

Location in Economic Development: Mapping Better Decisions

Baseline Business Geographics Inc. Whitepaper

Introduction

The primary goals of any Economic Development and Planning Organization are to strengthen and diversify the local economy. These goals can be attained by supporting the expansion of current businesses; attracting, brokering and facilitating new business development; and encouraging continued economic diversification.

In order to support these key activities and achieve economic success, economic development organizations must coordinate their resources and make them available to planners and investors, who have the potential and desire to develop within their district. The resources required by planners do not only include the price and location of a property, but also information such as economic, planning, utility, geographic, demographic and consumer spending data, as well as important points of interest and availability of services. Combined, this information provides valuable insight into prime investment locations to investors and planners.

Problem

Disseminating community information to planners and developers can be very time-consuming because the information they require is unique. The successful transmittal of this information is vital to the development of a region; yet, often times there is no way of easily obtaining it or easily presenting it. When planners and investors seek community development information, they could spend up to several weeks searching for it by making numerous phone calls, visiting government offices, and searching many sites on the Internet.

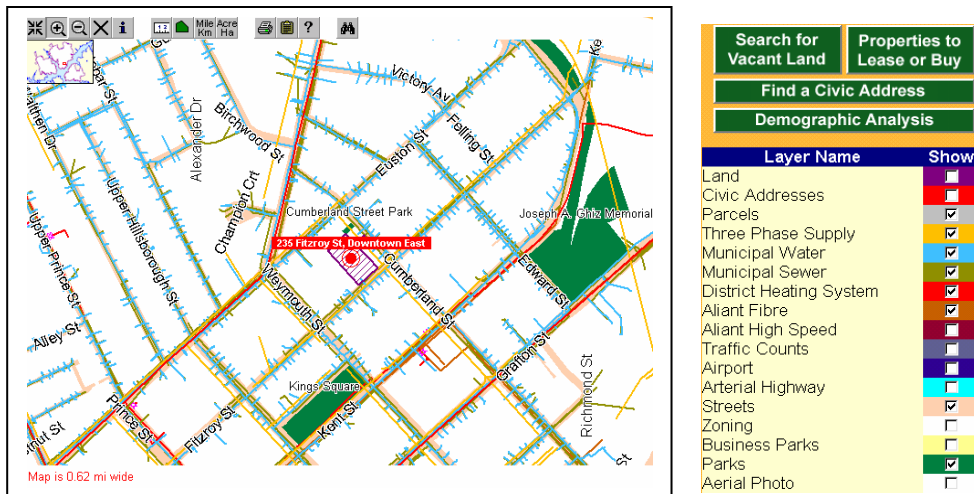
If the proper information is not readily available, investors may simply discontinue their search, and the opportunity for a community to increase its economic wealth is lost.

Even when relevant information can be found, searching through multiple sources can be a redundant and wasteful practice. However, consolidating the approach of information delivery through a single point of contact would make all of the data-seeking in developmental planning more productive, as well as leave more time for the actual decision-making activities.

Solution

Baseline Business Geographics Inc. created the Economic Development Analyzer (EDA) in order to provide a system of quickly and effectively providing detailed information to individuals or companies interested in vacant lands with development potential or in properties for sale or lease. The EDA is a Web-based application that provides a means to convey a wealth of important, timely information that is organized into a single web portal that planners and investors use to make well-informed decisions on their capital planning. Although the data that can be inputted is limitless, some of the data in the application may include the following:

- Demographic and consumer spending data
- Civic address points
- Parcel Mapping
- Three phase power supply
- Municipal water lines
- Municipal sewer lines
- District heating system
- Fibre routes
- High speed Internet footprint
- Traffic counts
- Airports
- Arterial highway
- Streets
- Zoning maps
- Business parks
- Digital Air Photography
- Street layers
- Property mapping
- Points of interest
- Developable land database
- Developable properties database



A layer control feature on the application allows developers to produce and customize reports by selecting from a comprehensive set of data layers. It also allows them to view air photos of properties using digital ortho-imagery.

A developer can begin to define a trade area by picking a point on a map or by entering a civic address. Then the developer specifies the size of the radius from that point in which he wants to profile, or he can define his own customized boundary. Available land and properties can also be searched by minimum or maximum acreage and maximum cost. With this application, the developer can visually see where properties are for sale, rental or lease and all of the critical details pertaining to them.

Whether your community has a strategic location, available work force, a low cost of business operation or other business incentives, it is vital to the growth of its economy to easily and effectively communicate this and other information to potential planners and investors. The unique approach of delivering business development information via the Economic Development Analyzer provides the well-needed support that your community needs to attract capital and stimulate economic growth.

Benefits

- The application ties all of the vital information into one neat package – it is easily understood and communicated to potential developers
- Helps ensure that only the most up-to-date information is provided to planners and investors
- Planners and investors have a powerful tool they can use themselves
- Response time to developers is dramatically reduced (from days to minutes)
- Immediately view the locations of available properties/buildings
- Increased productivity and efficiency due to faster, easier access to business-critical information and the ability to see data geographically by site
- Cost savings with centralized access to information and management costs
- Uncover and boost economic development of communities in need of revitalization
- Developers can use the information within the EDA application and evaluate the potential for business attraction, expansion and relocation
- Creates an extremely positive and forward-looking image to the developer (provides the data quickly and creates a positive first impression)

Features of the Economic Development Analyzer

Easy Customization of Application - New interface uses HTML frames that can be placed on various HTML pages or in a single interface page. These pages can be easily customized to the look and feel of your preference. The application is customized to include more or less functionality, depending on your preferences.

Report Customization – The reports of any selected area can be customized to display any number of layers of information, illustrated by a legend of characters that suit your preference.

Thematic Mapping – The application allows users to shade areas on the map that area consistent with a particular theme. For example, a user can visually see all of the locations within the map that have available buildings with a minimum square footage or available land with a maximum cost.

Conversion Tools – Tools for measuring distance and area can convert the values between imperial and metric values.

Scalability and Flexibility - Efficient back-end request handling and resource sharing allow multiple requests to be handled by multiple users. This new architecture provides more flexibility in implementation and provides scalability from tens to thousands of users. This application is easily interfaced with other applications.

Administrator Tool - Server-based administrator tool makes altering parameters and diagnostic checking a smooth and logical process. Users are able to edit and add data to dynamic layers.

Comprehensive And Easy-To-Use E-Commerce Applications – EDA can be run online, so that it can provide 24-hour self-service information to planners and investors. Such e-commerce initiatives also allow Economic Development organizations to expand the competitiveness of key growth sectors and enhance the long-term economic self-sustainability of rural and urban communities.

Limitless Data Inputs - For instance, planners and investors can obtain economic, planning, utility, geographic, demographic and consumer spending information and important points of interest.

Layer Control – The user can display as many or as few layers of color-coded data by selecting them from a simple drop-down list.

Search Tools - Allow developers to search for available sites, buildings and locations. The tools available to users include a ruler for measuring distances and areas, and an Info tool for pulling data from the map. The application allows users to view, create and print maps; perform site-selection searches; develop custom demographic radius reports; and find available properties.

On-Line Help - An untrained individual can easily use the system and simple point-and-click operation makes the system a joy to use.

Data Updates - Yearly maintenance will keep EDA data current.

ASP – We can host the server for you, or your organization may purchase the license yourself.

Advantages

- Provide an advanced level of economic analysis and information delivery
- Distribute map, zoning, parcel and other GIS information through the web
- Examine economic, planning, utility, geographic, demographic and consumer spending information – all within a specified radius of an address
- Provides detailed information on location of physical infrastructure