

# MetroGIS: Performance Measures Case Study

## RILEY-PURGATORY-BLUFF CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

**Organization:** Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District  
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**Organizational Profile:** The Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District was formed in 1969 to enhance water quality and to protect residents from flooding in the 46-square-mile District. Under state law, it is responsible for water resources planning. The District works with other government bodies to regulate stormwater runoff, improve water quality, and provide recreation. The District also works with developers on any project that proposes to alter floodplains, wetlands or streams. The District requires permits for such projects to ensure that land use changes do not negatively impact water quality and flood protection. District review of permits provides an opportunity for citizen input on water-related issues.

**Uses of GIS:** Geospatial data are critical for a great deal of the District's work, including erosion control permitting, flood prevention, and water quality monitoring and prediction. Among the data used by the District are parcels, future land use, orthophotos, soils and land cover.

**Recent Successes:** The MetroGIS future land use dataset is used in computer models that can help predict the quality and quantity of surface-water flows in 2020. Barr looks at the development plans of the cities in the District, and is then able to evaluate the impacts on area lakes. With that information, it can create different scenarios for how to maintain and improve the conditions of the water bodies.

The District recently published a colorful map that highlights parks and trails located in the District. Data for the map came from a number of sources, including the parks/features element of The Lawrence Group dataset, available free of charge to government users through MetroGIS.

**Impact of MetroGIS:** The District, like many government entities that participate in MetroGIS, finds that one of the biggest benefits of MetroGIS is [www.datafinder.org](http://www.datafinder.org), the one-stop shop for data that the District uses in its everyday operations.

GIS Specialist Tim Anderson, of the District's consulting firm, Barr Engineering, explains that before MetroGIS, his firm had to spend time and money getting data from two separate counties and several cities and then reconciling the data. Through the MetroGIS data-sharing agreements, that data can be downloaded for free and is often contained in a regional dataset that doesn't require any further work to piece it together. "This represents a savings for our clients because we don't have to generate or look for the data," Anderson said.

“It’s like manufacturers who get together to standardize the size of bolts,” said Conrad Fiskness, one of five managers on the Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District Board, and a member of the MetroGIS Policy Board. “MetroGIS is an idea that makes sense—communities and agencies cooperating to develop standards that make sharing data easier and, in the process, save taxpayers’ money.”