



GIS Capacity Building Study, Washington County, Rhode Island

CLIENT NAME

Grow Smart Rhode Island

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DURATION

2000

MPS was engaged by Grow Smart Rhode Island to undertake a *GIS Assessment* within the eight town Washington County region in Rhode Island, with the purpose to build local GIS capacity. This area is one of the fastest growing regions in southern New England, as well is part of The Nature Conservancy's Pawcatuck Borderlands landscape – the largest forested system between Boston and Washington, D.C. GSRI and the Washington Regional Planning Commission recognized that GIS is an essential component in the planning toolbox for sound land use planning, growth management and land conservation efforts.

The *GIS Assessment* identified all existing and planned GIS systems and activities with the region, both public and private. Local needs were assessed, stakeholder's meetings conducted and recommendations developed. MPS and other GIS Steering Committee members, highlighted the need for a local matching program to build GIS capacity to the RI Governor's Growth Council. As a result, the 2001 Statewide Planning Program's Community GIS Enhancement Grant program was developed.

The *GIS Assessment* also summarized the cost-benefit of developing parcel data. Today, four of these six towns have developed (or are in the process of developing) parcel-based GIS systems. Several of the towns are collaborating with the objective to share staff and resources, as well as conducting regional land planning, storm water management and conservation projects that take advantage of improved GIS capabilities at the local level.

The *GIS Assessment* project was funded by Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

