

Project Profile – City of Surprise, Arizona



Background

Signs posted at the City of Surprise's borders say it all: "Population Increasing daily." Located 20 miles northwest of downtown Phoenix, Surprise is experiencing a nearly 30-percent growth rate per year, earning it the title of Arizona's fastest growing city four out the past five years. It's estimated that its current population of about 60,000 could reach as high as 300,000 by 2020.

As a result, city leaders are taking a proactive approach to planning. Just approved by voters in March 2001, the City's updated general plan encompasses a 220-square-mile planning area. This roadmap to the future addresses such critical issues as open space, economic development, revitalization of the Original Townsite neighborhood, and mass transit needs. In addition, city leaders are establishing short, medium, and long-term goals to make Surprise a well-rounded community where residents love to live, work, and play.

Infrastructure

- 70 square miles
- 45,000 parcels
- 400 linear miles water distribution
- 250 linear miles wastewater collection

Project Description

In 1998, EMS was hired to completely design and develop the GIS for the City of Surprise. In addition to parcel, water, and sewer layers, EMS developed over 100 GIS layers for the City. As a result, Surprise now uses the EMS Utility Map Server to maintain the water, sewer and storm utility layers.

EMS developed the Surprise Land Information System (LIS). A web based application for the Community Development department that covers Development Agreements, Planning and Zoning, Engineering Reviews, Permits, and Inspections, Building Reviews, Permits, and Inspections, and Code Enforcement. The LIS includes a public component for Building Permit Applications and Inspection Requests. LIS keeps a complete record of the building processes allowing users to attach documents, pictures, emails, and voice messages to the related projects. LIS has streamlined the Surprise development process by providing a single source for all relevant construction information. LIS also interfaces with EMSWebMap to show Building Inspectors where their stops for the day are.

As a result of its GIS development, Surprise has significantly reduced processing errors when issuing permits and collecting fees. The City is expanding its program through further data distribution, custom programming, and migration from Access to SQL 7.0, all with the continued assistance and consultation of EMS.

In 2016, EMS delivered a custom HTML5-based application for city-wide web-based data viewing. The City continues to leverage the services of EMS as it continues its GIS maintenance and LIS programs.

Contact Information

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