



## Professional Geographic Information Systems Revolutionize Land Acquisition Process

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Location, location, location. This mantra of real estate has become ever more pertinent. Whether comparing multiple parcels to optimize site selection or analyzing a chosen parcel for opportunities and constraints, today's developers can enhance decision-making during the land acquisition process by taking advantage of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). GIS is an ideal tool because it ties together diverse data by location – that key variable at the heart of successful land development.

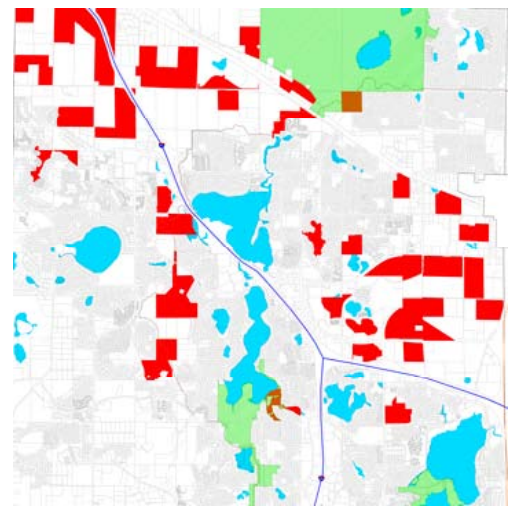
Professional GIS is much more powerful than web-based data viewers. It facilitates high-level analysis and portrays results in a way that written reports or simple mapping programs cannot, enhancing the speed, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness of analyses required during land acquisition. Factors such as current land values, demographic trends, income levels, and regional transportation planning can be integrated to determine the most strategic location for your next development.

To optimize site selection, professional GIS can be used to conduct a quick and efficient search for parcels that meet your development criteria. These criteria may include:

- (1) parcel size and ownership;
- (2) demographic or economic factors, such as census information or home sales data;
- (3) proximity to amenities or infrastructure, such as retail centers or utilities and transit; and
- (4) natural or cultural resources, such as parks or historic sites.

A “query” of the database containing these criteria can be conducted to identify priority parcels. For example, a senior housing developer might want to know which parcels are over 40 acres, located within retirement-age communities, in proximity to walkable streets and a planned light rail station, and adjacent to naturally vegetated open space.

Once a site is selected, professional GIS provides a more in-depth evaluation of site suitability. A wide array of database information can be linked to land parcels for site-specific analysis of how geographic factors interact to affect development. Layers of information such as floodplains, wetlands, topography, soils, utilities, setbacks, and zoning can be compiled, for example, to determine developable acreage and allowable density.



Parcels ranging in size from 30 to 50 acres (red) are shown in the context of existing development, transportation infrastructure, water resources, and regional parks and trails.

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GIS is a dynamic tool for research and analysis of property during land acquisition. It provides a time-saving, efficient, and simplified approach for gaining early and accurate insight into property suitability for specific uses. This approach allows you to reduce risk and make informed decisions based on site-specific opportunities and constraints without doing more costly analysis than is needed at the concept phase. The knowledge from this initial GIS analysis can then be seamlessly integrated with the next steps in land acquisition, such as concept plan design, site review, and due diligence.

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For more information, please contact  
**Jason McCarty**  
Director of Residential Development  
jason.mccarty@westwoodps.com  
952.906.7446



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