINTING CUSTOM MAPS TO SCALE

1. Open the site and navigate to the area of interest.
2. Once you have your desired map, click on the "Export Map" icon  at the top of the page.
3. After clicking, a new window will appear that lets you set up your map to be printed.
4. Change the title to whatever you want to call your print.
5. Select the size and layout of the map.
6. Choose the format of the print (PDF, jpeg or png).
7. DPI can be changed from the default if a higher resolution is needed.
8. Print to Scale is a new feature. It allows you to print your map at a pre-set scale to make measurement easy. Check the box, and then enter the number in the box that corresponds to the number of feet you want 1 inch to equal. For 1 inch equals 100 feet, simply check the box and enter 100.
9. Export your map. You can then print or save it.

City of Marlborough, Massachusetts
Department of Public Works
Engineering Division
135 Neil Street
Marlborough, MA 01752
(508) 624-6910

Ronald M. LaFreniere, P.E.
Commissioner of Public Works
Thomas Cullen, P.E.
City Engineer
Nathaniel Bowen, GISP
GIS Administrator