**Google maps**

Google maps allows you to search for local businesses and get driving, transit or walking directions

**Google Earth**

With GoogleEarth you can view all of the same 3D imagery, terrain and buildings available in the desktop version, you can search for cities, places and businesses around the world with Google local search, view layers of geographic information including roads, borders, Panoramio photos and more.

**GIS**

GIS organizes geographic data so that a person reading a map can select data necessary for a specific project or task. A thematic map has a table of contents that allows the reader to add layers of information to a basemap of real-world locations. A good GIS program is able to process geographic data from a variety of sources and integrate it into a map project. Many countries have an abundance of geographic data for analysis, and governments often make GIS datasets publicly available.

**Arc GIS**

With ArcGIS you can tap on the map or use your current location to discover information about what you see. You can query the map, search and find interesting information, measure distances and areas of interest and share maps with others.

Literally thousands of local government organizations, and planning agencies in particular, have embraced GIS tools from ESRI as a means of meeting these demands while dealing with limited funding and staffing. GIS tools can provide the necessary planning platform for visualization, modeling, analysis, and collaboration.

**Front Counter Service and Current Planning**

GIS promotes a good public image of a planning department. Equipped with GIS tools from ESRI, staff members can quickly access information on parcel maps, such as environmentally sensitive areas, and all matters concerning the implementation of zoning, permit status, and other planning information.

**Comprehensive Planning**

Planners use GIS to prepare plans, which set the standard for policy decisions regarding long-range changes to a community’s physical environment. Planners make use of GIS to smooth the progress of citizen participation and community input as they develop a vision for the community that enhances the quality of life for all citizens. ESRI GIS tools help planners analyze problems more quickly and thoroughly, formulate solutions, and monitor progress toward long-term goals for the community.

**Planning Agencies**

GIS is also used at planning agencies to conduct environmental review of projects; development review, analysis, and compliance; historic preservation; and redevelopment, as well as regional planning, as more planning agencies seek to coordinate planning efforts to minimize negative impacts on neighboring communities. In many cases, planning agencies are also using GIS Web services to coordinate planning and economic development initiatives. It is no wonder that ESRI’s software solutions have been adopted by more planning agencies than any other GIS software. By integrating and organizing information spatially, planners can get a broad view of the current situation and more accurately assess the future. GIS software can analyze more scenarios more quickly, giving decision makers more choices.

**GIS planning solutions can be used for**

* Community-based design and planning
* Economic development
* Smart growth
* Improving the quality of life
* Creating better communities for future generations
* Creating livable communities
* Planning services
* Urban and regional planning
* Brownfields redevelopment

**Benefits**

* Assists planners in identifying land use trends and developable land areas
* Provides decision support
* Saves time
* Promotes enterprise or system wide use of GIS data and technology
* Increases accuracy

**ESRi BAO**

ESRI Business Analyst provides key demographic and market facts about any location in the U.S. ESRI BAO provides information about what types of people live in an area, how an area compares to another area and if it is a good fit for business professionals looking to evaluate a site

**3D GIS and 3D CAD**

**Local governments and cities around the globe are rapidly incoporating advanced 3D tools and technologies into their planning, design, construction and operations. 3D GIS and 3D CAD technologies connected to local government databases and businesses are weaving a common thread throughout communities.  Improved mapping, collaboration, 3D building designs, visualized opportunities for better education and understanding are all flowing from these new technological gains. We are seeing the evolution of the digital city, inter-connected, interactive, continuously online and always available.**

Digital cities can rightly be assigned to those places where digital computing first began recording and storing informaiton about urban environments. Those efforts where more data oriented and less visualization and aligned to collaborative use of the data because such tools only became available during the last few years.

The 3D software for creating 3D city models cannot be separated from the technologies that actually  data that goes into these software. They are not easily separated, in fact, it is near impossible to create a good 3D city model without adequate 3D data capture. For this reason photogrammetry, lidar, laser scanning, digitization, 3D totalstations and other technologies are also gaining more features as they need to meet city modelling needs.

Having pointed to the advantages of 3D city models, it should be stated that there is an important need for governments and businesses to adapot policies that support 3D digital technologies. Clearly, some cities 'get it' and are streamlining policies and legislation to ensure models can be created, tools can be readily adopted and even working towards the development of a workforce that thinks and acts in 3D.

More than images alone, 3D city models and 3D city visualization are poised to rapidly grow as innovations, research, education and applications continue to expand. It makes good business sense and - good citizen sense.