

Inspiring Interagency Collaboration Through Visual Mapping

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*Ziad Mazboudi
Senior Engineer
City of San Juan Capistrano, Calif.*

Profile

Franciscan missionaries established the Mission at San Juan Capistrano in 1776, but the City did not incorporate until 1961. In 1974, San Juan Capistrano was a small community with approximately 10,000 residents. By January of 2003, the City boasted of a population of 35,215 living in an area with a variety of land uses including open space, recreation, housing, jobs, retail and commercial services. When Senior Civil Engineer Ziad Mazboudi arrived in San Juan Capistrano a year and a half ago, San Juan Capistrano did not have any GIS system in place for non-technical staff.

Challenge

Ziad is in charge of the water quality program for the city, so he needs to collaborate with staff members throughout the city and at other local agencies on data sets and maps. Without a GIS system for non-technical staff, Ziad worked in an environment where there was no central depository of map data. If he needed to collaborate on a project with another agency, such as the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA), he had to rely on the other agency to have or hire a GIS specialist in order to get map details from them.

San Juan Capistrano also had some operational concerns when responding to customer property complaints. Without the implementation of CityGIS2™, engineering personnel would go to a customers' site and discover, after they arrived, that they brought the wrong equipment given the site features. The personnel would then return to the yard, get the correct equipment and go back to the customer's site.

Solution

Having worked with Digital Map Products' CityGIS2 for four years as part of the City of Westminster, Ziad knew right away that CityGIS2 would provide a great solution for San Juan Capistrano. "I'm a repeat customer," says Ziad. "I had enough experience working with it at Westminster to know that it was a great product. I recommended it to the Council, and they approved it."

Digital Map Products helped Ziad to implement a solution very similar to the Westminster solution, but Ziad included additional information. "I added my own data on soil quality, geohazards and slope stability. When staff receive questions from constituents, they can use CityGIS2 to provide information about the site and determine if the issues affecting the property are planning, engineering or building issues. They are also able to see what site features exist before their engineering personnel

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visit a site, which helps them ensure that they have the correct equipment when they leave the yard."

In addition to engineering personnel, administrative staff members receive benefits from using CityGIS2. "Our biggest users are the people manning the front desk," says Ziad. "When community members come in to apply for permits, the front desk staff use CityGIS2 to immediately see what features and issues exist for the proposed site. This has helped individual community members and developers speed up the application process."

CityGIS2 has also saved the San Juan Capistrano Senior Engineer time. Once the City implemented CityGIS2, the entire process of collaborating with other agencies changed dramatically. Ziad has been able to obtain mapping details from other agencies in a matter of minutes rather than the hours it would have taken previously. In one recent experience, Ziad was collaborating on a project with a staff member of SOCWA when he suggested that the other member use CityGIS2 to map out the details and send it back to Ziad. Using the CityGIS2 markup tools, the other staff member sent the detailed map back to Ziad in about 5 minutes. CityGIS2 is so easy to use that the SOCWA staff member did not have to have any specialized GIS experience when he marked up the map. "I liken using CityGIS2 to instant messaging on the Internet. When working with other agencies, you can markup a map, send it, get a response immediately, and save time."

Ziad has big plans for CityGIS2. He wants to implement additional Digital Map Products applications including CommunityView, which would allow the public access to details that San Juan Capistrano currently provides over the counter. He is also hoping to make CityGIS2 the foundation of the City's disaster preparedness plan. "We would not need to rely on our own systems being operational to know that the data is secure and available. All we would need is access to the Internet to see CityGIS2, and we could collaborate with other agencies in the case of a disaster or emergency."

The entire implementation of CityGIS2 has been seamless for San Juan Capistrano. "Not only does CityGIS2 fit into technologies we currently have, but we are trying to make CityGIS2 the foundation of any technologies that we want to add. We want everything to be linked to it including our code enforcement, finance and permitting software."

Case Study Highlights

- » San Juan Capistrano uses CityGIS2 to collaborate with non-technical staff members of other agencies on various land management projects.
- » CityGIS2 speeds up the permit application process for San Juan Capistrano customers by enabling front desk staff to immediately see the features of the application site.
- » Seamless implementation of CityGIS2 is quickly becoming the foundation with which all other San Juan Capistrano solutions integrate, including code enforcement, financial and permitting software.