



Snapshot



Advantages

- Easily integrate existing graphics, text, and maps in a coherent framework that “tells the story” of a project
- Meets today’s need for visual alternatives to conventional technical reports
- Versatile tool can be used in meeting presentations, as an online resource, and provided to partner agencies such as local governments
- Users can interact, on their own time, with the materials best suited to their interests and learning styles, whether viewing maps, infographics, visualizations, videos, explanatory text, or project documents
- Well-suited for presenting multiple alternatives for comparison at different scales; users can zoom in to the locations that interest them
- Easily updated with new pages as a project or plan evolves
- Effective tool for gathering public comment to be used for planning and environmental linkages (PEL) purposes



Disadvantages

- Information may appear too technical to some readers, despite explanatory text
- Requires lead time to develop



Resources Required

- GIS and graphics expertise



Outcomes

- Increases readers’ understanding of project issues and choices, enabling them to provide more informed, useful feedback
- Provides a “self-serve” information option for persons unable to attend public information sessions



Tips for Success

- Know your audience; determine how much technical information they can absorb and how much interpretation must be provided
- Build the narrative in advance – emphasis on the “why,” but also include the who, what, where, and when (if appropriate)
- Include both public involvement staff and GIS staff in developing the story map
- Determine the expected “shelf-life” of the story map at the outset – will it be used for a relatively brief public comment period, or as part of a living document, such as a long-range transportation plan?
- To attract visitors, provide prominent links to story maps on websites, social media, and at meetings
- As with websites, keep story maps fresh with new information to encourage repeat visitors
- Include links to comment forms, surveys, or other feedback opportunities within the story map

