

The Importance of GISP

For CGIA – Feb 2024

Nick Franchino, AICP, GISP

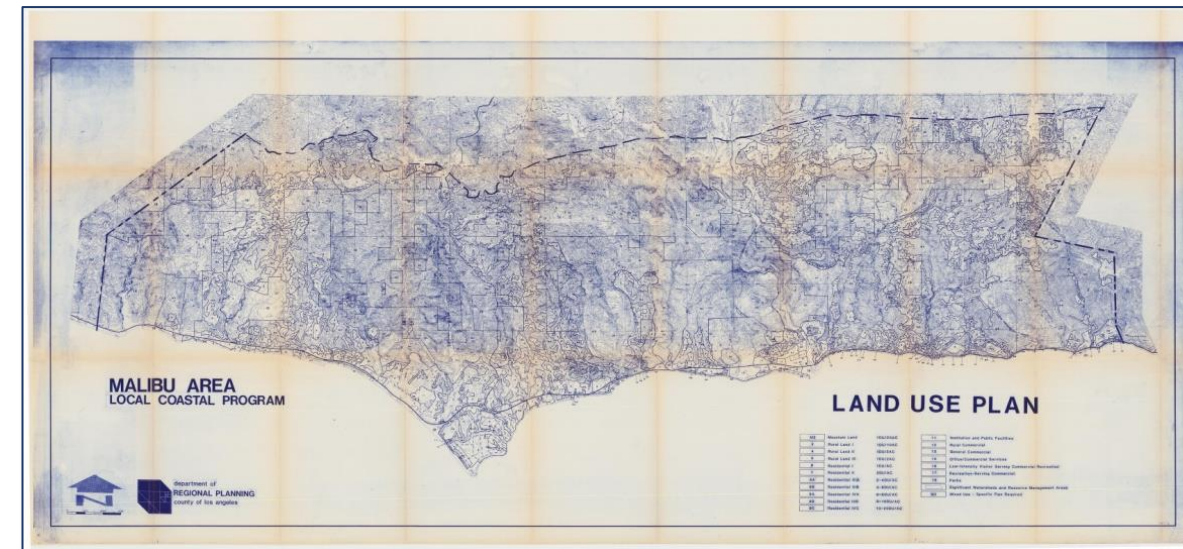
GIS Manager, LA County Planning

Topics for Today

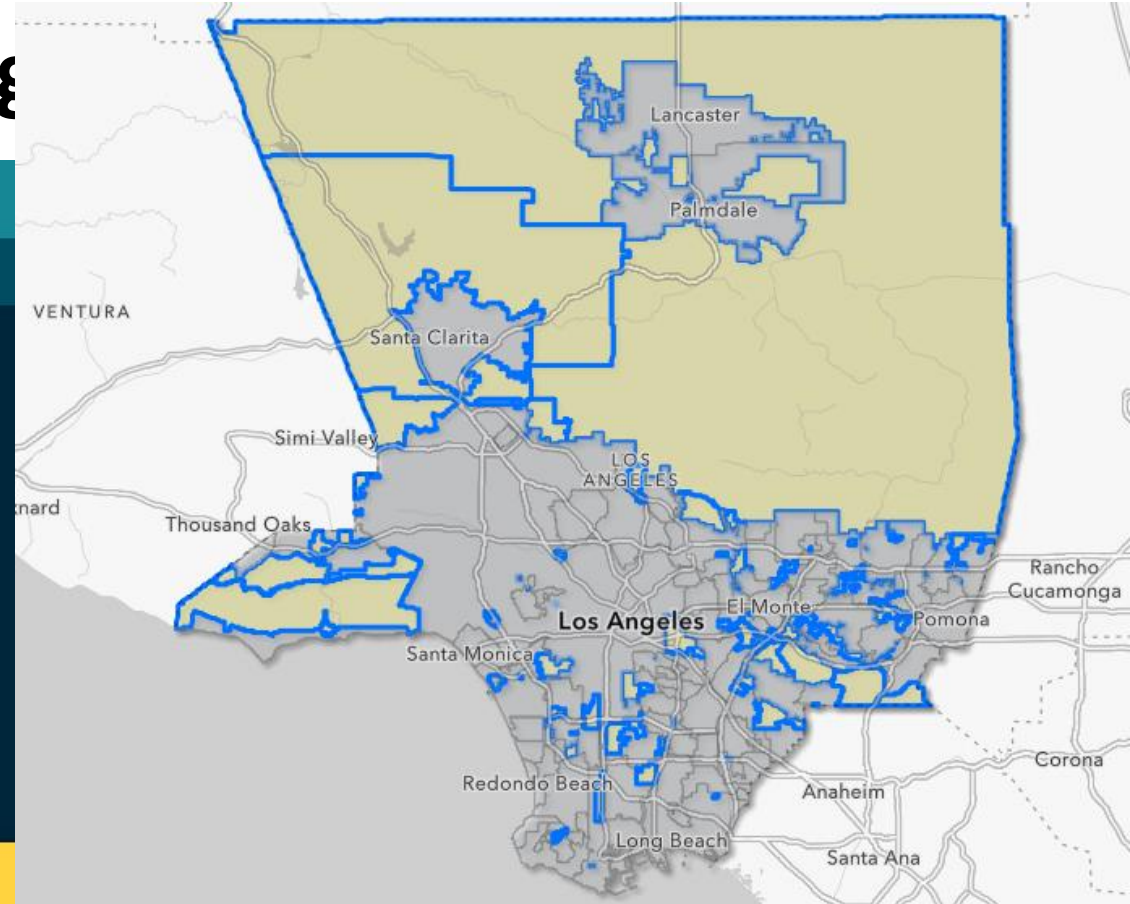
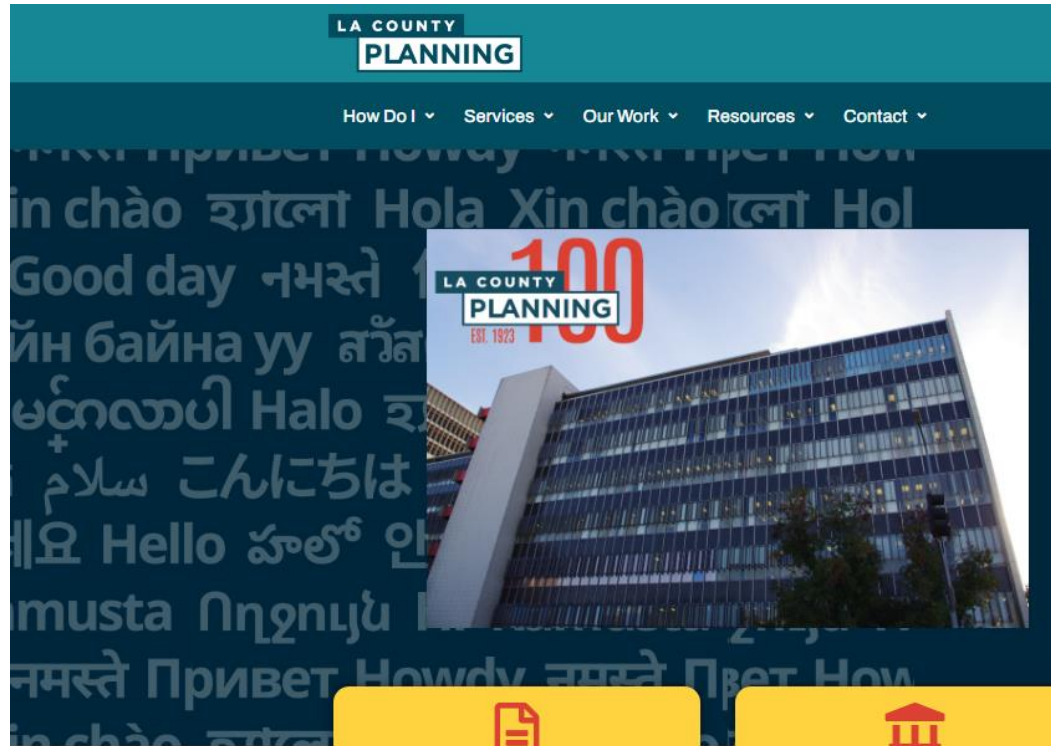
- My Background
- Professional Certifications
- Why GISP is Important

My Background - Career

- Education in Urban & Regional Planning
- Work has been in GIS (28 years)
- Started as intern (student professional worker)
- From Student to GIS Analyst to GIS Manager
- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification in 2001
- GIS Professional (GISP) certification in 2014



My Organization – LA County Planning



APPLICATIONS & FORMS



HEARINGS & MEETINGS

PLANS & ORDINANCES



GIS

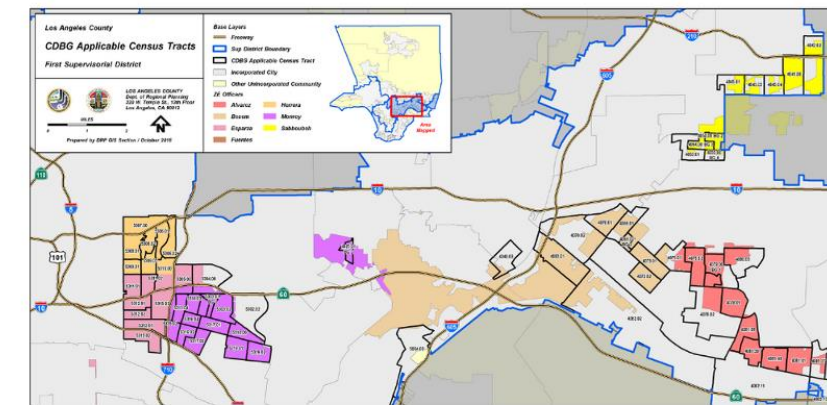
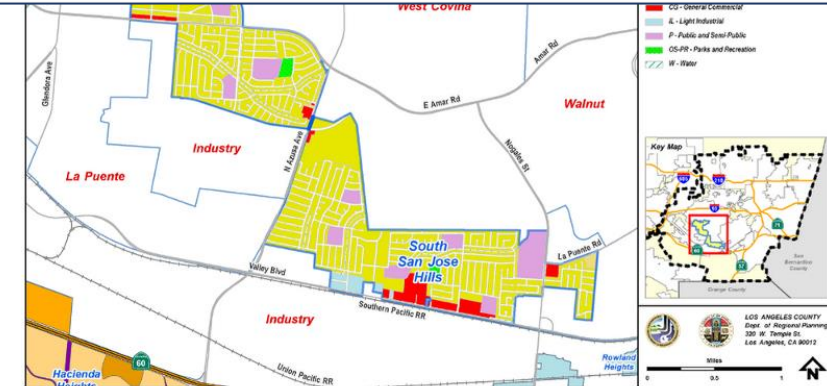


OFFICE LOCATIONS

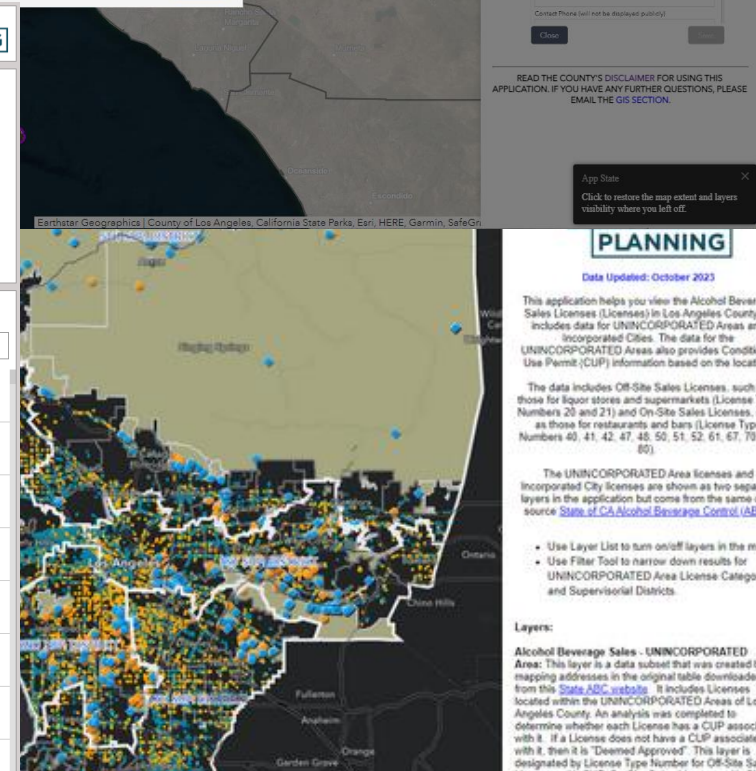
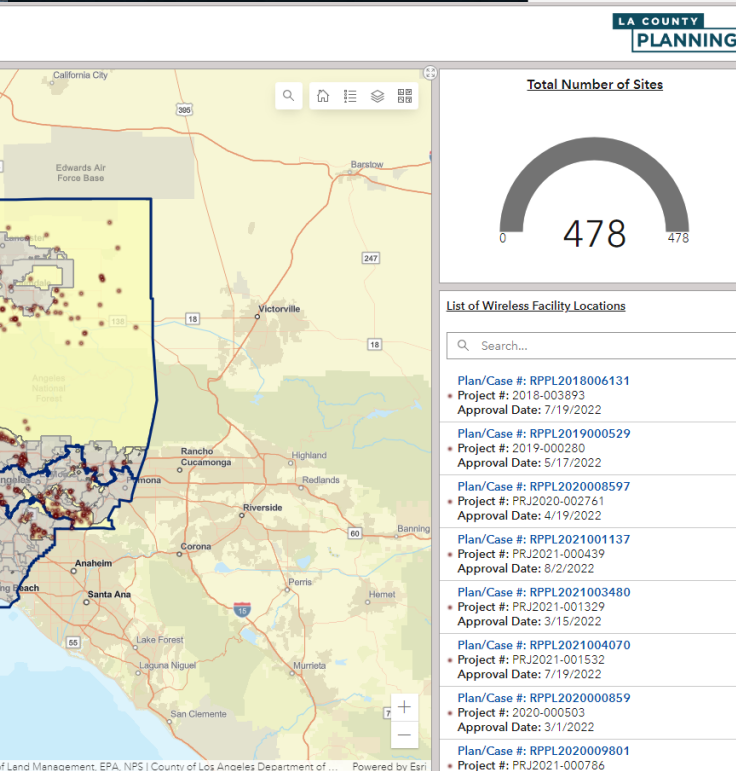
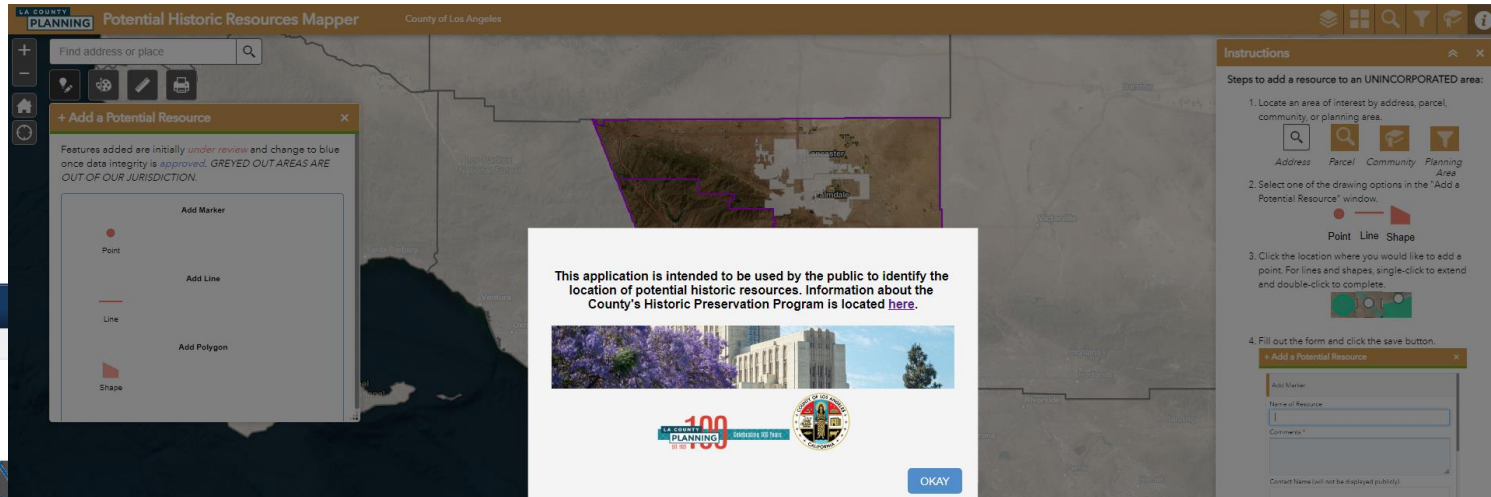
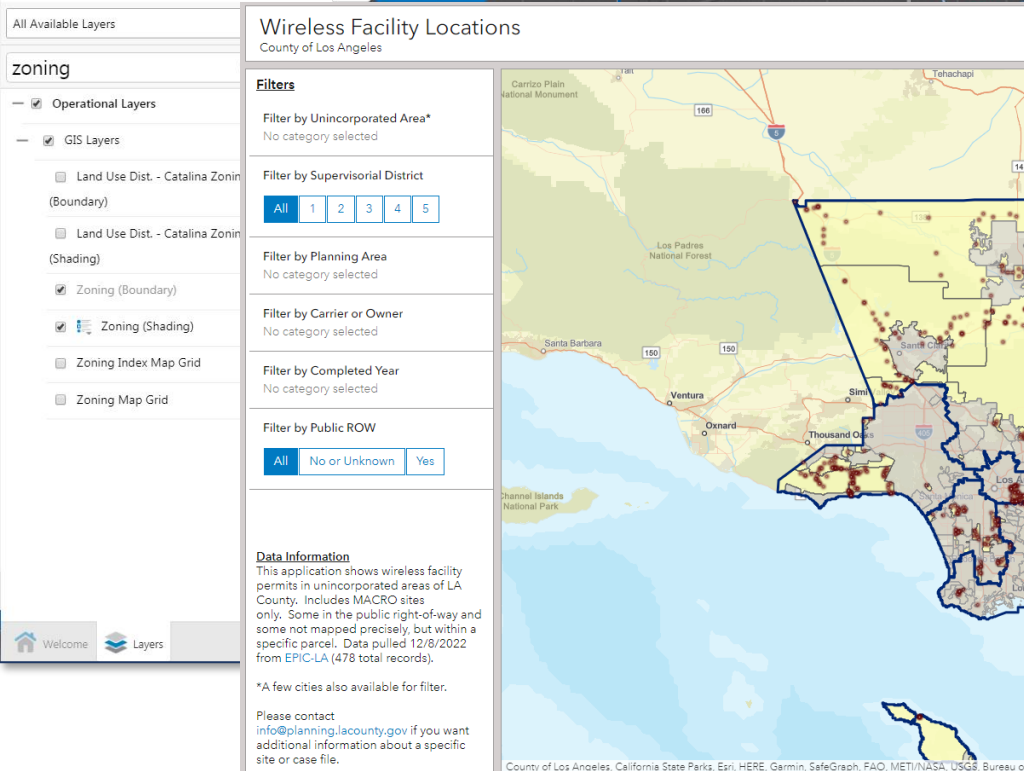
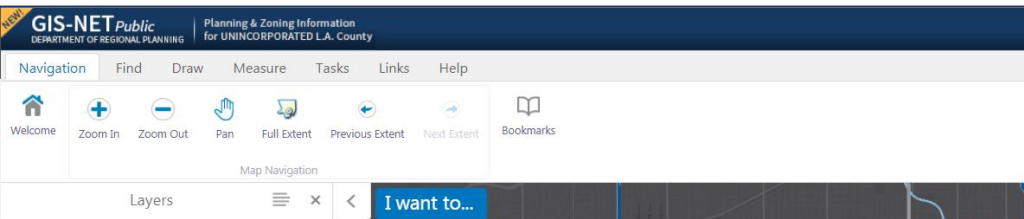


ADU

Maps



Some of our stuff ... Apps



Some of our stuff ... Data



Professional Certifications

- There is distinction between certifications and licensure/credentials
 - Licensure is usually required by law
 - Certifications usually obtained through a professional organization or educational institution* (source: Indeed.com)
- Certifications can be general or specific
 - Foreign language certificate, software certifications, CPR or first aid programs, leadership, project management, etc.
 - Certified Financial Analyst, Marketing, HR, various trades
- GISP is similar (as is AICP, for planners)

Certified Planner - AICP

- Received my AICP certification in 2001
- I work in a traditional land use planning organization
- Felt good to get it; feels good to have it; working with planners every day
- AICP bonus; for those in our department, having the certification; established in 2008
- County unions negotiated for it – I was on the negotiating team; 2.75% of base pay

How We Got to Certification...



- When an industry matures – that's when certification comes up

My GISP Certification Journey

- Certified in 2014
- I had been doing GIS since 1996 (approx. 18 yrs of professional experience)
- I had a Masters degree in a related field (urban & regional planning)
- I did a myriad of tasks and lots of different things as it relates to GIS (data creation & mgmt, map making, database mgmt, web mapping, graphics, etc.)

My GISP Certification Journey

- I did NOT take the exam; I was “grandfather’d” in
- I would have studied exam guides and taken practice exams (just like I did for AICP)
- I have recertified twice already

GISP Certification...

- Supports specialized knowledge & skills
- Adherence to ethical standards
- Enhances professional credibility

Support Specialized Knowledge

- For most certifications – this is the key (to compliment your education and professional experience)
- Continuing education is usually required
 - To keep you up-to-date on standards, tools, and industry trends
- While GIS is broad; it's still specialized as it relates to other fields

Support Specialized Knowledge

- You take a test; it's exam based*
- You do some number of hours related to contributions to the profession
- You stay engaged and active

Support Specialized Knowledge

- There are 45+ Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) that they pull from the GIS body of knowledge (source: GISCI)
- Study guides and exam prep materials are available online
 - Guides with study materials
 - I found a 3 hr exam webinar on YouTube

Adherence to Ethical Standards

- This is often overlooked
- Means you are obligated to oblige by some minimal ethical standards
- This was big for me; because planning, to me, was always about helping others, the public good, etc.
- Ethics comes up in GIS and Planning regularly
 - What data we provide and how we provide it
 - How we use public funds/resources
 - Equity has been brought to the forefront more recently too

Code of Ethics

<https://www.gisci.org/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>

- I. Obligations to Society
 - Do the Best Work Possible
 - Contribute to the Community to the Extent Possible, Feasible and Advisable
 - Speak Out About Issues
- II. Obligations to Employers and Funders
 - Deliver Quality Work
 - Have a Professional Relationship
 - Be Honest in Representations
- III. Obligations to Colleagues and the Profession
 - Respect the Work of Others
 - Contribute to the Discipline to the Extent Possible
- IV. Obligations to Individuals in Society
 - Respect Privacy
 - Respect Individuals

Enhances Professional Credibility

- Shows your commitment to the profession
- This might be more important for younger professionals (those early in their careers)
- This might be more important for consultants
- This may expand in importance over time (like other professions)

Enhances Professional Credibility

- From my anecdotal research
 - Those that had GISP were happy they did it
 - Those that did not have GISP were either considering it (especially if financial incentives were added) or past it (didn't feel they need it)
- Finally, it's not a scam (this came up in some online forums)

Benefits in Holding the GISP Certification

- In hiring
 - If it helps separate you from other candidates
- In salaries
 - If you get a bonus for having the certification
 - If you get reimbursed for taking the exam
- In pride
 - Shows that you are a professional

The Intangibles

- I am an optimist – so I am inclined to support the effort
 - It just feels like there is value in this certification
 - I understand there is a process involved – it's an investment to become a GISP and maintain your GISP
 - Also, better to have than NOT to have; all other things being equal
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- “Becoming a GISP is an investment, not an expense”
Tony Spicci, GISCI Executive Director

Key Take Aways

- Three main things regarding GISP certification:
 - Supports specialized knowledge & skills
 - Adherence to ethical standards
 - Enhances professional credibility
- GISP adds value; on top of your education and experience
- Encouragement to contribute back to the profession

Questions?

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<https://planning.lacounty.gov/maps-and-gis/>