Bluesky 3D Photomaps Help Manage Cityâ€™s Green Space

The Parks Trust, the charitable organisation responsible for parks and green spaces in Milton Keynes, UK, is using a range of highly detailed geographic datasets from Bluesky to manage its portfolio of property and open spaces. Deployed in the Trust's GIS, the high resolution aerial photography, detailed laser mapped height models and National Tree Map (NTM) data are informing a range of projects, including grounds maintenance contract awards, encroachment monitoring and new development plans.

"The data offers the most up to date and accurate view of our parks and green spaces," commented James Cairncross, Landscape Infrastructure Manager at The Parks Trust. "Used within our GIS, the aerial photography provides more features and better currency than other map layers, and the different ages of imagery allow us to monitor changes in boundaries and land use over time. The 3D height models also allow us to visualise new developments or proposed improvements in context, and the National Tree Map data provides detail not available from other sources."

Within The Parks Trust there are around 40 users regularly accessing the data via Autodesk's Infrastructure Map Server. Applications of the data include the digitising of new acquisition boundaries directly from the aerial photography, and the creation of contract drawings and bills of quantities for more accurate and therefore cost effective grounds maintenance contracts. The high resolution imagery is also very useful in identifying and proving 'garden / land grab'. With land bordering more than 10,000 private properties, the Trust has several cases of encroachment each year. Different ages of Bluesky imagery – 2009, 2012 and 2015, are used to identify changes in boundaries and often presented as evidence to the homeowner.

In addition to the aerial photography, the Trust also uses detailed 3D height – Digital Terrain Model (DTM) and Surface Model (DSM) models and the National Tree Map data which uniquely identifies the location, height and canopy cover of more than 280 million trees nationwide. This data is used to create desktop visualisations of proposed developments or maintenance projects and illustrate their potential impact on the local environment.

"The combination of GIS and Bluesky data is already realising significant savings for the Trust," continued Cairncross. "Being able to complete initial investigations from the desktop we are saving valuable staff time, improving efficiency and reducing costs. You could say the data has more than paid for itself, costing less than one traditional site survey."

The Parks Trust maintains 5,000 acres of parks and green spaces and continually improves this essential resource by providing new facilities, increasing biodiversity and enhancing habitats. The Trust organises more than 200 park events, provides environmental education for nearly 6,000 children and works with developers and other organisations to bring new green space into its stewardship every year.

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