

# MANAGING GROWTH USING RICH AERIAL DATA

The Village of Huntley in Illinois uses aerial imagery to manage growth and respond to residential needs.

OCTOBER 2020 | HUNTLEY, IL U.S.

## INTRODUCTION

The Village of Huntley is located in suburban Chicago's "Golden Corridor" at the crossroads of Interstate 90 and Route 47 and is one of the fastest growing communities in the Chicago area. Huntley's population is hovering around 30,000 and is split between two counties (Kane and McHenry), a challenging situation when faced with trying to obtain or access recently captured high-resolution aerial imagery.

The need to have current, consistent, clear imagery was a vital component for the Village.

"With the Village being split between two counties, we were constantly dealing with aerial imagery from two different sources since the counties don't contract aerial services together," said Jason Irvin, Assistant Director of Public Works and Engineering, "We'd often get imagery from different times with differing resolutions and the quality was really difficult to work with."

## NEARMAP PRODUCTS USED & INTEGRATIONS



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It wasn't just for project planning that Irvin and his team needed clear, current imagery. "When presenting capital improvement projects to the Village Board, the exhibits were severely lacking in quality," he said. "We were pulling imagery from two different sources with competing resolutions and different dates that needed to be stitched together for representation."

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## FINDING A SINGLE AERIAL IMAGERY SOURCE

Looking for a way to better visualize the Village, Irvin was introduced to the rich image library of Nearmap and immediately began to see the benefits it would bring. "Nearmap imagery has been a lifesaver; we no longer have to deal with outdated and inconsistent imagery anymore," he said. "I used to search property addresses with Google Earth Pro, but after using the MapBrowser platform, I found that searching property addresses was much faster and easier than ever before. It's about as seamless a process as I've ever used."

Accessing the Vertical Imagery library, Irvin was able to start gathering information and detail he had not been able to use previously. One of the initial projects of use was evaluating and updating the year paved for all the roadways in Huntley. With additional phases of subdivisions being developed, the final lift of asphalt often progresses at varying frequencies and limits throughout the subdivision. "We started using Nearmap to fill the gaps for a more accurate depiction of year paved limits and date of installation. It was extremely helpful to be able to quickly evaluate and discover information like that," he said.



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Utility mapping was also of high importance to Huntley, including a large water main model project, which involved identifying and locating all water main features such as fire hydrants and valve vaults. Considering that within a 14 square mile area Huntley manages 2175 fire hydrants and 4574 water valves, it was a large project to undertake in ArcGIS.

“It’s so important for Huntley to have our GIS utilities overlaid with Nearmap imagery. Super important,” stated Irvin. “In ArcGIS, we’re able to draw features that may be missing and add/revise line work based on API-keyed Nearmap imagery in coordination with georeferenced development plans. The utilization of the high-resolution aerial imagery has reduced dependence on GPS surveys because features such as hydrants and manholes can be located easily which in turn, increases staff efficiency and reduces fieldwork.”

## THE GROWING BENEFITS OF USING CRYSTAL CLEAR, CURRENT IMAGERY

As with many communities, residential and commercial development is critical, especially with Huntley being among the fastest growing communities in the Chicago area. Getting access to current aerial imagery and having the ability to evaluate change was beyond important.

“We use Nearmap because of the resolution and currency,” commented Irvin. “Imagery can be tough to come by—good imagery, that is. And to be honest, what we had access to prior to Nearmap was typically outdated and/or the resolution was low quality. What we get with Nearmap is just unbelievable.”

Downtown revitalization is part of the growing development and preservation of the history of Huntley, reflecting their town motto “The Friendly Village with Country Charm”. Creating historical exhibits with Nearmap imagery to highlight change over time will be a true testament to the value of current imagery. “It’s just extremely important for us to see the progression of our developments,” said Irvin. “We take a lot of pride in what we’ve accomplished.”



Above: The Village of Huntley’s downtown historical revitalization, completed in 2018. Images captured by Nearmap show the progression and change over time.



## REMOTE EVALUATION DURING A PANDEMIC

In May 2020, the Village of Huntley set a record for rainfall of 9.4 inches, resulting in a high number of resident phone calls regarding over active sump pumps due to the large volume of rain.

“Trying to stay safe by maintaining distance during the pandemic is definitely a lot easier with Nearmap imagery. We have a better ability to evaluate the current conditions of properties and get a quicker understanding of resident concerns without having to be on-site,” shared Irvin.

“Nearmap has also been invaluable to verify work done on any property in the Village. With the newness of the imagery, it’s possible to see relatively current activity. Being able to use the split screen comparison with differing years, it’s also possible to determine changes to a property over time. The oblique imagery is also helpful so we can see details on properties that may be obscured due to shadows or tree canopy, including the layout of fences or even the location of a specific window well on the side of a home.

“Having current and high-resolution aerial imagery at your fingertips—who wouldn’t want that? Plus, as we look at the Nearmap relationship continuing, we’ll eventually have 15-20 years’ worth of imagery—and more. The value only exponentially increases as the years go on.”

## ABOUT NEARMAP

We capture, manage and deliver the most frequently updated location content in the world, allowing businesses and governments to explore their environment easily. With Nearmap, organizations unlock opportunities that consistently inform decision making and transform the way they work. Delivered within days of capture, our imagery is much higher resolution than satellite imagery and shows changes over time. Nearmap helps users save time and money, reduce site visits, and make better informed decisions with current, clear imagery.

Nearmap is delivered through our web-based MapBrowser, integrated via our robust APIs or accessed via third party applications.

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PROGRESSION FROM 2016-2020  
HUNTLEY, IL U.S.

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