

Turning **Good Ideas** into **Solutions!**

GIS is 50? What is GIS?

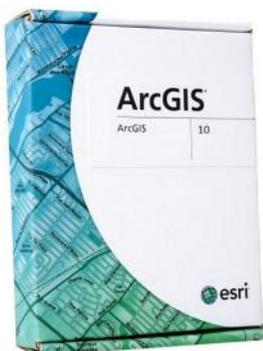
While GIS internationally is approaching the half-century mark, here at the City of Salisbury, North Carolina GIS has been in use since the early 1990s.

Many different departments and divisions throughout the City have come to rely on GIS for their day-to-day operations. And GIS provides them with an easy-to-use, efficient means to serve a variety of customers. A big question that many users of GIS still receive even now is, **What is GIS?**

What is GIS?

GIS is an acronym for *geographic information system*. It is an integrated collection of computer software and data used to view and manage information about geographic places, analyze spatial relationships, and model spatial processes. A GIS provides a framework for gathering and organizing spatial data and related information so that it can be displayed and analyzed.

Now that that's out of the way...
no really, **WHAT IS GIS?**



GIS is software.

For most GIS users in local government, GIS means using software made by ESRI—ArcGIS.

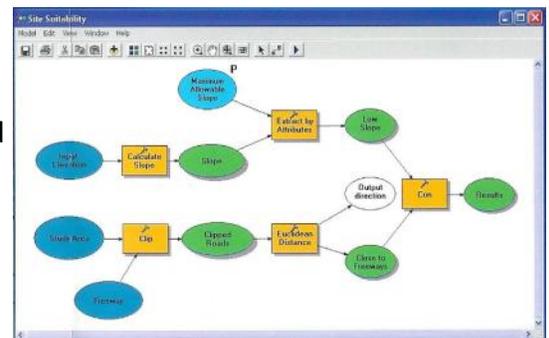
GIS is hardware.



GIS used to be a technology used by a select few to collect data, perform analysis, and prepare a map to convey information for decision-makers. Now, GIS technology is available for a variety of users—on a traditional desktop computer, on an Internet browser, and even on smartphones and tablets. Many users of a GIS system don't even realize they are using a GIS—they just know that it gives them the answers that they need quickly and easily, both in the form of a map and also tabular information.

GIS is procedures.

GIS is a defined set of standard workflows and procedures that, even when used by different people, should yield the same results. GIS should be well-documented so



Top Five Benefits of GIS

- ⇒ Cost Savings & Increased Efficiency
- ⇒ Better Decision Making
- ⇒ Improved Communication
- ⇒ Better Recordkeeping
- ⇒ Managing Geographically



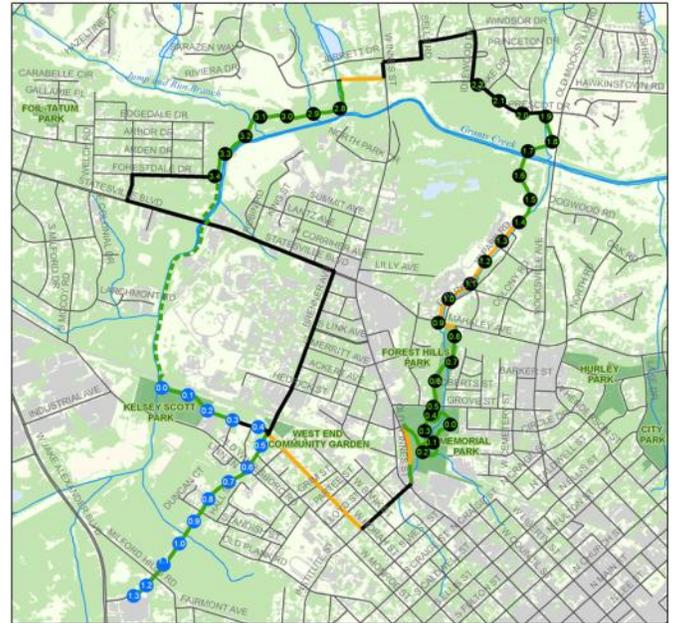
What can you do with GIS?

- ⇒ Map Where Things Are
- ⇒ Map Quantities
- ⇒ Map Densities
- ⇒ Find What's Inside
- ⇒ Find What's Nearby
- ⇒ Map Change

that persons using the data have **confidence** in the information, and consider it to be an authoritative source. Results from GIS should be **reproducible**.

GIS is data.

Graphical information that people see on their maps also has tabular information tied to it—and both are equally important. Data is probably the most often overlooked element of a GIS. Simply put, if you want to know about the various assets that are in your community—addresses, parks, fire hydrants, streets, trails, water and sewer lines, trees, etc.—you have to get out there and map them!

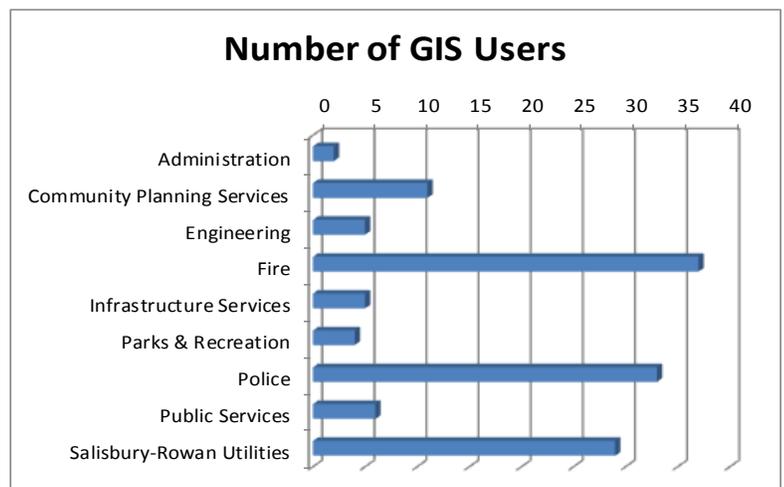


Mile marker locations for the Salisbury Greenway were generated from GIS data about the trails. Park boundaries were obtained from Rowan County GIS parcel data. Tree canopy was rendered through spatial analysis of aerial photography. And creeks and streams were heads-up digitized from aerial photography.

And most importantly, GIS is people.

The single most important element of a GIS is people committed to the cause of providing as complete and accurate information as possible to serve both internal and external customers.

Creative people can do their best to serve the needs of many.



Numbers based on software installations for ArcGIS Desktop, Visual Fire, and OSSI Computer Aided Dispatch.

For more details on this or any GIS Division project, please feel free to contact GIS Coordinator Kathryn Clifton, GISP at 704-638-5246 or katclif@salisburync.gov.