



## Case Study

### Organization

City of Westminster GIS  
Department

### Location

Colorado, United States

### Industry

Local Government

# Westminster, Colorado, Saves Time with Esri's Community Maps Program

Situated 10 miles northwest of downtown Denver, Westminster, Colorado, is a growing city with a population topping 100,000, located on the highway that heads toward Boulder and the Front Range of the iconic Rocky Mountains. The Denver metropolitan area is a tech-savvy region, and Westminster has been one of the leaders in developing new ways of using geographic information system (GIS) data and making geographic information available to its citizens. The City of Westminster GIS group, consisting of four members, is responsible for GIS development and spatial data management in the city, as well as much of the municipality's mapping work, including web-based and more traditional plotted map formats.

## Staying Ahead of the GIS Curve in Westminster

Westminster GIS prides itself on staying at the edge of geospatial technology and created a series of interactive web maps, providing residents with an intuitive visual tool to learn more about city services and administration. It has used ArcGIS® API for Flex to access ArcGIS mapping functionality on the web, making maps viewable with ArcGIS Viewer for Flex, as seen in its school districts map. Westminster was also one of the early adopters of the ArcGIS<sup>SM</sup> Online subscription, allowing it to publish web maps directly on ArcGIS.com, bypassing the need to serve data to the web from its own servers.

"I don't have to re-create a basemap for each individual web application; instead, I can focus on presenting what I really want to show, not wasting time making street labels."

### Sandy Malesky

GIS Specialist  
City of Westminster



## Time Savings Benefits Multiple Departments

Dave Murray, GIS manager for the city, realized the value Community Maps provided by making authoritative local data available online, but the program also helped his group in very practical ways. As contributed data is incorporated into Esri's World Topographic Map, which can be used as a ready-made backdrop to a wide range of maps, interactive or static, digital or paper, the group saves significant time by using the ArcGIS Online basemaps. Made up of 20 maps of different scales, as the basemap scale decreases, data layers are filtered to provide the appropriate level of detail, maintaining legibility and an uncluttered design. This means participating communities have a basemap easily accessible in ArcGIS for Desktop or ArcGIS Online that can be quickly dropped into maps with little concern that street labels are too small or the map symbology unattractive.

Westminster uses ArcGIS Online basemaps regularly in its map products, including many of its interactive web maps. Sandy Malesky, GIS specialist for the city, estimates that she saves upwards of two hours each time she uses the

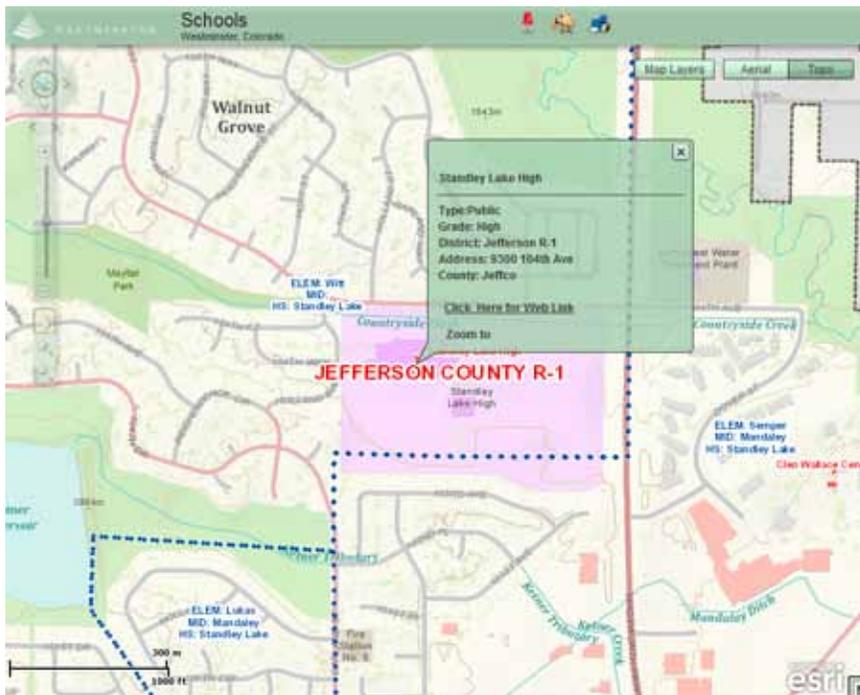
basemap, as she "doesn't have to re-create a basemap for each individual web application" she makes; instead, she can "focus on presenting what [she] really wants to show, not wasting time making street labels." Even when the basemap cannot be used as the backdrop for a map Westminster is creating, symbolization parameters from the Community Maps template are used because of their cartographic quality and legibility.

The Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department have also benefited and use the basemap internally when using ArcGIS, which serves as a convenient contextual tool when browsing data and performing analysis. The time saved by using the ArcGIS Online basemaps has increased the productivity of work, facilitating more meaningful communication of data to citizens.

## Future Efforts Will Increase Community Involvement

One project Westminster is currently working on is an interactive map that allows viewers to see how the extent of open space has changed over time. Partly in response to the significant growth the city was seeing, in 1985,

Westminster adopted a mandate to preserve 15 percent of city area as open space. Backed by a voter-approved municipal tax, the city has purchased close to 3,000 acres of open space to preserve the city's unique natural landscape. The map Westminster GIS is creating features a time slider that allows the user to see the increase in area preserved over time as the city's holdings of land acquired for protection grew. The map will provide a visual testament to the accomplishments of city residents and a more concrete sense of how their tax dollars are used. Efforts such as the open space map and the city's participation in Community Maps reflect Westminster's commitment to bringing local government and citizens closer together through innovative use of GIS technology.



Westminster Schools Application

For more information, visit  
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